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Racial Boundaries and Stereotypes: An Analysis of American Advertising

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What they [the media] produce is, precisely, representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work. And, amongst other kinds of ideological labor, the media construct for us a definition of what *race* is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the "problem of race" is understood to be. They help to classify out the world in terms of the categories of race (Stuart Hall, emphasis in original).[1]

I INTRODUCTION

In order to categorize, store, and retrieve information, humans apply boundary making, a universal phenomenon indispensable to their cognitive mechanisms. Cognition of other human beings also relies on boundaries constructed in their minds. However, the basis of boundary making as it relates to others significantly differs in space and time. Since the European advent of colonization and expansion of territories, the most significant index of boundary making has been the concept of race. Among other characteristics, the color of skin has served as the major factor dividing racial lines in the West, although obviously in reality races referred to as "white", "black", and such do not actually have skin

colors accurately described by such color terms. Racial boundaries have remained ideologically fixed for an extended period as demarcation lines to describe "essential differences."[2]

This paper approaches the study of racial boundaries by focusing on racial stereotypes, which I regard as representations of "races" that are confined within ideological boundaries. Stereotypes with racial markers serve to confirm, reproduce, and invent racial differences.

In an earlier paper on stereotypes, I discussed the historical changes in the images of five groups as seen in advertising and jokes, physical or external stereotypical elements, and the roles of "ethnic markers" and their relationships with ethnic symbols.[3] Drawing on this past study and based on my research in progress, this paper is an initial attempt to better explain the white-minority relationship either explicitly or implicitly portrayed in advertising by combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In Section IV, I apply the decoding method originated by Judith Williamson. Williamson's study combining contemporary general advertisements with Saussure's concepts of signifier and signified was influential in the field of semiotics in advertising.[4] My research involves reviewing advertisements published in several mass-circulation American magazines from the 1900s until World War II, so as to examine the meanings of signs used in these advertisements and analyze the ideologies which support those meanings. In Section V, I discuss the correlation between races and patterns of representations in advertisements by presenting statistics calculated by examining advertisements depicting racial minorities in magazines circulated between 1920 and 1931. By utilizing these two approaches, my goal is to delineate deep and widespread patterns of racial boundaries and their underlying ideologies.

My approach to advertising focuses on its performance as a reflection of American ideologies and its role as a mechanism that produces and maintains ideologies. Advertising functions as the accumulated knowledge of what people seek and want to identify with as consumers who try to achieve their desires to transform themselves by purchasing certain products. Magazine advertising concentrates on getting the reader's attention and influencing purchasing decisions in order to sell more products. Sut Jhally argues that advertising is part of "a discourse through and about objects" because it shows the ways things are connected to important domains of our lives.[5]

In America, a white-dominant capitalist society, those with power maintain and increase their privileges by selling products and accumu-

lating wealth. Therefore, I believe advertising is one way to investigate social discourse and is particularly effective in examining features that pertain to race because of its strong visual images.

II MAGAZINE ADVERTISING IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the late nineteenth century, the newspaper and magazine industry advanced rapidly due to technological developments in the printing industry, transportation diffusion via railroads, and growth in the number of department stores. Furthermore, published popular journals and women's magazines saw consecutive growth figures in sales volume and variety commencing around the turn of the century. In the period between 1900 and 1930, the aggregate amount of national advertising revenues skyrocketed from $200 million to $2.6 billion, much of this growth coming from expanded periodical circulation.[6]

From the end of World War I through to the beginning of the Great Depression, the advertising industry made significant developments. National magazine advertising in amount of pages alone increased six times during the decade between 1916 and 1926.[7]

A number of scholars point to the 1920s or the 1920s and 1930s as having particular significance in regard to the study of advertising and its relation to modernity. Stuart Ewen argues that in the 1920s dramatic changes leading to higher wages and shorter working hours took place, which in turn became linked to general tendencies to promote consumption by workers. It is during this period that "marginal utility" economic benefits such as fashion, taste, status-giving functions, suggestions of sensuality, and the broad range of commodities or of consumption itself—heretofore beyond the utilities achievable by people in their daily lives—surfaced in their public consumption patterns.[8]

A second important aspect also related to modernity that came to light in the 1920s is the change of the nature of advertising. According to Jhally, whereas the initial period of national advertising from the 1880s to the 1920s tended to focus on the "reason why" in a celebratory manner regarding product purchases, advertising created during the 1920s featured "representation of people who 'stand for' reigning social values such as family structure, status differentiation, and hierarchical authority." Jhally argues that in this stage the advertising industry had to educate consumers in how to read commercial messages. By the end of World War II, consumer education was complete and advertising

strategy shifted towards more cryptic forms, using written text as a "key" to the visual "puzzle."[9]

For these reasons, I chose the time period between 1920 and 1931 to examine advertisements for the statistical analysis presented in Section V. However, this by no means implies discontinuity in the patterns of minority stereotypes observed in advertising over a much longer time span. It is important to bear in mind that latent racial ideologies are not very susceptible to historical contexts that exist on a rather surface level. It has been reported in a number of previous studies of racial or ethnic images in advertising that little significant change can be observed in ethnic or racial images prior to the beginning of the civil rights movement.[10] Seiter attributes this to the fact that a dominant group's position is relatively stable and unproblematic.[11] Therefore, one partial focus in this paper is to examine advertisements in the first half of the twentieth century for the purpose of decoding advertisements and identifying the ideologies behind them.

III SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF RACIAL GROUPS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Let us briefly overview the socioeconomic status of racial groups in the period examined for the following advertising analyses. In 1920, 47 percent of native-born whites, 60 percent of blacks, and 53 percent total of Indian, Chinese, and other races were engaged in gainful occupations. With regard to occupations stereotypically associated with racial minorities, in 1920 only about 25 percent of the number of janitors and sextons were blacks, whereas 44 percent and 31 percent were composed of native whites and foreign-born whites, respectively. Similarly, only 20 percent of those in the waiter category were black. Blacks portrayed as cooks and porters and other service occupations were significantly over-represented in advertisements (see Table 1).

In the two categories related to laundry, Chinese people working as laundry operatives and as laundry owners, officials, or managers were over-represented compared to their relative population figures. The Chinese people made up approximately 10 percent and seven percent respectively of those engaged in these professions, despite the fact that the Chinese population comprised only one percent of the entire U.S. population at that time. In 1930, blacks made up only 24 percent of male domestic occupations, whereas 46 percent were native whites and 26 per-

Table 1 Race and Occupation in 1920

OCCUPATION	TOTAL		NATIVE WHITE		FOREIGN-BORN WHITE		NEGRO		INDIAN		CHINESE		JAPANESE		ALL OTHERS	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Janitors and sextons	178,628	100.0	78,604	44.0	54,910	30.7	44,110	24.7	95	0.1	221	0.1	625	0.4	63	0.0
Laundry operatives	120,715	100.0	63,253	52.4	19,397	16.1	25,332	21.0	73	0.0	11,577	9.6	1,072	0.9	11	0.0
Laundry owners, officials, and managers	13,692	100.0	8,150	59.5	4,189	30.6	247	1.8	3	0.0	982	7.2	120	0.9	1	0.0
Porters, domestic and professional service	43,208	100.0	8,268	19.1	9,083	21.0	25,405	58.8	20	0.1	181	0.4	206	0.5	45	0.1
Chambermaids	29,302	100.0	10,596	36.2	8,130	27.7	10,453	35.7	36	0.1	6	0.0	77	0.3	4	0.0
Cooks	398,475	100.0	104,677	26.3	80,877	20.3	202,435	50.8	397	0.1	6,943	1.7	2,931	0.7	215	0.1
Waiters	228,985	100.0	113,049	49.4	66,149	28.9	45,836	20.0	94	0.0	2,810	1.2	808	0.4	239	0.1

Source: *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Population*, Vol. 4, 358–59.

cent were foreign-born whites, respectively. For women, 35 percent of domestic and personal service workers were blacks, and 46 percent and 15 percent were native whites and foreign-born whites, respectively (Table 2).

Thus, although there are certain occupations highly over-represented both in number and percentage by minority groups such as the laundry and porter categories, other occupations strongly associated with minorities were in fact more highly represented by whites both in number and percentage.

IV STEREOTYPES AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE

In the following analyses of advertisements, I employ some of Judith Williamson's key concepts as presented in her book, *Decoding Advertisements*. These include concepts such as the Signifier (the material object), the Signified (its meaning), and the Referent System, which she defines as a mythology external to the sign itself but meaning the actual thing in the world.

With particular regard to the Referent System, Williamson states, "*the Signifier is itself the denoting sign: the sign in its totality points to something else. That something else I term a Referent System*" (emphasis in original).[12] She underscores the importance of making the distinction between the "*knowledge*" which we must have "as a prerequisite to understand the ad's connotation process," and the "system of signification *of* this knowledge," which as a system cannot have specific "existence" in one place and consists of a series of formal relations (emphasis in original).[13] Her explanation is crucially important in terms of understanding that signifiers in advertisements are neither isolated from each other nor coincidental, but are linked to the whole system of social ideologies.

I have selected a limited number of advertisements as examples to discuss in depth the decoded signifiers and the signifieds contained within the advertisements, which in turn demonstrate racial boundaries explicitly or implicitly observed either in individual cases or when combined together.[14]

Figure A is an advertisement for automobile tires that appeared in 1925. Readers are confronted with the surprised face and wide eyes of the black boy who has apparently just dropped a watermelon, considered a favorite food of blacks. A closer examination of the advertisement

Table 2 Gainful Workers 10 Years-old and Over in 1930

Occupation	TOTAL		NATIVE WHITE		FOREIGN-BORN WHITE		NEGRO		OTHER RACES	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
MALE Agriculture	9,562,059	100.0	7,151,291	74.8	647,249	6.8	1,492,555	15.6	270,964	2.8
Manufacturing and mechanical industries	12,224,345	100.0	8,212,540	67.2	2,951,751	24.1	923,586	7.6	136,468	1.1
Transportation and communication	3,561,943	100.0	2,610,354	73.3	476,095	13.4	395,437	11.1	80,057	2.2
Domestic occupations	1,772,200	100.0	813,780	45.9	465,465	26.3	423,645	23.9	69,310	3.9
FEMALE Agriculture	909,939	100.0	367,228	40.4	26,413	2.9	495,284	54.4	21,014	2.3
Domestic and personal service	3,180,251	100.0	1,514,041	47.6	475,439	15.0	1,152,560	36.2	38,211	1.2

Source: *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population,* Vol. 5, 74.

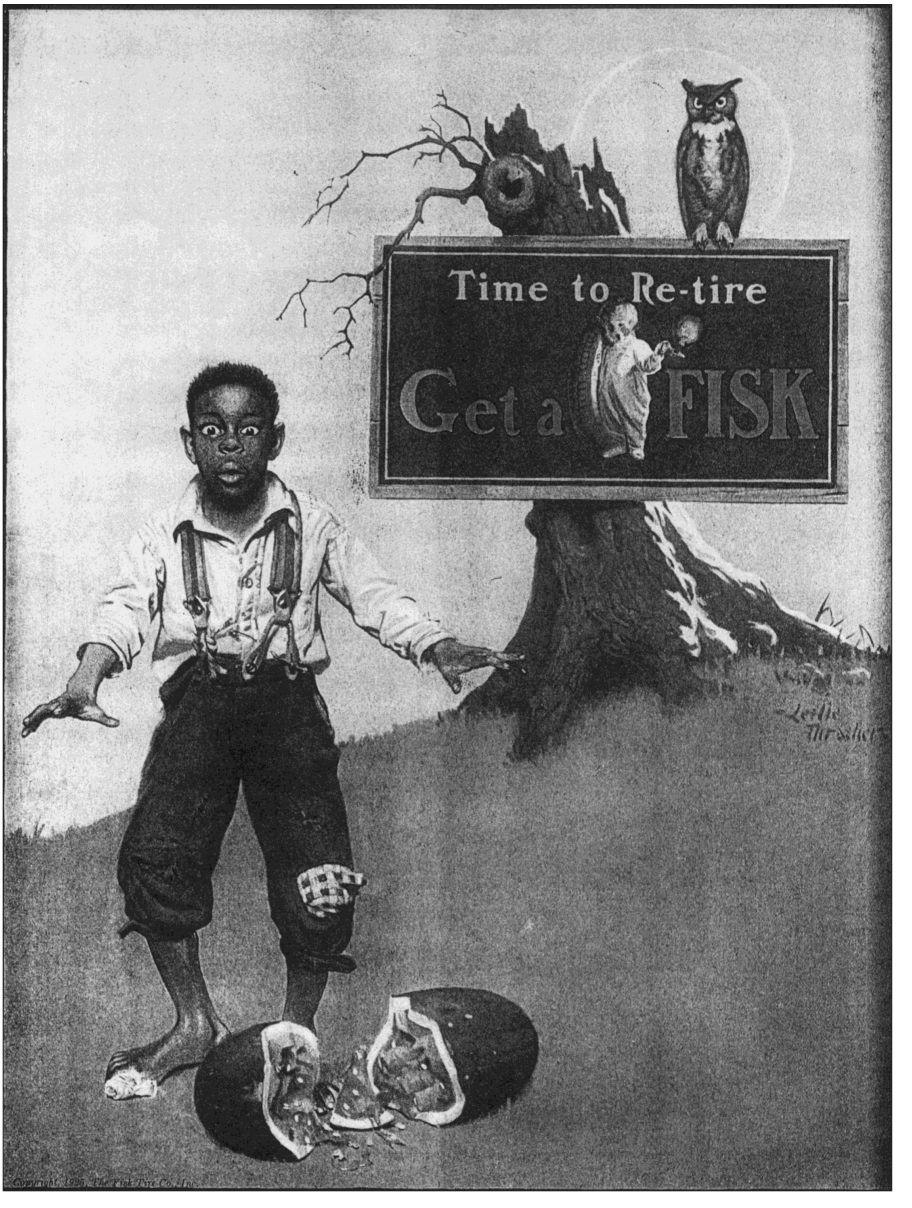

Figure A *Collier's* 1925

reveals several important signifiers: the dead tree, the owl, and the position of the sun and sunbeam, signifying death and fear, night and fear, and the sunset, respectively. The ideal position of the sun in northern Europe is over the head, and therefore this picture is in opposition to the norms contained within Eurocentric society. The patched clothes signify slavery or poverty. The extensive use of a dark color tone enhances the boy's red lips, which match the color of the watermelon fruit. This combination is not coincidental. These backgrounds—the patched clothes, the assumed act of dropping a watermelon, and the surprised expression on the boy's face—when combined together make a referent system: the boy stole a watermelon at sunset and dropped it when he got caught. "Time to Re-tire", the phrase written on the signboard, implies that the boy was withdrawing from the watermelon field, while at the same time it is a play on words or a pun referring to the tire product. In contrast, a different advertisement using whites for the product appeared in the same magazine that same year. In this second advertisement, the signboard is a much lighter color and the phrase"time to retire" is used to refer to the white old man smiling at a white young boy.

The "Cream of Wheat" advertisement (Figure B) promotes one of the most popular products whose advertising features human characters.[15] The main character in its series is a smiling black cook named Rastus, a typical black male name during the slavery era.[16] Dressed in a cook's white smock, Rastus sports a toothy grin while cooking or serving food and is frequently standing behind white figures. In most advertising examples in the Rastus series, he is a voiceless figure: captions underneath often specify phrases of conversations conducted by other figures in the advertisement while Rastus observes from the background with a warm smile. Rastus is apparently an obedient, non-challenging figure for whites. As a referent system, his voiceless figure and smiling face with gleaming teeth convey docility and obedience. According to Horseman, the prevalent image of blacks in popular theater and literature in the late eighteenth century was that of the docile, childlike, lazy, contented slave, dependent on the protection and care of a white master.[17] However, Rastus not only signifies the stereotype associated with this image, but also conveys a sense of the wealth of the whites, which can be considered a universal goal that can trigger consumer purchases.

"Cream of Wheat" advertising strategy also uses Uncle Sam, another popular face perhaps appearing not as often as Rastus. Figure C illustrates the central figure Uncle Sam dining while seated in an armchair.

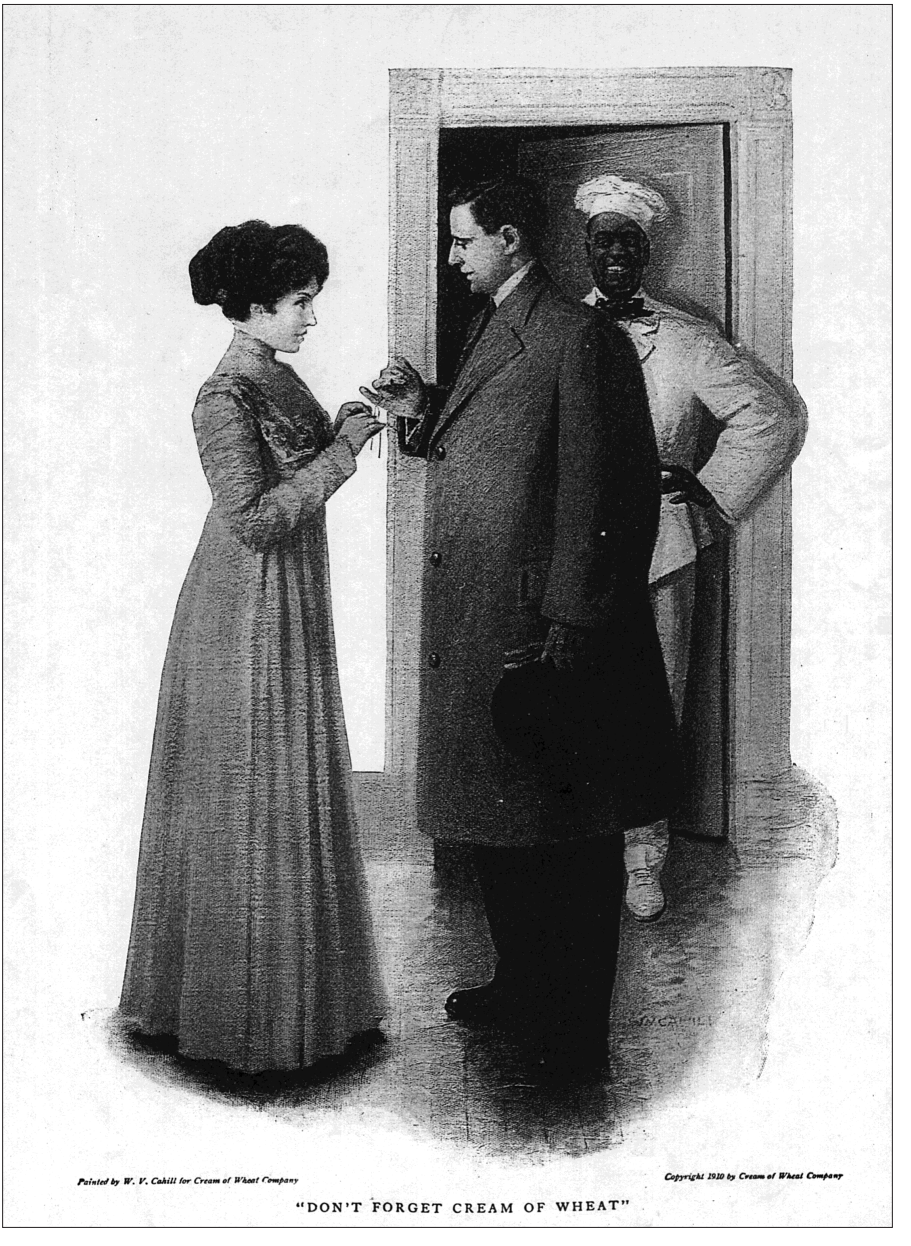

Figure B *Literary Digest* 1910

Figure C *Literary Digest* 1917

Uncle Sam, a signifier of American patriotism, makes a referent system of "class" and conveys the meaning that what he eats can be considered a staple in American diets. A further contrasting feature of these two pictures is the contrast between the teeth and the red gums of Rastus and the absence of such features in smiling Uncle Sam.

Figure D is an advertisement for formal wear that appeared in 1909. The message in the ad reads: "CRITICAL dressers will find nothing to criticize in the evening and dinner clothes we make . . . they are right." One particularly interesting feature in this advertisement is the divergence in the line of sight between the two parties. Both white men, who are positioned in the foreground and cast in central roles in the picture, are looking at two black-faced persons, while in contrast the two black-faced men are looking in different directions. This scene has the effect of making the reader identify with the more closely situated white men in the foreground, leading the reader to assume their gaze at the shabby, unpressed clothes worn by the black-faced men posing in the background. The physical boundary which divides the inside and the outside symbolizes racial lines. The dichotomy of a plain yet spotless black suit as the ideal versus a shabby, unironed suit as a point of "criticism" is represented by the contrasting polarity of the white and the black-faced men. Note also that the white men are depicted as being taller than the black-faced men. A similar contrast between white men and black men has been used in another advertisement created by the same company.

An advertisement for chewing gum appearing around 1928 contains a less explicit but ideologically comparable representation of blacks. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, soon after the development of advertising employing visual images, the use of black figures in advertisements for detergent and soaps became popular.[18] Such use of blacks in advertising directly implied that black skin was dirty and something to be cleaned and whitened. After the early decades of the twentieth century, however, the teeth of blacks as one of the signifiers of their black skin became increasingly featured in advertisements for products associated with teeth such as toothpaste and chewing gum. Although it does not carry overt implications compared to earlier advertisements, the blackness of the skin of blacks as a referent system remained unchanged. A particular point of interest in this advertisement is the caption underneath the watermelon that reads, "the tempting taste [that's] simply irresistible." It reinforces the stereotype of blacks as people whose immense desires are uncontrollable and whose lack of rationality or reason makes them steal watemelons from fields.

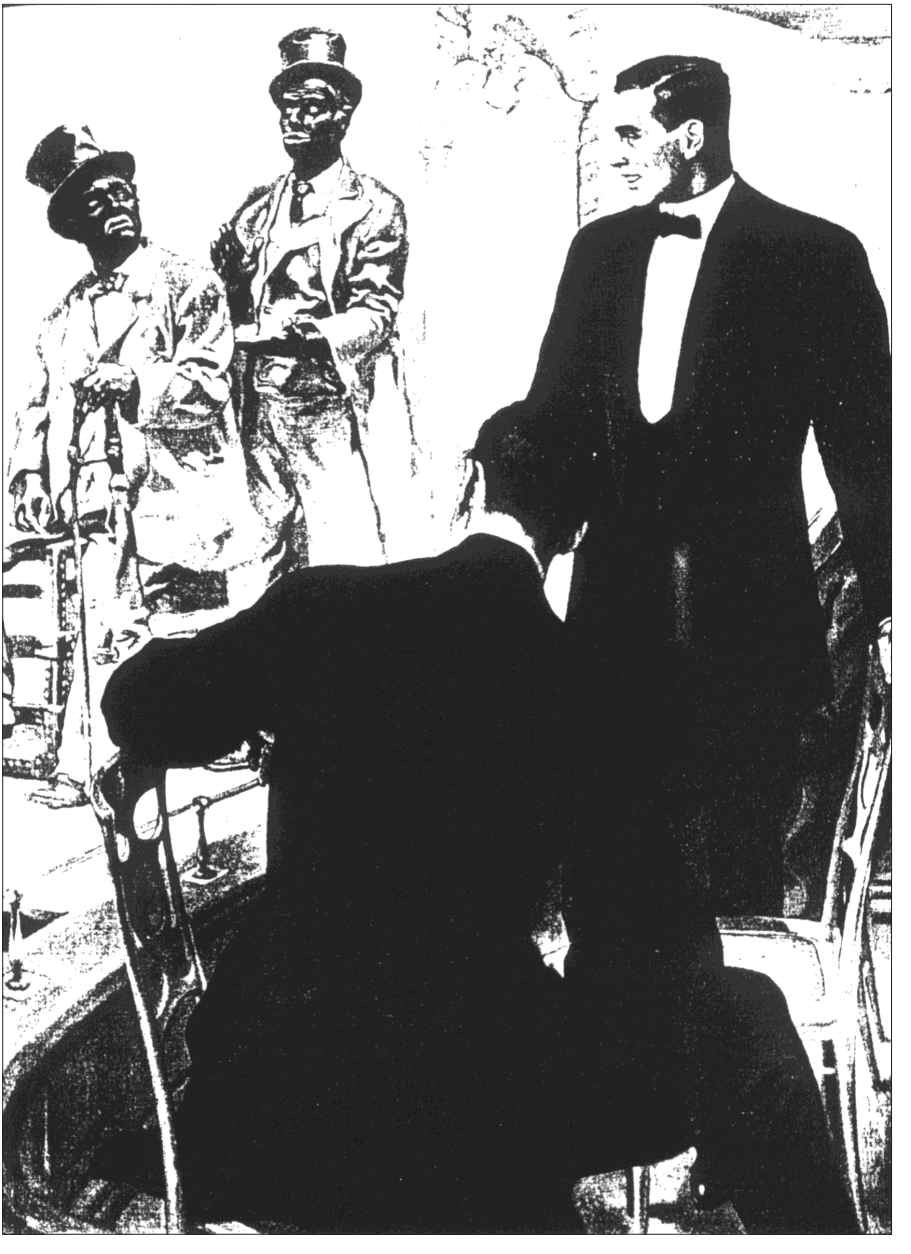

Figure D *Collier's* 1909

Until the civil rights movement, blacks played stereotypical occupational roles in advertising: for men, roles such as cook, servant, porter, and janitor, and for women, roles such as cook and housemaid. An ad for Coca-Cola in 1927 illustrates the waiter role assigned to a black boy, clearly differentiated from roles played by the whites, although, as mentioned earlier, blacks made up only 20 percent of the number of waiters in 1920. It is noteworthy that he is a boy, hence shorter in the picture, in contrast to the adult man he happily serves. The black person in the advertisement is not allowed to be depicted in a role such as drinking Coca- Cola or any role linked to "sociability" or "taste."

An advertisement for crystal lenses portrays a white man and men of racial minorities as signifiers of differences in civilization and knowledge. The advertising caption reads:

> Crystals of marvelous clearness are found in rocks, caves and along river beds. The Brazilian Indian, Iceland Eskimo or African native who picks them up has no idea of their true nature. . . . Every one of the millions of Wellsworth Lenses now being worn is made of glass which was examined by delicate instruments to find out if its optical density was exactly right.[19]

The different positions of the white man and the native men are also noteworthy: the former standing while the latter are sitting, trying to figure out the usage of the crystals. The contrast is also overt in clothing worn by the white man compared with those of the half-naked natives. In this advertisement as well, we find the phrase "exactly right," indicating that the norm employed in this advertisement is attached to a white man and not racial minorities. The location of the white man in the advertisement—the center, underneath the light, in a high position, and wearing a lab coat—contrasts with that of the men of color who are found in the periphery, in the shade, in lower positions, and naked. The yellow background color tone effectively contrasts the black and the white in the advertisement.

In an advertisement for bubble bath soap appearing in 1911, Japanese women serve as signifiers of the smoothness of skin. The lantern positioned in the center shines neither on the Japanese child nor the doll but on the bubbles, and its round shape coincides with the round bubbles which the advertisement claims are "like pearls." The use of Japanese women as signifiers of smooth and soft skin is also evident in another advertisement for the same product which contains the message, "Then the JAP ROSE bubbles soften your skin as well." Association of the

Japanese with the color of yellow is observed in an advertising phrase for the same product, "Look for the JAP ROSE Girl on the yellow package." The yellow color of the package seems to aim at differentiating itself from Ivory Soap, which advertises whiteness and pureness, apparent attributes of the image of the color white. Figure E, another advertisement for the same product, symbolically illustrates the boundary between the two races: it is a white woman and her daughter who are using the bubble bath, whereas two Japanese women are placed outside the central bath setting. Note the physical distance between the two races in the picture. The image of Japanese women as having smooth skin was strongly associated with skin products such as skin cream and soaps, and their exotic kimono-clad images appeared in some travel-related advertisements for tours and steamships.

An advertisement for "Masterpieces of Oriental Mystery" uses images of "Oriental" men as "monsters", "mysterious" and lustful for white women. The man in the advertisement is about to catch a beautiful white woman who, scared and powerless, is screaming for help. The message within the advertisement is:

> She is yours, Master! Sick at heart the trembling girl shuddered at the words that delivered her to this terrible fate of the East. How could she escape from this Oriental monster into whose hands she had been given—this strange man whose face none had seen?[20]

In fact, negative depictions of minority men are almost universal, especially in terms of their relation to majority women.[21]

One of the stereotypes imposed on Native American men is that of attacking whites, often with an ax as Figure F illustrates. In this advertisement the white man is having a nightmare of being attacked by an "Indian" who shouts, "Ugh! Scalp no good! Won't pass FINGERNAIL TEST!" The detailed message reads, "If my scalp wasn't good enough for an Indian, it wasn't good enough for me!" "Even Indians don't like me. . . ." His barber suggested that he use a hair cream product, with the result that "for the first time his girlfriend called him 'Handsome.'"

As we have observed in these examples, stereotypical depictions of racial minorities in advertising rely on the reader's premised knowledge. However, they are not merely reflections of social ideologies reading minorities and racial differences, but in fact they play active roles in inventing and enhancing racial differences. For example, the repetitive use of black figures in service occupations, such as waiters and house-

Figure E *Sunset* 1921

"UGH! Scalp no good! Won't pass FINGERNAIL TEST!"

WOTTA NIGHTMARE! But it woke me up to the fact something was wrong with my hair. If my scalp wasn't good enough for an Indian, it wasn't good enough for me!

"EVEN INDIANS DON'T like me," I told Mike, the barber. "Say, is there anything to these Fingernail Test ads?"

"YOU'RE A FINE ONE," snorts Mike. "You're the fella they're runnin' those ads for! If you weren't always countin' on your smile and your winnin' ways, you'd have made the Fingernail Test long ago. Your scalp's as gummy as a race track after a rain!"

"WOW!" says I, "what do I do?" "Easy!" Mike says, "just use this 3-Action Wildroot-with-Oil. It's the same Wildroot that's been scarin' away dirt and dandruff scales for 30 years, plus pure *vegetable* oil to keep your hair well groomed without building up grease on the scalp!" Use Wildroot-with-Oil between shampoos and your hair will be that clean and good lookin' you'll be breaking your young lady's heart!

BOY WAS HE RIGHT! For the first time my girl friend calls me "Handsome", and she's darn near right! My hair stays down, and dandruff stays away!

35¢ **60c** and **$1** at all drug dealers. Professional applications at barbers.

WILDROOT CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.
FORT ERIE, ONT.

WILDROOT WITH OIL

THE 3-ACTION HAIR TONIC

1. CLEANS AS IT GROOMS **2. RELIEVES DRYNESS**
3. REMOVES LOOSE DANDRUFF

IMPORTANT: *Wildroot Hair Tonic, original formula, used by millions who prefer a non-oily tonic, on sale everywhere!*

Figure F *Life* 1939

maids, appeared far more frequently than their relative population figures, serves as a sharp contrast to whites, and in turn, adds "class" to whites who use the product. Although the fundamental images of minorities have changed little over the long span of history, racial boundaries are constantly being drawn and redrawn by enhanced visual images in advertising.[22]

V STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISEMENTS

In the previous section, I conducted a decoding analysis of advertisements. This section supports part of that discussion and statistically analyzes widely practiced patterns of representation of minorities in advertising. My survey included taking substantial selections from four large-circulation magazines with mainly middle-class readerships published between 1920 and 1931. The magazines were two general-circulation lifestyle magazines (*The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*), one intellectual magazine (*The Literary Digest*), and one general-circulation women's magazine (*Good Housekeeping*).[23]

Because of the extremely large volume of advertisements in these magazines found even in one issue, for this paper I selected the years 1920, 1921, 1925, 1926, 1930, and 1931 as sample years. The total number of advertisements suitable for this analysis was 557, after excluding advertisements illustrating minorities only as trademarks.[24] As additional criteria, I selected advertisements comprising at least a quarter of a page and containing at least one visible minority member.

Throughout my analysis of these advertisements, I paid particular attention to the following aspects: (1) the roles played by minority characters; (2) the relationship between the white main characters and the black main characters; (3) the types of products promoted by minority characters; (4) appearances of race and gender; (5) age categories; and (6) facial expression (for example, no expression, smiling, showing teeth, or other facial expressions). I must point out that this is only a preliminary attempt at statistical analysis, the sole purpose of which is to support my qualitative argument presented earlier in this paper.

The first notable contrast that I observed was the difference in race and gender roles among different groups.[25] Table 3 shows the percentages of advertisements containing at least one minority member appearing in an advertisement with or without white persons. Close to half (51.4 percent) of the advertisements showing a black man as the main minor-

Table 3 Minority Roles in Advertisements (%)

Ads containing / Type of role	Black man	Black woman	Native American man	Native American woman	Chinese man	Chinese woman	Japanese man	Japanese woman
Domestic servant	14.5	54.8	0	5.0	0	0	0	0
Servile roles	51.4	19.0	0	0	26.0	12.5	33.3	11.1
Part of landscape	2.8	7.1	9.8	0	34.0	75.0	55.6	50.0
Brand-recognition figure	4.5	4.8	11.8	5.0	6.0	0	0	0
Traditional stereotypical images (including props and behaviors)	2.8	0	19.6	55.0	4.0	0	11.1	11.2
Being dangerous, barbarian, uncivilized	3.9	4.8	54.9	30.0	16.0	0	0	5.6
Entertainment	13.4	2.4	2.0	0	4.0	0	0	11.1
Other	6.7	7.1	2.0	5.0	10.0	12.5	0	11.1
Total (%)	100.0 n = 179[26]	100.0 n = 42	100.0 n = 52	100.0 n = 21	100.0 n = 50	100.0 n = 8	100.0 n = 9	100.0 n = 18

ity character depict him in a servant role such as waiter, porter, or even as slave. When combining this with the percentage of blacks portrayed as domestic servants (14.5 percent), we see that in 65.9 percent of these advertisements, blacks are depicted in servant roles. This trend can also be clearly seen in how black women are depicted: an overwhelming percentage (73.8 percent) of advertisements show black women in servant roles. However, in contrast to the popular role portrayal of black men, the percentage of advertisements illustrating female house servant roles (54.8 percent) is higher than the percentage illustrating black women in menial roles (19.0 percent).

Another popular role imposed on black men in advertisements is that of entertainer, for example, singer or dancer (13.4 percent). I found only one case of an advertisement that depicted a black woman in an entertainer role.

I also found that the representation of Native Americans in advertising differs significantly from that of blacks. Over half (53.8 percent) of the surveyed advertisements containing at least one Native American man portray him (or them) as threatening, dangerous, or uncivilized. Native Americans were also frequently posed with stereotypical objects such as arrows, a horse, or an ox (19.2 percent). Stereotypical representations were also common with Native American women: 55.0 percent of advertisements containing at least one Native American woman shows her with some stereotypical object, usually food such as corn. Over a quarter (30.0 percent) of the advertisements portrayed her as being uncivilized or barbarian.

Comparing advertisements containing Chinese and Japanese with those of other groups, I found a notable difference in their appearance in distance or landscape pictures: 75.0 percent for Chinese women, 50.0 percent for Japanese women; 34.0 percent for Chinese men, and 55.6 percent for Japanese men. I also noted that among advertisements depicting Chinese or Japanese there are a high percentage of pictures illustrating them in servant roles (26.0 percent for Chinese and 16.0 percent for Japanese).

Second, in shifting our attention to the relationship between whites and minorities in advertisements (Table 4), we can see similar results in terms of minority roles. Notable differences in either the presence of or little presence of whites were observed in advertisements featuring blacks and those featuring other minorities. Appearances of either male or female blacks in advertisements also portraying whites most often illustrated the black in a servant role and the white in a master or customer role. In sharp contrast, the relationship between whites and Native Americans is typically a contrast between civilized and uncivilized behavior. Chinese and Japanese in advertisements, however, accompany whites far less frequently.

Third, advertisements show certain concentrations in terms of advertised products depending on the racial background of the main character in the particular advertisement (Table 5). Blacks have a high association with food products (32.2 percent of all food advertisements include at least one black with 65.9 percent of that figure being black women), and black men frequently appear in advertisements for music and entertainment (16.9 percent). Role portrayals of black men in travel and automobile advertisements also correlates to their roles as porters and other menial positions.

Table 4 White-minority Relationships (%)

Ads containing / Type of relationship	Black man	Black woman	Native American man	Native American woman	Chinese man	Chinese woman	Japanese man	Japanese woman
Minority individual(s)	28.2	33.3	47.1	47.6	63.5	77.8	66.7	50.7
Master vs. domestic servant	14.9	40.5	0	0	1.9	0	0	8.0
Customer vs. servile workers	37.6	19.0	3.9	0	13.5	0	22.2	15.7
Sophisticated, civilized vs. dangerous, uncivilized	2.2	4.8	41.2	42.9	5.8	0	0	12.6
Mixed (almost with no racial distance)	10.5	0	3.9	0	5.8	11.1	0	4.8
Mixed (with some racial distance)	6.6	2.4	3.9	9.5	9.6	11.1	11.1	8.1
Total (%)	100.0 n=181	100.0 n=42	100.0 n=51	100.0 n=21	100.0 n=52	100.0 n=9	100.0 n=9	100.0 n=19

Native Americans are also quite frequently found in travel advertisements (35.3 percent for men and 33.3 percent for women) and automobile advertisements (11.8 percent for men). Likewise, more than half of the advertisements containing at least one Native American woman advertise food products (52.4 percent). These findings indicate the majority view of Native Americans as "objects" and also reflect the majority image of "uncivilized" Native American men and "natural" Native American women. As described above, Chinese and Japanese are frequently associated with images of travel. An interesting point is that many advertisements for entertainment and music as well as furniture and painting also show Japanese and Chinese in central roles.

Table 6 shows the frequency of appearance for each racial group categorized by gender. I found a total of 269 advertisements containing at least one white man and a minority figure, and a total of 198 advertisements with at least one white woman and a minority figure. However, I

Table 5 Type of Products (%)

Ads containing / Type of products	Black man	Black woman	Native American man	Native American woman	Chinese man	Chinese woman	Japanese man	Japanese woman
Food products and kitchen appliances[27]	32.2	65.9	7.8	52.4	5.7	0	0	0
Furniture and decorating	2.2	2.3	0	0	7.5	0	0	11.1
Travel	9.3	9.1	35.3	33.3	32.1	44.4	55.6	38.9
Entertainment	16.9	4.5	2.0	0	17.0	11.1	0	11.1
Industrial technology	3.8	2.3	9.8	4.8	7.5	0	0	0
Automotive industry	11.5	2.3	11.8	4.8	13.2	33.3	22.2	16.7
Other	24.1	13.6	33.3	4.7	17.0	11.2	22.2	22.2
Total (%)	100.0 n=183	100.0 n=44	100.0 n=51	100.0 n=21	100.0 n=53	100.0 n=9	100.0 n=9	100.0 n=18

Table 6 Appearances by Race and Gender

Number of ads containing	Man	Woman
Native Americans	52	21
Chinese	54	10
Japanese	10	19
Whites and minorities	269	198
Blacks	184	44

observed a striking imbalance in gender observed in cases of all other races, yet in different ways. For blacks and Chinese, the appearance of male figures is four to five times as frequent when compared to female figures (184 vs. 44 for blacks, 54 vs. 10 for Chinese).[28] The frequency rate of the appearance of Japanese men is about half that of Japanese women (10 vs. 19). For native Americans, the figures are 21 for males as opposed to 52 for females.

The statistical contrast between Chinese and Japanese in this respect is explained by the images associated with each group's gender in advertising, as I discussed in my earlier article.[29] Japanese women have an image of being exotic, having smooth skin, and wearing kimono, and

images of Chinese men often cast them in roles such as cook, laundry man, or "Dr. Fu". Japanese men appear very frequently in caricatures associated with war or invasion, at least until and during World War II, but were seldom used for advertisements.

Another interesting result of the statistical analysis related to gender is the higher percentage of adult black women compared to white or black men (Table 7). Although in the cases of white men, white women, and black men, the percentages of adult appearances in advertisements including a member of each relevant category are 87.7, 88.4, and 85.3 percent respectively, 95.5 percent of the advertisements including at least one black woman also contain at least one adult. Only 2.3 percent (1 case) of advertisements containing at least one black woman include at least one child, a sharp contrast to 21.7 percent among their white women counterparts in the same type of advertisements. Appearances of the aged are far more frequent among men than women for both blacks (10.3 percent vs. 0) and whites (8.2 percent vs. 1.5). An overall analysis of these figures shows that black women appear almost always as adult women, illustrating a narrow concentration in terms of age representation.

A cross tabulation of the data analysis reveals an interesting correlation between race and gender. I observed a high correlation between depictions containing at least one black man and at least one white woman in advertisements. Although a further analysis of role categorization is necessary, in large part, this high correlation is seen in many advertisements which portray a black man as a private servant or in a servile role for a white woman mistress or customer. The effect is adding a class feature related to the image of the advertised product, while at the same time, attracting readers' attention because of latent sexual taboos concerning relationships between white women and black men.

With regard to facial expression, I observed a striking difference between blacks and whites. Table 8 shows four categories which indicate race and gender among blacks and whites. These are advertisements that contain at least one white man with a minority member, at least one white woman with a minority member, at least one black man, and at least one black woman. Among the 184 advertisements including at least one black man, 43 advertisements (23.4 percent) show the black man or men smiling showing many teeth. Similarly, 17 advertisements (38.6 percent) include at least one black woman wearing a "toothy" expression. In sharp contrast, only one case (0.5 percent) including at least one

Table 7 Appearances by Race and Gender

	white man		white woman		black man		black woman	
	269		198		184		44	
	A (%)	NA (%)	A (%)	NA (%)	A (%)	NA (%)	A (%)	NA (%)
Child(ren)	52(19.3)	217(80.7)	43(21.7)	155(78.3)	11 (6.0)	173(94.0)	1 (2.3)	43 (97.7)
Adult(s)	236(87.7)	33(12.3)	175(88.4)	23(11.6)	157(85.3)	27(14.7)	42(95.5)	2 (4.5)
Aged	22 (8.2)	247(91.8)	3 (1.5)	195(98.5)	19(10.3)	165(89.7)	0 (0.0)	44(100.0)

A: applicable
NA: not applicable

Table 8 Facial Expressions by Race and Gender

	white man		white woman		black man		black woman	
	A (%)	NA (%)	A (%)	NA (%)	A (%)	NA (%)	A (%)	NA (%)
No expression	187(69.5)	82(30.5)	111(56.1)	87(43.9)	83(45.1)	101(54.9)	18(40.9)	26(59.1)
Smile without teeth	94(34.9)	175(65.1)	73(36.9)	125(63.1)	33(17.9)	151(82.1)	5(11.4)	39(88.6)
Smile w/ few teeth	46(17.1)	223(82.9)	54(27.3)	144(72.7)	24(13.0)	160(87.0)	1 (2.3)	43(97.7)
Smile w/ many teeth	5 (1.9)	264(98.1)	1 (0.5)	197(99.5)	43(23.4)	141(76.6)	17(38.6)	27(61.4)
Other expression	7 (2.6)	262(97.4)	4 (2.0)	194(98.0)	8 (4.3)	176(95.7)	2 (4.5)	42(95.5)

A: applicable
NA: not applicable

white woman and five advertisements (1.9 percent) including at least white man depict people wearing facial expressions showing many teeth.

As far as "no expression" is concerned, 184 advertisements from a total of 269 (69.5 percent) containing at least one white man show at least one white man with no facial expression and 111 out of 198 advertisements (56.1 percent) that contain at least one white woman show that character wearing no facial expression. The corresponding figures among black men is 83 advertisements (45.1 percent) and among black women 18 (40.9 percent). These statistics support the earlier discussion that in advertising, blacks are stereotypically portrayed as docile, obedient, happy-go-lucky, and eager to please.

The above results provide an interesting portrayal of racial boundaries as reflected in advertising in different arenas. In the time period selected for my analysis, minorities were placed in socially inferior positions, thus reinforcing notions of class. Furthermore, they were associated with traditional home-making: good "home-cookin'" by "mammies" contrasted with products that represent technological developments, civilization, or sophistication (as compared with uncivilized minorities). Advertisements also stimulate the desire to travel by presenting exotic images featuring minorities. The differences in roles played by various minority groups are reflected in an uneven distribution of types of products featuring these minority groups.

My statistical analysis also proved that facial expressions of blacks compared to those of whites were stereotypically portrayed. One particularly interesting finding was the extremely low frequences of appearances of "grinning" white women in advertising.

Although this is only a preliminary attempt, it is clear that race and gender interplay with the images of minorities consumed in American society to construct and reinforce racial boundaries.

VI MINORITY RESISTANCE TO STEREOTYPES IN ADVERTISING

Minorities that were stereotypically portrayed did not have enough influence to change their images as portrayed in advertising until after World War II. However, they did not remain silent and passive subjects of stereotypical depiction by the dominant society. Blacks, who suffered the severest form of racism, later made great contributions to the recognition of civil rights issues in the United States. Archived documents held by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(NAACP) show numerous protests made by institutions or individual black readers against the companies that used stereotypical images of blacks in magazine advertising.

One case involves a windshield-wiper advertisement that appeared in *Time* magazine in 1949. It contained a caricature of a black person with plain dark skin, popping eyes, large, thick lips, and wearing a tattered straw hat. The figure is holding a slice of watermelon while saying, "It is raining tonight in GEORGIA?" The board of directors of the San Diego NAACP sent a letter to *Time* protesting the advertisement:

> It seems incredible that a magazine which usually does a fairly good job of reporting on inter-racial affairs and which is willing to acknowledge Dr. Ralph Bunche as "a new colossus" should be guilty of printing an advertisement which is offensive to so many people.
> The Board of Directors of the San Diego Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People takes this means of expressing their indignation and resentment.[30]

In response to this letter, the advertising editor of *Time* apologized:

> We are very sorry to hear that this advertisement was offensive to some of our readers, and we appreciate very much your taking the time to bring us your opinion, for it is only in this way that we can learn of our readers' reactions to the advertising pages of TIME. . . .[31]

In another example, a black doctor in Los Angeles addressed a letter to President Harry S. Truman regarding the black figures of "Aunt Jemima" and "Uncle Mose," both of which the Quaker Oats Company used in their products:

> I seriously believe that this type of advertising, this type of distribution of material, which ridicules the poor and misguided, but faithful, and endorses undignified fawning servility, is bad world relations. . . .
> It is my belief that we have never had a Chief Executive more sincere in his belief in human rights than you, Mr. President. Nevertheless, I believe that your noble crusade is being harassed and impeded by such programs and this advertising campaign of the Quaker Oats Company. And the result is that the Negro people have their faith in democracy shaken; and other nations of the world use our hypocrisy as a worse weapon against us than the atomic bomb could ever be. . .[32]

In reviewing the correspondence between blacks or the NAACP and manufacturing companies or advertising agencies, in most cases, I found that the latter apologized and expressed their intent to discontinue the

use of such advertisements. However, there was one situation wherein a manufacturing company executive retorted: "You are overreactive." It seems that such repeated efforts led to changes in the images of minority members only after the civil rights movement.

Conversely, especially in the South, whites displayed resistance to the positive use of blacks in advertising. According to Kern-Foxworth, advertising agencies as well as TV programmers feared a white backlash. For example, during the 1950s, whites living in the South boycotted Phillip Morris because it sponsored a Chicago beauty contest that was won by a black woman.[33]

It is not possible to estimate the extent to which the voices of blacks against manufacturing companies and advertising agencies influenced the discontinuation of negative images of blacks in advertising. Clearly, further progress had to wait until the civil rights movement before drastic changes in the images of minorities were effected.

VII CONCLUSION

Issues involving racial stereotypes are complex by nature and require different modes of analysis. Racial boundaries exist not only on the superficial level of racial categories divided by skin color, but they often take more covert forms deeply rooted in the human psychology of cognitive differentiation, which is eventually linked to social hierachy or Orientalism. By decoding advertisements and analyzing statistics, we have observed a number of dimensions in which minorities are confined by their role representations in advertising, either in terms of gender and age or by such attributes as facial expression, language, and clothes.

These boundaries are rigid in one sense and yet are flexible in another. We have to bear in mind that whites are the main target readership around the time period examined in this paper, while for minorities advertising served as a means of "Americanization" or becoming "white-like".

For example, advertisements for men's suits send a message to white men —not necessarily to black men— that wearing the "right" clothes will prevent them from being criticized by more sophisticated dressers. Likewise, those unable to appreciate the merit of using crystal lenses are presumably, in fact, not Brazilian or African natives but whites. It is not a piccaninny who finds temptation irresistible, but a white. The point here is that the images attached to minorities seem to be mere projec-

tions of complex selves of whites, to which they could be transformed to "better" selves exhibiting higher social class, civilized lifestyles, sophistication, and good-looks by purchasing these products. Precisely because of the possibility of changing themselves and fundamentally because of different selves existing within their selves, they need icons representing different positions and statuses in order to differentiate the self they aspire to from the self they want to deny.

Although I discussed only a limited number of stereotypical aspects in advertising in this paper, in the future I hope to explore other issues such as light and shade, relations between the roles they play in advertising and the intersection of race and gender.

Racial boundaries, although derived from the Western traditions of color ideology, as well as Western colonization and modernization, are not merely aftereffects. They continue to affect contemporary society, and are reproduced and reinforced by the consumption of racial images and stereotypes in capitalist societies.

NOTES

[1] Stuart Hall, "The White of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and Media," in Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, eds., *Gender, Race and Class in Media* (Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage, 1995 [1981]), 20.

[2] For the concept of race, see Yasuko Takezawa, "'Jinshu': From a Biological Concept to an Exclusive Worldview," *Japanese Journal of Ethnology* 63, no. 4 (1999).

[3] Yasuko Takezawa, "Ethnic Stereotypes in the U.S.A.—the Dynamics of Ethnic Group Images Seen in Advertising and Jokes," *Japanese Journal of Ethnology* 52, no. 4 (1988): 363–90.

[4] Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (London: Marion Boyars, 1978).

[5] Sut Jhally, "Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture," in *Gender, Race and Class in Media* (1995 [1990]), 79.

[6] Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw- Hill, 1976), 62.

[7] Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 7. For example, in 1900, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the leading weekly with the largest circulation of any periodical, contained a total of 162,319 lines of advertising, and that number skyrocketed to 4,108,509 lines by 1925. Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929), 443. *The Saturday Evening Post* annual revenues from 1897 to 1928 were the following.

Table 9 Circulation and Revenue of *The Saturday Evening Post*

Year	Average Circulation	Advertising Revenue
1897	2,231	$ 6,933
1902	314,671	360,125
1907	726,681	1,266,931
1912	1,920,550	7,114,581
1917	1,883,070	16,076,562
1922	2,187,024	28,278,755
1927	2,816,391	53,144,987
1928	2,843,904	48,661,580

Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising*, 483.

[8] Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness*, 89–90.

[9] Jhally, "Image-Based Culture," 78.

[10] Ellen Seiter notes the remarkable endurance of images that seem to remain unchanged for a century. For example, white children with blonde hair are depicted as go-getters, a stereotypical representation which is not available for black children. Ellen Seiter, "Racist 'Stereotyping' in Television Advertisements," in *Gender, Race and Class in Media*, 100. See also William M O'Barr, *Culture and the Ad: Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising* (Boulder: Westview, 1994); and Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1994).

[11] Seiter, "Racist 'Stereotyping' in Television Advertisements," 78–79. Marchand also presents a similar argument, saying that the ad creators of that era proudly proclaimed themselves missionaries of modernity, feeling the need to teach the values and norms of modernity to their readers. Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, xxi.

[12] Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, 99.

[13] Ibid., 101.

[14] Advertising using racial minorities has a long history, since the time of slavery when African Americans were the object of "for sale" or "wanted" posters in the case of runaways. In this form of advertising, they were depicted inhumanely and other minorities as well were portrayed in a discriminatory or inhumane manner in advertising from the late nineteenth century.

[15] Cream of Wheat's smiling chef first appeared in magazines in 1896.

[16] In the following discussion of stereotypes, I use "blacks" rather than "African Americans," a terms emphasizing cultural heritage, because the nature of racial stereotypes and racial discourse is highly associated with Eurocentric color in this context.

[17] Reginald Horsman, "Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism," in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, eds., *Critical White Studies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997).

[18] Takezawa, "Ethnic Stereotypes in the U.S.A.," 374.

[19] An ad for Wellsworth glasses. *Literary Digest*, 1922.

[20] An ad for Masterpieces of Oriental Mysteria, in Frank Rowsome, Jr., *They Laughed When I Sat Down* (New York: Mcgraw-Hill, 1959), 156.

[21] For discussion on racism and sexuality, see Ali Rattansi, "Racism and 'Postmodernity,'" in Ali Rattansi and Sallie Westwood, eds., *Racism, Modertniy, Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994).

[22] Ideally, in addition to the foregoing analysis, the way in which readers (mis)interpret advertisements as text should be taken into consideration. However, since the time period dealt with in this study is not contemporary and I have not to date found any systematic study that analyzes reader interpretations, I maintain that it is legitimate to choose this period featuring explicit messages contained in advertisers' "teachings."

[23] *The Saturday Evening Post* succeeded two magazines, one of which was first published in 1728 in Philadelphia. In 1821 it changed its name to *The Saturday Evening Post. Collier's* was established in 1888 first with the name of *Once-a-Week* and then changed to its current name in 1902. Its circulation circa 1910 was over 600,000. Established in 1895, *Good Housekeeping* was first published in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and later in Springfield, Massachusetts. Its circulation in the late 1920s was over 1.75 million. John E. Drewry, *A Selected Bibliography and Reprints of Articles Dealing with Various Periodicals* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1938).

[24] Due to the enormous number of volumes, certain months were selected for samples.

[25] I categorized minority roles, relationships between whites and minorities, and products featuring minorities based on my preliminary examination of these aspects.

[26] There were several missing values in the data for the analyses of minority roles, white-minority relationships, and products that resulted in different total numbers of advertisements for each group. The percentages presented here are valid percentages. Since the absolute number of advertisements containing Chinese women, Japanese men, and Japanese women are so low, the precentages for those groups have less validity.

[27] I excluded refrigerators from this category and included them in the category of industrial technology since they symbolize the latter than the former.

[28] In this analysis, categories detailing each race and classified by gender are based on the criterion that at least one member of the analytical group is included. For example, "advertisements including a black man" may or may not include a black woman or a member of other races.

[29] Takezawa, "Ethnic Stereotypes in the U.S.A.," 369–70.

[30] A letter by Gordon H. Stafford, Member of the Board, addressed to *Time* magazine dated March 7, 1949, Reel 11 of 15, NAACP, General Office Papers, 1940–1955, Series B File (University of Washington), microfilm.

[31] A letter by Helen Shearer, Advertising Editor of *Time*, addressed to Madison S. Jones of the NAACP in New York dated March 25, 1949, Reel 11 of 15, NAACP, General Office Papers, 1940–1955, Series B File (University of Washington), microfilm.

[32] A letter by Mahlon C. Cooley, M.D. from Los Angeles addressed to President Harry S. Truman, dated October 6, 1949, Reel 11of 15, NAACP, General Office Papers, 1940–1955, Series B File (University of Washington), microfilm.

[33] Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus*, 38.

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