

WHITE AND BLACK WOMANHOODS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIONS IN 1920s
AMERICAN ADVERTISING

by

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ABSTRACT

The 1920s represented a time of tension in America. Throughout the decade, marginalized groups created competing versions of a proper citizen. African-Americans sought to be included in the national fabric. Racism encouraged solidarity, but black Americans did not agree upon one method for coping with, and hopefully ending, antiblack racism. White women enjoyed new privileges and took on more roles in the public sphere. Reactionary groups like the Ku Klux Klan found these new voices unsettling and worrisome and celebrated a white, native-born, Protestant and male vision of the American citizen. Simultaneously, technological innovations allowed for advertising to flourish and spread homogenizing information regarding race, gender, values and consumption across the nation. These advertisements selectively represented these changes by channeling them into pre-existing prescriptive ideology.

Mainstream ads, which were created by whites for white audiences, reinforced traditional ideas regarding black men and women and white women's roles. Even if white women were featured using technology or wearing cosmetics, they were still featured in prescribed roles as housekeepers, wives and mothers who deferred to and relied on their husbands. Black women were featured in secondary roles, as servants or mammies, if at all. Concurrently, the black press created its own representations of women. Although these representations were complex and sometimes contradictory and had to reach multiple audiences, black-created ads featured women in a variety of roles, such as entertainers, mothers and business women, but never as mammies. Then, in a decade of increased tensions, white-created ads relied on traditional portrayals of women and African-Americans while black-designed ads offered more positive, although complicated, visions of womanhood.

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INTRODUCTION

To many Americans, race and gender are fixed, unchanging biological categories. Accepting race and gender as permanent facts denies the complexity and historicity of these phenomena. In American history, race and gender intersect and shift to address perceived domestic needs as well as respond to international events. These constructions constantly interact and are informed by one another. With technological innovations, perceptions of race and gender could be visually reproduced and distributed across the nation, especially in the form of advertising, thereby creating national understandings of race and gender and using those perceptions to sell products. This thesis examines shifts in constructions of race and gender in the 1920s, in response to perceived social crises and those constructions were represented in advertising. In this thesis, I argue that in response to mounting social tensions, print advertisements created by whites for white audiences created images that reinforced existing stereotypes, while advertisements designed by blacks used the changing society as a backdrop to construct and distribute positive (although sometimes complex and contradictory) images of black women.

There have been a number of works dedicated to advertising and consumerism, black history, women's history, black women's history, the constructions of blackness and whiteness, femininity and masculinity. These topics intersect and overlap; not all texts address each of these themes. More recent texts may address advertising and race and gender, but do not fully explore the origins of advertising stereotypes. Other texts may examine the black press and black advertising, but do not look at specific advertising tactics. Some works, which may suggest parts of my thesis statement, do not do so as part of the work's main argument, but more

as a side note. Historiographical changes allow historians to look at all of these historiographies in totality.

One of the earliest texts written about perceptions of black Americans, George Fredrickson's *The Black Image in the White Mind*, published in 1971, examined tensions and connections between racist attitudes, politics and ideology between 1817 and 1914. In his discussion of white perceptions of blacks, Fredrickson lays the foundations for discussions of racial attitudes and perceptions in twentieth century America. Later works, such as 1977 article "Black Stereotypes as Reflected by Popular Culture" by J. Stanley Lemons, *Slavery and Race in American Pop Culture* by William VanDeBurg published in 1984, *Disfigured Images*, written by Patricia Morton in 1991 examine perceptions of black Americans by whites.

Roland Marchand's 1985 work, *Advertising the American Dream* offers a cohesive study of American advertising and consumerism. He addresses visual clichés, stereotypes, social values and ideals, while also examining perceptions of white women and African-Americans. Importantly, Marchand suggests that advertising can reflect a society's unmet needs, in this case, unresolved issues surrounding the roles of white women as well as black men and women.¹ James Norris' 1990 work, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society* examines the role advertising played in changing American culture. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth's 1994 monograph, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus: Blacks and Advertisements Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* draws from Marchand's assertion that advertising reflects and reinforces widespread beliefs. This text focuses on three particular derogatory images of black Americans created by and marketed to white Americans. Monographs such as *Inarticulate Longings* by

¹ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity: 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 200.

Jennifer Scanlon, published in 1995 and Janice Ward Moss' 2003 text *The History and Advancement of African-Americans in the Advertisement Industry, 1895-1999* examine the ways in which advertisements reflect and react to mainstream society. These texts contribute to the historiographies of advertising, but also complicate intersections between ads, culture, race and gender.

Writing in 1992 Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham's "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race" uses Joan Scott's proverbial toolkit to analyze the conflation of race, sexuality, gender and class.² Higgenbotham argues that in historical studies, race often takes precedence, overshadowing but encompassing perceptions of sexuality, gender and class.³ Higgenbotham stresses the need for complicating and unpacking preconceived notions of black women, for example. Her text is effective not only because it encourages the historian to unpack constructed terminology, but also because Higgenbotham uses multiple case studies to reveal how certain words and phrases take on multiple and complicated meanings.

A number of texts examine the constructions of white and black womanhood. Published in 1999, *White Women's Rights* by Louise Newman examines the racial component of feminism, as well as the resulting construction of black womanhood. *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, published in 2001, by Carolyn Kitch focuses on white womanhood in conjunction with visual stereotypes. These works contribute to an understanding of constructions of race and gender as well as visual stereotypes which repeat in advertising. This topic spans a number of

² Joan Scott "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075. Scott's text criticizes the reduction and essentializing of constructed groups, be they racial, gendered or otherwise. Scott introduces the notion of looking at how these constructions are formed, either directly or in opposition to other groups. Then, a historian examines societal constructions of whiteness in response and opposition to blackness, rather than homogenizing the experiences of whites and blacks.

³ Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *The University of Chicago Press* 17 (1992): 251-274, 252.

historiographies, including race, gender, advertising, and consumerism. Early texts engage race as something fixed and universal, not something plastic and affected by sex. The developments of race and gender history encouraged an understanding of both as constructed categories that change over time as well as respond to one another. Studies of advertising reflect the ways in which these categories can change. There are many useful texts that allow historians to conceive of how these topics work together but no text compares the ways in which white advertisers advertise to white audiences to how black advertisers sell items to black audiences.

Theoretical Foundations

One must understand values and beliefs ingrained in a society in order to find deeper meanings in advertisements. This section examines beliefs regarding race and gender embedded in American culture. The interactions between race and gender anchor this study. Because these attitudes are so embedded in American culture, the ideas presented in this section influenced the ways in which advertisements were created and received by the public. The meanings of race and gender shifted throughout American history in order to serve perceived social needs.

Joan Scott demonstrated the ways in which gender can be analyzed using historical tools. She rejects a binary model that defines men and women universally and ahistorically, which places men and women in permanent opposition to one another. Scott defines gender, the “social category imposed on a sexed body,” as symbolic representations, normative concepts, social politics and institutions and subjective identity.⁴ Using this definition, Scott proposes deconstructing these categories within the context of the societies they represent and how these

⁴ Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1056, 1067-1068.

categories interact.⁵ In Scott's model, it becomes possible to examine what made a "woman" in a particular historical moment. In her monograph, *Imperial Leather*, colonialism scholar Anne McClintock applied Scott's method to race as well as gender to demonstrate how these categories interact and intersect.⁶ Black women's history scholar Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham lists gender, race and class as social constructions that function through recognizing difference and "positioning groups vis-à-vis one another;" gender, race and class can only be understood comparatively.⁷ Using symbols, norms, politics and identity, what it meant to possess the qualities of blackness, whiteness, masculinity and femininity in a historical moment can be reconstructed and understood. It is important to note that these constructions intersect and overlap- that is, the construction of black femininity differs from the construction of white femininity.

Perceptions of what it means to be a black or white woman have differed, historically. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham argues that categories of analysis- race, gender, class and sexuality- are interrelated and overlapping. According to Higginbotham, race has an "all-encompassing effect on the construction and representation of other social and power relations."⁸ Anne McClintock argues that sex, race and class exist in relation to and through one another.⁹ Black women are also thought of as having certain class and sexual identities (in addition to racial and gender identities) while white women allegedly possess different class and sexual identities. Feminist scholar Elizabeth Spelman encourages one to be aware of how easily

⁵ *Ibid*, 1065-1066.

⁶ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 6.

⁷ Higginbotham "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race" 253

⁸ *Ibid.*, 252.

⁹ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 5.

conflation takes place, to recognize and address it.¹⁰ To ignore this process is to privilege one group of women over all others and to assume that sexism has been experienced the same by all women, regardless of class, race, religion, sexuality, etc. Spelman suggests that historians must remember that this oppression is not piled on; one cannot combine the oppression a black man and white woman face to understand the discrimination black women face.¹¹ Therefore using reductionist terms to describe a complicated set of constructions must be avoided, that is, “blacks” should not be used to describe black men and women and “women” should not be used to describe the experiences of black and white women.

What it has meant to possess the traits of blackness or whiteness has changed throughout American history. In the early nineteenth century and prior, race was not an overarching, fixed category.¹² During this period, black men and women could be free and may have owned slaves; slavery was a question of legal standing. Although African-Americans could own black slaves, whites were never enslaved and black skin was equated with inferiority. However, the meaning of race transformed as slaveholders, politicians and others needed to reconcile the use of slave labor with American notions of freedom and equality. New scientific and religious theories of racial difference satisfied the discrepancies between promoting freedom while relying on slave labor.¹³ These theories relied on circular reasoning, such as the claim that black men and women were better suited to labor because black humans performed labor. Other theories suggested slavery “tamed” black men and women, which made them “docile” and without being held in bondage, they became “bloodthirsty.” Southern slaveholders constructed black men and

¹⁰ Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: The Problem of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹² Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4-5

women as dependent, childlike and/or subhuman.¹⁴ Within the American slave society, political decisions such as the Three-Fifths Compromise of 1787, which counted slaves as three-fifths of a person for the purposes of political representation and the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, that stated that black Americans, even if they had been freed, could be forced back to a master reinforced the dependent and non-citizen constructions of blackness. These laws conflated black skin with servility and slavery, and this association persisted long after the abolition of slavery.¹⁵ The slave society gave birth to the foundations of whiteness and blackness, in which whiteness represented citizenship, freedom and superiority while blackness conferred non-citizen, inferior status.

After the Civil War, Southerners attempted to maintain the order in the “New South” by modeling the principles and hierarchies of the antebellum South. One of the goals of new Southern organization was to integrate black men and women into the southern hierarchy of gentility in order to preserve elite white men and their wives at the top of the socio-political-racial hierarchy.¹⁶ Elite Southern white men passed laws such as Black Codes (often edited Slave Codes) and later enforced Jim Crow segregation in an attempt to control newly freed black movement, opportunity and labor.¹⁷ Not only did Black Codes restore white control of the economy, they also allowed for white men to use violence against black men and women to preserve or restore white honor.¹⁸ The outcome of the 1896 Plessy versus Ferguson case ruled that black bodies were “separate but equal” to whites, constraining black bodies to inferior

¹⁴ George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 52-58.

¹⁵ William L. VanDeburg, *Slavery and Race in American Popular Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 3; Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 14.

¹⁶ Fredrickson, 226.

¹⁷ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 5.

¹⁸ Steven Tuck, *We Ain't What We Ought to Be: Black Freedom Struggle from Emancipation to Obama* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2010), 45.

spaces via *de facto* and *de jure* segregation nationwide.¹⁹ Although slavery was abolished, black men and women did not receive racial status equal to whites. In the postbellum racial hierarchy, blackness occupied a spot beneath and inferior to whiteness. Because whiteness remained at the top of the racial hierarchy, theoretically all white men and women had access to at least some position of social privilege and power.²⁰ Then, all whites, despite gender, geography, religion or ethnicity, had a stake in maintaining the antebellum racial status quo.

The desire to preserve the antebellum racial status quo included the need for sectional reconciliation, at least in terms of race. As part of attempts towards sectional reconciliation southern fiction encouraged the romanticized myth of the loyal, happy (and largely imaginary) slave. One aspect of this myth included the juxtaposition between the “mammy” and the “mistress,” the mythologized image of the loyal, black slave woman who served the elite, white plantation wife.²¹ These images of gender and race spread through reconciliation groups, such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy, an elite women’s social club. White women from the North and West looked for Confederate ancestors so they could join the elite group, which allowed the Daughter’s ideals to spread across the country.²² Juxtaposing plantation mistresses and black mammies exemplifies how racial, gender and class ideals are constructed and conflated by emphasizing the perceived differences between the two ideals of women.²³ In this example of Southern fiction, black women are portrayed as poor, loyal servants who are inferior to wealthy, respectable white women. This contrasting model also forms the basis for constructions of race. Possessors of whiteness need only define the “other,” for it is assumed and

¹⁹Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 23.

²⁰ John Hartigan Jr., “Establishing the Fact of Whiteness,” *American Anthropologist* 99, no. 3 (1997): 495-505, 496.

²¹ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 61, 88, 98.

²² Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 29-30.

²³ Hartigan, “Establishing the Fact of Whiteness,” 496.

acknowledged that whiteness is the default. Whiteness is constructed in opposition to blackness, so that however blackness is defined, whiteness is its opposite (here black women serve while white women are served).²⁴ While white men and women had a theoretical stake in maintaining their positions of social privilege, whites need not agree on the definition of whiteness.

Racial science bolstered white beliefs of superiority. French diplomat Arthur de Gobineau was one of the first scientists to apply Darwinian notions of evolution to social groups. He claimed that the alleged white, “Aryan” race needed to avoid racial miscegenation because all other races were inferior; miscegenation would lead to the degeneration of the white race.²⁵ In a lecture series, American physician Dr. Josiah Nott echoed similar fears of white racial denigration. Citing Greece and Rome as examples, Nott claimed that “wherever in the history of the world the inferior races have conquered and mixed in with the Caucasian, the latter sunk into barbarism.”²⁶ Francis Galton, Charles Darwin’s cousin, also applied convoluted Darwinism to human populations. Galton believed the human races could be improved through positive eugenics; careful breeding that would increase “worthy” traits in a race. Not regulating reproduction, Galton proposed, allowed unwanted traits to flourish and spread.²⁷ Racial science was legitimized through the use of Darwin’s theories regarding evolution, giving pseudo-scientific racial theories the authoritative veneer of science. To white Americans, racial science justified their place in the racial hierarchy.

Many white Americans engaged racial science in order to legitimize earlier theories about

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 496.

²⁵ Stephen Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981), 389-390. Discussions of racial science in this section are influenced by my undergraduate thesis, “The Evolution of the Swastika: From Symbol of Peace to Tool of Hate.”

²⁶ Josiah C. Nott, *Two Lectures on the Natural History of the Caucasian and Negro Races* (Mobile: Dade and Thompson, 1844), 16.

²⁷ Francis Galton, “Hereditary Improvement,” *Every Saturday: A Journal of Choice Reading* (1873): 207-214. 207-208.

black men and women's dispositions and prescribed roles while solidifying white status in the racial hierarchy. According to racial science, white women evolved to be pure, moral, domestic and submissive, relying on their highly evolved, civilized white male counterparts. On the contrary, less evolved black women lacked piety, virtue, sexual control and morals. By the same theory, un-evolved, highly sexual and primitive black men were seen as physical threats to pure white women.²⁸ Even under the so-called scientific umbrella, whiteness continued to be described as the opposite of blackness. By using circular reasoning, scientists constructed theories that demonstrated white civility in relation to a perceived lack of black civility and evolutionary progress. The alleged modernity of racial science served the dual purpose of satisfying southern reactionaries as well as progressive northerners because it maintained the established racial hierarchy while cloaked in the authoritative veneer of science.²⁹

White northerners interpreted racial science to support the notion that African-Americans should stay "in their place," which, according to race historian George M. Fredrickson, meant blacks should remain in the South because the North was sole province of whites.³⁰ Despite persistent racism, many black men and women migrated north, looking for opportunities and equality. This movement, led by educated, middle class black men and women in the North and South, led to a "black collectivity" that trumped gender, class, religion and ethnic lines.³¹ Black solidarity did not address class, religion or gender issues. Elite leaders promoted the politics of respectability, where black men modeled white, middle class, patriarchal families. According to the tenets of racial science, patriarchal families, where men provided for their families by

²⁸ Louise Michelle Newman, *White Women's Rights: Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5, 9, 32.

²⁹ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 47-48.

³⁰ Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 174.

³¹ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 20-21.

working outside the home while women remained in the domestic sphere, were the height of civility. A race's "civility" was determined by how well they conformed to white, middle-class gender roles.³² Modeling white middle class families would allow black families to demonstrate their evolutionary progress. This construction of the black family left black women to "bear the burdens of their gender as well as their race," meaning they faced gendered oppression at home as well as racial oppression in society at large.³³

The ideas of race, gender, sectional reconciliation and racial science coalesced during the Spanish-American War. According to racial science, the best, fittest and most developed races would dominate less fit races. The ability to colonize determined which races were the most fit.³⁴ According to the circular logic of racial science, colonizing non-white nations would prove white fitness. Conquering and colonizing foreign peoples allowed a race to prove their dexterity, fitness and masculinity.³⁵ In 1891, American clergyman Josiah Strong proclaimed the white man as possessing "an instinct or genius for colonizing...he excels in pushing his way into new countries."³⁶ American success in colonizing would demonstrate white dominance and reaffirm white masculinity during a time of rising social anxiety regarding white masculinity.

By the 1890s, many of the Civil War veterans had aged or passed, meaning the majority of young white men in America had not been "made manly" enough for politics.³⁷ The nascent (white) women's movement encroached upon the 'men's public sphere,' causing some to fear that men were becoming too effeminate to be proper American citizens. Along with fears of

³² Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 7.

³³ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 22.

³⁴ Andrew Porter, *European Imperialism 1816-1940* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 24. Discussions of imperialism and racial science were influenced by my undergraduate thesis, "The Evolution of the Swastika."

³⁵ Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 12.

³⁶ Josiah Strong, "Josiah Strong on Anglo-Saxon Predominance," 1891.

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/protected/strong.htm> Accessed 14 Sept 2012.

³⁷ Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 10.

feminization, high unemployment nationwide threatened white men's prescribed roles as providers, furthering the belief that white masculinity was waning. These social and political factors led some political leaders to worry that the new generation of men was not masculine enough for government. For these reasons, the Spanish-American War was popular because it allowed for white men to demonstrate their virtue and virility and solidify their honor through military conquest.³⁸ White Southern men's participation in America's military victory restored the image of "the natural unity between southern and northern whites" and southern masculinity.³⁹ The Spanish-American War reunited Northern and Southern whites under the banner of colonialism while also redeeming the white South for its role in the Civil War. With military victory, America received Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines as colonies. Interaction between America and her colonies reveals deeper attitudes about race and gender in America at the turn of the century.

The acquisition of colonies reinforced the existing ideas about black and white men and women. American politicians and media portrayed Filipino men as unmanly, un-chivalrous and savage. With white paternalism, Americans believed Filipinos could eventually become "civilized."⁴⁰ In this way, blackness and Filipino-ness were constructed similarly- not only were both groups portrayed as childlike and lacking civility; both groups were thought to need white guidance. Although black men participated in armed conflict, they did not receive full American citizenship. Instead, it was believed that black men could only serve effectively when under the command of a white general. Only white men acted bravely, according to military theorists.⁴¹ This demonstrates the plasticity of race; although black men served in combat, constructions of

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-12, 24.

³⁹ Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 146.

⁴⁰ Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 134-135.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

race changed to deny black men access to full citizenship. Where white men allegedly possessed qualities of honor, bravery and civility (thus giving them the privilege of citizenship) black men were thought not to possess these qualities because of their race, despite their contributions to the war effort.

Constructions of white womanhood paralleled the tensions between men. According to racial science, white women's fertility was crucial to continuing the white race. Because white women were the racial lynchpin, it was believed to be imperative that white women continued to have white children. White women embarked on mission trips to "uplift and civilize" Filipino men and women. Allegedly, Filipino women were "primitive" because they lacked strict Victorian sexual spheres and morals. For supporters, teaching Filipinos "correct" behaviors justified imperialism.⁴² This postcard [fig 1] shows an assimilated girl on the left and her unassimilated sister on the right. The assimilated girl, dressed in European clothing, represented the results of the "civilizing" potential white women allegedly possessed.

⁴²Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 42; Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 136.



Figure 1: Postcard from Philippines showing "assimilated" girl, left and her unassimilated sister, right. From Newman, *White Women's Rights*.

White women's work in the Philippines offered a space to exercise authority and knowledge over those considered inferior. White men, on the other hand, were encouraged to resist taking Filipino wives or having affairs with "seductress" Filipino women, but it mattered much less if they did so.⁴³ White women who had children by non-white men were considered denigrating the race, but there was no stigmatization for white men who had children by non-white women. This demonstrates the flexibility of race and gender theory and the necessity of the "other." Through American colonies, white men and women were able to assert their whiteness in new and changing ways to ensure their positions in the top of the racial hierarchy, therefore maintaining their access to social privilege and power. Whites could deny or bestow these privileges on other groups. The Spanish-American War played the important role of solidifying

⁴³ Newman, 16-17; Hoganson, 135-136.

a national, American identity centered on white male authority and conquest and white women's responsibilities to the white race.⁴⁴ America's role in the Spanish-American War allowed for space to perform, reinforce and maintain white gendered and racial identities at the expense of other races. By observing this phenomenon in response to the Spanish-American War, one understands how race, gender and other identities interact with one another.

The desire to maintain separation between the races coincided with the rise of new types of technology. New technologies, such as more affordable printing, and advertising allowed people to share new conceptualized identities centered on race. Images that portrayed black men and women with the same characteristics constructed during the antebellum- lazy, simple and loyal- combined with segregation, which kept black bodies in inferior spaces and reassured white superiority.⁴⁵ These racialized and oppressive visual representations flourished because the images shown were accepted as legitimate. The acceptance of such images was based on white "consensus [rather than] conspiracy," and racialized images were used across the nation to sell products.⁴⁶ World War I increased the importance of visual images, as war propagandists discovered the effectiveness of image-based propaganda.⁴⁷ Technology, advertising and war allowed for easier and more widespread distribution of racialized images.

World War I offers insight on the status of race in America in the face of domestic changes due to war and military efforts. Prior to the United States' entrance into the war, the

⁴⁴ Cecelia Elizabeth O'Leary, "Clasping Hands Over the Bloody Divide: Memory, Amnesia, and Racism" *American Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2002):159-165, 164.

⁴⁵ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 132.

⁴⁶ Rickie Solinger, *Wake up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 20.

⁴⁷ Robin Anderson, *A Century of Media, A Century of War* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 7.

Great Migration increased the North's black population.⁴⁸ As a result of America's military efforts, economic opportunities on the home front also encouraged black men and women to move north. Black migration led to increased competition between whites and blacks for space and jobs, increasing tensions between the races, especially after the end of the war.⁴⁹ Although black men and women hoped for a better life, the increased presence of blacks and resulting job competition led to heightened racial tensions. Despite national efforts to ensure military victory in the war, black men and women were seen and treated as second class citizens by whites.

Despite hopes for peace and prosperity in the wake of the war, many black soldiers did not return home to fanfare, like their white counterparts. Just as in the Spanish-American War, military service did not change the status of black soldiers. During the war, black soldiers were segregated and only allowed to do menial labor. White soldiers painted black soldiers as unpatriotic and lazy, a characteristic assigned to blacks during slavery.⁵⁰ Similarly, white men did not acknowledge white women's contributions to the war effort- working men's jobs as they fought overseas. As soon as the war was over, white women were asked to give up their jobs to return to their proper, domestic sphere.⁵¹ By contrast, black women were prohibited from offering their service. Not until the Spanish flu increased deaths were black women allowed to be nurses in the Red Cross.⁵² White women's contributions were ignored on the basis of sex, but black women were excluded from domestic efforts on the basis of race and sex. Black soldiers did not receive proper treatment after the war and black and white women's

⁴⁸ Christopher Robert Reed, *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis, 1920-1929* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

⁵⁰ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2011), 30-31.

⁵¹ Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 63.

⁵² Nina Mjagkji, *Loyalty in the Time of Trial: The African-American Experience during World War I* (Lanham: Roman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2011), 138.

contributions to the military effort were marginalized.

The war could have been a turning point for race relations; whites could have acknowledged black military service, which would have showed that black men were capable of being proper citizens. Instead, black soldiers returned to segregation. A letter written by Lt. Leroy J. Knox, published in the *Chicago Defender*, describes an example of the segregation of wounded black soldiers. Although given tickets to see a play, Lieutenant Knox wrote, “As true citizens and soldiers who were on the ‘firing line’ we as a body, protest the transportation given us. The white soldiers were driven to the theater in touring cards and limousines...while we rode down in an ambulance. Haven’t we done as much and do we not deserve the same as whites?”⁵³ Although Lt. Knox and his men served in the United States military, suffering the same losses as white soldiers, they did not receive the same recognition. World War I and its aftermath demonstrate that for whites, race was fixed in opposition. Despite black military efforts, whites refused to acknowledge their contributions, demonstrating that whites were unwilling reform their ideas of blacks, leaving blackness constrained to an inferior position in the racial hierarchy.

By using the lenses of race and gender theory, it is possible to understand conceptions of blackness or whiteness, manliness or womanhood in a historical moment. Although what it has meant to be black or white, man or woman throughout American history has changed, the foundations of those meanings date back to the slave society. The antebellum slave society gave inferior meanings to blackness while whiteness represented freedom, citizenship and superiority. After the Civil War, these ideas of race persisted as the belief that all white men and women had at least theoretical access to privileges granted to whites. In attempts to gain access to these privileges, many black families attempted to mirror white middle-class ideals, in efforts to

⁵³ Lt. Leroy J. Knox, “Lest We Forget,” *Chicago Defender*, November 6, 1920.

convey respectability and civility. The ideas about race and gender (and their plasticity) played out in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War and in colonial dealings. World War I demonstrated white stubbornness in acknowledging black humanity and sacrifice. Instead, racial tensions increased. New technologies coupled with racial science and pre-existing constructions of blackness and whiteness allowed for the dissemination of images, including advertisements that bore racialized messages. By knowing how race and gender have functioned historically, one can understand the implications of being black or white, man or woman in a historical moment. An understanding of the plasticity of race, gender and their intersections is crucial to finding deeper meanings in advertisements.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter one discusses the social and political changes occurring nationwide, including the heightening of deep-seating gendered and racial tensions. This chapter examines Chicago as a case study; Chicago served as a point-of-entry for many African-Americans migrating north, was a hotbed for women's political activity and housed a significant number of Klansmen. Chicago also acted as a center for sociology, political science and social workers, who meticulously documented the effects of industrialization, migration and other social changes.⁵⁴ Chapter one examines a number of primary sources from white and black newspapers as well as Klan publications to better grasp national and local feelings regarding social, economic, and political changes. The interactions between marginalized and majority groups led to increased friction and multiple creations of what it meant to be an American.

⁵⁴ Lizabeth Cohen, "Encountering Mass Culture at the Grassroots: The Experience of Chicago Workers in the 1920s," *American Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1989): 6-33, 7.

Chapter two deconstructs white womanhood. This chapter finds that white women's situations were more complicated than ideal white womanhood suggested. This chapter also examines advertisements from *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Chicago Tribune* to analyze constructions of white and black womanhood, created by whites, for white audiences. In order to find deeper meaning from advertisements, I apply Gillian Rose's critical visual methodology to understand an image, its cultural significance, the power relations it represents and the mental association the image is intended to bring about.⁵⁵ Carolyn Kitch's 2001 monograph, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, uses content assessment to "read, shift, weigh, compare and analyze" images to tell a story. Kitch highlights white publications' tendency to use carefully created feminine images to convey and perpetuate a specific set of roles and meanings associated with white womanhood.⁵⁶ Deeper meanings in advertisements reveal the tensions between the ideal, "true womanhood" and the realities of many women's lives.

Chapter three examines black womanhood. This chapter reveals tensions within the black community, as well as friction with whites. Like Erin Chapman's 2012 publication, *Prove It On Me*, which examines blues music advertisements, chapter three uses Gillian Rose's critical visual methodology to tease deeper, complicated meanings out of advertisements from black publications such as *The Chicago Defender* and *Half-Century Magazine*. Knowledge of the tensions within the black community allows for more complex readings of the advertisements, revealing multiple messages to differing, often disagreeing audiences.

⁵⁵ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 3.

⁵⁶ Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 3, 6, 13.

CHAPTER 1: “KEEP THE MELTING POT WELL-STIRRED:” TENSIONS IN 1920s AMERICA

The 1920s was a decade of social changes. As a result of World War I, newly formed nations, Bolshevism and labor unrest created global uncertainty and unrest.⁵⁷ Americans had to cope with national changes at the end of World War I; the growth the consumerism and advertising, the Great Migration and changing racial demographics and evolving roles for middle-class white women. Nationwide, new social, economic and political changes threatened the established gender and racial hierarchy. The growth of black populations in the North led to increased racial tensions and sometimes violence. Suffrage, feminism and the expanding roles of white women challenged traditional ideas of women’s roles. The Second Ku Klux Klan arose to combat the perceived problems created by black migrants and immigrants and to “protect” white women. Examining the new and expanding roles of black Americans and women, as well as reactionary responses via the Ku Klux Klan reveals common themes echoed throughout the decade. Tensions, already present in American society, increased as marginalized groups expanded their roles and presence in the public sphere. These tensions overlapped and were sometimes contradictory, for example, white and black women did not necessarily unite in the fight for suffrage. Throughout the decade, African-Americans, white women and reactionary groups promoted their own, competing visions of American citizenry. If these groups did unite, they did so in segregated organizations. Simultaneously, advertising linked the nation, communicating similar values, beliefs and styles from coast to coast and largely ignored changing roles. This chapter examines changes with regards to black Americans, white women, the KKK and advertising nationally, but examines Chicago as a case study.

⁵⁷ McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 16.

The Expansion of Black Communities and Heightened Racial Tensions

Black men and women hoped that their participation in the war effort would lead to more social and political equality. Black military personnel expected their service demonstrated their capacity for citizenship. Black-created poems, films, music, newspapers, clubs, books and dolls led many to believe that racial equality was on the horizon.⁵⁸ Despite black hopes, there was little change in black men and women's social and political status. Instead, whites responded to black hopes with increased racial tensions, violence and threats of violence. Whites in the north and south perceived the large movement of blacks as threatening and tensions that led to riots persisted long after the violence stopped. Friction between blacks and whites persisted throughout the decade and tensions demonstrate the ways in which the white and black communities struggled to adjust to societal, economic and political changes.

The Great Migration was fueled by the promise of new opportunities throughout the North. The *Chicago Defender*, a Chicago-based paper with a circulation of one-hundred thousand, encouraged black and women to move north, claiming migration would lead them to the "Promised Land." Between the years of 1910 and 1920, the black population in Chicago increased by one hundred and fourteen percent.⁵⁹ For some, Chicago was the point-of-entry into the North and they continued to other cities, but a significant portion of migrants made Chicago their permanent home. The catalysts for migration are divided into two categories: social and

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 12, 15.

⁵⁹ Reed, *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis*, 9. These figures vary; according to the *Negro in Chicago* and *Red Summer*, the population of black men and women increased 148 percent. Despite the discrepancy in these figures, it can be reasonably assumed that the black population increased by at least 100 percent.

economic, although many migrants expressed concerns of both.⁶⁰ Black men and women left their homes in the South and headed north, guided by the *Chicago Defender*, towards to promise of greater equality and safety, increasing the number of black individuals in Chicago.

Men and women also moved north because of expanded economic opportunities. In the south, the boll weevil destroyed cotton crops, leaving many black laborers without a source of income.⁶¹ Meanwhile, the North desperately needed laborers to produce materials for the war effort. The common wartime need for labor was compounded by the lack of European immigrants. Many new immigrants returned to their home countries at the outbreak of the war and quotas prohibited new immigrants. Not only could black men and women find work in the North, they could earn four to six times as much money per hour.⁶² In a survey conducted by the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, African-Americans felt the north offered more opportunities; “better wages, away from the South, schools for the children... freedom in voting and improved conditions.” Northern states also offered some refuge from Southern court injustice and mob violence, including lynching.⁶³ Economic opportunities created by World War I including improved work conditions, and more social equality convinced many black families to take their chances in the industrial urban North. Yet, although there were more and better opportunities in the North; it was not necessarily the “promised land” the *Chicago Defender* promoted.

The Great Migration challenged the traditional racial order for blacks and whites. For African-Americans, migrating north meant abandoning dreams of land ownership and financial

⁶⁰ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *A Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922), 79, 87.

⁶¹ McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 2.

⁶² Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *A Negro in Chicago*, 80, 83-84.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 84-85.

independence that were crucial to Southern black culture.⁶⁴ Migration also meant rejecting the abuses of the sharecropping system.⁶⁵ For Southern black migrants, moving north meant more than relocating; it meant giving up an agricultural lifestyle, including dreams and exploitation, for an urban lifestyle, which likely included renting. Migration threatened the Southern labor supply and left white Southerners in denial. Many Southern whites assumed migrants would return to the South, claiming black men and women simply “loved to travel” and were only truly happy doing agricultural work. Claiming the South was the “natural home” for blacks, Southern whites attempted to expel northern labor agents and prevent migrants from boarding trains.⁶⁶ After the war, jobs given to black men, such as in stockyards and packinghouses, were given to returning white soldiers. Southern employers encouraged migrants to return to the South, promising to curb anti-black violence. Although Northern whites, including those in Chicago, were by and large committed to white supremacy, they did not control black bodies in the same fashion. The North was still racist, but less violent.⁶⁷ The massive migration of black men and women from the South to the North not only challenged traditional ideas of the “proper place” for blacks, it also created tensions in the North stemming from racism and increased competition for jobs and housing.

Migration led to increased competition between whites and blacks for space and jobs especially after the end of the war. Despite continuing migration, the war effort halted

⁶⁴ James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 6.

⁶⁵ Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 11.

⁶⁶ Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 43-47, 59.

⁶⁷ Grossman, 166-167; McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 19, 93; Paul Street, “The Logic and Limits of ‘Plant Loyalty:’ Black Workers, White Labor and Corporate Racial Paternalism in Chicago’s Stockyards, 1916-1940” *The Journal of Social History* 29 (1996): 659-682, 661.

construction, leaving new migrants to crowd into existing homes and apartments.⁶⁸ Because Chicago housing was segregated on a *de facto* basis, a lack of “black housing” and the influx of migrants drove up rents as much as fifty percent and led to overcrowding. Whites took non-violent measures to keep blacks out of certain neighborhoods, like Kenwood and Hyde Park, forming associations to “ensure the value of the neighborhoods” and keep out the “incoming horde,” painting newcomers as unwanted, unwelcome and disruptive to the existing order.⁶⁹ Some resorted to violence in their efforts to restrict black movement into “white” neighborhoods. Between 1917 and 1921 in Chicago, fifty-eight bombs killed two people and caused over \$100,000 in damage.⁷⁰ Because bombings were publicized, and few were killed, it appears bombing was meant to scare blacks away, rather than to kill. Labor issues also contributed to tensions because black laborers were often used as strikebreakers. Many unions prohibited blacks from joining and as a result, black laborers showed more loyalty towards employers by providing ‘scab’ labor during strikes. Nevertheless, it seems likely that black laborers may have continued to work out of economic necessity, not out of spite for white workers.⁷¹ Because black laborers provided ‘scab’ labor, white laborers probably associated all blacks with ‘scabs,’ heightening friction between black and whites as they competed for jobs and economic stability. With regards to housing and labor, blacks were perceived as encroaching on white space and labor, posing a threat to white homes and finances. Therefore, any gains blacks made with regards to labor or housing were seen as detracting from white opportunities.

⁶⁸ Reed, *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis*, 5.

⁶⁹ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *A Negro in Chicago*, 93, 117, 129-130; “United Action Keeps Negroes Out of 57 Homes,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1920.

⁷⁰ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *A Negro in Chicago*, 122.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 404, 431

In addition to tensions that resulted from housing and job competition, black men and women were also accused of being part of the Bolshevik movement and therefore, accused of being anti-American. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* insisted blacks spread Communism through churches “under the guise of Christianity.”⁷² Whites saw quests for racial equality as radical and equated black activism with Communism. The white press emphasized black Communism in France, and suggested black Americans would soon follow suit.⁷³ The black press promoted the notion that black men and women defended American institutions and believed in American democracy. A *Chicago Defender* article called Bolshevism a “menace to civilized society.” The article continued; “the best American citizens are of the Race,” because they “offer their lives in its [America’s] defense.”⁷⁴ Overall, black leaders identified with American ideals rather than promoting Bolshevik or Communist rhetoric and actively denied claims of Bolshevism. This tension shows that both races created competing visions of “true Americans.” In their association of blacks with Communism, whites implied that blacks were un-American. Many black men and women largely rejected this wholesale claim, instead painting themselves as true American citizens and patriots.

Tensions between blacks and whites regarding the presence of more black men and women, competition for jobs and housing, unfair treatment for black soldiers returning home and fears of Bolshevism led to increased friction, which sometimes resulted in violence. As a response to violence not just in Chicago, but across the nation, black men and women developed various responses- notably black consciousness- but also conflicting ideas of how to exist in a wholly racist society. Racial consciousness and black solidarity affected black men and women

⁷² Donald Ewing, “Soviets Spread ‘Red’ Doctrines among Negroes,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 2, 1924.

⁷³ McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 56, 59.

⁷⁴ Phil H. Brown, “Are We Bolsheviks,” *Chicago Defender*, January 8, 1921.

regardless of class or gender. Black consciousness unified classes, and promoted spatial hegemony, a “city within a city” in order to examine black identity and hopes. This “city within a city” allowed space for businesses that catered to the black community, leading to the growth of the black middle class.⁷⁵ Prevalent voices promoted integration with white society and adherence with white societal norms, while more radical voices celebrated black culture on its own merits. Although African-Americans did not agree on one specific way to confront white racism, they continued to engage in American politics and capitalism, creating their own American identities as politicians, businesspeople and consumers.

The increased African-American population that resulted from the Great Migration allowed businesses, churches, civic groups and beauty schools to flourish. Chicago’s Anthony Overton, founder of the Hygienic Building and Company and publisher of the *Chicago Bee* newspaper, and Jesse Binga, founder of the Binga Bank demonstrated the potential for black businesspeople to found, run and succeed in business. On its opening day, Binga Bank received \$200,000 in deposits.⁷⁶ These men showed business and professional competence, highlighted the potential for economic success independent of white bosses. Beauty colleges also offered self-improvement through economic means. Beauty classes allowed women to work out of their homes to aid a family income or sustain themselves.⁷⁷ Beauty colleges and hairdressing gave black women economic benefits and allowed black women to confront white notions of beauty and create new beauty standards.⁷⁸ Through these roles, women earned money and could shape perceptions of beauty outside of white standards. Black Americans inserted themselves into the

⁷⁵ Reed, *The Rise of Chicago’s Black Metropolis*, 2-4, 14. More attention will be paid to these competing voices in chapter 3.

⁷⁶ “First Day’s Deposits Binga Bank, \$200,000,” *Chicago Defender*, January 8, 1921.

⁷⁷ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *A Negro in Chicago*, 168.

⁷⁸ Susannah Walker, *Style and Status: Selling Beauty to African American Women, 1920-1975* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 3.

landscape of American business though successful capitalist enterprises independent of whites. In this way, black Americans proclaimed themselves consumer, capitalist citizens through business.

Black individuals embraced the press and print media to write themselves into America. In a *Chicago Defender* article about public schooling, one wrote “by all means let us keep the melting pot well stirred so when the mass is poured...they will be one unit...termed Americanism.”⁷⁹ This article echoes the notions discussed throughout the chapter; black men and women had demonstrated loyalty to the nation, and saw themselves as a crucial part. A 1926 article, “Some Suggestions for Congress,” stated “there are not two Americas, like some law makers seem to think...there is only one America for all Americans.”⁸⁰ Black Americans wanted to be seen as part of the national fabric, as full citizens with the same rights and privileges as whites. Articles such as “Some Suggestions for Congress” also emphasize a desire for unity, encouraging all African-Americans to embrace integration. An article entitled “Holding our Ground,” summarized the pains many migrant families had endured through travel and as laborers and concluded that “we must hold the ground we have gained and it can be done if each individual does his level best and gives an honest day’s work for an honest pay.”⁸¹ These texts demonstrate black voices demonstrating their loyalty and participation in American institutions, such as military service, capitalism and a strong work ethic. Through the black press, individuals wrote black voices, thoughts and actions into American history, trying to align their voices with America as a whole.

⁷⁹ “Americanism,” *Chicago Defender*, January 17, 1920.

⁸⁰ “Some Suggestions for Congress,” editorial, *Chicago Defender*, December 18, 1926.

⁸¹ “Holding our Ground,” *Chicago Defender*, November 6, 1920.

African-Americans used the press and elections to voice their political opinions. In a series of political cartoons, blacks pointed out the hypocrisy of lynching, mob violence and social inequality. In “Some Suggestions for Congress,” the author calls for unified education for black children as well as a strong anti-lynch law.⁸² Another article called “American Inconsistencies” could not reconcile America’s foreign policy with a domestic policy that allowed “men, women and children to be lynched in the nation’s capital.”⁸³ Although portrayals of American hypocrisy were not flattering, black individuals saw themselves as American citizens who could utilize the political process to push for more equality. Voters used their voices to elect candidates that promised to end lynching and injustice. After Warren Harding’s election in 1920, the *Defender* proclaimed “men and women of the race...are hopeful that real principles of democracy will reign and unjust legislation will be removed.”⁸⁴ In Chicago, black men and women gained political power through Mayor “Big” Bill Thompson’s administration, as he appointed many blacks to low-level administration jobs. Although part of the Republican political machine, Thompson maintained black political support because he rewarded his black supporters with jobs. Black Congressman Oscar DePriest was elected to office, despite his protection of “vice and gambling.”⁸⁵ In the face of continuing prejudice, black men and women continued to write, proclaim and vote themselves into American politics and history.

Many black Americans hoped the 1920s would be decade for racial equality, but they were met with racism and often violence. Tensions created in part by demilitarization exacerbated racial tensions across the nation, culminating in riots. Between April and November

⁸² “Some Suggestions for Congress,” *Chicago Defender*, December 18, 1926.

⁸³ “American Inconsistencies,” *Chicago Defender*, April 16, 1927.

⁸⁴ “Republicans Sweep the Country,” *Chicago Defender*, November 6, 1920.

⁸⁵ Reed, *The Rise of Chicago’s Black Metropolis*, 150; “DePriest Wins Congress Seat,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 8, 1928.

of 1919, twenty-five race riots occurred across America, in cities such as Washington D.C, Chicago and Charleston. Chicago's nine day riot began at the city's segregated beach, when a black teenager swam into the white beach. White boys threw rocks at the teenager until he was knocked unconscious and drowned. Police officers refused to arrest those responsible. As the body was handled, blacks and whites hurled rocks at each other. Police held to their refusal to make arrests. Rumors regarding the death reached throughout the city, and violence spread between whites and blacks across the city.⁸⁶ The riot resulted in the deaths of fifteen whites and twenty-three blacks, five hundred and thirty seven injuries- sixty-two percent of injuries were sustained by African-Americans at the hands of whites- and one thousand homeless due to or arson or vandalism.⁸⁷ Race riot scholar Cameron McWhirter points out that 1919, the height of racial violence, coincided with the peak of Jim Crow segregation in the South, the Great Migration to the North, urbanization and a post-war economic downturn.⁸⁸ Chicago's 1919 riot was one of the longest and most damaging. The riot demonstrated not only friction between blacks and whites, but also revealed tensions within the black community. Black leaders originally encouraged blacks to defend themselves, but later urged rioters to avoid confrontations and forgo violence. Black leaders attempted to distance themselves from "bad," violent rioters, while others saw violence as necessary to defend black masculinity.⁸⁹ Friction existed within the black community between those who sought integration and those who challenged the status quo. Racial tensions that contributed to the riot did not dissipate when the violence ended and persisted throughout the decade.

⁸⁶ Carl Sandburg, *The Chicago Race Riots, July, 1919* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1922), 1; Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *A Negro in Chicago*, 5-6.

⁸⁷ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, xv, 26.

⁸⁸ McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 13-14, 16-17.

⁸⁹ Jonathan S. Coit, "'Our Changed Attitude': Armed Defense and the New Negro in the 1919 Chicago Race Riot," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 11 (2012): 225-256, 231-232, 238, 254.

Because of the binary nature of American race relations, whites saw black gains as detrimental to whites, which only inflamed anger. Despite white anger, blacks continued to assert their American-ness via business, the press and politics. Black Americans demonstrated their skill in navigating American staples- business, the press and politics- which showed that they fundamentally saw themselves as citizens who served the needs and wants of their own communities. In doing so, African- Americans stretched boundaries, engaged new roles and demonstrated their proficiency in avenues previously unthought-of by whites. Although Chicago was not necessarily the “promised land,” black individuals did have more freedom than their Southern counterparts. This space gave blacks space to have a voice and agency within their community and American culture as a whole. These new black freedoms did not go unnoticed by whites, and although race riots ceased, tensions between the races did not dissipate.

Women’s New Roles

The fight for suffrage created a perceived challenge to the “true” genteel, American woman. The ‘true’ American woman was proclaimed to be pious, pure, and submissive and offered her husband and sons reprieve from the world; she did not participate in the allegedly dirty world of politics.⁹⁰ Throughout the 1920s, women, especially white women, participated in society in new ways including politics, employment and education. At the same time, Victorian morals and standards began to erode, allowing white women more freedom with regards to clothing and sexuality. Despite persisting sexism from men and women; women achieved in various arenas. Black women engaged the changing social landscape differently than white

⁹⁰ Dorothy M. Brown, *Setting a Course: American Women in the 1920s* (Boston: Twayne Publishing, 1987), 2, 29.

women did because they faced the burdens of racism and sexism. Women in 1920s America wrote themselves into American history, proclaiming their sex did not and should not prohibit them from participating in society, politics, education and economics.

Suffragists complicated the notions of womanhood by exploiting and capitalizing on the notion of the true woman.⁹¹ Women's piety and purity, some claimed, would allow them to clean up American politics. More radical women argued that there was little difference between men and women and pointed out women's inferior legal standing.⁹² According to radical suffragists, women should be given equal rights because both sexes were mentally capable. As a political agenda, generally, women focused on the "six Ps," Prohibition, public and physical education, protecting infant health, protecting working women and peace.⁹³ Despite presenting a vision of equality for women, the suffrage movement was highly racialized. Although black and white women fought for suffrage, they did so in segregated organizations. White women's arguments for suffrage rested on notions of white women's racial superiority, which implied that black women were less evolved than white women and that black men were rapists.⁹⁴ These beliefs led white women to exclude black women from their efforts. Although black and white women fought for the right to vote, the pervasiveness of racism prevented women from uniting across racial lines. Once women gained suffrage in 1920, their lack of unity did not prevent women from electing women to political office. In 1924, four Republican women were elected into the Illinois house, demonstrating that women could successfully navigate the campaign

⁹¹ According to Nancy Cott, the terms feminism and suffragist are often confused. Because suffragist fell out of favor after women earned the right to vote, I refer to activists pre-1920 as suffragists and post-1920 as feminists.

⁹² Brown, 33.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁹⁴ Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 5, 9; Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 3.

process.⁹⁵ Despite assumptions to the contrary, women voted by party affiliation rather than sex. By 1928, it had been accepted that “women were as intensely interested in elections as the men” and that, at least in Northern states, women voters carried enough influence to swing elections.⁹⁶ After receiving the right to vote, women were able to affect the outcomes of elections and successfully gain political power through the election process. By focusing on political issues that aligned with alleged womanly qualities, former suffragists participated in politics, stretching their influence to the public sphere, but without directly challenging or deconstructing women’s perceived domesticity.

Despite women’s attempts to maintain their perceived roles while expanding their influence, some expressed concerns about women’s participation in politics. Some white male anti-suffragists voiced concerns of white women leaving their homes and becoming masculinized. This opposition voice also feared that as a result of women leaving the home, men would become domestic and feminized, the “inversion of civilized gender roles.”⁹⁷ A political cartoon from the *Chicago Tribune* highlights this fear. When a white woman expresses her happiness with her new voting rights, her husband responds “you were on a pedestal far above us. Now that we are on the same level, now that you are a full-fledged voter, what are you going to do about it? You’ll have to devote some earnest thought to public matters, you know.”⁹⁸ The husband suggests his wife has somehow fallen off her white, womanly pedestal. This comic portrays a common sentiment amongst anti-suffragists; that by participating in politics, white women would lose what made them unique and adopt a burden they were not meant to carry. The comic also implies that women lacked knowledge regarding political issues.

⁹⁵ “G.O.P. Avalanche Sweeps 4 Women into House,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1924.

⁹⁶ “Women’s Votes May Turn Tide at City’s Polls,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1928.

⁹⁷ Newman, *White Women’s Rights*, 70.

⁹⁸ “They Discuss Suffrage,” comic, *Chicago Tribune*, August 20, 1920.

Some elite white women opposed suffrage because it would grant political equality to non-white, non-elite women as well. If these women were to gain a voice, elite women felt they would lose their role as “protectors” of “lesser races” of women. For elite white women, suffrage would result in giving up their white privilege, including the privilege of white male protection.⁹⁹ Some anti-suffragist men feared that newly enfranchised white women would abandon their roles at home and others feared women were not capable of the burden of voting. Despite fears surrounding their political capability, women demonstrated their ability to vote, thereby showing their citizenship. This debate highlights the tensions between men and women as well as between women regarding voting rights and women’s roles.

With women’s enfranchisement, some feared white women would leave their perceived place in the home. In actuality, many women, including black and white working-class women, worked outside the home to support their families before the suffrage amendment. World War I opened the doors for (usually) white women to work with machinery and enter into higher paying jobs, although these opportunities were temporary.¹⁰⁰ After the end of the war, women lost their jobs to returning soldiers. A separation between men’s and women’s work emerged. Service jobs employed young white women because they were seen as “less ambitious, careful, docile and tolerant of routine.”¹⁰¹ For these reasons, clerical jobs, previously considered masculine work, opened to educated, single, young women. Although the war gave more women entry into the job market, these jobs were not offered to black and white women equally. Educated black women worked in community organizations. Most black women performed the lowest paying, dirtiest jobs with the most unstable hours, such as working in meat packing

⁹⁹ Newman, *White Women’s Rights*, 70, 84.

¹⁰⁰ Brown, *Setting a Course*, 77.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

plants, textile mills and the tobacco industry.¹⁰² Working-class black women were restricted to jobs white women refused.¹⁰³ Black women workers faced additional burdens; because of wage discrepancies between whites and blacks, two incomes were needed to support most households.¹⁰⁴ Immigrant women faced a linguistic barrier as well as xenophobia, as they too worked long hours for low pay. Oftentimes, newly immigrated families relied on their children's labor to support the household.¹⁰⁵ In contrast, young, white feminists expected to "have it all," balancing a career and a family. One newspaper article, "Every Girl is the Gainer by Having Business Experience," argues that through work, young women gained skills that they could use for future careers as well as maintaining a healthy marriage and child-rearing.¹⁰⁶ Employment opportunities created by the war did not necessarily remain open, nor were they equal. For white women, work experience raised their expectations about work, money and quality of life.

Critics accused women workers of being ineffective, distracting and frivolous. One supervisor removed all mirrors in the building, citing "the last half hour of the day, when they should be working, the nose powdering starts... We had to do something!"¹⁰⁷ Some painted women workers as flighty, unreliable, temporary workers and threatening to men's productivity and masculinity.¹⁰⁸ Others called women workers frivolous, only working for "pin money" to buy superfluous goods rather than to support a household. This notion was contested amongst

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 94-95.

¹⁰³Lynn Dumenil, *Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang: 1995), 117-118.

¹⁰⁴Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 9.

¹⁰⁵Brown, *Setting a Course*, 94.

¹⁰⁶Brown, 33; Doris Blake, "Every Girl is the Gainer by Having Business Experience," *Chicago Tribune*, November 2, 1924.

¹⁰⁷"Gleaming Noses Sniff in Scorn at U.S. Trick," *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1921.

¹⁰⁸Brown, *Setting a Course*, 97; Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 122.

men and women who realized the necessity for a two-income household.¹⁰⁹ Opponents of women working outside the home suggested women manage their family's finances better, forgo maids and cooks, or babysit and chauffeur neighborhood children as a way to supplement the family income without leaving the domestic sphere. Some single women criticized married women for taking jobs from more needy women.¹¹⁰ Although some white and black women needed to work support their households, critics felt this was demasculinizing and frivolous. Friction existed between those who needed or wanted to work outside the home and those who preferred women remain in the domestic sphere. Friction did not prevent women from working; however, women risked criticism for working outside of the home.

Higher education for middle-class white women became more standard during the 1920s. Privileged women attended colleges such as the Seven Sisters women's colleges. As women gained more advanced education, some worried newly educated women would abandon their posts at home. In 1925, Seven Sister's college Bryn Mawr reported that 734 of 906 married graduates dedicated themselves to their marriages and childrearing, showing that education supplemented a woman's marriage, rather than replace it, as some thought.¹¹¹ Correspondence schools offered women opportunities to learn new skills that could provide them with more money and social advancement.¹¹² Black men and women attended co-ed colleges as a way to achieve middle class respectability.¹¹³ Literature directed at all women took on an educational veneer. Women, even if they had completed advanced education, were still theoretically

¹⁰⁹ Brown, 85; Addie Lewsk, "It's the Single Girls and Less Men that Have 'The Right Idea,'" letter to the editor, *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1921.

¹¹⁰ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 124; Gladys Huntington-Bevans, "Here Are Ways for Home keepers to Earn Extra Money," *Chicago Tribune*, November 2, 1928; A Little Martha, "The Single Girl's Quest for a Job," letter to the editor, *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1921; Hustler, "Suggestions for a Martyred Wife," letter to the editor, *Chicago Tribune*, November, 8 1921.

¹¹¹ Brown, *Setting a Course*, 134, 137.

¹¹² Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 75.

¹¹³ Brown, *Setting a Course*, 147.

responsible for the home and needed to avoid boring their husbands, raising their children poorly and mismanaging money. Instructional articles and magazines educated primarily middle class “respectable” white women on scientific housekeeping and domestic science, which claimed to teach women how to run an effective household.¹¹⁴ As women received more higher education, critics worried these women would shirk their duties at home; as a result, new literature sought to educate women on how to “do it all,” maintain a home, raise children and keep a husband; by “doing it all,” women attempted to silence those who felt women were shirking their primary duties at home.

Women gaining more education challenged traditional Victorian values and morals. Some, such as sociologists at University of Chicago and psychologists such as Havelock Ellis, defended women’s rights and sought to free men and women from the ‘confines’ of Victorian ideology.¹¹⁵ As Victorian traditions loosened, ‘confined’ Victorian fashion did also. Some doctors promoted abandoning corsets in favor of natural body forms and development. “Women,” a doctor noted, “are paying more attention to their work and their sports than their hearts and appearance.”¹¹⁶ However, it was not that women ignored their appearances; they just enjoyed new fashions. An interview by the *Chicago Tribune’s* Inquiring Reporter found that four out of five women preferred new, shorter skirt styles because women felt they were “more chic and comfortable.”¹¹⁷ The eroding of Victorian morals included changing hobbies and leisure as well as fashions. Some young white women adopted new hobbies, such as attending black and tan clubs- where black and white men and women could dance freely together- and

¹¹⁴ Genevieve Forbes, “Don’t Raise Your Boys, Let Them Grow like Topsy,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 2, 1921; Gladys Huntington-Bevans, “Should A Mother Also be a Human Being?” *Chicago Tribune*, August 4, 1927; “Women to Take the Guesswork out of Buying,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 3, 1921.

¹¹⁵ Brown, *Setting a Course*, 37.

¹¹⁶ Martha, “Throw Corsets Away to Keep Doctors Away,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 1, 1921.

¹¹⁷ “Inquiring Reporter,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1924.

listening to jazz. White critics of black and tan clubs feared the combination of “bad blacks and bad whites,” however the *Chicago Defender* felt the condemnations of black and tan clubs were based in prejudice and fears of race mixing.¹¹⁸ Black and tan clubs allowed blacks and whites to dance, drink and smoke together freely and was perceived as a threat to young white women’s respectability, morals and racial superiority. Jazz too came under attack, largely by elite white women. Mrs. Marx Oberndorfer of the Federation of Women’s Clubs criticized jazz as being “immoral, vile, un-American and disorganizing, leading to insanity.”¹¹⁹ It is no coincidence that jazz, created by black musicians, was seen as un-American and harmful to young, white women. Although not stated directly, it can be implied that elite white women feared black and tan clubs and jazz made would render young white women undesirable for marriage, or lead to racial mixing. Elite white women feared ‘inferior’ music would harm younger white women, showing generational tensions between elite and middle class white women.

As Victorian morals and ideologies shifted, so too did notions of marriage, sexuality and the family. Already, sexuality for unmarried women changed, as demonstrated by the acceptance of ‘petting.’ Sex, romance and sexual health became a component of a healthy marriage, as women were seen as sexual beings. The privilege of sexuality was largely restricted to the white middle class. Birth control became available to those elite and middle class white women who were educated, from ‘good’ families and marrying their “true love.”¹²⁰ Birth control had a dual purpose; it could allow married couples to plan their families, but it was also promoted as an instrument of eugenics, theoretically encouraging middle-class white families to

¹¹⁸ “Dance Halls and Cabarets,” *Chicago Defender*, November 29, 1924; “Black and Tan,” *Chicago Tribune* August 25, 1920.

¹¹⁹ “Jazz Music is Immoral, Club Woman Asserts,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 5, 1922; “NU Co-Eds Hear Hymn of Hate on Jazz and Toddle,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 4, 1921.

¹²⁰ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 131.

breed fitter children.¹²¹ Morals and norms were changing, but reluctantly, and only for those who enjoyed racial and class privileges.

For middle class, native born whites, divorce was on the rise. In the face of increasing anxieties about the nature of work, money, men's and women's roles, childrearing, many white couples simply opted to "give up."¹²² They could not rectify their expectations and the realities of married life. Because the divorce rate among black and Jewish and Catholic immigrant families did not increase, divorce was seen as a threat to the (white, native-born, Protestant) American way of life.¹²³ Generally, blame for a failed marriage was placed on the woman's shoulders. Benjamin P. Chase, economist and social writer, pointed to women's newfound independence as the cause of higher divorce rates. Dr. Chase concluded women's social and financial independence meant they married later in life and their widespread irresponsibility and triviality (a sign of "the age") led to more divorces, however the institution of marriage was not threatened.¹²⁴ Dr. Chase held contradictory beliefs- that women were more selective, but also more irresponsible- and blamed women for high divorce rates. Judge William Nelson Gemmill published a book that held women's fashion for divorce rates. In his view, extravagant demands for new clothes caused men great financial strife and laid the foundation for unhappy marriages and divorce.¹²⁵ These writings reinforce the idea that men's fundamental role is as a provider and conflicted with women's new roles in society cause them to abandon the home. Although sexual morals loosened, white women were still expected to marry and raise children. If white women failed to do so, they were not only challenging the social order, but threatened the future

¹²¹ Brown, *Setting a Course*, 113.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 124.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹²⁴ Doris Blake, "Independent Woman Thought Cause of High Divorce Rate," *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 1925.

¹²⁵ "Judge Reveals Clothes Often Cause Divorces," *Chicago Tribune*, March 21, 1926 .

of the white race.

Throughout the 1920s, women gained more power and influence in society, shaping the nation in unprecedented ways.. Although many opportunities were restricted to elite and middle class white women, overall, women exercised more political power, earned more money, received more education and were more visible in society. This created tensions between white men and women, but also between white women and black women, as the latter were often excluded by white women's rhetoric that saw black women as less civilized. Black women faced additional pressures in and out of the home as they were forced to work outside the home in heavier, lower paying industries. White women's new roles also caused generational tensions as younger white women sought to have a career and a family and had more social and sexual freedom, while older women saw respectable ways of life being challenged. Although not all men were appalled with women's new roles, critics of women's newfound roles blamed women for societal ills and high divorce rates which threatened the fabric of white, American culture.

The Second Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) resurrected as a response to growing black influence and political power, changes in white women's roles and immigration. Native-born, white Protestant men feared and/or perceived a loss of power as blacks gained political positions and influence. Forced to deal with the "New Woman," the Klan acted to protect white women. The rise of the Klan also represents a fracturing of hegemonic whiteness; the Klan vision denied whiteness to Catholics, Jews and certain immigrant groups. In order to maintain their role at the top of the

hierarchy, native-born, white Protestant men used collective violence or the threat of violence to try to maintain their power.

The Second Ku Klux Klan was founded in 1915 by William Joseph Simmons and floundered until he hired Mary Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Clarke, former World War I propagandists, to publicize the group. Trained by the wartime Creel Committee, Tyler and Simmons knew how to sell. They were able to capitalize on post-war fears, painting the Klan as defenders of traditional morals, patriotism, religion and Americanism while cloaking the organization in mystery and secrecy.¹²⁶ Guided by Tyler and Clarke, the organization flourished in the North as well as the South. The Klan's new enemies varied from community to community, but included Catholics, Jews, all non-white people, immigrants and Bolsheviks, as well as local scapegoats, such as unions.¹²⁷ The Klan also promoted community support through church sponsored events and aid to needy families in order to create support locally.¹²⁸ Klan members joined because they felt they were being denied their racial, gendered, religious and native-born privileges.¹²⁹ Tyler and Clarke were able to re-brand the Klan as defenders of traditional American values, values being eroded by black and white women's political power and new, expanded roles in American society. Klan members felt threatened by the increase of immigrants as well, especially those with non-Protestant belief systems. The Klan offered refuge to those who feared erosion of their power.

As a white supremacist organization, the Klan believed America was founded by white men and should be maintained by and for white men in order to be "kept out of the hands of

¹²⁶ Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5.

¹²⁷ Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 21.

¹²⁸ MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, 10-11.

¹²⁹ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 1.

inferior races.”¹³⁰ The Klan pointed to black poverty and continued oppression of blacks as evidence of black racial inferiority. According to the Klan, and in accordance with contemporary racial science, the white race must be free of miscegenation in order to maintain superiority.¹³¹ The Klan conflated whiteness as “American.” Klansmen feared the New Negro discussed earlier in this chapter. Largely, Klan members feared black men who they felt, after receiving military training in World War I, would be more aggressive towards white encroachment. The Klan also believed in the post-riot hysteria, and thought blacks were stockpiling weapons, making them a threat to whites generally, not just politically.¹³² Whether or not black men were actually stockpiling weapons, the Klan preyed on these fears in order to drum up support.

The Klan’s racial rhetoric appealed to some, but not all. At the height of the Second Klan, fifteen percent of Chicago’s eligible (white, native-born and Protestant) men were members of the Ku Klux Klan.¹³³ Mystery made the Klan appear exotic, but their beliefs were somewhat ordinary, as prejudices promoted by the Klan were not restricted to Klansmembers. Some joined the Klan for political or social gain, rather than strictly racial or religious reasons.¹³⁴ The Klan succeeded because of its ability to play on American fears, incite passions and convince whites to put aside class, gender and some political differences to work towards a common goal.¹³⁵ The Klan promoted “service of the living kind...dedicated to God” and showing “honor,

¹³⁰ Ku Klux Klan, *Ideals of the Ku Klux Klan*, (Ku Klux Klan, 1915), 4-5.

¹³¹ MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, 132; Thomas R. Pegram, *100% American: Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2011), 52.

¹³² MacLean, 28.

¹³³ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 239.

¹³⁴ Pegram, *100% American*, 6.

¹³⁵ Blee, *Women and the Klan*, 80, 128.

unfeigned love, showing kindness towards other Klan members.”¹³⁶ While the Klan was highly exclusionary, it sought to create some sense of belonging and solidarity. Whether or not there actually was solidarity amongst all members of the Klan, many men and women found the message welcoming and appealing.

The “New Woman” of the 1920s troubled Klansmen and they worried that women’s suffrage took power away from white men. In the minds of Klansmen, feminism suggested a decline in white women’s modesty and therefore a decline in the traditional social order.¹³⁷ Although these beliefs were not common in the 1920s, as demonstrated by newspaper articles and testimonies, the Klan chose to combat feminism and woman suffrage. As they incorporated women into the Klan, they launched purity campaigns and limited their support to moral white women who also sought to defend the traditional, Victorian order.¹³⁸ Klan ideology glorified white women as homemakers and mothers of the race. As a way to uphold the standards of the traditional family, Klan members sought to punish drunk, abusive or absentee husbands or punish those who harmed white women.¹³⁹ The middle-class, single income home was promoted as the true American home that sheltered women and children from inferior influences. In contrast, the Klan painted black homes as “broken,” susceptible to “alien” influence and therefore, un-American.¹⁴⁰ Unlike previous constructions of the self and other, where the other is constructed and the self is assumed, Klansmembers defined American as white and therefore “right,” and allowed the opposite construction to apply to black homes.

¹³⁶ “Life Demands Service! Sacrifice!” *Imperial Nighthawk*, November 1923, 3.

¹³⁷ MacLean, *Behind the Mask*, 23, 31-32.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹³⁹ Blee, *Women and the Klan*, 82; “Klansmen Admit Attacking Doctor,” *New York Times*, June 16, 1922.

¹⁴⁰ Blee, 46-47.

Although the Klan theoretically abhorred the idea of women in politics, they were forced to incorporate enfranchised white women into the Klan. White women, often wives of Klansmen, wanted to be included in the Ku Klux Klan because they saw themselves as equal partners in their marriages. Rival organizations were willing to offer these women space, forcing the Klan to allow white women into the organization under their 100% American mission in 1923. In the space of the Women's Ku Klux Klan, or WKKK, white women could participate in politics while maintaining their 'womanly virtue.' The Klan did not allow Klanswomen true equality or sexual freedom; it merely sought to give white women a "moral space" for political activity. The WKKK focused on the same issues as their non-Klan counterparts, such as education, peace, citizenship, amusements and child welfare.¹⁴¹ The WKKK focused special attention on 'saving' young white children from Jewish and Catholic education, as the WKKK feared multiculturalism was destroying American education.¹⁴² Klanswomen focused on many of the same issues as non-Klan activists, sometimes sharing the same prejudices, however Klanswomen were perceived (by Klansmen) as maintaining their womanly modesty and virtue. The Klan contradictorily preyed on fears surrounding woman suffrage and gave white women space in the WKKK to participate in politics while contradictorily sheltering them from the social consequences of greater political rights.¹⁴³ The Ku Klux Klan did not need to explain its contradictions; it merely sought to create solidarity amongst native-born, white Protestants against perceived rising tides of black political power and the erosion of traditional values and immigration.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 24-26, 28-31.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 39-40; "History Must 'Go,'" *New York Times*, November 20, 1927.

¹⁴³ MacLean, *Behind the Mask*, 127.

The Klan created and promoted an image of “one hundred percent American,” where “American” actually meant white, native-born Protestant. This exclusionary construction assumed whiteness, native-born status and Protestantism were standard and anyone who deviated did not fit into the society.¹⁴⁴ The Klan was able to capitalize on sensationalized Red Scares as well as anti-Semitism, which according to *Behind the Mask* author Nancy MacLean, is a hallmark of national strife generally.¹⁴⁵ Klan propaganda capitalized on the 1920s economic troubles and strikes, feeding the idea that Jews were conspiring to take down the government.¹⁴⁶ This idea fit with existing Klan rhetoric that painted Jews as non-American and non-white. To the Klan, it was not enough to be white, one also needed to be native-born and Protestant to be considered a true citizen. The Klan claimed foreign-born people only came to America to better themselves, rather than truly be a part of America and suggested that foreign-born Americans attend citizen-schools and be excluded from government.¹⁴⁷ Xenophobia was common during the 1920s and although not all xenophobes joined the Klan, it gave Klansmembers a framework to deny foreign-born access to the term ‘American,’ largely by proclaiming white, native-born Protestants the only “true” Americans and excluding “hyphen-Americans” as un-true citizens.¹⁴⁸ The Klan relied on commonly held fears and prejudices to proclaim themselves defenders of true American citizenship, religion and race. Because the prejudices were commonly held, there was little resistance to the Klan’s depiction of American citizenship for half the decade.

Because Chicago had such a diverse population, some Chicagoans took deliberate action against the Klan which combined with national trends to quicken their downfall. The city

¹⁴⁴ Blee, *Women and the Klan*, 151, 156.

¹⁴⁵ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 221; MacLean, *Behind the Mask*, 135.

¹⁴⁶ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 17.

¹⁴⁷ *Ideals of the Ku Klux Klan*, 3; “What Shall We Do To Be Saved?” *Imperial Nighthawk*, November 1923.

¹⁴⁸ Pegram, *100% American*, 48.

refused to allow Klan parades and some judges banned Klansmen from sitting on juries. The American Unity League, although anti-Semitic, was instrumental in weakening the Klan's foothold. The AUL published secret Klan rosters in the *Tolerance*, a counter newspaper, organized boycotts of Klan business and even promoted and organized violence against the Klan. The AUL succeeded because the Klansmembers chose not to retaliate when outnumbered.¹⁴⁹ At the state level, Klan-elected or Klan-supported politicians were perceived as bumbling, lacking experience and incompetent and often were outmaneuvered by political machines.¹⁵⁰ Despite promises to restore political power to white, native-born Protestant men, the Klansmen lacked the political savvy and widespread support to make it a reality. At the national level, immigration restrictions quieted a number of concerns the Klan had voiced.¹⁵¹ National, state and local trends and corruption within the organization combined to quicken the Klan's ultimate demise. Although short lived, the Klan's popularity demonstrates that racist, sexist and anti-immigrant trends were popular and widespread throughout the 1920s.

The Development and Spread of Advertising via Print Media

Along with regional and local changes, national methods of conducting business and exchanging information underwent changes as well. Innovations in national advertising and magazines, linked manufacturers and consumers through widely circulated print media.

Advancements including railroads, cheap paper for printing, rising literacy and favorable mailing

¹⁴⁹ David J. Goldberg, "Unmasking the Ku Klux Klan: The Northern Movement against the KKK, 1920-1925," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 15, no. 4 (1996): 32-48. 34-38; "Chicago Opens War On Klan," *New York Times*, November 12, 1922.

¹⁵⁰ Pegram, *100% American*, 33.

¹⁵¹ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 175.

rates, combined with new, diverse popular interests to stimulate of the magazine industry. Magazines relied on advertising to cover costs, a business model that allowed them to circulate broadly and cheaply.¹⁵² The development of magazines as a form of popular media coincided with a rise in national brands, massive industrialization, mass production, industrial capitalism, the nascent middle class and the expansion of national market.¹⁵³ As magazines relied on advertising to cover their costs, the growth of magazines and the growth of advertising advanced in tandem. Rising wages, more leisure time and the desire for new, luxury items combined, to enhance access to mass-produced items.¹⁵⁴ Diversified interests and literacy increased readership and encouraged the use of magazines as a way to reach customers.

World War I introduced the American public to modern, national advertising via war propaganda. Advertising's association with the war effort elevated advertising to a moral, social and educative force that Calvin Coolidge claimed would "uplift the American citizenry."¹⁵⁵ Successful war propagandists considered popular attitudes and incorporated emotional appeal in the design of their messages, a technique repeated in 1920s advertising.¹⁵⁶ After the war, the advertising and magazine industries promoted modernity rather than combat. Heightened obsession with the rapid pace of change was a benchmark of modernity.¹⁵⁷ According to World War I propagandist Harold Lasswell, successful campaigns identified an enemy that represented

¹⁵² David Sumner, *Magazine Century: American Magazines since 1900* (Peter Long Publishing: New York, 2010), 5, 15-17.

¹⁵³ Vincent Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell: American Hygiene in an Age of Advertisement* (Ames, Iowa State University Press, 1992), 16-17; Martin Pumphrey, "The Flapper, The Housewife and the Making of Modernity," *Cultural Studies* 1 (1987): 179-194, 180.

¹⁵⁴ Juliann Sivulka, *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes: A Cultural History of American Advertising* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1989), 142.

¹⁵⁵ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 8-9.

¹⁵⁶ Robin Andersen, "The Great War and Fight between Good and Evil: The Birth of War Propaganda," *A Century of Media, A Century of War: A Century of Media, A Century of War* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 8; Pumphrey, "The Flapper, The Housewife and the Making of Modernity," 185.

¹⁵⁷ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 2-4.

a “menace and an obstacle to reaching a new national value.”¹⁵⁸ Some early hygiene ads declared germs and poor hygiene that obstacle. Although advertising was born of modernity, war and change, the advertising industry really “hit its stride” in 1920s hygienic ads.¹⁵⁹ For the people of the 1920s, modernity was represented best by youth, mobility, optimism and speed. During WWI, Germans haunted national imaginations, but in the 1920s it was germs, poor hygiene and improper consumption that threatened to prevent America from becoming a modern, urban and successful nation.

Advertising and magazines encouraged consumption and homogeneity in the face of the post-war manufacturing boom. Twenties historian Lynn Duménil argues that the new culture of consumption and purchasing changed American’s Victorian morals and ideas of success. The nationalization of markets eroded community and standardized personal autonomy while limiting citizen’s personal freedoms.¹⁶⁰ Rather than demonstrating one’s respectability through proper behavior and Victorian morals, respectability could also be consumed by purchasing the appropriate fashions or other items. Consumption, especially the conspicuous consumption of clothing, allowed people to communicate the values, class status and respectability they believed themselves to possess- even if they did not uphold a strict Victorian moral code or belong to the middle class.¹⁶¹ This kind of conspicuous consumption allowed for the blurring of class lines, which could cause confusion when attempting to differentiate between middle and working classes.

¹⁵⁸ Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Peter Smith, 1927), 58-59.

¹⁵⁹ Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell*, xii.

¹⁶⁰ Duménil, *The Modern Temper*, 12, 27.

¹⁶¹ Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: Ladies’ Home Journal, Gender and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 46; Kenneth A. Yellis, “Prosperity’s Child: Some Thoughts on the Flapper,” *American Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1969): 44-64, 52.

The rise of national markets, magazines and advertising shaped and disseminated national, popular notions of identity, gender, class, race, personal style and fashion and encouraged national homogeneity. Magazines, with the exception of the black press, assumed all readers were white and in some cases, magazine sales representatives were forbidden from selling subscriptions to non-whites.¹⁶² This “white washing” of the mainstream magazine industry reaffirmed American identity as white, as discussed in chapter one, normalized whiteness and thus made invisible non-whiteness. Overall, mainstream magazine readership remained limited to white readerships. Subscribers to some magazines, such as *Household* and *Comfort* lived in mostly in lower income homes (under \$2000) while *National Geographic* boasted readerships in homes with greater income (\$5000 or more). Some magazines such as *Ladies Home Journal* and *Women’s Home Companion* reported readers of all incomes, ensuring that white women at all income levels received the same homogenizing information regarding class, race, gender, style and consumption, creating one uniform picture of American identity.¹⁶³

Although magazines and newspapers, and consequently advertisements, were read by members of all social classes, ad creators did not represent diverse social classes. Furthermore, ad men did not represent the magazines’ targeted readership. Many ad men employed domestic servants in a time when only six percent of all American homes did so.¹⁶⁴ Wealthy men, ad creators saw themselves as “veterans of modernity” who needed to help the masses adjust to new, urban lifeways.¹⁶⁵ Incredibly cynical, ad men saw the masses as stupid and “feminine;”

¹⁶² Simone Weil Davis, *Living up to the Ads: Gender Fictions of the 1920s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 1-4; Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 148.

¹⁶³ Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell*, 19.

¹⁶⁴ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 205.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-39, 51.

passive, emotional, conformist, irrational and possessing bad taste.¹⁶⁶ Although few in number, women also created advertisements. Like their male counterparts, ad women lived unlike the majority of the population; ad women were primarily white, native-born, college educated and upper class. Many employed domestic servants and did not shop for themselves.¹⁶⁷ Working in sex-segregated departments, ad women presented a narrow definition of American womanhood while securing their own wealth and other benefits.¹⁶⁸ While successful advertisements appealed to large numbers of people, ad men's and ad women's lives did not reflect the general populace.

Despite the social distance between ad creators and the public, ad creators needed to reach the masses. According to Albert Lasker, the father of modern advertising, in order to communicate with their intended audience, advertisers had to remain sensitive to consumer reaction and understand what appealed to the public.¹⁶⁹ To do this, ad men relied on existing social structures and beliefs so that consumers identified with the advertisement and its message. Advertisements include images, phrases, stereotypes, visual clichés, icons and other ideals already encoded in popular perceptions which allow viewers to create their own meanings of ads.¹⁷⁰ Although ads needed to reach the mainstream consumer, ad men wanted the viewing public to identify with a higher standard of living in order to encourage more consumption. As a result, the lifestyles portrayed in advertisements rarely reflected the average American's life, but nonetheless were designed to appeal to broad segments of the population.¹⁷¹ Advertising scholar Roland Marchand suggests that 1920s advertisements reflected unmet societal needs, specifically

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 69, 84.

¹⁶⁷ Jennifer Scanlon, "Advertising Women: The J. Walter Thompson Co. Women's Editorial Department," in *Gender and Consumer Culture Reader*, ed. Jennifer Scanlon, 201-225 (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 203, 216.

¹⁶⁸ Scanlon, "Advertising Women," 220.

¹⁶⁹ Albert Lasker, *The Lasker Story as He Told It* (Lincolnwood: NTC Business Books, 1963), 71.

¹⁷⁰ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, xviii-xix, 238, 265; Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 89.

¹⁷¹ Marchand, xvii.

class assurance and fears of downward mobility. Marchand believes that consumers wanted to think of themselves as stasured.¹⁷² Advertising demonstrated which products, clothing and furniture one would need to be considered middle-class or higher. Advertising reinforced Dumenil's notion that one could demonstrate their perceived or desired class standing by purchasing certain products, such as Aunt Jemima pancake mix to give the illusion of affording help. Even if a family could not afford domestic help, they could consume a servant-like product to momentarily identify with a higher class. Along with reassuring Americans of their class status, 1920s advertisements also offered anonymous, therapeutic life advice; especially regarding hygienic matters.¹⁷³ The success of an advertisement, according to World War I propagandist Harold Lasswell, depends on exploiting traditional prejudices, channeling irritability and aggravating anxiety in times of crisis and capitalizing on the masses' feelings.¹⁷⁴ Advertising in the 1920s closely followed this model. Massive social changes led mainstream, white advertisers to use traditional and therefore reassuring images of white women and black men and women to sell products. Ad men also played on social fears of downward mobility and potentially awkward social interactions to convince the public that they needed to consume certain products in order to maintain their social status, social grace and beauty.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 344, 347, 360.

¹⁷⁴ Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques*, 192.

Conclusion

The 1920s were a tumultuous decade categorized by racial, gendered, class and generational tensions; with each group creating their own version of proper American citizens. African-Americans faced discrimination, including violence, in their quests to make a better, freer life in the North. Antiracist racism encouraged black solidarity and the creation of black identities, although African-Americans did not agree on a single method for coping with racist society. Despite white racism, Northern blacks engaged business, the press and politics, writing themselves into the American framework, proving themselves to be productive and effective citizens. Although white women faced sexism, they too engaged politics and expanded their roles in society including education, sexuality, fashions and leisure. At the same time, women were accused of possessing lax social values and morals and were blamed for divorce. Public disputes exposed gendered and generational perceptions of modernity. New roles for women were largely restricted to middle-class white women, but it is important to note that white women were visible in new ways in American society. The Ku Klux Klan grew rapidly in the 1920s as a reaction against black Americans' new social engagement, immigrants and the perceived declining values of white women and American society as a whole. To the Klan, white womanhood was to be protected and white supremacy was to be upheld. The Klan's vision of America mandated white women's protection as well as ensuring the established racial hierarchy against perceived encroachments by African-Americans and immigrants. Simultaneously, the ad industry expanded via print magazines and blanketed America with homogenizing information regarding American values, lifestyles and ideas about gender and race. Largely, mainstream ads failed to acknowledge the multiple visions of America marginalized people created.

CHAPTER 2: SHE WANTED TO “HAVE IT ALL:” WHITE WOMANHOOD AND ADVERTISING

Social changes, especially tensions between blacks and whites, new women’s roles and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan provided the background for this study. Confronted with competing visions of America, advertisers especially in mainstream (white) print media drew from traditional, conservative- and perhaps their own- views of gender and race to sell products. Mainstream, white publications sought to largely ignore white women’s expanding roles in favor of reaffirming traditional notions of gender, class and race. Despite women’s social, political, economic and educational gains, advertisers portrayed white women as idealized, middle class wives and mothers, which likely did not reflect the reality of most women’s lives. Although white women took new and more public roles, the construction of femininity emphasized the importance of the white middle class housewife and mother ideal.¹⁷⁵ This chapter will address women’s new roles as discussed in chapter one and how these roles affected the construction of womanhood. Then the chapter will examine advertisements to see how gendered, racial and class tensions surrounding the construction of white femininity was manifested.

White Women’s Roles and the Evolving Construction of Womanhood

The previous chapter outlined social changes, including changes in white women’s activities. The idealized “true woman” portrayed in many 1920s mainstream advertisements was based on traditional constructions of white womanhood and represented one way to assuage mainstream society’s fears that the “true woman” was being replaced by the New Woman. As

¹⁷⁵ Middle class refers to those who earned their living doing white collar work, but did not own large industries such as small business owners, salesmen, supervisors, teachers, attorneys, etc.

women's roles changed and evolved, so too did the construction of womanhood to reinforce the pre-existing ideal that painted women as nurturing wives and mothers. White women's traditional role kept her in the home, her private sphere, where she deferred to her husband and bore and raised well-mannered children. According to evolutionary racial theory, white women's nature was pious, pure, submissive and domestic. Women who fulfilled these roles were "normal" and proper Victorians.¹⁷⁶ This "normal" woman also possessed morals, compassion, and a peaceful, nurturing nature. She ruled the home with her strong moral code and transformed the house into an oasis for her husband and family, away from the bustling public sphere.¹⁷⁷ Women then, existed to wed and sacrifice their bodies, energies and aspirations to a husband and children. A woman who did not marry "feels her life is incomplete," claimed a 1920s statistician.¹⁷⁸ A wife must accept that her husband may not express romantic tendencies and feelings or sacrifice her own happiness for his.¹⁷⁹ Ideally women confined to the private sphere happily accepted their primary roles and duties as wives and mothers, ignoring their own wants and dreams in order to maintain the household.

White women's acceptance of these roles, duties and characteristics afforded them some benefits. By marrying and deferring to her husband, white women assumed the privileges of white male protection, financial support, supervision and politeness. Non-white women could not claim any of these benefits from white men.¹⁸⁰ Because non-white men were largely restricted by racism and low-paying jobs, they could not necessarily afford their wives financial

¹⁷⁶ Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 32.

¹⁷⁷ Peter Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Gender Identities in Modern America, Third Edition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 39; Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 20.

¹⁷⁸ Lillian Genn, "The Bachelor Girl, Is She a Menace?" *Independent Woman* 7 (1928): 538, 563-564. 564.

¹⁷⁹ Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 96.

¹⁸⁰ Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 86.

support nor offer them protection. By the 1920s, due to the implications of racial theory and women's new educational opportunities, elite white women assumed the roles of protector and mediator for "more vulnerable people," including poor white women and non-white women of all classes. Often, these efforts were patronizing and condescending.¹⁸¹ This allowed elite, respectable white women to enjoy the privileges afforded to them while reinforcing their superior class and racial and moral Victorian status by juxtaposing their privileged societal positions against those they sought to protect. At the dawn of the 1920s, ideas about women's roles and opportunities offered elite white women allowed for some to blur the line between the public and private spheres.

The 1920s New Woman broke with the "true woman's" traditional and accepted roles. She did not eschew these roles completely; the New Woman took on the roles of her foremothers and stepped outside her traditional role in the home to vote, to work and be otherwise engaged in the public sphere. She embodied the ideals of upward mobility, urbanization, corporatization and new possibilities for women. The New Woman did not defer to her husband; she wanted to be his equal.¹⁸² Like the elite, white, activist and Suffragist women at the dawn of the 1920s, the New Woman was generally young, educated and from a middle or upper class family.¹⁸³ The majority of white women lacked the education and status of the New Woman, and some middle- and upper-class men and women feared a crisis in womanhood, blaming the New Woman for "the end of monogamy as we know it" and alleged race suicide.¹⁸⁴ The New Woman thought she could "have it all;" fulfill her roles as wife and mother while also being educated and

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 183; Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 82. Evolutionary racial theory as discussed in theory section.

¹⁸² Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 8; Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 6.

¹⁸³ Brown, *Setting a Course*, 114.

¹⁸⁴ "End of Monogamy Seen in Feminism," *New York Times*, February 7, 1927; "Is the New Woman a Traitor to the Race?" *New York Times*, August 28, 1921.

gainfully employed.¹⁸⁵ The *Chicago Tribune* offered the following advice to mothers to help their daughters “be efficient wage earners, desirable employees and contented workers; and at the same time, you must keep alive in them those domestic instincts and tastes.”¹⁸⁶ New Women hoped to benefit from their new, expanded roles in order to lead fulfilling lives in and outside of the home.

While the New Woman hoped to balance a career and family, the majority of women had to work in order to support their households- balance came from necessity, not opportunity. While critics of working women claimed women, especially young women, worked for frivolous “pin money,” many homes relied on two wage earners. A semi-skilled or skilled male worker could barely support a family of four.¹⁸⁷ Chicagoan Addie Lewsk wrote to the *Chicago Tribune*, “When did they begin to pay married men twice the wages of single men? There isn’t an industry that pays... enough to enable them to raise a family in comfort without outside help!”¹⁸⁸ Realistically, most middle-class families needed two wage earners to provide a comfortable, consumer lifestyle. Working outside the home for wages was neither new nor revolutionary for poor white women and women of color; however working for wages outside the home was new for white middle-class women. Furthermore, these women often continued to work after they wed, perhaps stopping upon their first pregnancy.¹⁸⁹ Largely, women entered the workforce out of necessity, not due to new opportunities; the percentage of married women who worked doubled between 1900 and 1930, a six-time increase over unwed working women.¹⁹⁰ Despite the necessity for two incomes in many households, critics still believed married women should not

¹⁸⁵ Brown, *Setting a Course*, 31-32.

¹⁸⁶ Doris Blake “Mothers and Business Girls,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 2, 1924.

¹⁸⁷ Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 130 .

¹⁸⁸ “It’s The Single Girls and Less Men Who Have ‘The Big Idea,’” *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1921.

¹⁸⁹ Brown, *Setting a Course*, 77, 97.

¹⁹⁰ Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 129.

work. One woman wrote to the *Chicago Times* regarding married, working women: “[she] is not satisfied with what her husband can give her and has to go out and get work in order to be more fashionable...how many of these women really need to work.”¹⁹¹ For married women who did have to work, working in the home maintained respectability. Women who worked in public were shamed, but a married woman could work in the home by taking in sewing or caring for children and keep her reputation, although this type of work was low-paying and unsteady.¹⁹² Although many homes needed two wage earners, working outside the home was discouraged. This reinforced the proper construction of womanhood by emphasizing the domestic component of womanhood. A woman who entered the public sphere to work risked her reputation. If necessary, a true woman would work inside the home to support her family, remaining sheltered in the domestic sphere.

The New Woman’s younger counterpart, known as the flapper, also broke the mold of the “true” woman. She was skinny and boyish rather than feminine; loud, silly and self-absorbed rather than quiet, demure and sacrificing; immodest and shocking rather than timid and soft; leisurely rather than motherly.¹⁹³ Shifts in women’s roles in politics and education led the flapper to believe in the equality of men and women. Although Suffragists had given way to these beliefs, older feminists saw flapper girls as perverse.¹⁹⁴ As flappers shed corsets in favor of shorter skirts and short hair, they were dubbed unfeminine and immoral. If a woman’s clothes revealed her modesty, short skirts challenged the boundaries of respectable clothing, flaunting a

¹⁹¹ “The Single Girl’s Quest for a Job,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1921

¹⁹² Anne McClintock, “Soft Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising,” in *Gender and Consumer Culture Reader*, ed. Jennifer Scanlon, 129-152 (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 136; Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 81.

¹⁹³ Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 121-123.

¹⁹⁴ Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 123, 141.

new and uncontrolled sexuality.¹⁹⁵ Although some suggested a woman without a corset represented “a new type,” and women found shorter skirts “more attractive, more comfortable and more chic,” detractors chided these women for “paying more attention to work and sports than to hearts and appearances.”¹⁹⁶ Not only did the flapper break with traditional ways of dress, she also participated in new amusements. Flappers also engaged in smoking, drinking and listening to jazz, which had been dubbed a “menace” by respectable society.¹⁹⁷ Although, like the New Woman, most girls did not or could not embrace the flapper lifestyle, flappers allegedly threatened the social order by not conforming to “true” womanhood and engaging in ‘sinful’ behavior. At the same time, the flapper represented youth and beauty, traits which the “true” woman needed to possess.

Women’s new roles in the public sphere coincided with heightened anti-vice campaigns such as Prohibition and urban anxieties, like prostitution- a metonym for a number of social anxieties regarding women and vice.¹⁹⁸ As women gained more roles in the public sphere, the construction of “true” womanhood shifted to address women’s new and expanding roles by shaming women who left the home to work. According to the changing construction of proper womanhood, a woman who left her home to work was a “vamp,” a woman who walked a fine line between respectability and prostitution. Working-class women and girls who held jobs out of necessity were stigmatized as potential prostitutes, or at the least, not respectable.¹⁹⁹ As a result of shaming women who left the home, class was prioritized in the construction of

¹⁹⁵ Yellis, “Prosperity’s Child,” 46-48.

¹⁹⁶ Martha, “Is Another Feminine Tradition on Its Way?” *Chicago Tribune*, September 1, 1921. “The Inquiring Reporter,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1924.

¹⁹⁷ Dumenil, *The Modern Temper*, 135; “N.U Co-eds Hear Hymn of Hate on Jazz and Toddle,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 4, 1921.

¹⁹⁸ Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 55, 90.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 61, 88.

womanhood and it was further reaffirmed that women belonged in the home. A woman who left the home to work even if necessary for her and her family's survival risked scrutiny. Although rising costs of living and expectations of consumerism dictated women enter the workforce, the construction of womanhood shifted to maintain and emphasize the traditional middle class, domestic ideal.

As women were the primary purchasing agents for their families, consumerism forced women to participate in the public sphere.²⁰⁰ As women's participation outside of the home increased, so too did products to reinforce femininity. The women's roles outside the home created an alleged blurring of the sexes, allowing for the cult of feminine beauty to rise, evidenced by rising cosmetic sales. However, with more and more women engaging the masculine public sphere, applying cosmetics erased any perceived similarities between the sexes.²⁰¹ The cosmetic industry, previously seen as suspect, grew exponentially in the 1920s, as cinema became professionalized and middle-class white women sought to emulate their favorite actresses.²⁰² Advertising industries estimated that women used "3,000 miles of lipstick, three hundred and seventy-five million boxes of powder and two hundred and forty cakes of rouge a year...roughly \$191,039, 469."²⁰³ In some sense, cosmetics allowed women to "perform femininity" when they left their homes to engage the public sphere.²⁰⁴ Despite breaking with traditional gender roles, a woman could perform rituals, like wearing cosmetics, to demonstrate her femininity. Movies also promoted the flapper's youthful beauty ideal, which contributed to

²⁰⁰ Pumphrey, "The Housewife, the Flapper and the Making of Modernity," 184.

²⁰¹ Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell*, xv, 46, 54.

²⁰² Mavlis Schweitzer, "'The Mad Search for Beauty:' Actresses' Testimonials, the Cosmetics Industry and the 'Democratization of Beauty,'" *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 4, no. 3 (2005): 255-292, 266, 270.

²⁰³ Pumphrey, "The Housewife, the Flapper and the Making of Modernity," 189.

²⁰⁴ Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 117.

cosmetic sales and the development of specialized beauty regiments.²⁰⁵ Consumerism and specific engagement in the public sphere like politics, activism and education, forced women into the public eye. Once in the public eye, cosmetic and beauty treatment sales rose as a way for women to maintain their femininity in their new roles.

As women's roles outside the home changed, so too did expectations about women's roles inside the home. Social ills, such as divorce and juvenile delinquency, were blamed on women and their demands for equality. As such, women likely felt increasingly anxious regarding work, marriage, motherhood and the fear of failure.²⁰⁶ Lowered birth rates due to the rise of birth control and concerns regarding the high cost of living led to a renewal of the cult of motherhood and the notion of professional (unpaid) mothering. The cult of motherhood took on a scientific veneer. No longer was it acceptable for women to raise their children the way their foremothers had, women had additional burdens of "careful and excessive" watching and weighing their children.²⁰⁷ For most married women, it was not economically feasible to stay at home to raise children; by willingly leaving the home to work, a woman was not only a "vamp," but also a bad mother and contributed to juvenile delinquency. Women received blame for divorces; caused by her independence and "insistence upon rights" or excessively spending her husband's money on clothing.²⁰⁸ Women often worked before marriage and were encouraged to be fashionable. However, those very habits would allegedly lead to a failed marriage.

Mainstream culture and advertising alleged to offer women positive and reassuring advice- a

²⁰⁵ Daniel Delis Hill, *Advertising to the American Woman, 1900-1999* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 93-95.

²⁰⁶ Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 44, 154; Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 97, 105; Brown, *Setting a Course*, 124.

²⁰⁷ Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine*, 11; Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 179.

²⁰⁸ Doris Blake "Independent Woman Thought Cause of High Divorce Rate," *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 1925; "Judge Reveals Clothes Often Cause Divorces," *Chicago Tribune*, March 21, 1926.

woman could be an educated and beautiful wife and mother.²⁰⁹ The realities of rising standards and strict ideals pressured women to be able to do it all- be beautiful, raise children, keep a home and marriage and, often, work- with little assistance.

White women took on new roles in the 1920s, usually from necessity, but also from want. The New Woman of the decade, educated and young, wanted an equal husband and a career. As more women entered the workforce, willingly or for survival, the construction of womanhood tightened, shaming women who worked in public. This emphasized the role of class and domesticity in the ideal woman; her husband provided sufficiently for her and as such, she did not leave the domestic sphere and kept her virtue and honor intact. Despite rising pressures with regards to marriage and childrearing and women's expanding roles in the public sphere, the ideal woman successfully raised her children, kept house and deferred to her husband without batting a mascara-ed eyelash.

Maintaining Constructions through Advertisements

Advertising homogenized and nationalized ideals about gender, class and Americanness. Sustaining Victorian, white, middle-class roles, ads portrayed women as soft, cultured, youthful, beautiful housewives and mothers, home managers, social organizers, hostesses and decorators.²¹⁰ Men, usually pictured as static businessmen, produced money for their wives to consume. Wives, as the family's purchasing agent, transformed their husband's money into nice homes maintained with new technologies such as vacuums, well-behaved children and meals and

²⁰⁹ Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 5.

²¹⁰ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 167-168, 191.

fashion for the family.²¹¹ In this model, a man's primary role was to produce money for his wife to spend. His income, and by extension, his home and children, reflected his masculinity. A man who could not earn at a rate greater than his wife could spend lacked true masculinity.²¹² Ads primarily capitalized on traditional gender roles, highlighting white women's prescribed domesticity and alleged nurturing role.

While some ads did acknowledge women's new opportunities, women in these ads remained locked in their traditional, prescribed roles. Advertisements conflated women's new political freedom with the freedom to choose between products, which fostered attitudes that consumption was modern and progressive.²¹³ For example, despite women's gains in politics, advertisements framed women's biggest decisions in terms of products. Ads failed to incorporate feminism or Progressive politics; although women were technically liberated, they were still expected to be and portrayed as housekeepers.²¹⁴ Furthermore, advertisements co-opted youth and other movements, such as the flapper and feminism, to sell products. Although an advertiser might use the flapper image to sell a beauty cream or luxury garment, it did not mean advertisers condoned flapper behavior, just flappers' spending habits.²¹⁵ Ads also linked consumption to countless benefits such as improved marriages, less household responsibility, and more household freedom.²¹⁶ Advertisements promised consumption would lead to a happier, more leisurely life; a modern life. Food advertisements, such as those for Campbell's Soup®,

²¹¹ Sivulka, *Ad Women*, 42.

²¹² James Norris, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 155; Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 162; Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 156.

²¹³ Marchand, 186.

²¹⁴ Norris, *Advertising and Transformation of American Society*, 94.

²¹⁵ Pumphrey, "The Flapper, Housewife and the Making of Modernity," 146-186.

²¹⁶ Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 134.

encouraged women to give up self-reliance in favor of leisure.²¹⁷ Advertisements sold women a glamorous, modernized version of their traditional place.²¹⁸ Advertisers promised modernity through consumption and simultaneously reinforced women's roles in the home, even if the ads accepted women's new roles in the public sphere.

Advertising's treatment of white women locked them into specific, prescribed roles and largely ignored their gains in the public sphere. Meanwhile, advertisements' treatment of black men and women denied them modernity, largely ignoring or caricaturizing them. Outside of the black press, black men and women were not portrayed as modern. Never skilled workers or consumers, black men and women were absent from advertisements or acted as servants to whites, never consumers of a product. If pictured at all, black men and women appeared in ads as porters or mummies, respectively.²¹⁹ In 1920s advertisements, black men and women were not featured purchasing or using products, suggesting they were outside modernity. Whereas advertisements stressed the need for white women to be beautiful, ads featured black women as unattractive by white beauty standards; for instance, Aunt Jemima was plump, older, asexual and dark skinned. White men and women turned to the black cook as the kitchen authority; even if one could not afford a servant, one could reaffirm their class and racial status through purchasing a mammy product.²²⁰ Furthermore, when black men and women spoke in ads, they spoke in a "literary blackface" that stereotyped and exaggerated speech patterns.²²¹ White-created

²¹⁷ Norris, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society*, 107.

²¹⁸ Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 173.

²¹⁹ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 193; Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 74.

²²⁰ Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 87; Alice A. Deck, "'Now Then Who Said Biscuits?' The Black Woman Cook as Fetish in American Advertising, 1905-1953" in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender and Race*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness, 68-94 (Philadelphia: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), 72, 79.

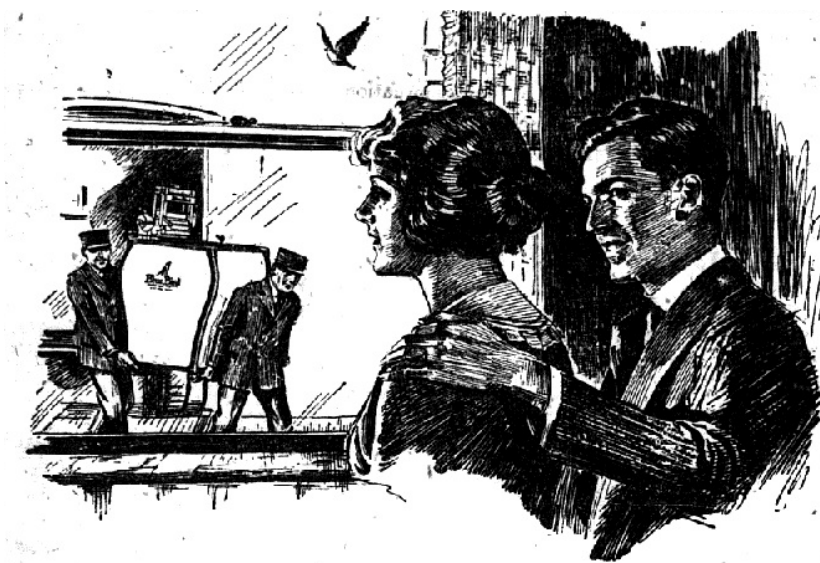
²²¹ Micki McElya, *Clinging to Mammy: The Faithful Slave in Twentieth Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 59.

advertisements that featured black men and women at all relied on stereotypical and exaggerated images, like mammies. Advertisements treated white women and black and white men as static and stereotypical.

White women in the 1920s did more in the public than their predecessors; they voted, worked, entertained, volunteered, learned and created. However, despite their gains, advertisers portrayed women in their traditional, idealized roles. Advertisements reflected society's insistence on maintaining white women's domestic roles, ignoring Progressive ideas about womanhood and its possibilities.²²² In the face of rising gendered tensions, advertisements sought to reaffirm the portrait of woman as domestic, moral and submissive. As cosmetics highlighted differences between the sexes, so too did advertisements by relying on antiquated and unrealistic portrayals of women in the face of social changes.

It is important to note that due to the prevalence of national brands, many of the same advertisements appear in local and national media. Because the tensions discussed existed nationwide, local advertisements mirror national ones in their use of specific constructions of white and black womanhood. The advertisements in this section, from 1920-1929 issues of *Chicago Tribune* and *Ladies' Home Journal* exhibit this pattern. Furthermore, both of these media would have been read by women locally and nationally, of all social classes.

²²² Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 177.



“BlueBird Brings Happiness in Home Work”

BlueBird gives the housewife time to shop and enjoy her life instead of spending all day Monday undoing herself for the five remaining working days of the week. Sunday is a happy day because BlueBird removes the dread of the day that follows it.

Clothes washed the BlueBird way last five times longer. A small cash payment puts the machine in the home.

Selling BlueBird Electric Clothes Washers is a live opportunity for good men who have reached the limit of possible earnings in their present line.

It is easy to sell BlueBirds because every family is reading the big BlueBird full-page, color advertisements in the national magazines each month and our frequent ads in the daily papers.

We have a few openings for good men, and successful applicants will find their income limited only by their energy, enthusiasm and capacity to get results.

Do you know a good man who has reached the limit of possible earnings in his present line, and who is looking for a real live proposition? You will be doing him a favor by telling him about the opportunities we offer.

Figure 2: Bluebird Appliance Ad, *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 1920.

In this 1920 Bluebird Appliance advertisement from the *Chicago Tribune* [fig 2] a man in a suit watches his fashionable wife look longingly at two men carrying a Bluebird washing machine. The text claims the Bluebird “gives the housewife time to shop and enjoy life” and

“removes the dread of Monday [wash day].” The ad conflates shopping and consumption with leisure, affirming that this family most likely has some disposable income and is middle class. Also, the ad suggests washing is time consuming, dreadful work. Although the Bluebird Appliance may have made washing more efficient, it was not necessarily timelier. Even if the appliance washed the clothes, the tub still needed to be filled and emptied; the wet laundry needed wringing and hung to dry, all by hand.²²³ Women’s domestic work did not lead to economic gain; therefore household chores did not need to be time efficient. Women who did work outside the home still needed to keep house, even with time-consuming machines.²²⁴ The Bluebird ad promises more time for women’s spending and leisure, but the advertisement’s text focuses mainly on sales.

The Bluebird ad’s text emphasizes the need for “good men” to act as sales agents to add extra income for their families. According to this ad, a man should take up additional work if extra income is needed in order to prevent his wife from entering the public sphere. This ad upholds the notion that a proper, respectable, middle class woman should not enter the public sphere to work. Instead, Bluebird suggests her husband adopt any additional financial burdens himself so that they may live and consume comfortably. This also affirms that a man is only as masculine as his wife is cared for; if a wife cannot “shop and enjoy life,” it is her husband’s manly duty to take measures so that she may live a proper, respectable lifestyle.²²⁵ The ad suggests it is not the reader’s husband who fails to provide for the family, but someone whom the reader can “do a favor,” which distances the reader from any perceived financial need. The Bluebird advertisement uses the promises of leisure via less arduous housework to sell products.

²²³ Cowan, *More Work for Mother*, 151.

²²⁴ Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 55, 106.

²²⁵ Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 156.

The
Eureka
Man
 leaves you

Health —
Happiness —
Home Sanitation



The Eureka man is the finished, trained representative of the world's largest manufacturer of electric cleaners. He is thoroughly conversant in modern methods, and will show you many "short cuts" to make your work easier and with results of longer life to your day.

As Man of the House, what are you going to give for Christmas this year? Something personal, of course, that she will be proud to own. Something useful, that will lighten labor and add to leisure. Something lasting, that will live many years beyond the season in which it is given.

Then why not give her the new Grand Prize Eureka? It is all these gifts in one—and more.

The Eureka contributes definitely to the well-being of every member of the family. Its amazing cleaning power has raised standards of home sanitation. It quickly removes the dangerous, germ-laden dirt that old, less effective cleaners leave embedded in rugs and furnishings. It changes the drudgery of cleaning into a pleasant, easy task—conserving health and energy.

Perhaps she already has an electric cleaner—but many cleaners lose their effectiveness in time, although they appear to be doing their work as well as ever. Of course she will be proud of a new Eureka—more

than 2,000,000 women have shared that pride—and remember, too, her old cleaner will bring a liberal trade-in allowance.

Just let the Eureka man demonstrate the many wonderful new uses—the improved Eureka attachments—for cleaning cupboards, closets, stairways—for keeping clothing and upholstery free from moths—and cleaning the inside of your motor car, too.

Phone the nearest Eureka branch or dealer now. Ask the Eureka man to tell you more about the new Eureka, with its convertible feature—to demonstrate it in your home. If this gift is to be a surprise, place order now—and delivery will be made at the time and place you desire.

EUREKA VACUUM CLEANER COMPANY, DETROIT, U. S. A.

Largest Manufacturers of Vacuum Cleaners in the World
 Canadian Factory, Kitchener, Ontario. Foreign Branches: 8 Fisher Street, London, W. C. 1, England.
 23-25 Margaret Street, Sydney, Australia.

Grand Prize

EUREKA
 VACUUM CLEANER

Gets More Dirt



Figure 3: Eureka Vacuum Cleaner Ad, Ladies' Home Journal, Dec. 1928.

This Eureka Vacuum Cleaner advertisement [fig 3] from a 1928 issue of *Ladies Home Journal* features a woman standing next to her husband, holding a vacuum cleaner. His gaze defers to her as she listens to the Eureka salesman. This advertisement takes two approaches to selling; it sells the product as leisure creating and it creates a male-product. According to the ad, the Eureka vacuum will “lighten labor and add to leisure” and “changes the drudgery of cleaning into a pleasant, easy task.” Technology, like the Eureka Vacuum, made cleaning easier, but not necessarily timelier, as the standards of cleanliness increased with the development of these new technologies.²²⁶ The advertisement suggests these new cleanliness standards; the house must be “sanitized” by “removing dangerous, germ-laden dirt” not just from the floors but also the “cupboards, closets, stairways, clothing and upholstery.” Using the appliance would leave the home as clean as a home that employed domestic servants. Rather than saving the housewife time, the vacuum merely replaced the labor of her domestic help.²²⁷ While the vacuum made cleaning the floors easier, women were expected to clean more of the house, with greater frequency, attention to detail and sanitation.

In advertisements, products assume the qualities of humans who endorse them.²²⁸ Through its association with the salesman, the vacuum inherits some of his qualities, making the vacuum more than just a technology for cleaning, but a male-product hybrid. In this case, the vacuum assumes the Eureka salesman’s authority and knowledge. When the salesman leaves, the vacuum assumes authority on cleaning and sanitizing, which the wife can access by using the product. To respond to national declines in domestic servants, some advertisers featured

²²⁶ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 128; Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 56.

²²⁷ Cowan, *More Work for Mother*, 178.

²²⁸ Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 75-77.

products associated with men, giving those products masculine connotations.²²⁹ The wife does not just have a vacuum; she has a masculine authority on cleanliness and sanitizing. In this advertisement, the wife receives a vacuum under the eye of her husband, from a knowledgeable salesman. After the salesman leaves, the wife uses the vacuum to access the salesman's knowledge. This product claims to boast leisure time while simultaneously highlighting increased standards of cleanliness and therefore women's increased responsibilities. Both the Bluebird Appliance and the Eureka Vacuum advertisements are intended for women, but focus on men. In both ads, women receive appliances from men, under the supervision of their husbands, which suggests that even if a woman wanted an appliance she must wait for her husband to purchase it for her. Women were America's consumers and primary purchasing agents; it is likely that ads for "women's products," like vacuums only appeared in women's magazines because a woman would be ultimately responsible for convincing her husband to purchase it for the home. Because a man's masculinity was proportional to the products he provided for his wife, buying a labor-saving appliance reaffirmed one's masculinity.²³⁰ In this way, these appliance advertisements reinforce dominant constructions of manliness and womanhood. The Bluebird Appliance [fig 2] and Eureka Vacuum [fig 3] advertisements promise more effective, less arduous cleaning techniques, leaving the white housewife more leisure time.

²²⁹ McClintock, "Soft Soaping Empire," 137.

²³⁰ Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 156.



Next morning both had Wheatena!



Try Wheatena Muffins

1/2 cup of cooked Wheatena
 1 cup of sour milk
 Stir well together and let stand half hour
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda dissolved in 1 teaspoon hot water, add to Wheatena and milk
 1 egg well beaten
 2 tablespoons melted butter
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 tablespoon sugar
 1/2 cup sifted flour
 Bake in muffin pans twenty minutes

Sample package free, and book of recipes showing many dainty and economical ways in which Wheatena may be served. Write today!

The tempting aroma of delicious whole wheat has started more grown-ups eating Wheatena than even the advice of thousands of doctors and dietitians.

Children don't know why Wheatena makes them look and feel so healthy and strong. They only know it tastes so good that they want more—and more—and more.

Grown folks immediately appreciate the important reasons. The real heart of the wheat—the most nourishing and appetizing part of Nature's perfect food for ages, gives Wheatena that delicious nutty flavor and attractive nut-brown color.

Wheatena is whole wheat at its best. Carefully selected winter wheat roasted and toasted by the exclusive Wheatena method. All the flavor and nourishment is retained—the real heart of the wheat, the vitamins, the carbohydrates, the starches and the bran. All for the definite purpose of making a perfectly balanced food.

That's why Wheatena has become "the great American breakfast dish"—for grown-ups and children alike. That's why Wheatena is so enthusiastically endorsed by doctors, dietitians and nurses, and is served regularly in the leading hotels, restaurants and dining cars.

Everybody likes Wheatena, and should eat it regularly. All good grocers have it or will gladly get it for you.

Get the yellow-and-blue package today—for breakfast tomorrow.

The Wheatena Company, Wheatenville, Rahway, N. J.

WHEATENA—FIRST THING IN THE MORNING SINCE 1879

Figure 4 Wheatena, Ladies' Home Journal, Feb. 1924.

Unlike the previous ads, this 1924 Wheatena advertisement [fig 4] from *Ladies' Home Journal* features the product being used. The advertisement features a woman busy in the kitchen while a man in a business suit and a young child eat Wheatena cereal at the table. The woman remains in the background, wearing an apron. Her face remains unseen. Other than preparing food and feeding the man and child, her role and her relationship to the family remains unclear. This uncertainty blurs the line between loving wife and dutiful servant and because the woman's face is hidden, the advertisement normalizes and reinforces not only this woman's role in the kitchen, but all white women's domestic roles. The advertisement focuses on a man in a suit and a child, proclaiming "*both* had Wheatena." The audience does not know if the woman eats the product as her setting at the table is empty and there is no reference to her eating in the advertisement. Wheatena claims endorsements from "doctors, dieticians and nurses...hotels, restaurants and dining cars," giving the advertisement authority from scientific and consumer sources. The Wheatena advertisement reaffirms white women's role in the kitchen by excluding her from the breakfast scene.

Let the Toaster Help Get Breakfast

Saves time...steps...extra work!

While you're busy in the kitchen, or serving the cereal or eggs, the electric toaster will brown the bread to golden perfection right at the breakfast table. Just place the toaster and the bread plate near your husband's place . . . he'll soon learn to do the rest! You'll both like "electric toast," too . . . so piping hot and flavory. Let us send you a toaster and charge it to your light bill. Just—

Phone Randolph 1280

Ask for "Electric Shops"

Hot toast served every day this month at the Apple Blossom Booth. Come in and be our guests

COMMONWEALTH EDISON ELECTRIC SHOPS

72 West Adams Street—Federal Coupons Given

4562 Broadway 2950 E. 92nd Street 3935 West Madison Street 3127 Logan Blvd. 852 W. 63rd Street

Liberty "Flopper" Toaster—\$2.48

Our "Toast Month" special. A strong, well made toaster with guaranteed heating element. Real value!

Universal Thermax Toaster—\$5

(Sketches at the right)

Federal Toaster

(Sketches at left)

High grade model that turns the bread automatically. Highly niched finish. Handsome for a gift. **\$8.50**

50c down buys any toaster during this sale. Balance monthly with your light bills. (Small carrying charge)

Figure 5 Commonwealth Edison's Electric Shops, *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 1926.

Several themes seen in the Wheatena advertisement [fig 4] featured in *Ladies' Home Journal* repeat in the 1926 *Chicago Tribune* Electric Toaster advertisement [fig 5], especially the theme of women's domestic roles. Like the Wheatena advertisement, the Electric Toaster

advertisement centers on breakfast. Also similar to the Wheatena advertisement, the Electric Toaster scene focuses on a family eating breakfast while reinforcing white women's domestic roles.

This ad shows a woman wearing an apron serving a man in a business suit. Wearing an apron could denote the woman's occupation as a domestic servant or that by wearing the apron she fulfills her domestic role. In this case, the empty place setting suggests the couple is married and the apron signifies the wife's domestic role. The advertisement leaves the woman's exact role ambiguous, conflating the wife's role with the role of domestic help. Despite married women's rapid gains in employment, the ad does not mention the wife's employment status, although the man's suit makes it clear that the husband works.²³¹ Although the wife has a place set, it is empty. In this ad, the wife prepares food for her husband, but she does not eat, implying her real nourishment comes from fulfilling her domestic role as cook and servant. Unlike the Wheatena advertisement, the Electric Toaster advertisement suggests that the wife would enjoy "electric toast," suggesting that she does enjoy the benefits of the product. The advertisement fails to clarify the woman's relationship to the man, but because she serves him, it reinforces the notion that preparing and serving food is a woman's job regardless of her employment status.

The Electric Toaster claims to save "time...steps...extra work!" The ad's text suggests that the toaster can be used while "busy in the kitchen, serving cereal or eggs," suggesting breakfast contains multiple components, encouraging higher consumption of prepared foods and more complicated meals. Although technology allows for faster toast, the advertisement raises the expectations of the meal.²³² The appliance saves time but the woman must dedicate that time

²³¹ Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 129.

²³² Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 56.

to preparing more food rather than spending time with her husband or on her own leisure. In return for her additional efforts, including “placing the toaster and bread plate” near her husband, her husband will “soon learn to do the rest.” According to the advertisement, operating a toaster was the extent of a man’s participation in food preparation. The advertisement for Electric Toasters attempted to sell women a glamorous version of her existing role.²³³ The ad sells a modern convenience that instead of adding to her leisure, suggests that she must prepare additional food while her husband waits. Although he may press the button on the toaster, his role occurs outside the kitchen, which remains the woman’s place. The Electric Toaster advertisement shares themes with the Wheatena advertisement [fig 4], especially the juxtaposition of the man in the suit and the apron-wearing woman. Whereas advertisements for appliances and food picture married couples, advertisements for beauty products feature women and highlight the necessity of beauty products in order to meet a husband.

²³³ Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 173.



A Shampoo that leaves the hair silky

"HOW can I make my hair look well for to-night? I wish I hadn't washed it this morning!"

That used to be a frequent tragedy—yes, tragedy—for sometimes a girl's happiness depends on her hair. Life turns on such tremendous trifles.

But it is different now—almost as soon as you finish using Wildroot Liquid Shampoo your hair will be delightfully pretty—clean—silk-like—and manageable!

Men notice a woman's hair—all men do.

And how a girl's hair can enhance her charm—or spoil her beauty at a glance!

Clip the coupon below and let us send you this dainty traveler's size bottle. Learn for yourself how easy, how delightful a shampoo can be. Notice

Wildroot's delicate, elusive fragrance. Enjoy its rich, mild, greaseless, creamy lather that cleanses without unduly drying the hair. See how soft and pretty and lustrous your hair becomes. Learn how easy it is to put up your hair after using Wildroot Liquid Shampoo.

The reason is in the mild, pure coconut oil base, and in its freedom from every trace of harmful alkali. It leaves the hair fresh, but not stiff.

A 6-ounce bottle will last for several months.

Almost any good druggist will be glad to provide you with a large bottle of Wildroot with this unusual guarantee:

If you do not think this Wildroot Liquid Shampoo is worth more than it costs you, your money will be cheerfully refunded.



WILDROOT LIQUID SHAMPOO

(PURE COCOANUT OIL BASE)

Hairdressers approve this method of shampooing

FIRST: Wet the hair and scalp with warm water.

SECOND: Apply a little Wildroot Liquid Shampoo and rub to a rich creamy lather. Rinse with clear warm water.

THIRD: Apply more Wildroot Liquid Shampoo, massaging lightly, then rinse three or four times with warm water and finish by rinsing with cold water. Dry thoroughly.

MAIL THIS COUPON FOR YOUR TRIAL BOTTLE

Wildroot Co., Inc.
Dept. 111
Boston, N. E.

I enclose ten cents. Please send me my Trial Bottle of Wildroot Liquid Shampoo. If I am not fully satisfied, you agree to refund my money.

Name _____
Address _____
My Druggist's Name _____
Druggist's Address _____

Figure 6 Wildroot Liquid Shampoo, Ladies' Home Journal, Dec. 1920.

This Wildroot Liquid Shampoo advertisement [fig 6] from 1920 *Ladies' Home Journal* and the two advertisements that follow it use white, middle-class and wealthy women to sell beauty products promising to increase women's beauty and social lives. Framed by a nature scene, the advertisement features a well-dressed white woman looking at herself in a small mirror. In the background, a woman converses with a man, both are sitting in a living room that features a bookcase and a bust sculpture, both of which are hallmarks of 1920s middle class homes.²³⁴ The woman performs femininity by observing her beauty and by courting men; she represents the white, middle-class idealized lifestyle. Her appearance in the advertisement gives some of her qualities to the product so that Wildroot Liquid Shampoo represents whiteness, youth, leisure and attractiveness.²³⁵ Presumably she does not work, but comes from a well-to-do background, giving her the time to focus on her appearance and find a suitable husband.

Wildroot Liquid Shampoo uses the “first impression” trope, which capitalizes on the idea that one only gets one chance to, in this case, attract the perfect man.²³⁶ The advertisement's text further emphasizes the importance of hair in finding a husband. “A tragedy,” the ad claims “sometimes a girl's happiness depends on her hair.” The ad remarks that “men notice a woman's hair...and a girl's hair can enhance her charm or spoil her beauty at a glance!” This reinforces the idea that marriage should be the focus of a young woman's life.²³⁷ Furthermore, Wildroot Liquid Shampoo promises that consumers of the product will gain charm, an intangible benefit, from use of the product. Using charm and “pretty, clean, silk-like hair,” a woman will meet and marry a man that can allow her to live a respectable middle class lifestyle, as pictured in the

²³⁴ Deborah Willis, “Towards a New Identity: Reading the Photographs of the New Negro” (PhD diss., George Mason University, 2002), 19.

²³⁵ Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 75-77.

²³⁶ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 208.

²³⁷ Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 96.

advertisement. Beauty advertisements suggest that extra focus on a particular feature, via consumption of a beauty aid, lead the white, female consumer to a better life.



"The Djer-Kiss"—INTERPRETED BY R. F. SCHABELITZ
 Here you behold the charm one gains by the use of my beauty aids, Madame! Mademoiselle! "The Djer-Kiss" so subtly whispers my message, that I have asked the world's great artistes to express it—each in his own manner. Watch for these illustrations and, as you use my creations, watch in your mirror for the beauty which inspires "The Djer-Kiss"!
 (Signed) KERKOFF, Paris

*Beauty Irresistible....
 with Djer-Kiss!*

WOULD you know the secret of alluring charm? It's not difficult to attain—if you will only take care to *choose*, and *use*, the right beauty aids!

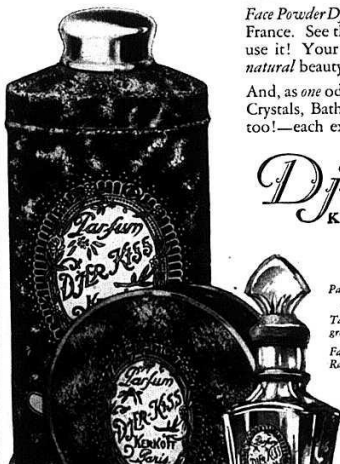
Parfum Djer-Kiss—to endow your personality with exquisite appeal. A touch to your handkerchief, your boutonniere, and—*voilà!* you take on a new loveliness.

Talc Djer-Kiss—created and packaged in France—to make shoulders and arms satinsmooth; and slim slippers more comfortable!

Face Powder Djer-Kiss—made and boxed in France. See the difference as you begin to use it! Your skin takes on an exquisite, *natural* beauty, a clear and lovely color.

And, as *one* odeur is smartest: Sachet, Bath Crystals, Bath Powder, and Toilet Water, too!—each exquisite with

Djer-Kiss
 KERKOFF - PARIS



Parfum Djer-Kiss in graceful crystal container.
Talc Djer-Kiss—in moss-green can, or crystal bottle.
Face Powder Djer-Kiss—Rachel, Chair (Naturelle), and Blanche tints.

Figure 7 Djer-Kiss, *Ladies' Home Journal*, Aug. 1926.

Like the Wildroot Liquid Shampoo advertisement [fig 6], Djer-Kiss promises youth and personality through beauty regiments. This Djer-Kiss advertisement [fig 7], published in a 1926 issue of *Ladies' Home Journal*, features a well-dressed young woman kissing her reflection in a mirror. The young woman reflects European beauty standards: white, moderately well-to-do and specific hair and dress.²³⁸ Djer-Kiss reinforces and highlights the importance of youth through the use of their “beauty aids.” The product is so successful that the woman in the advertisement, the object of display, is so narcissistically overcome by her own beauty that she must kiss her reflection. The Wildroot Shampoo ad promotes a quest for marriage; however Djer-Kiss sells sexuality, it is the first advertisement in this series where a woman is overtly sexual. This advertisement has a voyeuristic and fetishized quality; the audience witnesses a private ritual in the woman’s life and the woman is displayed larger and in focus over the product.²³⁹ The product borrows from the flapper’s youthful image while also drawing from the Victorian focus on the skin.²⁴⁰ Djer-Kiss synthesizes youth and whiteness to reinforce the contemporary version of European beauty standards which are in turn associated with the product. The advertisement promises the consumer will “gain charm” and “beauty irresistible” through use of the product. Djer-Kiss promises more than beauty aids and youth, but also self-esteem, charm, popularity and other intangible things, likely to appeal to men.²⁴¹ The ad implies that potential consumers possess some insecurity and lack charm, wit and grace. The product promises to do more than just add beauty, rather it will improve the quality of one’s life by augmenting their personalities. This advertisement highlights the importance of beauty- equal parts youth and whiteness- in women.

²³⁸Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 40-41.

²³⁹Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 110.

²⁴⁰Hill, *Advertising to the American Woman*, 107.

²⁴¹Sivulka, *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*, 158; Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 13.



Bebe Daniels (Paramount) and the bathroom her charm inspired

“Smooth skin instantly attracts,”

says Victor Fleming, PARAMOUNT director

“Every screen star realizes how vitally important this beauty is. Her skin must have real loveliness under the close-up lights.”

A QUICK throb of emotion—you catch your breath at the flower-like beauty of smooth, soft skin.

Screen stars unflinchingly possess this loveliness which makes the close-up's appeal irresistible. Motion picture directors insist on skin so perfect that the pitiless close-up lights reveal only alluring beauty. Screen stars know smooth skin is vital to their career.

Nine out of ten screen stars use Lux Toilet Soap. There are in Hollywood 433 important actresses, including all stars. 417 of these use this fragrant, white soap.

All the great film studios have made it the official soap in their dressing rooms.

MERNA KENNEDY, lovely United Artists star, says—“Lux Toilet Soap keeps my skin marvelously smooth.”

★
NINE out of ten screen stars use it for smooth skin.



“Many girls lacking great beauty, but possessing lovely skin, have passed on the road to fame women with perfect features. Lux Toilet Soap is a great help in keeping the skin smooth and lovely.”

Bebe Daniels



VIRGINIA VALLI, the beautiful star, says—“I delight in the marvelous velvety way Lux Toilet Soap leaves my skin.”

LUX Toilet SOAP . . . 10¢

Figure 8 Lux Toilet Soap, Chicago Tribune, Nov. 1928.

This Lux Toilet Soap advertisement [fig 8] from a 1928 issue of the *Chicago Tribune* features testimonials from white, well-to-do celebrities. This advertisement, like the Djer-Kiss advertisement [fig 7], promotes a Victorian obsession with “smooth, soft skin.”²⁴² Also like the Djer-Kiss ad, the advertisement uses women’s sexuality to sell product; Babe Daniels’ dress reveals her bare shoulder. Unlike the Djer-Kiss ad, this advertisement does not promise to bolster young women’s personalities. Instead it suggests that perfecting the skin through the use of Lux Toilet Soap will “attract.” It is unspecified whom or what will be attracted, leaving it up to the reader to insert themselves into the advertisement and create their own meaning.²⁴³ Like the 1926 Djer-Kiss ad, this 1928 Lux Toilet Soap ad utilizes beautiful white women to sell skin products. Lux Toilet Soap relies on the modern film industry and the power of celebrity testimony.²⁴⁴ A quote from Victor Fleming, Paramount director, occupies the largest space and draws the eye in. While the three testimonials come from women, the advertisement ultimately relies on a male voice for legitimacy and authority, overshadowing the reviews from women who actually use the product. The celebrities in the ad likely do not do housework nor do manual labor as they are not working class, although the advertisement addressed women who did work for a living. The ad sold elements of a leisurely life to women who did not necessarily live luxuriously, which suggests that through consumption, an ordinary woman could enjoy the same beauty and leisure as a wealthy actress. Like the previous beauty ads, Lux Toilet Soap conflates beauty, white skin and youth. All of the previous advertisements have featured whites, normalizing whiteness and rendering blackness invisible. The last four advertisements juxtapose white and black women, reinforcing the perceived separation between them.

²⁴² Hill, *Advertising to the American Woman*, 107.

²⁴³ Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 25.

²⁴⁴ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 14.



"La France Launder's Clothes Clean Without Rubbing"

Your Middle Blouses, Sport Skirt, Linen Suits Made Snow White—ready to rinse and hang out without submitting them to the tortures of the wash board—that is what La France offers you. When La France goes into the wash water, your, sweet-smelling garments come out.



Think of Getting the Men's Shirts and Other Garments Beautifully White
without any rubbing or extra bluing. La France eliminates the wear and tear and therefore makes the garments last longer. If cuffs or neckbands are very much soiled, rub soiled parts between the hands and the dirt will immediately disappear.



Children's Play Clothes, Rompers and Dresses Will Last Twice as Long
when washed with La France because La France washes clothes spotlessly clean without rubbing; takes out all the ordinary soil of daily wear, stubborn stains and makes them white, sweet and wholesome.

"Isn't my linen suit lovely and white? You wouldn't think it had been washed three times, would you? Yet it is just as fresh as the day it came from the store—thanks to La France. And I've earned the everlasting gratitude of my washwoman, for she feels she is indebted to me for having shown her how to take all the back-breaking rubbing out of washing by using La France."

Every time you wash clothes in the old-fashioned, grandmotherly way of rubbing and scrubbing, you are unnecessarily wearing them out—sending them to the rag bag long before their time. How foolishly extravagant this method is when by using La France you can get your clothes so wonderfully clean and fresh!

No matter how you do your washing you can use La France. Just go on doing it in the same way—with tub, boiler or washing machine—using the same soap. Just add La France and see how much better results you will get. La France is a cleaning agent that takes out all the soil and grime. La France whips up into an abundance of rich, cleansing suds and the clothes that you ordinarily wash with such drudgery—bed linens, table linens, the kiddies' play clothes, men's garments—are cleaned by just letting them soak in La France, for La France dissolves all the dirt.

La France is intended not only for the heavy wash but also for your frilly under-muslins, dainty silk things and woolen garments, all of which will leave their La France cleansing suds snowy white and sweet smelling. La France cannot harm the most delicate fabrics. Simply follow the directions on the package. La France is a dual-work saver—no bluing of the clothes is necessary because it

SATINA—Makes Ironing Easy
After your clothes have been cleaned by easy La France usage, use Satina in finishing the soiled pieces. Satina makes ironing easy because it prevents the iron from sticking. It is added to the hot starch—gives just the right degree of blue to whiten the clothes—a dainty new finish that avoids dampness and imparts to the clothes the wonderful flower-like perfume of La France Bouquet. You do not have to wax the iron when Satina is used. Stains, lint, etc.—anything, everything that needs starch and the smoothing influence of a hot iron is better by using Satina. After you have ever learned how much easier Satina makes ironing, you, like thousands of other women, will never be without it on ironing day. Satina is sold by grocers who sell La France. If your grocer does not have it, send us his name and we will send you a trial package free.

Blues As It Cleanses

La France whitens clothes in the washing, takes out all the yellow of age. Try La France with your next washing. Your grocer sells it. If not, send us his name and we will send you a trial package free.

La France Manufacturing Co.
 Philadelphia, Pa.



La France

Figure 9 La France, Ladies' Home Journal, Aug. 1920.

The La France advertisement [fig 9] shows a black woman handing a white, well-dressed woman a suit while her similarly dressed friend looks on. The black woman wears an apron that, when worn by whites, represented service. Here, the black woman lacks access to white fashions and in turn, modernity.²⁴⁵ Her apron contrasts against the white women's stylish, fashionable clothing. Although it was equally likely for a domestic servant to be a black or immigrant woman, the image of black women in middle-class homes supported images of modern, white womanhood by highlighting differences in social, economic and racial position.²⁴⁶ The white women in the La France advertisement can live a more leisurely life because they can hire a domestic servant to perform labor.

One of the white women proclaims "I've earned the gratitude of my washerwoman...she feels she is indebted to me," suggesting that the black woman should be grateful beyond measure for a white woman's instruction and advice. Although one construction of black womanhood portrayed black women as "earth mothers" who had deep, almost mystical understandings of cooking and cleaning, this advertisement deferred to the white woman's knowledge.²⁴⁷ The white woman knows of La France because she is a product of modernity, emphasized by her youth, interest in sports, fashion and access to consumerism. The black woman, not a consumer and therefore not modern, is unaware of this modern product. The emphasis on white women as middle-class consumer is highlighted by showing all of the products La France can clean, including "middy blouses...sport skirts...frilly under-muslins, dainty silk things and woolen garments," suggesting that all white women could afford to and did consume these fabrics and

²⁴⁵Patricia Morton, *Disfigured Images: The Historical Assault on Afro-American Women* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 10.

²⁴⁶Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 87-88; Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 200-202.

²⁴⁷Deck, "Now Then, Who Said Biscuits?," 68.

garments. This advertisement suggests race demarcates the difference between women who work and women who enjoy leisure. This conflates whiteness with leisure as well as blackness with service to whites and work. Contrasting the white women with the black servant woman makes whiteness modern, normal and invisible. Although this advertisement portrays white women as modern, it shows black women as excluded from consumption, fashion, modern conveniences and therefore modernity. Most advertisements in the 1920s portrayed black men and women as living outside modernity.

What memories clustered 'round that little cabin!

Aunt Jemima

Bids Goodbye to the Old Plantation

SOME twenty years after the Civil War, Aunt Jemima bade goodbye to her little cabin home down in Louisiana and went to St. Joseph, Missouri.

There, in a big flour mill, under her supervision, was accomplished the mixing by machinery of all the ingredients in her famous pancake recipe.

So today, by simply adding water to Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour, *everybody* can have Aunt Jemima pancakes—the real, old-time Southern pancakes. So rich, so tender and so fine-flavored.

Are *you* having them? Aunt Jemima left the old plantation so that you might.

Your grocer has Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour—also Aunt Jemima Buckwheat Flour for delicious buckwheat cakes.

How to get the famous Rag Dolls
Look on the top of Aunt Jemima's Pancake Flour. It tells you how to get the famous Aunt Jemima Rag Dolls.

It's in town, Honey!

Copyright 1921 Aunt Jemima Mills
Manufactured by General Mills

AUNT JEMIMA PANCAKE FLOUR

Figure 10 Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour, *Ladies' Home Journal*, Jan. 1921.

This Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour advertisement [fig 10], featured in a 1921 issue of *Ladies Home Journal*, pictures Jemima wearing an apron and long dress and an unnamed black man leaving a plantation twenty years after the Civil War. Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour based this advertisement on the myths of paternalism and slave loyalty by implying that the black man and Jemima happily and willfully remained on their former master's plantation for twenty years. Even her name, "Aunt" references slavery, where slaves were addressed as "aunt" and "uncle."²⁴⁸ According to the ad, Jemima left the plantation, bound for a northern "big flour mill" that would package and share her famous pancake recipe with America. The ad pictures a white man, possibly her former master or a factory owner, looking approvingly at the product. This set of transactions represents the perceived absolution of racial tensions and reconciliation between the North and South- nationalism- through consumption.²⁴⁹ Northern consumption of products originating in the South allowed for a new nationalism based on consuming.

Featuring Aunt Jemima on the box allows the consumer to take home a literal "slave in a box," suggesting that the target consumer is white.²⁵⁰ Jemima does not consume the product, she is the product. Like the La France advertisement, the black Jemima is not modern, but frozen in time as a mammy, ready for purchase by a modern, white consumer. Jemima speaks in a "literary blackface," as opposed to Standard English, further emphasizing the difference between the white consumer and the product.²⁵¹ Unlike the La France advertisement [fig 9], the Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour advertisement shows Jemima's authority in the kitchen, which she naturally possesses as a "black cook" and "earth mother" that can be accessed by whites upon

²⁴⁸ Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus*, 70, 94; Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 51.

²⁴⁹ Hale, 87, 166.

²⁵⁰ The phrase comes from M.M. Manring's book of the same title.

²⁵¹ McElya, *Clinging to Mammy*, 59.

purchase.²⁵² Buying such a product demonstrates not only a consumer's modernity but also reaffirms their status and whiteness by allowing them to purchase black domestic help. The Aunt Jemima product line allowed white consumers to purchase products representing blackness.

²⁵² Deck, "Now Then, Who Said Biscuits?," 72, 79.

For the kiddies' Christmas

Special offer now!
This jolly family of Aunt Jemima Rag dolls



Aunt Jemima, 15 inches high

Uncle Mose

Little Diana

Little Wade 12 inches high

Here's more fun for the kiddies than they've had in a year! A whole family of jolly, rickicking Aunt Jemima Rag Dolls, ranging from 12 to 15 inches in height.

There's Aunt Jemima herself, whose delicious pancakes have already made her so great a favorite with the children. And there's Uncle Mose, and Wade, and Diana—four of them altogether, every one with a cheery smile, every one a perfect toy, a toy that will keep no matter how much it is thrown about, sat on, stepped on, or slept on.

And how the kiddies love them! The boys, too, quite as much as the girls. They're such hardy, rough-and-ready, good-fellow playmates. Nothing to break, no sharp corners to hurt, as good for playing catch as for playing "house." They're the kind of toys that will make the children shout with glee when they first see them on Christmas morning.

Such delightful toys for so little money!

How to get them? Just tear the top from a package of Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour or Aunt Jemima Prepared Buckwheat Flour and send it to us with only twenty-five cents. You'll have them,



all four, within a few days, printed in bright colors, ready to cut and stuff. Where else can you get such delightful toys for so little money?

And think of the wonderful pancakes you'll have! For Aunt Jemima Pancakes make the finest breakfast dish in the world! They are served in ten million American homes. Only with Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour can you get that old-time plantation flavor that made her famous throughout the South in the days before the War.

A new treat awaits you at breakfast tomorrow
So easy to make good pancakes, too, with Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour! It brings you her own ingredients, ready-mixed, just as she used them. In less than a minute you are ready to bake. Simply mix a cup of water (or milk) with every cup of the flour. The batter is ready in the time it takes to stir it smooth.

Have you ever served real Aunt Jemima Pancakes? Try them tomorrow at breakfast and watch the happy faces round the table as the folks take their first bite. Learn how easy it is to get light, fluffy cakes every time! See how much time and money you can save by making pancakes this way.

Now is the time when men are hankering for buckwheats

It's right now, these winter mornings, that men-people are hankering for "buckwheats". Make 'em with Aunt Jemima Prepared Buckwheat Flour. You'll get cakes, tender, golden-brown—with a "tang" that helps start the day right. And there's no overnight waiting with Aunt Jemima—no fussing with ingredients—no uncertainty.

Delicious waffles and muffins

Did you know what delicious waffles and muffins can be made with Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour? You'll find simple recipes printed on the back of every package.

Send for the dolls today

Don't let your children be without the Rag Dolls, this Christmas. And remember how much they will enjoy tender, wholesome Aunt Jemima Pancakes.

Ask your grocer today for a package of Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour or Aunt Jemima Prepared Buckwheat Flour.

To get the four Aunt Jemima Rag Dolls, all ready to cut out and stuff, just tear the top from either package and mail it with twenty-five cents (wrapped so that the coins won't cut the envelope), and with your name and address, plainly written or printed, to—

DEPT. 1-C, AUNT JEMIMA MILLS COMPANY
St. Joseph, Missouri

This offer is valid in retail and states, if any, having local regulations prohibiting exchange of pennies for cents.

AUNT JEMIMA PANCAKE FLOUR

Figure 11 Aunt Jemima Dolls, Ladies' Home Journal, Dec. 1924.

This 1924 Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour advertisement [fig 11], also from *Ladies Home Journal*, utilizes the same stereotypes as the previous Pancake Flour ad. The characters retain their informal "aunt" and "uncle" titles, dating back to slavery. This advertisement, from December 1924, promises that the Aunt Jemima family of rag dolls will make an excellent gift

for “boys as much as girls.” Through the Pancake Flour Company, a family could purchase and own a slave family for their child. This reinforces the notion of black inferiority as well as the idea that black men and women were commodities to be consumed.



Figure 12 Cream of Wheat, *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 1922.

This Cream of Wheat advertisement [fig 12] ran in a 1922 issue of the *Chicago Tribune*. It features Rastus, a black male cook. Rastus' image was based on an actual person who was paid a mere five dollars for his image.²⁵³ Like the Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour advertisements

²⁵³ Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus*, 45.

[fig 10, 11], this Cream of Wheat ad features Rastus as the product for whites to consume. Again, through buying a “slave in a box,” white consumers reinforced their class and racial status. Even a consumer who could not afford actual domestic help could still afford to buy this commodified version of the black cook. Black male cooks like Rastus were feminized through their association with domestic service.²⁵⁴ Feminizing black men furthers the notion that domestic work is not something white men do; this emphasizes the difference between the Rastus in his chef’s coat and the white business men in suits featured in the previous advertisements. Like Jemima, Rastus smiles as if he is happy and willing to help whites who purchase the product, reinforcing the myth of the loyal servant.

These advertisements rely on stereotypical images of white women and black men and women. Despite women’s new roles in the public sphere, constructions of femininity and advertising tightened, portraying white women in their traditional roles; housekeeper, care taker, provider, wife and mother. Advertising placed women in glamorized versions of these roles, but did not portray women in their new and diverse roles outside of the home. Advertisements featuring single women sought to sell products so that women could more easily find husbands. When an ad portrayed women as modern, as in the La France advertisement, their modernity came in part from their juxtaposition against the black washerwoman’s exclusion from modernity. White women in their traditional roles wear aprons as a sign of their domestic service. All of the black women featured in these ads wear an apron and do not wear contemporary fashions. White men exclusively wore business suits, while black men wore outdated clothing or service garments, like the chef’s jacket. These advertisements demonstrate that despite massive social changes, advertisers chose to portray white women and black men

²⁵⁴ McClintock, “Soft Soaping Empire,” 139.

and women in their traditional, static roles rather than portray them as diverse and evolving people.

Conclusion

In the face of social and technological changes in the 1920s, mainstream advertisers reinforced traditional assumptions about white women and black men and women. Working-class women traditionally worked outside the home, but the 1920s saw white women working, even after marriage, in order to cover the rising costs of living and heightened pressures to consume. However, the construction of white womanhood tightened in response to women working outside the home, emphasizing middle-class status as a prerequisite for proper womanhood. At the same time, women's roles inside the home changed. Although new technologies removed some arduous labor from housework, women were expected to cook more, maintain higher standards of cleanliness and practice scientific housekeeping and motherhood all on their own. White women achieved all of their prescribed tasks remained beautiful and youthful. The themes of women's homemaking roles and beauty repeat in advertisements found in national magazine and local newspapers. The advertisements featured in this chapter show white women's modernity; they use labor-saving technology, act as familial purchasing agents, embrace cosmetics and beauty rituals and wear fashionable clothing. In some sense then, advertisements acknowledge women's expanding roles in society. However, despite this acknowledgement, ads continually showed white women in traditional roles- as wives, mothers and housewives, dependent upon their husbands to provide money for the family's purchases. At

the same time, black men and women were portrayed as existing outside of modernity, often as foils to white women. In white ads, blacks lacked access to labor-saving technologies, beauty rituals (or beauty in general) and purchasing power. In this way, white women retained their privileged position in the racial hierarchy as well. White women made gains in the 1920s, although not without criticism. Advertisements subtly reflected some of these gains, but overall, featured women in existing, traditional roles such as wife and mother. These portrayals of women continued in advertisements because they reassured consumers in an era of nation-wide tension and uncertainty. Most importantly, advertisers continued to use the white, middle-class housewife and mother ideal to sell products to white men and women because it was effective.

CHAPTER 3: “NEW HOPES, NEW DESIRES:” BLACK WOMEN IN BLACK PRESS ADVERTISEMENTS

Ads created by African-Americans looked much different than white designed advertisements, especially in their portrayals of women. In the 1920s, black men’s and women’s social, economic and political roles expanded. The Great Migration increased the black population in Chicago, which combined with consumerism and race pride resulting in a larger market for black businesses. These businesses advertised throughout the black press, including magazines and newspapers that were distributed locally as well as nationally. In response to African-Americans’ expanding roles, advertisements portrayed a multitude of womanhoods, which more fully represented the diversity of black women’s lifestyles. As part of racial uplift, black women were encouraged by elites to uphold Victorian notions of respectability and fulfill the roles of wife and mother. Women also sought financial stability through work outside the home. Black elites drew from white standards and ideals to create a positive black identity as one of a limited number of responses to a desperate and often violent situation.²⁵⁵

Simultaneously, more radical blacks promoted an identity removed from white standards. As a result, black advertisers featured a multitude of black womanhoods in advertisements, unlike white advertisements, which largely featured white women in limited roles. Furthermore, some ads spoke towards both groups of blacks; those who modeled and those who rejected white ideals. This chapter will address the role of the black press and the expanding roles of black women in the 1920s and how the construction of black womanhood changed as a result. Then, the chapter will examine how advertisements portrayed black women’s new and expanding roles in the context of racial uplift and the New Negro.

²⁵⁵ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, xv.

The Black Press

The black press allowed space for African-American thinkers and journalists to share their voices and ideas. These publications offered new, positive images of African-American men and women, whereas mainstream, white-created newspapers and magazines perpetuated stereotypes and caricatures of black men and women that relegated them to servants. First published in 1827, *Freedom's Journal* represents one of the earliest examples of the black press that provided varied images of blacks despite the persistence of slavery.²⁵⁶ *Freedom's Journal* promoted education, self-reliance and voting as ways to “fortify the mind and stimulate intellect.”²⁵⁷ Black newspapers and magazines promoted racial and national unity, created space for black voices, announced conventions and other events and sought to enlighten and elevate readers.²⁵⁸ The black press linked African-Americans by allowing space for communication across the nation.

As discussed in earlier chapters, consumption played an important role in the 1920s for whites and blacks. In mainstream print media, white men and women were assumed to be consumers, while black men and women were depicted as products, such as Aunt Jemima, or servants to whites. In the tradition of Booker T. Washington's advocacy of the free market, Claude Barnett, born in Sanford, Florida and the founder of the first black advertising group, encouraged citizenship through consumption. As such, his ads featured black men and women

²⁵⁶ Janice Ward Moss, *The History and Advancement of African-Americans in the Advertising Industry, 1895-1999* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 1, 14, 18.

²⁵⁷ Clint Wilson and Armistead Pride, *A History of the Black Press* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1997), 13, 16.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

consuming products rather than as products- such as the Gold Dust Twins Cleaning Powder.²⁵⁹ Like contemporary white magazines and newspapers, the black press encouraged a higher standard of living for families via consumption.²⁶⁰ Unlike white print media, these newspapers showed that a higher standard of living for black families was attainable. Advertising strengthened black markets, leading to the growth of businesses, especially beauty businesses, which celebrated black women's physical beauty.²⁶¹

As a bustling metropolis with a large black population, Chicago housed a number of black-owned publications. The largest and most widely circulated of these publications, the *Chicago Defender* newspaper, boasted a quarter of a million copies per issue and as many as two-thirds of this number travelled outside of Chicago via Pullman Porters across the nation's rail lines. This far-reaching newspaper was read aloud and "passed around until worn out," meaning its message reached far more than the circulation numbers accounted for, making the *Defender* a national publication.²⁶² Black women's magazines experienced growth during this time and informed women about class, gender, urban life, consumption, injustice and citizenship.²⁶³ These magazines encouraged black women to separate from their "debased pasts" by subscribing to the politics of respectability- that is, modeling white, patriarchal families- and embracing gentility and true womanhood as it was defined by white society. According to women's magazines, ideal black womanhood- like its white counterpart- involved childrearing, home management, fashionable dress, leadership via women's clubs and an informed

²⁵⁹ Walker, *Style and Status*, 12; Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Boston: Bedford St. Martin, 2003), 23.

²⁶⁰ Moss, *The History and Advancement of African-Americans in the Advertising Industry*, 39-40.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 79.

²⁶³ Nowlie Rooks, *Ladies' Pages: African-American Women's Magazines and the Culture That Made Them* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 21.

worldview.²⁶⁴ These magazines promoted standards of womanhood based on white ideals as one way of coping with pervasive white racism. Published by Anthony Overton, founder of Chicago-based Overton Hygienic Company, *Half-Century Magazine* had two voices; one that appealed to middle-class black readers, and one that prepared recent migrant women for an urban, consumer lifestyle. Importantly, *Half-Century Magazine* recognized and celebrated black women's beauty.²⁶⁵

The black press allowed black men and women space to create and distribute their own voices, images and ideas. These newspapers and magazines encouraged consumption, expanded black business markets and celebrated black beauty standards. Because of its growing black population due to the Great Migration, Chicago housed a number of black media outlets including the *Chicago Defender* whose circulation reached far outside the city limits. Black women's magazines such as *Half-Century Magazine* celebrated black womanhood and educated recent migrants in "appropriate" urban behaviors, dress and lifestyle. For men like Overton, "unruly" migrants threatened progress some elite blacks had made in assimilating- blending in and ingratiating- into white-dominated society and earning whites' respect.²⁶⁶ Elites hoped to maintain their status and educated migrants in attempts to prohibit them from disgracing already assimilated, elite black men and women. Black newspapers and magazines encouraged racial and national unity while embracing and promoting consumer citizenship. These media outlets, although not as far-reaching as their white counterparts, played important roles in sharing and shaping African-American voices, beauty, behaviors and consumption.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 9, 73; Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 7.

²⁶⁵ Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1984), 186; Rooks, 4, 70.

²⁶⁶ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 89.

Constructions of Black Femininity and Changes

Slavery, racism and oppression played roles in the creation of black identities. White racism and oppression allowed space for black political and cultural solidarity.²⁶⁷ This space allowed for the creation of divergent black identities in the post-slavery era and to some extent, during slavery. Understandably, these identities differed from white identities because whites did not suffer the violence and degradation of the racialized slave labor system nor the continued racism that persisted after the end of slavery. As a result, black ideas of womanhood differed from their white counterparts. The link between slavery and skin color led to anti-black attitudes that outlived slavery and continued to serve the needs of white imaginations.²⁶⁸ Generally, white Americans equated black bodies with bondage, seeing them either as slaves or ex-slaves, lazy and simple but loyal. These representations circulated through popular media channels, such as white newspapers and magazines, advertisements and radio and minstrel shows.²⁶⁹ Blackness remained linked to slavery in the white mind, but black men and women created new identities that acknowledged the slave past while proclaiming their American identities. An article in the *Chicago Defender* celebrated race and nation, proclaiming “there would be no [American] melting pot without the pure metal- the black man, the 100 per cent loyalty man. His children must sit side by side with white children and impart, not learn, true Americanism.”²⁷⁰ Despite

²⁶⁷ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 30.

²⁶⁸ Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 14.

²⁶⁹ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 8, 16-17.

²⁷⁰ “Americanism,” *Chicago Defender*, January 17, 1920.

forced bondage, segregation and racism, many black men and women saw themselves as Americans, hopeful that assimilation was possible.²⁷¹

The construction of black American women's femininity is inextricably tied with slavery. The identities of southern slave owning whites depended upon the construction of black bodies as different.²⁷² During slavery, white femininity used black womanhood as a foil, creating womanhoods that were diametrically opposed, but dependent on one another. Whereas the construction of white femininity dubbed white women 'pure,' black women were described as hot tempered and "passionate for white men" as early as 1630.²⁷³ Black slave women's alleged promiscuous sexuality foiled white women's purity. Enslaved black women wore ripped clothing and rags, unlike white women's long dresses and corsets, which added to the myth that black women were hypersexual, lewd and desirous.²⁷⁴ Black women were seen as mistresses, whores and breeders to oppose the constructions of white womanhood as wives and mothers. This alleged lack of chastity along with the lack of male protection and piety, left black women excluded from 'true' womanhood.²⁷⁵ Black women's sexuality, constructed by whites during slavery, imagined and emphasized promiscuity in order to contrast white women's supposed purity and chastity. This construction outlived slavery which left black women vulnerable to sexual attacks long after slavery ended.²⁷⁶ While negative white perceptions of enslaved women persisted, black women constructed their own identities as active historical agents and resisters

²⁷¹ Reed, *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis*, 184.

²⁷² Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 74.

²⁷³ Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 35.

²⁷⁴ Rooks, *Ladies' Pages*, 11.

²⁷⁵ Giddings, *When and Where I Enter* 35, 43; Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York, Random House, 1981), 7, 23.

²⁷⁶ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 55.

of violence in their own narratives.²⁷⁷ Despite negative constructions of black femininity by whites, enslaved black women created their own identities.

Racial uplift and assimilation promoted new roles and ideals for black men and women. Women's roles largely mimicked ideal white womanhood. Wealthy black elites promoted racial uplift as a way to refute notions of black inferiority. Drawing from leaders like Booker T. Washington, wealthy black elites believed that by demonstrating Victorian mannerisms and respect, they could show their 'civility' and assimilate into white society. At some level, Washington accepted social Darwinist rhetoric that linked white skin and European ancestry to superior morals, heritage and intellectual capability.²⁷⁸ Black cultural historian Kevin Gaines referred to the process of assimilation as ascribing to "universal but deeply racialized ideological categories of western progress."²⁷⁹ Assimilation meant accepting, or at least acknowledging the preconceived, negative constructions of blackness by suggesting those constructions must be refuted. Gaines argues that racial uplift was therefore a limited response to a wholly racist and often violent society.²⁸⁰ Despite internalizing racist rhetoric, Washington believed that by adopting white standards of behavior and work, black people could "uplift" themselves and the race to be accepted by white society. Once racial uplift was complete, African-Americans would theoretically have assimilated into white society, ending white violence and racism. In some cases, elite and middle-class black men and women had been integrated into white communities; they were accepted and respected by whites. These men and women used their experience to

²⁷⁷ Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 36.

²⁷⁸ Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 20; Madison Grant, *Passing of the Great Race of the Racial Bias in European History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), vii.

²⁷⁹ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, xiv.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, xiv.

justify upholding and promoting respectability based on white ideals.²⁸¹ Deemed respectable by whites, the upper class tended to be light-skinned and had accumulated wealth, often times through entrepreneurship.²⁸² Like contemporary whites, African-Americans emphasized class as the most important component of respectability. Assimilation was a narrow and conservative response, limited by the social, political and economic setting of the decade.²⁸³ Although this method worked for some wealthy, elite, light-skinned black men and women, the idea of assimilation caused tensions between wealthy and poor blacks, those who did and did not want to assimilate and light and dark skinned blacks.

Along with uplift theory, black leadership espoused the values of wealth, merit, racial solidarity and consumption- tenets of the New Negro. According to the *Chicago Defender*, the New Negro was “the same individual roused into self-consciousness...awakened...with new hopes, new desires for the future.”²⁸⁴ New Negro ideology encouraged black self-determination, political engagement, racial uplift and advancement through consumption. This ideology assumed that educated, genteel blacks would oversee and guide the race.²⁸⁵ Black men and women were encouraged to purchase respectable middle-class items and clothing to advance the race by demonstrating that black men and women were capable of possessing middle-class tastes. White imaginations excluded black men and women from consumption, thus shopping became a performative ritual in which black Americans could reaffirm their citizenship. Even

²⁸¹ Mjagkij, *Loyalty in the Time of Trial*, 43.

²⁸² St Claire Drake and Horace Clayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harper & Row, 1945), 531.

²⁸³ Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 29.

²⁸⁴ Reed *Rise of Black Metropolis* 14; Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, The Great Migration and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 7.

²⁸⁵ Erin Chapman, *Prove it On Me: New Negroes, Sex and Popular Culture in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8, 19, 56, 119.

buying ordinary household goods was believed to advance the race.²⁸⁶ The New Negro promoted self-reliance and creation of a new set of standards and norms did not completely adhere to white standards. However, this ideology promoted black women “fair, sensitive and modest, and as crucial in maintaining the race.”²⁸⁷ Like the standards of whiteness prescribed, the New Negro elevated and tasked women with the responsibility of ensuring racial survival.

For some black women, racial uplift offered a way to prove that they could achieve “true” womanhood. Elite African-Americans believed that adhering to (white) patriarchal, gender roles reaffirmed their social status.²⁸⁸ According to the dominant racial science, achieving “true” womanhood demonstrated black women’s evolutionary progress, morality and humanity. Slavery, sharecropping and racism-driven job competition forced black women to work outside the home, exposing them to shame and sexual attacks, both of which also diminished black male authority because they could not provide for nor protect their wives, sisters and daughters.²⁸⁹ As long as a man lacked the ability to protect and provide for his family, his wife would not be considered a “true” woman. The “cult of the black lady” encouraged women to practice chastity and sexual loyalty and to keep house and raise children while her husband worked. This not only demonstrated black women were “true” women, but secured “true” masculinity for black men, as masculinity was proportionate to how well his wife was cared for.²⁹⁰ In this way, the “cult of the black lady” reinforced traditional gender roles but simultaneously challenged preconceived

²⁸⁶ Rooks, *Ladies' Pages*, 20; Jason Chambers “Equal in Every Way: African Americans, Consumption and Materialism from Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement,” *Advertising and Society Review* 7 (2006): accessed 31 August 2012, <http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.lib.ucf.edu/journals/asr/v007/7.1chambers.html>; Kate Dossett “I Try to Live Somewhat in Keeping With My Reputation as a Wealthy Woman:” A’Lelia Walker and the Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company,” *Journal of Women’s History* 21, no. 2 (2009): 90-114, 93.

²⁸⁷ Reed, *The Rise of Chicago’s Black Metropolis*, 19; Joel Tobias Herring, “Men vs. Women,” *Chicago Defender*, July 9, 1921.

²⁸⁸ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 17.

²⁸⁹ Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 58.

²⁹⁰ Morton, *Disfigured Images*, 41, 50; Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 156.

notions of race. Like contemporary whites, wealthy black reformers assumed and promoted traditional, patriarchal gender roles as correct, ideal and acceptable. Unlike whites, black reformers did not see these roles as being in danger.²⁹¹ This is possibly because historically, black women worked outside the home without male economic or physical protection. Because reformers did not see gender roles as threatened, black women's roles outside the home were seen as a valued necessity rather than embarrassment. In advertisements, black working women were portrayed positively, as opposed to white ads, where working women were not featured at all. In one way, encouraging black women to embody normative, traditional (white) gender roles was conservative. However, because black women had been previously prevented from fulfilling these gender conventions, whites saw black women as inferior and immoral.²⁹² By embodying the roles of housewife and mother, black women could theoretically achieve true womanhood.

This replicated the ideal of white womanhood; however it was far more difficult for black women to achieve "lady" status because racism forced most black men into low-paying jobs, which in turn forced women into the workplace. By and large, it was more acceptable for black women to earn money outside the home.²⁹³ Unlike the white community, which shamed white women for leaving the home to work, the black community was more accepting- or at least less threatened- by women earning wages. Black women historically had worked alongside men to support their families, making their work less threatening. As a result, 1920s black women's fiction emphasized housework as a space for black women to define themselves, if they did work

²⁹¹ Christina Simmons, "African-Americans and Sexual Victorianism in the Social Hygiene Movement," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, no. 1 (1993): 51-75, 67.

²⁹² Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 5, 78; Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 88.

²⁹³ Rooks, *Ladies' Pages*, 106.

outside the home.²⁹⁴ Instead of shaming women who left the home to work, black leaders praised women's stability and strength. W.E.B DuBois recast the mammy, one of the archetypal black women, as an asset. To DuBois, she represented spirituality, patience, positivity and love; she anchored the family.²⁹⁵ Strong mothers played a crucial role in anchoring families and raising respectable, race-conscious children. Race motherhood emphasized the importance of maternal roles in patriarchal families and prioritized a mother's respectability and fashion sense.²⁹⁶ For those who sought to assimilate into white culture, black families emphasized patriarchy as part of respectability and racial uplift. The focus on patriarchal families reflected contemporary white ideals because black leaders believed that doing so was the most effective way to dispel and combat racism. Despite promoting white, gendered ideas of families and work, families were more flexible when it came to ideas of women working. Black leaders celebrated women's strength and glorified their roles as wives and mothers as part of the racial uplift strategy.

Class shaped the ways in which black men and women engaged New Negro and racial uplift ideologies. By engaging conspicuous consumption, leisure and valuing personal, outward appearance and respectability African-Americans demonstrated that they were uplifted: middle-class, respectable and civilized.²⁹⁷ Class determined how one "uplifted" one was, which created tensions amongst blacks in addition to tensions between blacks and whites. Black elites, some of whom had already been accepted into white communities, felt threatened by incoming

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁹⁵ Morton *Disfigured Images*, 62-63.

²⁹⁶ Chapman, *Prove It On Me*, 14, 55, 90.

²⁹⁷ Clayton and Drake *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis* 48-49, 57; Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, xiv, xv.

migrants, many of whom were unwilling or uninterested in assimilation.²⁹⁸ The majority- sixty-five percent in Chicago- of the black population were not uplifted. They allegedly belonged to the “underclass” and elites blamed them for vice, disease and social ills.²⁹⁹ The *Chicago Defender* encouraged these people to regulate their behavior for the betterment of the race. A comic called “People We Can Do Without” blamed “those gossiping women...who annoy other passengers” for negatively affecting white’s perceptions of blacks as a whole.³⁰⁰ However, not all African-Americans accepted assimilation ideologies and some actively resisted efforts to shape their behavior in a way that was acceptable to whites. Migrants were accused of not observing “everyday courtesies” on the trains, despite efforts by elite and middle-class blacks to police train riders’ behaviors, dress and conduct.³⁰¹ Established blacks hoped migrants would observe decorum, however, many migrants did not want to follow the rules laid out for them. This deepened tension within the community; migrants did not wish to conform, while assimilationists feared migrants’ unruly behavior would result in elite blacks’ loss of status. Adding to the existing tensions, radical blacks shunned white standards and norms entirely, promoting standards for blacks that did not rely on white standards or norms. In reference to the New Negro ideology promoted by working and middle-class blacks, the radical *Chicago Whip* added that the “New Negroes...have conceived a new line of thought...that the intrinsic standard

²⁹⁸ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 89; Kenneth Goings “‘Duty of the Hour:’ African-American Communities in Memphis, TN, 1862-1923,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 2 (1996): 130-143, 133.

Although Goings’ work examines Memphis, there are parallels between it and Chicago. Both cities had established groups of wealthy blacks who sought to uplift the race towards assimilation, middle- and working- class blacks who promoted harmony between the races rather than assimilation and a growing group of migrants who largely ignored the previous groups.

²⁹⁹ Clayton and Drake, *The Rise of Chicago’s Black Metropolis*, 523.

³⁰⁰ “People We Can Get along Without,” editorial cartoon, *Chicago Defender*, Dec 10, 1921, pg 16.

³⁰¹ Brian McCammack, “‘My God, they must have riots on those things all the time:’ African-American Geographies and Bodies on Northern Urban Public Transportation, 1915-1940,” *Journal of Social History* 43 (2010): 973-988, 979-980; Goings, “Duty of the Hour,” 140.

of beauty did not rest in the white race.”³⁰² The *Whip* echoes sentiments from blacks who celebrated black beauty on its own, not in comparison with white standards. New forms of black music such as blues, celebrated sexually independent, self-sufficient and creative women, which assimilationists and whites both feared and rejected.³⁰³ Although wealthy and middle-class blacks attempted to shape behavior, others rejected ideals based on white models.

This tension applied to women as well as men. Along with glorifying their roles as wives and mothers, upper- and middle-class black women also heavily guarded their sexuality. White women who left home to work might face shame, and may have been seen as “vamps,” but black women risked rape and sexual abuse because whites believed they were inherently promiscuous. As a result, black women shelved their own sexual needs and promoted chastity as a way to counter the myths of the oversexed jezebel stereotype.³⁰⁴ Black women had limited options when they attempted to construct their sexuality because sexual violence against them continued. This type of binary approach to sexuality left black women with two options; respectability or sexuality.³⁰⁵ Sexuality played a substantial role in respectability because the myth of black women’s promiscuity was so heavily ingrained in white society. A binary approach restricted expressions of sexuality, but perhaps black women felt that acknowledging any sexuality reaffirmed the ‘jezebel’ myth or made black women more vulnerable to sexual attacks by white men. Respectable black women wanted to eradicate their association with promiscuity by promoting chastity, purity and middle-class values, thereby creating a new construction of black

³⁰² Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes*, 7.

³⁰³ Angela Davis: *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), xviii.

³⁰⁴ Chapman, *Prove It On Me*, 52.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

femininity.³⁰⁶ Journalist Elise McDougald connected “sexual irregularities” to socio-economic conditions, further emphasizing the link between class and respectability.³⁰⁷ Simultaneously, blues women embraced their sexualities, portraying themselves as sexual, sensual beings. Blues culture created space for working-class black women to discuss controversial themes such as sex and promiscuity, domestic violence, extramarital affairs and homosocial relations. Unlike black reformers’ notions of female submissiveness, blues women opposed marriage and therefore, patriarchy and instead promoted independence, equality and strength.³⁰⁸ Perhaps it was blues’ association with women’s sexuality that led to condemnation from whites and upper and middle-class, respectable blacks. Blues music also received criticism from religious believers, who proclaimed blues’ secular, sexual message as promoting the devil.³⁰⁹ The emphasis on black women’s purity and chastity mirrored the ideal construction of white women’s sexuality. However, because of constructions of black femininity created during slavery and etched into in the white imagination, black women were assumed to be promiscuous and therefore not respectable. For black reformers then, creating a binary sexuality by promoting chastity was the only respectable, sexual option for women. However, working-class and blues women pushed beyond acceptable, respectable boundaries to create their own expressions of sexuality, which resulted in tensions between middle and working-class black women.

Organizations such as the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) highlighted the tensions between respectable upper and middle-class reformers and working-class black cultures. Community-center based clubs and church groups combined white ideas about

³⁰⁶ Rooks, *Ladies’ Pages*, 53.

³⁰⁷ Elise McDougald, “The Double Task: The Struggle of Negro Women for Sex and Race Emancipation,” *The Survey* 53 (1925): 689-681, 691.

³⁰⁸ Chapman, *Prove It On Me*, 107-109; Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 3, 11, 18, 31.

³⁰⁹ Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 6; Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 93.

domesticity and the woman's sphere with notions of racial uplift.³¹⁰ They also promoted respectability and helped recent male migrants find employment.³¹¹ Founded as a response to segregation in women's clubs such as the YWCA, black women's clubs sought to educate the masses of recent migrants in hopes of shaping migrants' behavior to be inoffensive to urban whites. The NACW motto, "lifting as we climb" implied that as club women elevated their social position, other, less fortunate blacks needed to be "lifted" so that they too could occupy middle-class status.³¹² Not all migrants and poor black embraced uplift, nor did they want to conform their behavior to white standards. Although there is little written by migrants, it is obvious newspapers and magazines attempt to address them.³¹³ Articles and comics such as "People We Don't Need (I and II)," "Keep Them in School," and "Character Building" in the *Chicago Defender* not only offered advice to migrants, but also attempted to distinguish wealthy and middle-class blacks from poor blacks who might have been tarnishing elite statuses. "Judging by your Clothes," printed in *Half-Century Magazine* in 1922 reminded women that "first impressions sway people's favor for or against you."³¹⁴ Established urban women were likely well aware of the importance of dress and first impressions. In this article, *Half-Century* reminds migrant women to dress appropriately lest they tarnish the race as a whole. Prominent clubwoman Mary Church Terrell wrote that she "wished to shun the masses of black women, but...cannot escape the consequences of their actions."³¹⁵ Clubwomen saw no other option to maintain their elite positions within the black community. For upper and middle-class black

³¹⁰ Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes* 66; Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro In Chicago*, 147-149.

³¹¹ Robin F. Bachin, *Building the South Side: Urban Spaces and Civic Culture in Chicago, 1890-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 260.

³¹² Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 81.

³¹³ Goings, "Duty of the Hour," 143.

³¹⁴ The Investigator, "Judging by your clothes, what do people think of you?" *Half-Century Magazine*, October 1922.

³¹⁵ Spain, *How Women Saved the City*, 102.

women participation in women's clubs created space for race activism, advice and friendship. Reformers attested to the strength of black women which, when channeled through women's clubs, educated and found employment for recent migrants. Through women's clubs, black women networked, engaged in race work and supported one another.³¹⁶ Elite black women who participated in women's clubs felt they were doing their part to help the race. However, not all migrants appreciated nor wanted this help. Club work illustrates tension between urban, wealthier, established black women and recent migrants.

Not all black women participated in women's clubs, nor did they all want to participate. Beauty culture represented another arena in which class, race and migration status created conflict. Middle-class, respectable women encouraged migrants to don "natural" hair styles, while working-class and recent migrant women "artificially adorned" their hair. Beauty entrepreneur Madam CJ Walker attempted to bridge the gap between classes by emphasizing her work ethic and promoting products promising to enhance natural beauty.³¹⁷ Mainstream beauty standards focused only on white features which excluded black women. In attempts to confront mainstream, white notions of beauty, black women acknowledged that they were beautiful- "the most beautiful women in the world"- and modern.³¹⁸ Although class debates existed regarding beauty, black women created space to confront white notions of beauty, earn income and even bond with other women in the community.³¹⁹ Beauty work also offered women respectable and financially beneficial employment while simultaneously sheltering them from

³¹⁶ Dorothy Salem, *To Better our World: Black Women in Organized Reform, 1890-1920* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publisher, 1990), 232.

³¹⁷ Dossett, "I Try to Live Somewhat in Keeping With My Reputation as a Wealthy Woman," 99-100.

³¹⁸ Walker, *Style and Status* 3, 29, 31-32; Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes*, 63.

³¹⁹ Walker, 3; Noliwe Rooks, *Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture and African-American Women* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 9.

racism and sexism and sexual threats found in other fields of work.³²⁰ However, with the exception of earning income, middle and working-class beauticians did not share the same goals. Middle-class women pushed for the professionalization of the beauty industry while working-class beauticians wanted autonomy and economic security.³²¹ Beauty culture allowed all black women to confront white standards of beauty and offered paths to economic stability. However, beauty culture was not immune to class-based tensions that persisted within the black community.

Upper and middle-class black women could also engaged fashion as a way to demonstrate racial uplift. Fashion encouraged black women to consume because dressing in fashionable clothing showed that the wearer was refined and wealthy.³²² Pamphlets and news releases emphasized the importance of women having “with self-respect and dressing in proper clothing” before leaving home.³²³ Again, this highlights the tension between middle-class and working-class women. Elite black women concerned themselves with outward appearances and encouraged working women to dress in middle-class fashions so as to maintain racial progress. Through the consumption of clothing, black women also demonstrated that they participated in the national, modern consumer world and implied their households earned enough money to purchase fashionable clothing. The shift from “values to valuables”³²⁴ fit in with a national trend that equated consumption with middle-class values. Stated black women used fashion to communicate respectability, social status and modernity.

³²⁰ Susannah Walker, “‘Independent Livings’ or ‘No Bed of Roses’? How Race and Class Shaped Beauty Culture as an Occupation for African-American Women from the 1920s to the 1960s,” *Journal of Women’s History* 20, no. 3 (2008): 60-83, 61-62.

³²¹ Walker, “‘Independent Livings’ or ‘No Bed of Roses?’,” 61-62; Dossett, “I Try to Live Somewhat in Keeping With My Reputation as a Wealthy Woman,” 99.

³²² Rooks, *Ladies’ Pages*, 49-50, 90.

³²³ “People We Can Get Along Without,” *Chicago Defender*, July 9, 1921.

³²⁴ Rooks, *Ladies’ Pages*, 110.

Overall, black womanhood was complex; it encompassed intersections between classes, modernity and nostalgia, rural and urban, strength and oppression, race motherhood and solidarity.³²⁵ While wealthy black elites and reformers encouraged white standards of respectability as a way to deflect racism, other groups created their own definitions of black womanhood. Black womanhood was reclaimed from derogatory, slave-era stereotypes and redefined to highlight hard work, achievement and independence.³²⁶ Black women were seen as hard-working, tenacious and self-reliant; capable of redeeming black masculinity. The long history of black men and women working side by side resulted in more sexual equality for black women than their white counterparts.³²⁷ This allowed black women space to work without men feeling threatened. The divergent histories of white and black women resulted in a more flexible notion of black womanhood as opposed to a single, ideal white womanhood. White advertisements offered a limited picture of black-women-as-mammies, however black-created advertisements featured a multiplicity of black womanhoods. At times, these womanhoods did not agree- not all black women wanted to ascribe to white, Victorian standards. As a result, some advertisements attempt to speak to groups of black women who did not agree on one vision of womanhood.

Black Advertisements and Representations of Womanhood

White popular culture, especially advertisements, relied on derogatory images of black men and women. These forms of media relied on images of black womanhood constructed as

³²⁵ Chapman, *Prove It On Me*, 3, 148.

³²⁶ Giddings, *When and Where*, 356.

³²⁷ Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, 29.

permanent slave women.³²⁸ Aunt Jemima Pancake Mix, for example, offered a stereotypical portrayal of a black woman as a mystical, earth mother and a natural cook.³²⁹ This widespread advertisement did not acknowledge the post-slavery life of black women, and instead relied on a mythologized, romanticized idea of black women. The advertisements in the previous chapter that featured African-American men and women [figs 8-11] perpetuated the myth of black men and women as docile servants to whites. These demeaning and racist images appealed to whites, debased blacks and attempted to reduce their self-esteem.³³⁰ White advertisements featured black men and women as slaves as a way to reassure white consumers during times of expanding black political, social and economic power. However, black advertisers used ads as a medium to portray dignity and gain acceptance and recognition through building and disseminating new, positive images to replace negative ones.³³¹ Black advertisements relied heavily, but not exclusively, on photographs to refute negative stereotypes.

Photograph technology allowed blacks to construct positive images of themselves and the race. African-Americans used photographs as a way to combat negative stereotypes by creating anti-racist, dignified images that highlighted black hygiene, literacy style and leisure.³³² Black men and women created images that aligned with the ideal middle-class lifestyle. Photographs represented reality, whereas art reflected an ideal.³³³ Black photographs offered concrete refutations of negative stereotypes. Photographs, including those found in advertisements, changed the visual representations of black America and celebrated beauty, achievement,

³²⁸ Morton, *Disfigured Images*, ix.

³²⁹ Deck, "Now Then, Who Said Biscuits?," 68.

³³⁰ Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus*, 58, 62.

³³¹ Stanley Lemons, "Black Stereotypes As Reflected in Popular Culture, 1880-1920," *American Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1977): 102-116, 113.

³³² Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 68.

³³³ Willis, "Towards a New Identity," 27; Pierre Bordieu, "The Social Definition of Photography," in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: SAGE Publishers, 1999), 162-180, 175.

diversity and self-worth. Portable camera technology gave blacks agency to create modern, class-conscious and socially-conscious images that refuted white-created ideas and representations of black men and women.³³⁴ These positive images of the race were then disseminated through media, including advertising.

Magazines and papers featured advertisements with black women playing many different roles. Black ads used modern and nostalgic images of blacks to display many types of black women. Black women were shown as educators, consumers, business women, beauty queens, musicians, wives and mothers never as domestics or laborers.³³⁵ Although many black women were laborers and servants, using photographs in advertisements suggested that, if they followed the prescriptive ideology, any black woman could achieve the womanhood presented in a particular ad. Comparatively, white ads limited black women to mammy or domestic servant roles and white-created ads limited white womanhood to a narrow construction; a homemaker, mother and wife. However, both black and white created advertisements emphasized the importance of beauty. As part of respectability and “true” womanhood, black women accepted the “woman’s duty” to be beautiful.³³⁶ Black women in advertisements highlighted the potential and beauty of all black women. Black advertisements used similar selling practices and techniques as white advertisements used, such as an emphasis on science, modernity and sophistication.³³⁷

³³⁴ Willis, 4, 10-13, 20.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 24; Chapman, *Prove It On Me* 91.

For a complete study of black female jazz and blues musicians depicted in advertisements, please see Erin Chapman’s text *Prove It on Me*.

³³⁶ Walker, *Style and Status*, 67.

³³⁷ Julia Blackwelder, *Styling Jim Crow: African-American Beauty Training during Segregation* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 15; Walker, *Style and Status*, 33.

The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to examining black advertisements from two publications, the national *Chicago Defender* and *Half-Century Magazine*, a regional magazine run by prominent Chicagoan Anthony Overton of Overton Hygienic Company. As mentioned, the *Defender* reached national audiences throughout the 1920s. Between 1916 and 1925 *Half-Century Magazine*, a bi-monthly magazine, reached at least sixteen thousand readers via subscription and sharing. In 1926, the magazine became *The Chicago Bee*.³³⁸ Both publications celebrated black beauty, culture and lifestyles and promoted the tenets of racial uplift and race solidarity. Although exact records do not exist, it is reasonable to presume a significant percentage of Chicago's black population had access to one or both papers, through subscription or sharing networks. The remainder of this chapter examines advertisements in chronological order.

³³⁸ Rooks, *Ladies' Pages*, 4.

HAIR! HAIR! HAIR!

At Reasonable Prices



Genuine Creole Hair.
\$2.50.

Effect
Obtained
by Use
of
"Ear Kobs"



AAA
Quality
Hair
\$2.00 a
Pair.



3 Puffs Ringlet Hair, AAA
Quality. Price, \$1.50
Per Set.

The Secret of a Charming Personality Is In a Proper
and Becoming Arrangement of the Hair



Our Stock of Hair Goods is
Complete in Every Detail

Switches AAA Quality, Genuine
Human Hair, 20-in. . . \$6.25

Switches AA Quality, Genuine
Human Hair, 20-in. . . \$3.50

Send Liberal Sample of Your Hair to
Assure a Perfect Match

**The Winona Hair
Emporium**

5011 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.



One of the Effects to Be Obtained With 4 Curls of
AAA Quality Hair, \$2.00.

The Following Classes of "Ads" Will Not Be Accepted by THE HALF-CENTURY MAGAZINE:
Quackery, Fortune-tellers, Saloons, Intoxicating Liquors, Get-Rich-Quick Oil Wells or Mining Stocks, Buffet Plates, or Pictures
ridiculing C. I. People.

Figure 13: Winona Hair Emporium, *Half-Century Magazine*, Jan. 1920.

This advertisement for the Winona Hair Emporium [fig 13] ran in the January 1920 issue of *Half Century Magazine*. The advertisement features two young black women wearing hair extensions. In some ways, this ad emphasizes similar themes as beauty product advertisements

from *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Chicago Tribune*. This advertisement, like the white ads, claims that the “proper and becoming” appearance of hair is part of one’s “charming personality,” suggesting that without the proper hair care, a woman’s personality suffered. The advertisement does not tell the reader why she needed a charming personality, instead allowing the reader to construct her own reasons. The advertisement offers a consumer a way to create and express her identity through beauty.³³⁹ The Winona Hair Emporium ad emphasizes the importance of beauty and hair care for black women, however the ad also suggests that identity, in this case, a charming personality, can be expressed through beauty rituals. Unlike white advertisements for beauty, the advertisement does not feature men nor rely on sex appeal to sell the product. Winona Hair Emporium did, however, emphasize the need for beauty products to enhance black women’s beauty and personality.

This advertisement uses photographs of black women to showcase the product. Unlike white advertisements, which featured caricatured illustrations of black women, Winona Hair Emporium’s advertisement showed real black women. White advertisements used drawings, which emphasized the idyllic nature of the advertisements, whereas photographs represented reality.³⁴⁰ Using photographs of women suggests that their beauty and perceived charm was both attainable and real for all black women. By including photographs of black women, the advertisement also acknowledged that black women fit into notions of womanhood and beauty.³⁴¹ Beauty enhancements such as hair pieces may have been preferable; however this advertisement implies that black women possessed an inherent, natural beauty. Obviously a

³³⁹ Robert E. Weems, “Consumerism and the Construction of Black Female Identity in Twentieth Century America” in *Gender and Consumer Culture Reader* ed. Jennifer Scanlon (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 166-178, 166.

³⁴⁰ Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 95; Willis, “Towards a New Identity,” 27.

³⁴¹ Kitch, 99.

departure from white advertisements, which limited black women to mammies, Winona Hair Emporium showed that black women engaged in womanhood through beauty culture. Although this ad was selling beauty products, it acknowledged that black women could be beautiful, despite white condemnation of black women's appearances.

In fine print, the advertisement lists what types of ads were unacceptable for submission to *Half-Century Magazine*, including ads for "clairvoyants, saloons, intoxicating liquors, get-rich quick oil-wells or mining stocks, Buffet Flats or pictures ridiculing colored people." This suggests that these types of ads were common and *Half-Century Magazine* sought to avoid featuring those types of advertisements, because they were not seen as respectable. In order to maintain their status as a respectable, middle-class publication, the magazine distanced itself from running advertisements that could damage their reputation. This text also suggests that "pictures ridiculing colored people" were submitted to the magazine, which would contradict their ideology of racial uplift and race pride. As such, all *Half-Century Magazine* advertisements feature women who upheld the ideologies of respectability and race pride.



RO-ZOL FOR BLEACHING AND TO CLEAR THE COMPLEXION OF ANY OBJECTIONABLE DEFECTS. A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF SOME OF THE MANY BENEFITS TO BE ENJOYED

RO-ZOL offers a valuable service to those who are suffering from facial blemishes. You will find nothing that will eliminate liver spots, pimples, tan, freckles and blackheads so satisfactorily. We can especially recommend Ro-Zol to those who wish to remove dark rings and marks on the neck and arms caused by collars, furs, etc. Ro-Zol was the first preparation made expressly for bleaching. Our experiences have taught us which materials are most effective and in their usage would not cause injury to the skin. And it is this fact that has given Ro-Zol a standard by which all other similar preparations might be judged. Ro-Zol does not bleach by destroying the pigmentation or natural coloring agents of the skin. It is received by the pigment and combines and harmonizes to produce a remarkably sat-

isfactory, youthful, wholesome and whitened complexion. The preparations that bleach by destroying the pigment are dangerous and should be carefully avoided. It is that particular sort of treatment that gives the skin a dead, marble-like appearance. You could not offer any of our patrons a substitute. Its users of yesterday are its users of to-day. This evident popularity of Ro-Zol is due to the fact that we have kept it up to the same high standard of quality and merit we had when it was first offered to the public. We have analyzed and tested this article from every standpoint, consequently we can with certainty assure you it contains nothing that can injure a delicate or sensitive skin. There is no substitute for RO-ZOL. Refuse to accept anything else. Can be purchased at any reliable drug store.



THE OVERTON-HYGIENIC MFG. CO.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

Dept. H. C.

Write for Terms to Agents

Figure 14: Overton Ro-Zol, *Half-Century Magazine*, Jan. 1921.

This Overton Hygiene Company advertisement for Ro-Zol Complexion Clearer and Bleach [fig 14] was printed in the January 1921 issue of *Half-Century Magazine*. Like the Winona Hair Emporium advertisement [fig 13], this advertisement is for a beauty product. However, this advertisement features a black woman and a man, presumably her husband. Both are seated at a table, set for breakfast. The man and the woman admire the woman in a small mirror, emphasizing black women's beauty. In this advertisement, the couple is obviously middle-class or upper middle-class, as evidenced by the elaborate place settings, flowers and dress. The man, like men in white advertisements, wears a business suit. However, black men were commonly restricted to low paying jobs by racism; in this advertisement the man is dressed for white-collar work, implying the woman remains at home. This is drastically different from the images of black men in white advertisements, where black men were limited to porters, cooks such as Rastua and former slaves, like Uncle Mose, Aunt Jemima's husband. Also, both people are seated at set places; neither person appears above or below the other, they are equal partners and share the space.³⁴² The advertisement's themes parallel themes found in the Wheatena [fig 4] and Commonwealth Edison Electric Shops [fig 5] ads; all three advertisements feature a middle-class couple at a table. This advertisement could read as an emulation of white standards and ideals; however, it also suggests that black men and women shared ownership of these ideals.³⁴³ Popular 1920s black women's fiction suggests that many black women hoped to no longer need to work.³⁴⁴ Historically, black women rarely, if ever, had an opportunity to remain at home while her husband worked. Furthermore, a man who earned enough money to provide his family financial stability, thus allowing his wife to stay home was deemed

³⁴² Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 94.

³⁴³ Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 99.

³⁴⁴ Rooks, *Ladies' Pages*, 95.

masculine.³⁴⁵ White-collar, high-paying work offered black men a way to express their masculinity through economics. According to contemporary racial science, by staying at home, black women fulfilled mainstream gender conventions, thus demonstrating their morality, proving they deserved equality.³⁴⁶ Although in some ways, this advertisement perpetuates traditional, gendered stereotypes, it is progressive in others. In a racist society that automatically excluded black women from beauty, respectability and true womanhood, this advertisement features a black woman, encouraged by her husband, who embodies all three.

The text explains that Ro-Zol Complexion Clearer and Bleach was meant to clear up “dark rings and marks on the neck and arms caused by collars, furs, etc.” and did not “bleach by destroying the pigmentation or natural coloring agents of the skin.” This highlights the tensions between racial pride and a demand for skin bleach.³⁴⁷ Despite the tenets of race pride, skin bleaches received continuous advertising in the black press. The advertisement reflects persisting tension between light and dark-skinned black women, as light-skinned black women often had easier times gaining employment, passing as white (potentially avoiding racist remarks and violence).³⁴⁸ Light-skinned women could access privileges that darker-skin women could not, likely garnering some resentment. Perhaps consumers felt that by using this product, they too could access those privileges. However, men such as Marcus Garvey decried advertisements for skin bleach; he refused to print ads in his own publication, *Negro World* that told blacks to

³⁴⁵ Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 156.

³⁴⁶ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 5.

³⁴⁷ Blackwelder, *Styling Jim Crow*, 18.

³⁴⁸ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 118.

“bleach their skin,” instead encouraging race pride and beauty for all black women.³⁴⁹ This advertisement embodies the conflicting messages black women received about their appearances.

Using scientific language, the text condemned products that worked by “destroying the pigment” of the skin. The ad’s text demonstrates how prevalent and ubiquitous white beauty standards were. However, twentieth century African-American business scholar Robert Weems suggests that those who bought “bleaching” products did not actually believe they would be bleached white; perhaps consumers really did use “bleaching” products to enhance their beauty, as this advertisement suggests.³⁵⁰ Disconnect between the image and the text demonstrates the tensions black women faced; black women wanted to be beautiful and respectable, but those traits were inextricably tied to white standards. Although the text of the Ro-Zol advertisement is rife with complications and contradictions, the image presents an image of black men and women that is more positive than images of black women in white-created ads.

³⁴⁹ Robert A. Hill, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 382-384.

³⁵⁰ Blackwelder, *Styling Jim Crow*, 15; Weems “Consumerism and the Construction of Black Female Identity in Twentieth Century America” 169

When You Buy a **BLACK SWAN RECORD**



you buy the
**Only Records
 Made by
 Colored People**

Patronize Race enterprises when you get the same value for your money.



Black Swan Records
 Are Better Than Most Other Kinds

Buy from your dealer or order direct from

Ethel Waters, Queen of Blues Singers
 Race Phonograph Corp., 2289 Seventh Ave., New York City

Figure 15: Black Swan Records, *Chicago Defender*, Jan. 1922.

This 1922 Black Swan advertisement [fig 15] featured in *Chicago Defender* shows a picture of blues singer, Ethel Waters. Black Swan claimed to produce “the only records made by colored people.” Buying a Black Swan Record allowed a consumer to “patronize race

enterprises” and “get the same value for your money.” This advertisement highlights race pride and black-created music, but otherwise is not particularly noteworthy. However, this ad’s appearance in the *Chicago Defender* suggests that the *Defender* attempted to appeal not only to middle-class and wealthy, respectable blacks, but also to working-class Chicagoans. Elite blacks did not approve of blues; they believed it to be low culture, illicit, un-Christian, and overtly sexual and therefore, not respectable music.³⁵¹ At the same time, working-class black women found blues appealing. Blues women drank, danced, and engaged in extramarital sex and even lesbianism. Blues challenged Victorian notions of respectability by questioning the notion that women belonged in the home. Working-class black women found community in blues music, as it addressed working-class social issues that “traditional” black spirituals and white popular music did not.³⁵² Elites and respectable middle-class black men and women tried to distance themselves from blues music, yet an advertisement featuring the “Queen of the Blues” ran in the respectable *Chicago Defender*. Although blues was condemned as sexual, the image of Ethel Waters is not overtly sexual. This advertisement spoke to conflicting groups of black men and women. The ad encouraged respectable consumption by highlighting race pride, however, featuring a blues singer appealed to working-class blacks, whom elite blacks hoped to reform.

³⁵¹ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 93.

³⁵² Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 11, 22, 111.



**It's no use to wait
'Til your ship comes in
If you haven't sent one out.**

**The Way to Get Anything Is
to Go After It**

Do You Need Money?

If so, this is your opportunity. There are no hard times for High-Brown Agents. If you wish spare time or steady employment write for our terms to agents.

Our agents (young men and women) earn big money by a few hours a day of pleasant and dignified employment.

There is no other occupation that yields such big returns with such little effort as selling High-Brown Toilet Preparations. Also while helping yourself you are lending your aid towards the maintenance of a worthy Race Enterprise. We have one of the finest and most excellent lines of toilet preparations in the world and it is especially adapted to the needs of our people. We have always been leaders in putting out handsome packages with pretty Colored girls attractively displayed. Our products are of the finest quality. Therefore your success is certain. If you don't know how to sell, we will teach you.

You can't afford to "pass up" such an opportunity. Write for Terms Today

**OVERTON-HYGIENIC
MFG. CO.**

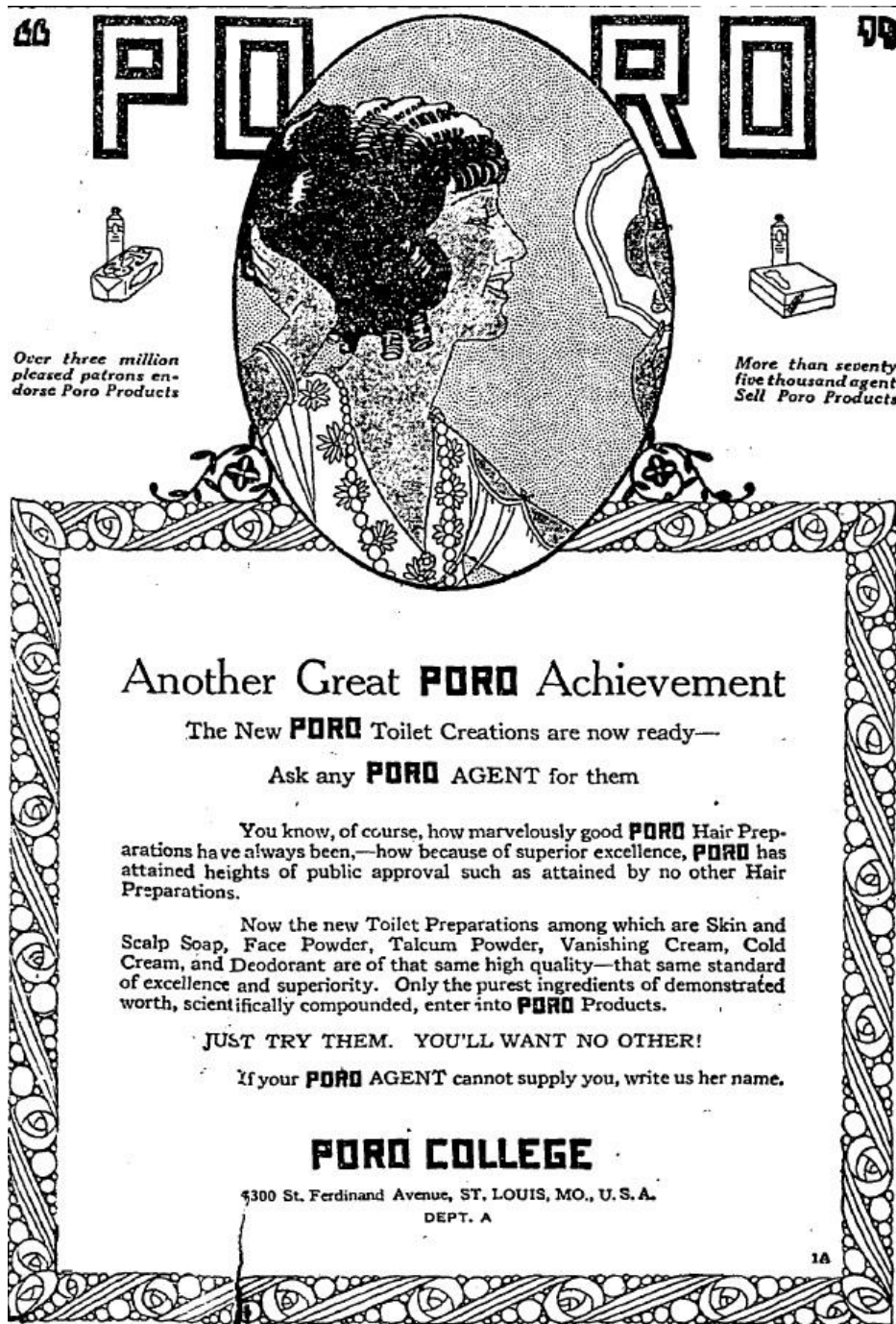
Dept. H. C. CHICAGO, ILL.

Figure 16: Overton Agents, *Half-Century Magazine*, April 1922.

This Overton Hygienic Company advertisement [fig 16] from 1922 is the only advertisement in the series to feature a woman working outside the home, making it unique. The woman in the advertisement is presumably working and dressed in respectable business attire. The ad text claims that a “few hours a day of pleasant and dignified” work would “yield big returns.” Furthermore, employment with Overton Hygienic Company helped to “maintain a worthy Race Enterprise.” A job with the Overton Company promised financial stability through respectable, race conscious employment. In this advertisement, the woman is respectable and dignified, despite working outside the home. She is racially aware and has the potential for upward mobility through her earnings. In the previous chapter, the Bluebird advertisement [fig 1] suggested that if a family needed money, the husband should take on extra work. In this ad, it is unclear if the woman has a husband or children; regardless she contributes to her financial future. Because black men were often forced into low-paying jobs, black women had to work outside the home to support their families. For white, middle-class women, working outside the home could result in shaming. However, this advertisement shows that for black women, work outside the home could encourage race pride, respectability and dignity besides benefiting the saleswoman financially. By acting as a saleswoman, one would also educate potential consumers in proper use of personal care and beauty products. Then, accepting a job as a saleswoman not only gave a woman financial income, but also converted her into an agent of racial uplift. It was the saleswoman’s duty to educate women in hygiene- especially hair care³⁵³- which would allegedly help these women to be successful and eventually middle-class. Overton

³⁵³ As Anthony Overton financed *Half-Century Magazine*, it should come as no surprise that *Half-Century* featured multiple articles on hair care, encouraging the use of multiple Overton Hygienic products.

Hygienic Company therefore both sold beauty products and offered black women a path to financial security and employed them in racial uplift.



46 **PORO** 49

Over three million pleased patrons endorse Poro Products

More than seventy-five thousand agents Sell Poro Products.

Another Great **PORO** Achievement

The New **PORO** Toilet Creations are now ready—

Ask any **PORO** AGENT for them

You know, of course, how marvelously good **PORO** Hair Preparations have always been,—how because of superior excellence, **PORO** has attained heights of public approval such as attained by no other Hair Preparations.

Now the new Toilet Preparations among which are Skin and Scalp Soap, Face Powder, Talcum Powder, Vanishing Cream, Cold Cream, and Deodorant are of that same high quality—that same standard of excellence and superiority. Only the purest ingredients of demonstrated worth, scientifically compounded, enter into **PORO** Products.

JUST TRY THEM. YOU'LL WANT NO OTHER!

If your **PORO** AGENT cannot supply you, write us her name.

PORO COLLEGE

5300 St. Ferdinand Avenue, ST. LOUIS, MO., U. S. A.
DEPT. A

1A

Figure 17 Poro "Achievement," *Chicago Defender*, May 1923.

This 1923 Poro advertisement [fig 17] was featured in the *Chicago Defender*. In this ad, a well dressed black woman admires herself in a mirror. The beauty ritual in this advertisement mimics the Wildroot Shampoo [fig 6] and Djer-Kiss [fig 7] advertisements from the previous chapter. This advertisement relies on a drawing, unlike the previous advertisements, which feature photographs. Using art suggests that the scene depicted in the advertisement is idealized and may not be intended to depict a reality.³⁵⁴ Poro’s advertisers wanted Poro ads to feel glamorous while linking the products to beauty and prestige, which may explain why the advertisers chose to use art rather than a photograph.³⁵⁵ The woman in the advertisement is wearing pearls and a luxurious dress and her hair is styled. She is not supposed to represent every woman, she represents an idealized version of black women’s beauty. Unlike similar white advertisements, this woman is not sexualized; she smiles at her reflection rather than kissing it, as in the Djer-Kiss ad. By performing a similar beauty ritual as seen in the white advertisements, the advertisement showed that black women shared in the desire to be beautiful.³⁵⁶ The advertisement tells consumers that beauty belonged to black women too, even though white standards primarily defined beauty. Poro products, the ad claims, are “scientifically compounded,” sold by “seventy-five thousand agents” and used by “three million patrons.” Like ads for white beauty products, scientific language and sales numbers give the advertisement credibility. Like the Overton Hygienic Company advertisements [fig 14, 16], Poro ads sold beauty products and recruited sale agents.

³⁵⁴ Willis, “Towards a New Identity,” 27; Bordieu, “The Social Definition of Photography,” 75.

³⁵⁵ Walker, *Style and Status*, 11.

³⁵⁶ Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 99.



CONSTANT CARE—NOT LUCK

Human history and experience have taught us that many persons believe that a head of naturally long and beautiful hair, a healthy scalp and a lovely smooth complexion come from luck, but they do not. **Constant care** and the frequent use of preparations of proven merit are the secrets.

Use Madam C. J. Walker's

Vegetable Shampoo

Pure, thoroly cleanses
hair and scalp.

Glossine

To soften dry,
curly hair.

Wonderful Hair Grower

Nourishes and stimulates the growth of stubborn, lifeless hair.

Tetter Salve

For Tetter, Eczema and Itching Scalps.

Four preparations especially recommended for short, thin and falling hair, tetter and eczema of the scalp. Sent as trial treatment for \$1.50.

Complexion Soap Superfine Face Powder Cleansing Cream
Witch Hazel Jelly Compact Rouge Vanishing Cream

World renowned and made to aid you have a lovely, smooth complexion.
For Sale at Drug Stores, or Agents and by Mail.

Free Booklet—Write To-day

The Madam C. J. Walker Mfg. Co., Inc.
640 N. West St., Indianapolis, Ind.

Figure 18 Madam C. J. Walker, *Chicago Defender*, May 1923.

This Madam CJ Walker Co. advertisement [fig 18] ran in a May 1923 issue of the *Chicago Defender*. The ad features a bust of Walker with a modern, bob haircut. The text advertisements multiple hair preparations, designed to “clean, soften, nourish” and ease itching. Compared to the Ro-Zol [fig 14] and Poro [fig 17] advertisements, the Walker advertisement is relatively un-glamorous, merely featuring Walker rather than an idealized breakfast or beauty scene. Instead of selling glamour, Walker Co. sold race pride and beauty to working-class women. The majority of Chicago’s women were working-class. This advertisement, combined with Walker’s rags to riches story, likely would have appealed to many women who hoped for economic stability. Walker demonstrated that despite pervasive white racism, a working-class background and single motherhood, a black woman could achieve the American dream. Walker emphasized her own domestic work background as a way to marry race pride, beauty preparations and working-class women.³⁵⁷ This advertisement did not encourage women to bleach their skin or to straighten kinky hair; it encouraged them to work with their natural skin color and hair texture. According to Walker, black women could have modern, stylish hairstyles without attempting to look white.³⁵⁸ In this way, Walker bridged gaps between working-class women and beauty in ways that did not necessarily rely on white standards, unlike the Ro-Zol advertisement.

³⁵⁷ Dossett, “I Try to Live in Keeping with my Reputation as a Wealthy Woman,” 98.

³⁵⁸ Tracey O. Patton, “‘Hey Girl, Am I more than my Hair?’ African American Women and Their Struggles with Beauty, Body Image, and Hair,” *NWSA Journal* 18, no. 2 (2006): 24-51, 29.

THE **PORO** AGENT RENDERS A DISTINCTIVE SERVICE

It Pays to Patronize Her

PORO HAIR AND TOILET PRODUCTS stand out from the crowd of competition with character strikingly their own.

PORO Products are amazingly effective. That **PORO** satisfies is evidenced by the fact that over **THREE MILLION** **PORO** patrons were served with **PORO** Treatments and **PORO** Products by more than **SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND** **PORO** AGENTS during the year just passed.

Wherever you live you may use **PORO** and enjoy matchless satisfaction.

There's a **PORO** AGENT nearby who will cheerfully serve you.

If you don't know her name, write

PORO COLLEGE

4300 St. Ferdinand Avenue

ST. LOUIS, MO., U. S. A.

DEPT. B-4

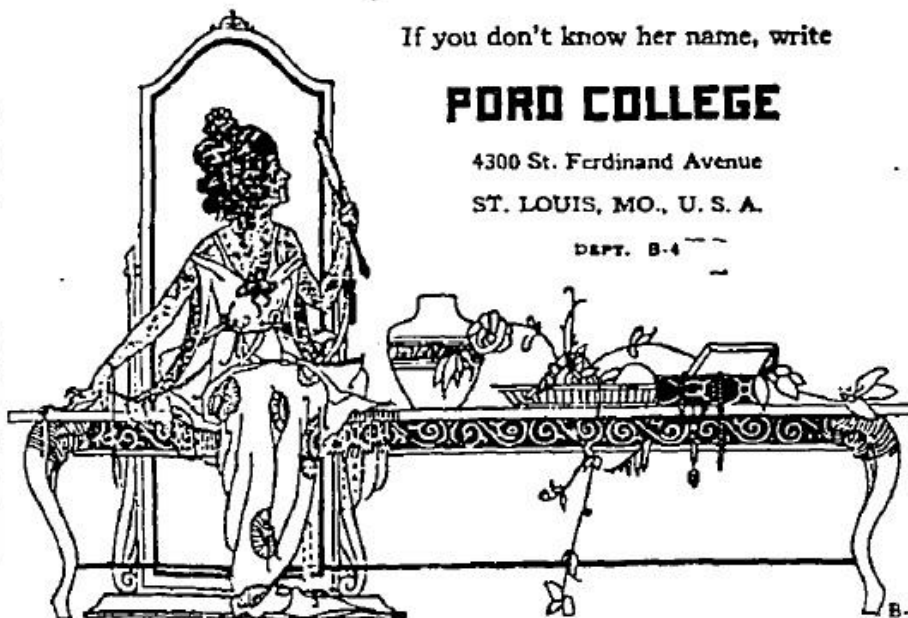


Figure 19: Poro (It Pays to Patronize), *Chicago Defender*, Dec. 1924.

This Poro advertisement [fig 19] was published in the *Chicago Defender* in 1924. Like the previous Poro advertisement [fig 17], this ad dedicates most of the space to text. This advertisement does not sell a specific product; rather it announces that it “pays to patronize” local Poro agents, emphasizing the intersections of race and capitalism.³⁵⁹ Buying cosmetics from a local agent supported a black business, black women’s beauty and black families. Unlike the Winona Hair Emporium advertisement [fig 13], the Poro ad does not suggest their products will enhance women’s lives; Poro simply claims the products “stand out from the crowd of competition.” This ad features a drawing of a well dressed, middle-class black woman looking at her reflection, much like the 1923 Poro ad [fig 17]. The ad does not feature any products. In a way, the ad could be perceived as “selling” the woman. However, the text specifies that it pays to patronize her. When the text and image are linked, a consumer could assume that the woman is a Poro agent. As a cosmetic sales agent, she embodies the brand; she is beautiful, race-conscious and middle-class, possibly from her work selling Poro products. Compared to the Walker advertisement [fig 18], this Poro ad sells fantasy and glamour rather than working-class practicality. Unlike the Overton advertisement [fig 16], the woman is not shown selling products, but just admiring her own beauty. In some ways, this advertisement has a negative feeling- the woman is narcissistic and the viewer feels like a voyeur. However, featuring a black woman admiring her appearance demonstrates that feeling beautiful was an option for black women, despite whites devaluing black women’s looks.³⁶⁰ Due to deeply ingrained racist beliefs prevalent in American society, images in advertising took on different meanings depending on the race of the person portrayed. Because whites denied black women access to

³⁵⁹ Chapman, *Prove It On Me*, 6.

³⁶⁰ Blackwelder, *Styling Jim Crow*, 15.

beauty and fashion, this advertisement could be seen as demonstrating that beauty, self-love and upward mobility were all available to black women.

DOLLS! DOLLS! DOLLS!

BIG HOLIDAY SALE

Just What You Have Been Waiting for:
World's Greatest Negro Doll Bazaar

We specialize in pretty high-brown, unbreakable, walking, talking, sleeping and other character dolls. We carry the largest variety of educational dolls ever introduced the world over. Children's delight, pretty high-crown dolls, dressed attractively, with human expression, changing creole complexion, with beautiful black hair. Remember, children are the home's dearest possession and the parents should see to it that they have what nature dictates. Beware of inferior or "bandanna" type doll. Give that child a doll that she can take anywhere and be proud of. Every doll sold under our name is backed by our guarantee for quality, beauty and durability. Our doll is entirely different from the rest. Compare our quality dolls with others and see for yourself why we can guarantee our merchandise. See our line first! Order today and be assured of delivery in time for the holidays. Factory is running day and night to meet the great demand. All orders filled in rotation, so don't delay.

For quick service, send money or certified check, 25 per cent deposit on all orders, balance C. O. D. Goods securely packed and shipped from factory to your door. We sell dolls the year around. Buy dolls with a guarantee—that alone should convince you that all we claim is true. Write name and address plainly.



PLAIN DOLL

No. 100—Unbreakable composition head and hands. 15 inches. 59c.
No. 102—Unbreakable composition head and hands. Smartly dressed. Black hair and movable arms. 15 inches. Only \$1.10.



MAMA DOLLS

Dressed in assorted colors and styles. Walk and Talk. Pretty black wig. Comes in two sizes.

No. 201—22 inches \$5.49
No. 108—18 inches 3.98
Very pretty baby face.

Order by
Number



SLEEPING Special Human Curls

Designed for those who appreciate quality, style and beauty. Long human hair curls, dressed in very latest style. Walk, Talk and Sleep. Comes in two sizes.

No. 900-E—
29 inches.
\$15.00

No. 700—
22 inches.
\$9.98

SIZE OF A
REAL TOT

Big Value

FRENCH DOLL



Season's Biggest Hit.
Makes a Very Useful Gift.
No. 432—26 inches. Made of unbreakable composition, with jointed limbs. Dressed in a well-tailored mannish suit of high-grade felt, trimmed in two colors. Boyish bobbed hair. High-heeled French slippers. Wears a bead necklace. Lends an artistic finish to the home. Price, \$5.98.



SLEEPING MAMA DOLLS

Dressed attractive. Walk, Talk and Sleep. Fine wig. Comes in two sizes.

No. 400—22 inches \$6.98
No. 800—18 inches 3.98



MAMA DOLLS

Comes in Two Styles

No. 300—15 inches; black hair wig; Walk and Talk. Price, \$1.98
No. 101—15 inches; painted hair; Walk and Talk. Price, \$1.29

N. V. SALES CO.

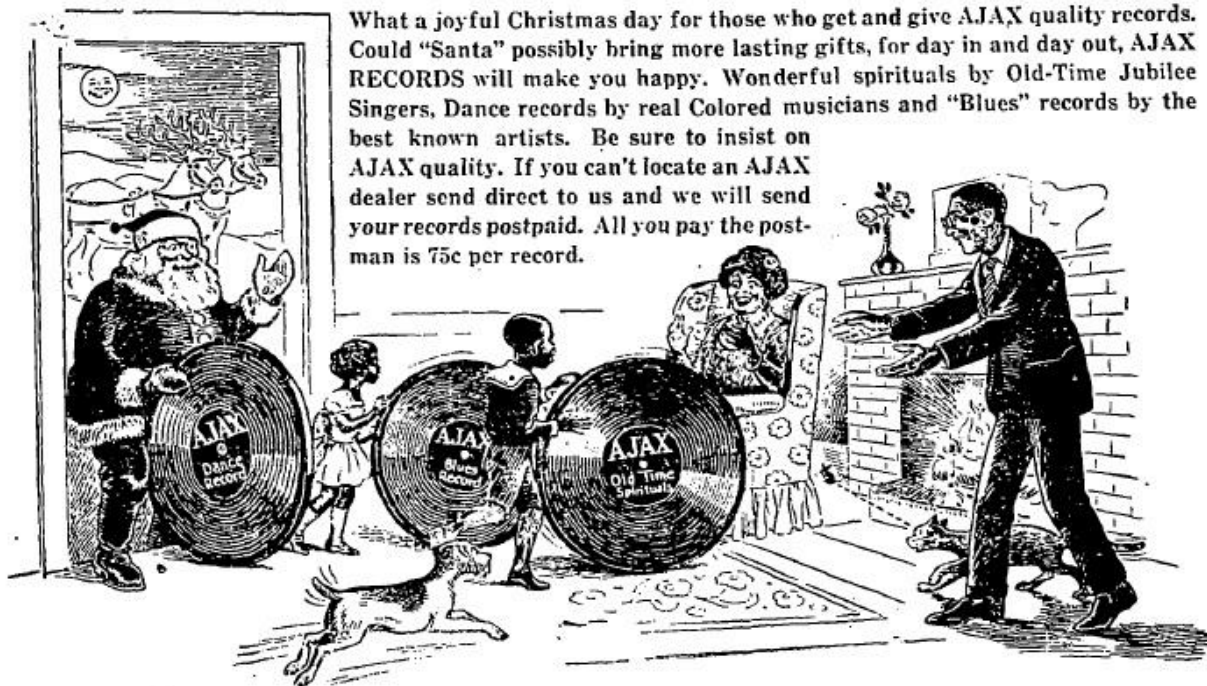
2540 Seventh Avenue, at 147th Street.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Figure 20: N.V. Sales Co, Chicago Defender, Dec. 1924.

Several themes found in the previous advertisements are seen in this Christmas 1924 advertisement [fig 20] from the *Chicago Defender*. This ad, engaging themes of race pride and realistic portrayals of black women, features various types of children's dolls. Unlike the Aunt Jemima ad [fig 11] that offered Aunt Jemima, Uncle Mose and their "pickaninny kids" in ragdoll form, this advertisement offers various "high-brown" dolls. The N.V. Sales Dolls more closely represented actual humans, as opposed to the simple Aunt Jemima ragdolls or similar dolls on the market. Black dolls encouraged self-esteem in black girls and young women, showing them their looks were something "to be proud of." The advertisement's text warns consumers to "beware inferior bandanna dolls," such as the Aunt Jemima mammy ragdoll, which was produced by a white-owned business. These dolls offered realistic, pretty representations of black women and girls, dressed in fashionable clothing rather than rags. However, the advertisement emphasizes light, "high-brown" and "Creole" complexions, ignoring the diversity of skin color amongst black women, and especially ignoring dark-skinned women. By purchasing one of these dolls, a consumer supported race pride. Giving a child a "high-brown" doll instilled that from a young age, black skin was "charming." Although doll manufacturers created black dolls, the advertisement emphasized light skin, perpetuating the tensions between light and dark skinned women.

Give AJAX Records



What a joyful Christmas day for those who get and give AJAX quality records. Could "Santa" possibly bring more lasting gifts, for day in and day out, AJAX RECORDS will make you happy. Wonderful spirituals by Old-Time Jubilee Singers, Dance records by real Colored musicians and "Blues" records by the best known artists. Be sure to insist on AJAX quality. If you can't locate an AJAX dealer send direct to us and we will send your records postpaid. All you pay the post-man is 75c per record.

SPIRITUALS

- 17041—When the Saints Come Marching In and That Old Time Religion, the Old-Time Jubilee Singers.
- 17063—My Lord's Gonna Move This Wicked Race and Father, Precious Me, the Old-Time Jubilee Singers.
- 17034—Onward, Christian Soldiers and Sun of My Soul, Ruthven McDonald.
- 17035—Rest for the Weary and I Need Thee Every Hour, Ruthven McDonald.

DANCE

- 17012—Louisville Blues and Tempermental Papa, Kansas City Five.
- 17078—St. Louis Blues and Believe Me, Hot Mama, Kansas City Five.
- 17065—Lenox Avenue Shuffle and Down in the Mouth Blues, Texas Blues Destroyers.
- 17032—Shuggle Up a Bit and That Teasin', Squeasin' Man of Mine, the Choo Choo Jazzers.

BLUES

- 17057—Crab Shooting Blues and Death Letter Blues, Helen Cross and the Choo Choo Jazzers.
- 17071—Bloody Razor Blues and Neglected Blues, Helen Cross and the Choo Choo Jazzers.
- 17064—Workhouse Blues and House Rent Blues, Essie Smith and the Choo Choo Jazzers.
- 17073—Rainy Weather Blues and Salt Water Blues, Essie Smith and the Choo Choo Jazzers.
- 17075—Bye Bye Blues and Weeping Willow Blues, Essie Smith and the Choo Choo Jazzers.
- 17058—Good Time Ball and Lost Opportunity Blues, Mamie Smith and her Jazz Hounds.
- 17063—Just Like You Took My Man Away From Me and Remorseful Blues, Mamie Smith and her Jazz Hounds.
- 17048—My Sweet Man and What You Need is Me, Mamie Smith and the Choo Choo Jazzers.
- 17080—A to Z Blues and I'm Done, Done, Done With You, Josie Miller, Billy Higgins and the Choo Choo Jazzers.
- 17057—Freight Train Blues and Lovin' Henry Blues, Josie Miller and the Choo Choo Jazzers.

GRAVEYARD BOUND BLUES
Susie Smith and the CHOO CHOO JAZZERS
 AJAX NO 17075

The Quality Race Record

Some Dealers' Territory Still Open
AJAX

Ajax Record Company, 108 W. Lake St., Chicago, Ill. Phone State 1327

Figure 21: Ajax Records, *Chicago Defender*, Dec. 1924.

This Ajax Records advertisement [fig 21] ran in a 1924 issue of the *Chicago Defender*.

The ad features a middle-class black family receiving records from Santa Claus. The family

appears to be in a single family home and wearing middle-class, fashionable and respectable clothing. Although the advertisement boasts race pride, Santa Claus is white; he cannot escape the prevalence of whiteness. The mother sits in the background as her husband welcomes the children and records into the home. The husband wears a business suit, which suggests (like in the Ro-Zol ad [fig 14]) that he does white collar work and earns enough money for his wife to remain at home and to own a home. By featuring a black family in traditional middle-class roles, the ad acknowledges that that lifestyle was attainable for African-Americans. Although this advertisement seems positive- or somewhat positive- on its surface, it is much more complex.

It is important to note that Black Swan Records was the only black-owned record company during this period, meaning Ajax Records was likely owned by whites.³⁶¹ While the ad features a middle-class black family, like the Ro-Zol ad, it also shows them listening to dance and blues music. A respectable, middle-class family would have likely attempted to distance themselves from blues or dance music, rather than purchase it as a holiday gift. As this record company was owned by whites, it is likely that the ad creator concerned himself or herself with profit alone. As such Ajax endeavored to sell as many records as possible, without attempting to understand the complexities of the black community. It is possible that the family featured in the ad was inspired by white family standards and ideals, rather than being intended to reflect a black middle-class family. Ajax did not concern itself with race enterprise or race pride as a marketing technique, likely because the owners of Ajax would not want to encourage race pride. This advertisement represents the complexities and challenges of the 1920s and consumer capitalism. White-owned Ajax Records sold “race records” to black Americans as a way to capitalize on an expanding market. Pervasive racism locked black Americans into permanent

³⁶¹ Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, xii.

second-class citizenship, yet whites were willing to create, market and sell “race” products to people they believed were inferior. Race mattered little, so long as it could be exploited for a profit.

Conclusion

Beginning during slavery, the black press created space for black men and women to share news and ideas. Unlike the white press, which reduced all African-Americans to servants and stereotypes, the black press shared positive (albeit complex and sometimes contradictory) representations of African-Americans, especially when compared to white portrayals of blacks. When whites perceived black identities, they did so with the intention of separating the races and maintaining continuing oppression of black bodies. Whites believed black women were lusty, hypersexual, simple and loyal. Because black men were also oppressed by slavery, they lacked the ability to protect women from sexual abuse, nor could they provide financial support. The combination of these alleged factors led to the belief that black women were not “true” women and could not achieve true womanhood. The constructions of white and black women opposed one another, but depended upon one another; white women could not be “true” women without denoting which women were “un-true.” Despite the inhumanity and cruelty of the racialized slave labor system and persisting racism after the Civil War, black men and women created their own identities.

The ideologies of racial uplift, assimilation and the New Negro were believed to offer a clear path to ending racism. Ascribing to assimilation meant, on some level, accepting negative

constructions of blackness by actively trying to refute them. These ideologies were just a few limited responses to combat a wholly racist society. However, the ideologies offered black women a path to true womanhood; they were to follow the ideals prescribed for true white womanhood. As such, black women were expected to be temperate, respectable, chaste and controlled wives and mothers that deferred to patriarchy. In theory, this demonstrated black men and women's racial progress, allowing them to integrate into white society, thus ending racism. Not all African-Americans accepted assimilation ideologies, and instead chose to resist white culture on an individual level while also creating black culture for themselves, outside of white standards and ideals.

Despite the promotion of the patriarchal white family, the black community was largely more accepting of black women earning wages outside the home. Whereas the white community saw white women's expanded roles as a threat, the black community accepted a more flexible notion of womanhood. This acceptance resulted in the depiction of multiple black womanhoods in advertising. Black women were shown as in many different roles, but never as mammies or laborers. Advertisers used photographs as proof that the roles advertisements portrayed could be achieved by black women. The divergent histories of black and white women allowed black advertisers to accept and portray women in many different roles. These portrayals did not represent all black women, as African-Americans experienced friction amongst themselves as well as with white society about proper roles for women. Competing visions of black culture and womanhood meant that advertisers sometimes needed to address multiple audiences and attempted to sell one product to many audiences. Although rife with complications and complexities, black-created advertisements offered positive, diverse images of black women.

CONCLUSION

The 1920s were categorized by racial, gendered, and class tensions. These competing groups created their own visions of what it meant to be an American. Facing discrimination in the South, many African-Americans moved north to gain better jobs and more equality. Racism encouraged solidarity, however black Americans did not agree upon one method for coping with, and hopefully ending, antiblack racism. Although racism persisted, Northern blacks conducted business, created their own media and engaged in politics. In doing so, they demonstrated that they were members of American society. White women faced sexism, however they too participated in politics and took on new opportunities in the public sphere, including education, sexuality and leisure. Simultaneously, white women were accused of frivolity and blamed for divorce and the relaxation of values. While these new opportunities were mostly restricted to white, native-born, middle-class white women, it must be noted that these roles, and their increased visibility, was new. As a reaction to migrating blacks, immigration, a perceived decline in morals and white women's new roles, the Ku Klux Klan grew. The Klan's vision of America included protecting white womanhood and upholding white supremacy. Concurrently, the advertising industry expanded and dispersed homogenizing ideas about American values, lifestyles and ideas of race and gender. These ads largely ignored the multiple visions of America being created.

Mainstream ads- ads created by whites for white audiences- largely reinforced traditional ideas about white women and black men and women. Working-class women had worked outside the home, traditionally, however middle-class white women began to work past marriage in order to cover the costs of living and increased pressure to consume. Although greater

numbers of married white women worked outside the home, the construction of white womanhood tightened to emphasize the necessity of domesticity and middle-classness as a requirement for true womanhood. Women's roles changed inside the home too; technology and scientific recommendations urged women to cook and clean with greater frequency and more attention to detail. Women had to maintain a home, raise children and maintain a beautiful, youthful complexion with little to no aid from domestic help or their husbands. Ads in local and national papers repeated these themes; women were to keep house and maintain their beauty. Although some ads show women using technology or wearing fashionable clothing, they still featured women as housewives, mothers and wives, always dependent upon their husbands. Simultaneously, black men and women were shown as antiquated and often as foils to modern, white women. In white ads, black women did not wear fashionable clothing, use technology or possess beauty; they appeared inferior to whites. Advertisers continued to feature white women as wives and mothers because these images reassured consumers in tumultuous times, but importantly, these images persisted because they worked.

While whites created derogatory and un-modern images of black men and women, the black press made their own, positive but complex representations. Whites largely assumed that black women were simple and overly sexual and black men could not support their wives. These beliefs excluded African-Americans from true womanhood and true masculinity. The constructions of white and black womanhood were foils, however they depended upon one another. Slavery and persistent racism created an unfriendly America for black men and women but black Americans created their own identities despite hostilities.

Following the prescriptive ideologies of racial uplift, assimilation and the New Negro was believed to end racism. Although these ideologies were rife with complications, they were just limited responses to combat racism. According to these ideologies, black women could achieve true womanhood by following the “rules” for true white womanhood: temperance, respectability, chastity and deference to patriarchy. Allegedly, modeling white gender roles demonstrated black racial progress, allowing blacks to integrate into white society, ending racism. However, African-Americans did not all accept assimilation as the correct method to end racism; some resisted on an individual level and created their own visions of black culture that were not based on white standards or ideals. Historically, black women worked outside the home, which resulted in more flexible constructions of womanhood within the community. Consequently, multiple black womanhoods were shown in many roles in advertisements, but women were never shown as mammies or laborers, as in white ads. Black and white women’s divergent histories fostered the acceptance of black women’s multiple roles. Because friction existed within the black community, ads often spoke with many voices to sell products to various groups. Although these advertisements were complex and sometimes contradictory and confusing, black-created advertisements presented positive and diverse images of black women.

The differences between white- and black-created advertisements are more fascinating and complex when compared side by side. Many works have examined constructions of black and white femininity, advertising, class and the 1920s; however these works fail to examine all of these themes together. In looking at representations of womanhood in white- and black-designed advertisements next to one another, more can be understood about advertising, gender, race relations and values embedded in American identity and culture.

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