

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Realizing Whiteness in U. S. Visual Culture:

The Popular Illustration of

J. C. Leyendecker, Norman Rockwell, and the *Saturday Evening Post*, 1917-1945

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Art History

by

Eric Jefferson Segal

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The dissertation of Eric Jefferson Segal is approved.

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2002

To my friends and family who put up with so much and so little of me.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Realizing Whiteness in U. S. Visual Culture:

The Popular Illustration of

J. C. Leyendecker, Norman Rockwell, and the *Saturday Evening Post*, 1917-1945

by

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During the period of its ascendancy between the World Wars, the *Saturday Evening Post* employed hundreds of illustrators to produce images for its weekly covers, essays and short stories. Their graphic art was integral to the success of the *Post* which was acknowledged not only as having the largest circulation of any magazine in the world, but of influencing the cultural life of America more than any other periodical. Among the thousands of illustrators working for the *Post*, J. C. (Joseph Christian) Leyendecker and, later, Norman Rockwell received special attention from editors and readers alike. *Post* enthusiasts lauded the “realism” of the magazine’s vision and of its illustrations as embodying symbolic truths deeper than any mere record of life. These truths concerned, above all, the essential meaning of Americanism and the identity of the

frequently invoked “common man.”

In shaping a visual language appropriate to this common man, the *Post* accorded specific connotative resources to popular illustration. Rather than simply employing illustration as alluring advertisement on the cover and as decorative enhancement to essays and stories inside, the *Post* articulated an instrumental function for its graphic art. In the context of this national magazine, illustration was argued to be the true art of America, one peculiarly suited to expressing core beliefs and shared values of the common man. In a rejection of modernism and Old Master paintings alike, the magazine developed an aesthetic of common sense in a visual style expounded as legible, sensible, anti-radical and American. More subtly, this style was tied as well to the common man’s implicitly normative modes of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and race, which, taken together, are constituent material of whiteness.

At stake in the *Post* was the functional creation of an audience to support its commercial enterprise and the conceptual formulation of a People as the basis of an ideological function. The signifying process that joined pictures and texts to a rhetoric of nationalism was both underwritten by and affirming of the complex event understood as whiteness. Here, whiteness undergirded the ideological production of white bodies as a medium for ideals national identity.

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Television, radio and video recordings/broadcasts

(chronological)

- Peter Rockwell, National Press Club luncheon, June 20, 2000.
- Peter Rockwell and Maureen Hart Hennessey in interview with Neil Conan. National Public Radio, Weekend Edition, broadcast June 2, 2000.
- "Norman Rockwell: Painting America." Public Television Broadcast, 1999.
- Talk of the Nation*. Public radio panel hosted by Melinda Penkava, with Peter Rockwell, Robert Rosenblum, Wanda Corn, and Neil Harris. National Public Radio broadcast, November 24, 1999.
- American Masters: Norman Rockwell: Painting America*. Co-production of Thirteen/WNET in New York and NHK, 1999.

News Hour. Ruby Bridges interview with Charlayne Hunter-Gault, February 18, 1997.
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Norman Rockwell interviewed by Douglas Cooper January 1972. *Distinguished Contemporary Norman Rockwell (1894-)*. Sound Perspectives, Inc, 1974.
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Norman Rockwell: An American Dream. Concepts Unlimited Film, 1971.

Introduction: but thou read'st black where I read white¹

“I’ve known collectors who owned Picassos who really preferred Norman Rockwell. If only they had owned up to it, it would have been way better for the life of art, and not that I think Rockwell is so negligible, I have to use his name because everybody knows it. He wasn’t that bad a painter, incidentally, but there are people who lie to themselves that way, and I don’t think that that helps art, in general.”

--Clement Greenberg, 1983.²

¹I appropriate these words to a different end from William Blake’s poetic reflection in *The Everlasting Gospel*, circa 1810.

²Clement Greenberg, from a talk at Western Michigan University (January 18, 1983). From the transcript and audio available on-line at www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/taste.html

Nearly forty-five years after Clement Greenberg, writing in “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” rued the undeniable appeal of a *Saturday Evening Post* cover by Norman Rockwell, he again oriented his arguments about modern art and taste in relation to Rockwell, feeling compelled *to use his name because everybody knows it*.³ To make a point about self-knowledge and taste Greenberg, in the epigraph above, acknowledges that art collectors may be drawn to both Picasso and Rockwell, two skilled painters who are utterly incommensurate on aesthetic grounds. This was by no means the only time Greenberg would cast Rockwell in the role of scape-goat illustrator: after repeated references over the years he became for Greenberg, “Norman Rockwell, poor Norman Rockwell.”⁴ Rockwell’s name persisted despite all -- whether a thorn in the critic’s flesh or convenient short-hand -- because as Greenberg wrote, those who do not believe “that Raphael is better than Norman Rockwell” can not be proved wrong.⁵ Despite Greenberg’s celebrated eye and keen critical judgment he could not simply dispense with illustrator and

³Clement Greenberg, “Avant–Garde and Kitsch,” *Partisan Review* VI, no. 5 (Fall 1939). There is a pleasing symmetry in the fact that in discussing Rockwell, I find myself compelled to use Greenberg’s name.

⁴“Night Three, April 8, 1971,” [The Bennington College Seminars], *Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1999), 104. See also Greenberg writing in *The Nation* (March 6, 1948) -- reproduced as “Review of an Exhibition of Mordecai Ardon-Bronstein and a Discussion of the Reaction in America to Abstract Art,” in v. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949, Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O’Brian (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1988) -- where he concludes “Those same millions also prefer Norman Rockwell to Courbet, and neither the Institute of Contemporary Art nor any other institute will in our day and age ever persuade them to comprehend the standards that make Courbet the one to be preferred.”

⁵“Esthetic Judgment” [originally “Seminar Two,” *Art International* 18, no. 6 (Summer, 1974)] in *Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1999), 10.

get on with the job of art writing. While it is tempting to formulate a psychoanalytic account -- a return of the repressed -- that accounts for that moment when the youthful Greenberg himself fell sway to the peculiar appeals of a Rockwell, a more productive tack for understanding the relation between art and illustration is to examine the aesthetic conception to which Greenberg subscribed.⁶

⁶Greenberg acknowledged that he had held a youthful appreciation of Rockwell, "Night Two, April 7, 1971," The Bennington Seminar, *Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1999), 100. Later, he even attempted to convert the enemy from within, writing an essay on the appreciation of modern art for the *Post*, "The Case for Abstract Art," *Saturday Evening Post* (August 1, 1959). Greenberg retained offprints of this essay in his papers, see Clement Greenberg Papers, 1928-1994, Series IV: Work Files: clippings and manuscripts, Box 33, Folder 3, at the Getty Research Institute.

Such a study would argue that Rockwell's alterity to Greenberg's conception of modern art was intrinsic to Greenberg's aesthetics. And more generally, it would show that a key function for popular and commercial illustration has been to reify conceptions about the self-sufficiency of fine art.⁷ Consider for a moment the terms which art critics have marshaled to explain why Rockwell was a fine illustrator, but no artist. According to this line of thinking, the illustrator may be distinguished from the artist because the former neglected aesthetic criteria of "subtlety, nuance, and depth"; because he worked on commission serving not himself, but the interests of editors and advertisers; and by virtue of the fact that his audience was unschooled in art.⁸ It can be shown that each of these arguments derives from Kant's work on the judgment of taste pursued in the *Critique of Judgment*.⁹ But they also possess the questionable force of common sense: artists are

⁷That these observations can be extended to other media is suggested by David Kunzle's note that "popular imagery" has its roots in a term coined in mid-nineteenth century France as *imagerie populaire*, and his observation that, at the time of his writing, "The concept 'popular' is construed principally in a stylistic sense: anything crude and naive in appearance...reminiscent of peasant art..." Kunzle proposes that the art historian's neglect of the comic strip might be accounted for by its qualitative indeterminacy, falling as it does between the naive appeal of the primitive and the aesthetic sophistication of fine engraving. See Kunzle's ground breaking, *The Early Comic Strip: Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from c. 1450 to 1825*, vol 1 *History of the Comic Strip* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1973), 4.

⁸For these three arguments, see Edwin McDowell, "Norman Rockwell, Artist of Americana, Dead at 84," *New York Times* (Nov. 10, 1978): 1; Roberta Smith, "The Complexities in Rockwell's Simple Images," *New York Times* (July 7, 1989): sec. III, 29; John Russell, "Illustrator for an Age With Idealized Images of Life," *New York Times* (Nov. 10, 1978): 29. Rockwell himself makes these distinctions in *My Adventures as an Illustrator as Told to Thomas Rockwell* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1960), 373-74.

⁹Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett, 1987), hereafter cited as *CoJ* with reference given to the section number (§) as well as the page number in reference to the pagination of the *Akademie*

autonomous originators pursuing ethereal goals according to purely aesthetic standards, not salesman working to order.¹⁰ And with all this contingency accruing to the illustrator's practice -- analogous to what Kant calls *mercenary art*¹¹ -- *free art* is left to its conceptual autonomy.

edition as provided in this translation. Respectively, the arguments correspond to (1) the universality of the aesthetic judgment, the judgment of taste that sorts out the chafe of that which is merely agreeable to the senses from the wheat of that which is pleasing, and without interest, to judgment (*CoJ* §45, 306); (2) the distinction between a free art pursued by an autonomous artist and a mercenary craft undertaken by a contingent producer (*CoJ* §43, 304); and (3) the artist's necessary recourse to a great tradition, which Kant identifies not, of course, as the middle-brow, but as the Classical (*CoJ* §44, 305).

¹⁰Luc Ferry, in his work on the role of the subject in modern philosophy, has demonstrated the centrality of aesthetics to the epistemic shift that placed man as a self-knowing subject at the center of a world now available to his faculties. Whereas God had ruled the realm of the intelligible which man could only partially grasp, the aesthetic situated man's very senses as the measure of knowledge. Luc Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of Taste in the Democratic Age*, trans. Robert De Loazia (Chicago & London: Univ. of Chicago, 1993), 20.

¹¹ *CoJ* §43, 304. Kant gives *mercenary art* as an alternative term for *craft* which he opposes to *free art*. Mercenary art is burdensome in itself and is attractive only for its fact, remuneration for instance.

Earlier in my thinking about popular illustration, I began an essay with a different epigraph from the pen of the same art critic, devilishly pleased to have found a springboard in his disapproval of Rockwell and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Having raised -- if only to dismiss -- the instance of Rockwell, Greenberg offered a legitimate opportunity to respond with a more attentive discussion of commercial illustration. His aesthetically inconsequential kitsch became for me an entree into thinking about the power of American illustration to shape the experience of millions of magazine readers. Although I argued then that Rockwell was a significant figure in the cultural history of the United States and I was interested in the processes of canon formation that necessarily excluded his work from art's history, it was never my intention to make of Rockwell a great artist.¹²

Since that essay, the figure of Rockwell has made increasing -- though still modest -- inroads upon the canon of art. A recent touring exhibition of his work has seen Rockwell casting his shadow across the threshold of a number of museums and winning the critical acclaim of many art historians as well as multi-million dollar auction bids from collectors.¹³ The success of a certain vision of postmodernism has been identified by some as the pry-bar used to open the canon, a little, to Rockwell. This argument holds that the

¹²Indeed, the idea seemed to me obviously misguided, although it has recently been advocated as a corrective to the history of art. For my part, I count myself among those who are less interested in augmenting and adjusting the canon than in understanding its discursive and historical function to maintain and distribute cultural capital. As Donald Preziosi has argued "the essential ambiguity of critical standards as such; [provides for] the fact that they are always, everywhere, instruments of power," *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 25 and ff.

¹³The exhibition and art historians are discussed in the next chapter. Rockwell's *Rosie the Riveter* recently sold for \$4.9 million at Sotheby's, see "Rockwell Painting Sells for \$4.9M," *New York Times* (May 22, 2002).

dissolution of reliable aesthetic standards associated with postmodernism, has for better or for worse left former distinctions between art and illustration untenable. And, as I have already noted, even Greenberg could not prove otherwise.

It is a mistake, however, to focus over-much on the impasse to which aesthetics -- either a flabby uncritical postmodernism or a tough minded, self-satisfied Greenbergianism -- lead. More fundamental issues can be located by attending to specific practices and discursive contexts of art and illustration. Up until this point, I have been looking at illustration from the perspective of art criticism and history. While critics have judged illustration insufficient to qualify as art, advocates of illustration have argued that it is really no different from art (i.e. if illustrators must please editors, artists have had to satisfy patrons; where illustrators must picture a textual narrative, Renaissance painters represented the Bible, etc.). In other words, both detractors and devotees have taken their bearings from high art as the primary term of analysis.¹⁴ However, as I will argue throughout this study, in the first half of the twentieth century it was possible to believe that *illustration* was the privileged pictorial practice in America -- in the United States -- not excepting either modernist movements or Old Master paintings.¹⁵ Illustration for such

¹⁴See Michele Bogart's important work on art and magazine culture and especially, in this regard, her discussion of debates over an illustration gallery for the Metropolitan Museum, Bogart, *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 43-47.

¹⁵Jerome Mellquist thought that frequent *Post* contributor Irvin S. Cobb had "confused painting with illustration" when Cobb, responding to the Armory exhibition, opined that Cubists were unjailed criminals while Remington and Pyle "were greater painters than any old Master that ever turned out blistered saints and fly-blown cherubim." Cobb, "Old Masters and Young Messers," *Saturday Evening Post* (August 10, 1913); Mellquist, *The Emergence of an American Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 222-23.

adherents *was* art.¹⁶

¹⁶Tom Gretton, discussing massified bourgeois culture in the distinctly high-brow *Le Monde illustré*, sketches out the relation between the mass image and Salon painting as one of difference and competition. That is, he argues that magazine culture and art culture in nineteenth-century France were engaged and responsive, the one to the other. Although this model does not suit a study of the *Post*, it usefully points to the necessity of breaking from art historical assumptions -- e.g. Salon painting untouched by mass imagery -- when approaching visual culture. Gretton, "Difference and Competition: the Imitation and Reproduction of Fine Art in a Nineteenth-century Illustrated Weekly News Magazine," *Oxford Art Journal* 23, no. 2 (2000): 143-162.

This view emerged in the early years of the century and continued to frame the work of *Saturday Evening Post* illustrators until mid-century. It was expressed in a series of brochures on prominent artists, one of which explained that the “fresher” and “broader” view possessed by *America* derives from “its heritage of frontier days,” a fact which gives rise “in some Americans [to] a feeling of inferiority.” And yet, “In the art world no group has done more to upset this inferiority complex than the so-called commercial artists. Not merely by the fresher viewpoint and broader outlook, but by actual superiority of technique as well, they have made their work the truly living art of today. The past fifty years have bred great American masters, none of them greater than J.C. Leyendecker.”¹⁷ Here art has become illustration, transforming cultural mortification to *amour-propre*. The leading force in elevating and interpreting illustration to this effect was the *Saturday Evening Post*.

I. “An impossible venture”¹⁸

¹⁷Unsigned. “J.C. Leyendecker,” *American Artists* n. 10 of a Series (Philadelphia: Gatchel & Manning, Inc., January 1940): n.p. Parts of the text of this brochure draws upon an earlier *Post* article as noted in Chapter III. Virtually all the illustrators honored in this series worked for the *Post*. They are F.R. Gruger, Robert Riggs, N. Rockwell, Wallace Morgan, Walter Biggs, Charles Buckles Falls, John LaGatta, Floyd M. Davis, Al Parker, J.C. Leyendecker, Dean Cornwell, and Harvey Dunn. See Bernard B. Perlman, *The Golden Age of American Illustration: F.R. Gruger and His Circle* (Westport, Conn.: North Light Pub., 1978), 137, note 18.

¹⁸The *Inland Printer* (circa 1887) declared Curtis’ plan to found the *Post* a mistake, for he had “established a wonderful property in *The Ladies’ Home Journal*, and now he was blowing in all the profits on an impossible venture.” Cited in John E. Drewry, *Some Magazines and Magazine Makers* (Boston: Stratford Co., 1924), 86. N.B. attribution of the same to *Printers Ink* in Joseph C. Goulden, *The Curtis Caper* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 22.

In 1897, *Ladies Home Journal* publisher Cyrus H. K. Curtis purchased the moribund *Saturday Evening Post*, and handed it over to the untried editorial leadership of George Horace Lorimer. Under Lorimer, the flimsy newsprint publication grew into a weekly magazine of a hundred or more pages of slick paper liberally illustrated, heavily advertised, and dense with fiction, news, opinion, and essays on business, politics, and culture. When *weekly* issues bloated to as many as 250 pages, one contemporary quipped, “I never read the *Post* in bed. I’m always afraid that, just as I’m going to sleep, it’ll fall on my face and kill me.”¹⁹ By 1913 Lorimer had garnered for his periodical the largest circulation of any magazine in the world.

¹⁹Unattributed quote in Frederick C. Davis, “The *Saturday Evening Post* -- An Interior View,” *The Author and Journalist* XIII, no. 2 (February 1928): 11.

The *Post*'s predominance over American print media throughout the interwar years provoked the ire of critics and the admiration of competitors: Upton Sinclair dubbed it "the great central power-plant of Fascism in America,"²⁰ while a student of magazines, noting that along with the daily paper it formed the only library of many homes, called it "one of the most powerful factors today contributing to good American citizenship, higher morals and ideals, and elevation of mind."²¹ With its transcontinental reach -- enabled by the massive scale of its organizational techniques, as well as technological and social developments -- the *Post* pursued a self-appointed task, "to interpret America to itself, always readably, but constructively."²²

This interpretive practice was frequently styled by the *Post* (and even its faultfinders) as a *mirroring* of the nation, as for instance in a critical review characterizing the magazine as a "Mirror on These States"²³ [Figure 1, "SatEvePost," *Survey*]. Regardless of this looking-glass metaphor, the *Post*'s efforts to interpret the nation may be better understood as the active production of a notional America suited to the magazine's political sensibilities, commercial requirements, and hegemonic cultural ambitions. It was,

²⁰Upton Sinclair, "The Great Dog Lorrimer [sic]," *Money Writes!* (New York: A. & C. Boni, 1927), 67.

²¹John E. Drewry, *Some Magazines and Magazine Makers* (Boston: Stratford Co., 1924.), 91.

²²Bigelow, *A Short History of the Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia: Curtis, 1936), 12. John Tebbel, *George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co, 1948), 25 attributes this phrase to Wesley Stout.

²³Leon Whipple, "SatEvePost: Mirror on these States," *Survey* 59 (March 1, 1928): 699.

wrote one critic, “a magic mirror: it not only reflects, it creates us.”²⁴ The *Post*, in other words, not only pursued high circulation figures in order to sell advertising, it sought to forge from an indeterminate mass of readers, an audience that would recognize itself in the magazine. Key to this process, the *Post* claimed, were the “famous covers [which] probably impress people with the magazine’s sympathetic mirroring of America more than any other single feature.”²⁵

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵[Ashley Halsey, Jr.], *A Short History of the Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia: Curtis, 1949), 44.

If the *Saturday Evening Post* featured illustration prominently, it also articulated the merits and ideological function of the medium. Emphasis on the legible and the immediate was tied to the *Post's* advocacy of the “common man” and of “common sense,” terms employed to shape political and cultural consensus. A common man’s art, the *Post* asserted, must “see life steadily and see it whole, to illuminate the dark spots, and to give order to the chaos of everyday life.”²⁶ Illustration was claimed to be particularly suited to this proscription by virtue of its ordinary, even natural, visual language.

²⁶Gilbert Seldes, “The Art Bogy,” *Saturday Evening Post* (January 12, 1929): 130. Emphasis added. The illustrative realism of the *Post* was consonant with ideas about a clear sighted realism that could be achieved through the press. As journalism professor John E. Drewry wrote in words that echo Seldes’, “the greatest influence of the magazine today is in its ability to confront truth -- to see life as it is,” Drewry, *Some Magazines and Magazine Makers* (Boston: Stratford Co., 1924.), 5.

In a 1932 essay describing how professional illustrators work, not like bohemian artists, but as business men and women, the *Post* extended common sense to fundamental problems of pictorial construction.²⁷ On the seemingly elusive art of composition it cited illustrator Frederic R. Gruger's reassuring pronouncement: "People say that they know nothing of art, but they do. They know bad composition when they see it. They do not know why it is bad, but the natural laws of it are instinct in the human make-up."²⁸ Here, he advised readers that if they could pick up a stick and balance it on a finger, then they had already mastered the principles of composition. If *Post* readers could trust their intuitive reactions to tell them when (if not why) a picture was done poorly, they were invited to dismiss any art evading their common sense response. Other *Post* essays addressed the business man with advice to ignore the "art snobs" and to appraise art as follows: "Take a look at a picture. If something happens, it is a work of talent; if a distinct thrill runs up and down your spine, you are in the presence of a work of genius."²⁹

The *Post's* perspective shared some concerns common to contemporary critics of the fine arts. For instance, in an essay entitled "Art and Common Sense", Royal Cortissoz responded forcefully to the excesses of "oracular jargon" among artists and critics in their apotheosis of the Artist above the rank of ordinary, talented individual. For Cortissoz,

²⁷Wesley Stout, "Yes, We Read the Story," *Saturday Evening Post* 204 (June 25, 1932): 8ff.

²⁸Gruger quoted in Stout, *ibid.*, 33.

²⁹Brenda Ueland, "Art, Or You Don't Know What You Like," *Saturday Evening Post* (May 24, 1930): 201. The essay devotes much space to dispensing with "the artist and his line" in favor of the illustrator who complains of the artist, "Why don't they draw what they see -- which is exciting enough -- without straining to be so interesting?" (52).

though a great work of art presents impenetrable mysteries, it need not be mystified, for in the “right thinking about a great work of art there is in it no mystery whatever.”³⁰ The corrective “is common sense that will bring the subject down from the clouds and keep the great work of art before us as the creation of a man, not of a demigod” (13). To this end he proposes that the prosaic facts of biography would keep viewers focussed on the human aspect and drive away irrelevant metaphysical considerations too often treated by critics. His concluding lines advise that the reader use common sense, resist esoterica, and view art “in a natural human way, with an open mind” because as he concludes “beauty is all.”

³⁰ Royal Cortissoz, “Art and Common Sense” 3-22 in *Art and Common Sense* (New York and London: Charles Scribner’s Son, 1913), 5.

This statement shares with the outlook advocated in the *Post* the idea that art is a natural expression and demands only natural responses based on more-or-less innate aesthetic judgments about beauty. Cortissoz with his Victorian temperament sought a fine art that expressed beauty and moral character. Similarly, the *Post* acted acolyte to a wholesome art that spoke to *status quo* experience and expectation. For the *Post* common sense and the common man would naturally be expressed through the practical pursuit of business. Art ought therefore serve and express the spirit of America as a business-loving culture.

Beyond offering a common visual language, illustration was to be understood as a salve for gender and aesthetic anxieties of the late-nineteenth century, something evinced in a peculiar account of the development of the arts in America. In a 1929 essay for the *Post*, journalist and critic Gilbert Seldes {see ejs notes on Kammen/seldes in c:\document\wp61docs\1_resea\readnote.wpd} drew an explicit connection between a crisis and subsequent restoration of normative gender roles, on the one hand, and popular realism in the visual arts, on the other. Very briefly: Seldes argued that a modern social crisis began with the closing of the western frontier, when “the American man buckled down to business and his wife was left in an ideal idleness.” (129-130). As men undertook women’s tasks of marketing and housework, feckless wives -- “idle and hysterical women” -- played host in their empty hours to “effeminate” European artists.³¹

³¹If Seldes left any question in the minds of *Post* readers about the sexual orientation of these artists, he was blunter elsewhere writing in respect to highbrow culture, “There are moments when, without moral prejudice of any kind, one wonders whether all the arts must eventually be practiced only by the sexually inverted.” Gilbert Seldes, *Mainland* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936), 119.

However, when these same women later discovered healthful outdoor activities,³² they returned to their conventional domestic responsibilities and abandoned cultural patronage, leaving their artists to retreat to Europe whence they came.

With the restoration of normal gender relations within the American middle-class, Art in America -- which is to say illustration -- was also returned to its proper, utilitarian function: entertaining consumers and selling goods. From this impressionistic history, illustration emerged as the art truest to the sensibilities of the common man and the reader of the *Post*. The *Post* advanced a realism that was concise, straightforward, affirming and safe in its content. Shunning irony, tragedy, and salaciousness -- though amenable to satire, adversity, and romance -- its literary and graphic realism offered narrative complications rather than epistemological aporia.

Of particular import here, is that in Seldes' narrative the new art -- commercially viable, straight, masculine, and American -- derives from a fantastic pre-history of corrupt gender roles in which effete artists from abroad dominated in social circles that treated the American business man as a cultural buffoon. This history, as glib it is, papers-over contradictions in the status quo as developmental rather than structural. For Seldes, the gender disorder forming the traumatic primal scene of illustration's genealogy was resolved within the ontogeny of American art; in its past. But I want to propose that non-normative identities (whether of gender, sexuality, race, or class) remained throughout the interwar years a constitutive element of the discourse surrounding illustration and of

³²In particular, Seldes cites the bicycle as liberating women from insular indoor lives, physically invigorating them and obviating their need for excessive refinements satisfied by the arts. See Ellen Gruber Garvey, "Reframing the Bicycle: Advertising Supported Magazines and Scorching Women," *American Quarterly* 47 (1995): 66-101.

illustration itself.

To be sure the questions of gender and aesthetics were not endemic only to the popular graphic arts. Prominent critics at the turn of the century and the early twentieth century -- Sadakichi Hartmann and later Thomas Craven, linked the two. Hartmann for instance deplored the *nouveau riche* of the United States for its “Anglomania and love of titles,” an epicureanism that promoted “refinement rather than strength.”³³ The situation in America was much the result of the influences of “incessant immigration” that disturbed the equilibrium of the nation, leaving it too dependent on Europe in aesthetic matters.³⁴ The resulting “lack of rough, manly force, and the prevailing tendency to excel in delicacy and subtlety of expression” (192) reigned everywhere among American painters. Hartmann excepted only Homer and Eakins who he thought “masters in the art of painting, [possessed of] . . . strong, frank, and decided ways of expressing something American” (193). Regarding the frank depiction of Eakins’ *Gross Clinic* (called his “Operation” here), Hartman wrote, “Our American art is so effeminate at present that it would do no harm to have it inoculated with just some of that brutality” (200-203). Hartmann called for the vigor of a Rooseveltian body to stride through the art schools setting the character of the

³³Sadakichi Hartmann, *A History of American Art*, vol I (Boston: L.C. Page & Co, 1902 [also noted as MDCCCI], 191-192.

³⁴Hartmann was himself an immigrant -- the son of a Japanese mother and German father -- who arrived in the United States disinherited and broke in 1882. Despite his remarkable and unconventional ideas and experiences, he nonetheless expresses such conventional insularly nationalistic beliefs. See Jane Calhoun Weaver’s introduction to *Sadakichi Hartmann, Critical Modernist: Collected Art Writings* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1991).

American artists in order, and perhaps restoring some of Eakins' "unbridled masculine power."³⁵ For, like Seldes, Hartmann, detected effeminacy in the American submission to European tastes.

³⁵Martin Berger quotes the same lines and points out that Hartmann's assessment of *The Gross Clinic* some thirty years after was at variance with the 1870 response, particularly in the relationship of painting to masculinity. Hartmann, therefore tells us more about twentieth century perceptions of masculinity and the arts than he does about the reception of Eakins's painting in the nineteenth century. See Martin A. Berger, *Man Made: Thomas Eakins and the Construction of Gilded-Age Manhood*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: Univ. of California, 2000), 7-10.

Such a perspectives as Seldes's and Hartmann's informed the judicious analysis of the *Post* in Bernard De Voto's 1937 essay titled "Writing for Money." De Voto gave muted credit to the *Post* for producing fiction that wisely suited the taste of its audience and provided writers of "serious fiction" with a means of earning a livelihood.³⁶ De Voto, then the editor of the high-brow *Saturday Review of Literature*, implied in his discussion of *Post* fiction, that the image of America reflected therein was one structured by denial. *Saturday Evening Post* realism," he wrote, "though light and shallow, is frequently quite as good as any in the contemporary novel. You will not encounter realism about homosexuality, let us say, or strikebreaking or adultery, but you will find superb realism about women at matinees or literary clubs or the A. & P., men in the locker-room or the bar or the commuter's car, married people worrying about expenses." Miscegenation, he continued, is "Mr. Lorimer's one unshakeable taboo."³⁷ With these strengths and limitations, De Voto concluded that "the historian is going to recover the surface of American life -- at least of middle class life -- much more fully and with less distortion from the slicks than from the novel of our day"³⁸

³⁶Bernard De Voto, "Writing for Money," *Saturday Review of Literature* XVI, no. 24 (October, 9, 1937): 22.

³⁷The *Post* was in accord with other manufacturers of mass-entertainment. Note for instance film industry production codes explicitly forbade themes of miscegenation from 1927 until 1956. See Susan Courtney, "Picturizing Race: Hollywood's Censorship of Miscegenation and Production of Racial Visibility through *Imitation of Life*," *Genders* 27 (1998): note 1, http://www.genders.org/g27/g27_pr.html.

³⁸De Voto, 20. De Voto's proposition is not meant as mere persiflage, for he took himself seriously as a man of letters. Before taking the editorial position at the *Saturday Review of Literature*, he had taught history at Harvard where he was disappointed to be denied a permanent position despite publishing *Mark Twain's America* in 1932. During his subsequent tenure in the "Easy Chair" at *Harper's* (1935-1956), he wrote prolifically

including a three part history of the American West (one volume of which was awarded the 1948 Pulitzer Prize).

But De Voto also discovers that, “Homosexuality can exist in the slicks only as an indirect allusion. Illicit love [too] must be carefully handled.” He catches editor Lorimer admitting that fornication, might in fact occur “between installments,” off stage, as it were.³⁹ Found too are veiled narratives of miscegenation even.⁴⁰ In other words, what De Voto calls the realism of “the surface of American life” is organized around specific acts of discursive segregation and repression that permit the *Post* to represent its America. And yet, as De Voto himself suggests, these repressed elements do return. The very taboos concerning gender relations, sexual practices, class oppression, and race lie at the heart of *Post* realism dominating its structure in fiction and illustration. The degree to which these clustered identities are difficult to see, is precisely a function of the structure of whiteness. It is whiteness that organizes the totality of these fractured identities into common sense arrangements, or to recall the *Post*’s description of its own art, whiteness “give[s] order to the chaos of everyday life.”

II. White Postness

³⁹De Voto, 4. Otto Friedrich fleshes out the anecdote as concerning a 1931 serial in which one installment ended with a secretary dining at her employer’s home while the next installment began with the same couple breakfasting together. In response to readers displeased by the implied fornication, Lorimer wrote, “The Post cannot be responsible for what the characters in its serials do between installments,” Friedrich, *Decline and Fall* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 10.

⁴⁰In 1948, Tebbel remarked upon the same taboo-breaking story, but treated it as an instance of Lorimer debunking the experts who “said that no popular magazine could print a story about miscegenation, least of all the *Post*.” Lorimer received further praise from Tebbel for defying critics and risking offending Jews (with Montague Glass’s Potash and Perlmutter series) and Negroes (with Octavus Roy Cohen’s Florian Slappy stories), and, he claimed, proving that in fact “no one was offended,” Tebbel, *George Horace Lorimer*, 42-43.

The present study is neither, exactly, a history of the *Saturday Evening Post*, an interpretation of the illustrative work of Norman Rockwell and J. C. Leyendecker, nor a survey of popular illustration in America, though it is intended to contribute to the scholarship on each of these.⁴¹ As an inquiry into whiteness and the *Post*, its subject proper is evanescent. George Lipsitz has characterized whiteness as an “unmarked category.”⁴² As a pervasive and invisible target of critical analysis, whiteness, by its very structure, belies inquiry.⁴³ And it has behind it the strength of common sense. To be sure, one thinks of the *Post* as a great media outlet for, by, and about white Americans -- “a land unpopulated by ethnic or black Americans”⁴⁴ -- and, ostensibly, this is so.⁴⁵ However, this

⁴¹For histories of the *Saturday Evening Post*, see Jan Cohn

⁴²George Lipsitz, “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the ‘White’ Problem in American Studies,” *American Quarterly* (September 1995): 369.

⁴³Whiteness shares this feature with ideology as Louis Althusser describes it: “It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are ‘obviousnesses’) obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot fail to recognize and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the ‘still, small voice of conscience’): ‘That’s obvious! That’s right! That’s true!’” Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971: 172.

⁴⁴A description of the aggregate of Rockwell’s *Post* imagery, McDowell, op cit, 29.

⁴⁵It would be a mistake to assume that blacks were simply under-represented (i.e. un-depicted) in the *Saturday Evening Post*: a single issue might feature a black cook on the cover and contain a Florian Slappy installment by Octavus Roy Cohen; advertisements featuring the Cream of Wheat chef or Amos and Andy touting Philco radios; and an illustrated short story in which a black waiter graciously serves white diners. Certainly, however African-Americans were only rarely given the opportunity to represent their experiences (to serve as agents of a community) in the *Post*; see for instance Stanley High, “Black Omens,” *The Saturday Evening Post* 210, two parts (May 21, 1938 & June 4, 1938).

study is concerned precisely with the formation and re-presentation of White as a discursive category--with whiteness. The fundamental questions have to do with what role popular illustration -- as propagated above all in the *Post* between the World Wars -- played in the production of whiteness as a natural and inevitable category of being, and what cultural utility that formation served in making Americans.

One of the first objections such a project might raise is that, by taking whiteness as its subject, it seems to reproduce the very effect of the category it wants to interrogate. A study of the *Saturday Evening Post* concerned with, among other issues, racial injustice, and yet focussing upon representations of dominant subjects would appear to marginalize minority interests as effectively as did the *Post* itself. Shouldn't the questions be, one might ask, how did the *Post* contribute to depriving ethnic and racial minorities a voice in "mainstream" culture, and what messages such a voice would carry? To be sure, these questions are pressing for the cultural history of the United States; however the cultural function of the *Saturday Evening Post* is better understood through a perspective that attends to the magazine's productive power rather than its complementary repressive effects.

That I might better make the point here, consider that this anticipated censure parallels actual remonstrance against Rockwell's oeuvre as too centered on the experience of white Americans to the exclusion of minorities. Such reproofs of Rockwell can only be understood in the context of partisan claims that his imagery represented -- that is captured, distilled and depicted -- the essential content of all that is meant by "America." The critique refutes the truth of this claim by questioning who is counted among *the American people*, but it does little to question the terms by which Rockwell is claimed for *the people*. Thus,

recent scholarship on Rockwell collected under the title *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, interprets Rockwell's larger career as producing an inclusive image of the nation.⁴⁶ A more pertinent question is, how do *we* come to know ourselves as *the people* and what are *the people* for. The critique of Rockwell's restrictive notion of America then is a red-herring. To effectively study the becoming of Nation through representation, and the distribution of power to make claims of authority on the subject, it is necessary to examine the terms themselves. Similarly, questioning how the *Post* colluded in the production of whiteness; fractures powerful ideological instruments, opening the path to an understanding of the process of marginalization.

⁴⁶As one example, an essay by one of the co-curators opens by declaring, "He was the people's artist" (23) and closes with the matter of fact, "it was people who mattered" (27). "The People's Painter," in *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, eds. Maureen Hart Hennessey and Anne Knutson (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. for the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1999), 23-27, catalog of 1999-2002 exhibition.

Moreover, in studying whiteness (as opposed to, say conducting a sociological study of communities of self-identified white people) it is necessary to understand the subject through difference and not as a self-evident fact: whiteness is a function of Others, and *vice versa*, constructed in culture. Whiteness is less an identity assumed by individuals, than it is an standard against which is measured the distribution of power. Further, I would suggest that “white people” do not possess and use whiteness, but are subject to it. Which is to say that at a discursive level whiteness never just empowers white subjects, but also imposes upon those subjects limiting factors. As Foucault taught, no individual in a disciplinary society actually possesses power--though subjects may be momentarily empowered, disempowered, even egregiously oppressed. Power flows through cultural formations asynchronously, and to individuals only as an effect, and then only provisionally.⁴⁷ Although whiteness elaborates culturally and discursively privileged positions in a particular society, it does not endow individuals with power. Instead, the counterintuitive operations of whiteness can be understood as a critical term of disempowerment that distributes bodies in the cultural matrix, subjecting them to its own forces. Through the critical examination of whiteness, we may account for historical processes that are not otherwise evident, and we may see signs indicating paths through to insolvable difficulties of the present.

III. Overview: Mass Magazine Illustration

⁴⁷See especially Michel Foucault, “The Panopticon” 195-228 in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979 [*Surveiller et Punir*, 1975]).

“Read this minute, cast aside the next; always new -- millions of words of untold merit pour forth from the press each week and month; low in price, yet rich in quality -- the modern periodicals are accomplishing so much and with it furnishing such fascinating enjoyment that the magazine may justly be termed an institution -- a very powerful institution,”⁴⁸
--John E. Drewry, *Some Magazines and Magazine Makers*, 1924.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the material conditions for the production and consumption of illustrated leisure material were evolving at a rapid pace. Undergirding the very possibility of the mass-circulation magazine, were developments in publishing technology (including improvements in the reproduction of illustrations), changes in patterns of material consumption and consumer marketing (including national brands advertised nationwide), a rise in the literacy rate, and efficient means of nationwide distribution by rail and road. The nationally circulating magazines that emerged and expanded during this period constituted the earliest formation of a truly mass-culture. As Richard Ohmann has argued, these magazines forged an audience that responded to their unique and abiding personality.⁴⁹ They appeared regularly -- every week or month -- unlike films and popular books which were singular experiences, and they reached out to a national audience where even the largest metropolitan newspaper focussed on local and regional markets. Indeed, in so far as the development of the mass-circulation magazine after 1893 comprised the birth of mass-culture itself, the *Saturday Evening Post* leapt to the forefront of the reproduction of American national identity in the twentieth century.

⁴⁸John E. Drewry, *Some Magazines and Magazine Makers* (Boston: Stratford Co., 1924), ii.

⁴⁹Richard Ohmann, “Where Did Mass Culture Come From? The Case of Magazines,” *Berkshire Review* (1981): 85-101. Also, Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (Verso 1996).

The onset of the “ten-cent magazine revolution” in 1893,⁵⁰ was premised on the concept of a low cover price underwritten by large advertising space and promoting large-volume, nation-wide circulation. Within a decade of its appearance “ten-centers” could claim eighty-five percent of all circulation among American magazines.⁵¹ Credit for this development is claimed for Samuel S. McClure with his *McClure’s Magazine* founded in 1893, but also for Frank Munsey, who in the same year dropped the price of his *Munsey’s* from twenty-five cents to a dime, boosting its circulation from 20,000 to 200,000. Other magazines were forced to follow suit.

⁵⁰David Abrahamson, *Magazine-Made America : The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical* (Cresskill, N.J. : Hampton Press, 1996); John William Tebbel, *The American Magazine; a Compact History* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1969). 165-180; David Clayton Phillips, “Chapter 2: The Ten-Cent Magazine Revolution,” in *Art for Industry’s Sake: Halftone Technology, Mass Photography and the Social Transformation of American Print Culture, 1880-1920* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1996: <http://pantheon.cis.yale.edu/~davidp/halftone/chap3.html#68>; since moved to <http://dphillips.web.wesleyan.edu/halftone/>).

⁵¹David Abrahamson, “Magazines in the Twentieth Century,” *History of the Mass Media in the United States: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Margaret A. Blanchard (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998), 340.

A recognizably modern periodical publication, one subsidized by advertising, emerged from the ten-cent magazine revolution of the 1890s. Prior to this, reader subscription fees underwrote most of the cost of production and -- it was generally hoped -- accounted for a margin of profit, but also restricted the audience.⁵² Capitalizing on technological developments and on new commercial relations (notably the rise of the advertising agency), publishers worked hard to build circulation, eventually developing their own in-house publicity and research departments as did the *Post* in 1911. Munsey led the way in exploiting half-tone technology as a means to enliven the prevailing model of the general-interest magazine, making popular illustration available to ever larger audiences.

⁵²See Phillips, *Art for Industry's Sake*, chapter 2, "The Ten-Cent Magazine Revolution."

Artists and critics took note of these changes and before the century's turn, began pondering the future of the cultural role of *facsimile* illustration, as an older generation of graphic illustrators called it.⁵³ Some like Joseph Pennell quickly foresaw that the waning Golden Age of illustration⁵⁴ would either collapse under the hack-work executed for the popular magazines with their mass runs and low quality, or perhaps, revive in the realm of advertising art (if, the nation would finally undertake to sponsor the graphic arts through national schools for which he vigorously argued). It was the birth of the mass magazine that threatened illustration, not with extinction, but with overstimulation.⁵⁵ By the 1920s Pennell's bitterness about the current scene left only small room for optimism about the future, as magazine editors, "have standardized and sterilized artists in a fashion to delight a prohibitionist. Some day--and there are signs--illustration may revive, but today it is rotten in America, like the country and the artless people. This sort of popular person has debauched the country. He knows nothing of art, or engraving, or printing. Cash is his only

⁵³Joseph Pennell discusses *facsimile* illustration (his italics), *Modern Illustration* (London & New York: George Bell & Sons, 1895). Page 35 and *passim*.

⁵⁴Pennell suggested that the Golden Age of illustration lay in the 1860s (*The Graphic Arts; Modern Men and Modern Methods* (1921), 38, but it has been variously claimed to extend from 1860-1920, 1880-1940, and to have "dawned" in the 1880s and "to tarnish and fade" in the 1930s. Rockwell felt it ended in 1911 with the deaths of Pyle and Abbey. Jerome Mellquist identified 1905-19015 as a Silver Age of Illustration, *The Emergence of an American Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 147-162.

⁵⁵Joseph Pennell, the eminent illustrator, was such the perpetual grouse that a reviewer remarked upon his autobiography, "the book is disfigured and at the same time enlivened by an almost continuous growling." unsigned, "The Jeremiad of Joseph Pennell: The Dean of American Illustrators Remembers a Better and a Happier World" [review of *Adventures of an Illustrator*], *New York Times Book Review* (December 27, 1925): 6. Pennell is also there characterized as "a man singularly adept in the art of making enemies" [Whistler was a friend], and as "self-centered to an extraordinary degree."

aim, ideal, ambition.”⁵⁶

⁵⁶Pennell, *The Graphic Arts*, 130.

From the perspective of the young generation of commercial illustrators emerging after the first decade of the twentieth century, the Golden Age of illustration was bathed in the glow of nostalgia as a prelapsarian moment.⁵⁷ Whatever that Golden Age had meant, it now signified the irreconcilable split between the higher calling of the unified practice of art and lesser undertaking of work tainted by extraneous -- especially commercial -- concerns. As a student around 1911, Rockwell and his cohorts could prick their fingers and, signing their names in blood, swear never to accept advertising assignments, plying their trade only for the editorial matter of magazines. Advertising was truly base, while illustrating proper retained an exalted status for these aspiring professionals.

Rockwell, of course, went on to produce thousands of advertising images -- work which paid substantially better than even a *Post* cover -- and candidly admitted later “at the time I was like the little boy who vowed he would never grow up to be a man -- I just didn’t know myself.”⁵⁸ To be sure, the radical improvements in the standards of advertising art and techniques of reproduction taking place at this moment would have made such work

⁵⁷The harder one presses to identify such retrospective constructions as the “Golden Age,” the more uncertain they become. Although Pyle’s moment would come to seem a time of perfect union of art and illustration, he was rebuffed in efforts to secure a teaching position around 1894 at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts because, according to Pyle’s students, the Academy did not view illustration as relevant to its exclusive concern with the fine arts. (Much later the PAFA did invite Pyle to teach there, but he refused). Even the celebrated illustrator A. B. Frost wrote to Pyle that when his contract with *Colliers Weekly* ran out, he was “going to paint” just as Pyle himself planned to do while art editing the inartistic *Munsey’s*. “We all drift that way,” Frost wrote, “all the men who have anything in them drop illustration as soon as they can....” And he goes on to name Reinhart, Abbey, Alexander Robert Blum, Irving Wiles, and Smedley. Finally he adds, “Gibson will paint, to a certainty; it is the natural yearning for something better....” in a letter of April 1, 1906 held by Pyle family. Henry C. Pitz, *Howard Pyle: Writer, Illustrator, Founder of the Brandywine School* (New York: Bramhall House, 1965), 132, 180.

⁵⁸Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 70.

more appealing to an ambitious illustrator. But, the business retained much of the stigma it had earned through years of peddling patent medicine and unsound investments.⁵⁹

Rockwell's forsaken vow indicates more about the new role of illustration than it does about changes in the field of advertising.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Curtis Publishing led other major magazines in making arguments and developing policies that would assure readers that advertising was not a prey on human weakness, that it lowered rather than increased the price of goods, and that it could be trusted. Among other restrictions, patent medicine advertisements were forbidden, as were questionable financial investments. *The Ladies Home Journal* and the *Post* even guaranteed any product advertised in their pages. All of which emphasizes that advertising still had a troubled public image. On artists and advertising see Michele H. Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago, 1995).

⁶⁰Occasionally exponents of illustration floated claims for a renewal of its cultural status as in a hopeful observation that recent years there had seen the "removal of the stigma that formerly damned as 'commercial' any artist who drew or painted pictures for advertisements." *Forty Illustrators and How they Work*, ed. Ernest W. Watson (New York: Watson-Guption, 1946).

That the *Saturday Evening Post* would become inextricably associated with Rockwell in the American imagination was not always apparent. Leyendecker, as little as he may be remembered today, is a key figure to any consideration of *Post* cover art between the Wars. Even after Rockwell had been contributing covers for nearly a dozen years it was still J.C. Leyendecker whose name commanded highest praise at the *Post*. In 1927, Curtis publications lauded him claiming, “His genius for interpreting the spirit of our national holidays is unrivaled. Though simple in idea and composition, his cover drawings are singularly decorative and at the same time make a strong imaginative appeal. . .” with Rockwell a close second: “Mr. Norman Rockwell’s work is scarcely less popular. Rockwell covers usually present a situation and tell a story. Humor, pathos and sheer fun are the effects he achieves in these homely pictured episodes of distinctively American life.”⁶¹ For decades, Leyendecker -- his advertisements and magazine covers -- so penetrated the minds of Americans whether highbrow, lowbrow or mezzanine, that his name alone could, in a smart, worldly and sophisticated little magazine of art, stand in for all the Babbitry of commercial mass-culture.⁶²

⁶¹Bigelow, Frederick S., *A Short History of the Saturday Evening Post: “An American Institution in Three Centuries”* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Company, 1927), 32-33.

⁶² Malcolm Cowley’s “Portrait by Leyendecker, to Sinclair Lewis,” *Broom* (New York & Berlin) 4, no. 4 (March 1923): 240-47 (Krauss Reprint Corp, NY 1967), a citation shared with me by Michael Murphy.

In 1936, Rockwell yet remained a qualified superlative, described as having been discovered by Lorimer in 1916, “a young artist destined to become possibly the most famous cover designer of all, Norman Rockwell.”⁶³ A few years later it seemed his covers “are an American institution” and that “the chances are really in the sure-thing class that he is the best beloved artist in his field today.”⁶⁴ With the success of his 1943 Four Freedoms series (promoted with the full force of the US Government to sell war bonds), this status was cemented.⁶⁵ By the time of a 1945 *Saturday Evening Post* facelift for the magazine, an editor mused “everyone, it seems, thought a *Post* cover had to be a ‘*Post*’ cover” and “Rockwell, had set the pace.”⁶⁶ Within a decade the categorical accolades were flowing and Rockwell became the “most popular, most loved, of all contemporary artists.”

⁶³[Curtis], *A Short History of the Saturday Evening Post: “An American Institution” in Three Centuries* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Company, 1936), 22-23. In a manual for aspiring illustrators, Rockwell was treated as one among other top-flight cover artists including Neysa McMein, McClelland Barclay, Dean Cornwell, John LaGatta and others, see Sid Hydeman, *How To Illustrate for Money* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1936), 4, 44 & 96-97.

⁶⁴Allan Keller, “Gold in the Paint Pot: Norman Rockwell Paints Homespun Models,” *New York World-Telegram* (c. June 6, 1940): 21.

⁶⁵*Norman Rockwell’s Four Freedoms: Images that Inspire a Nation*, ed. Stuart Murray and James McCabe (Stockbridge, MA: Berkshire House and Norman Rockwell Museum, 1995).

⁶⁶The facelift cleared out “bargain basement imitations of Norman Rockwell. . . , though not Norman, praise be!” Ernest W. Watson, “What’s Going On at the Post: An Interview with Kenneth Stuart” *American Artist*, IX, no. 7 (September 1945): 13.

The last is an observation repeatedly cited in Rockwell literature as fact. For instance Manuel Gasser, writing in 1956, claimed Rockwell held “the unchallenged title of ‘the most popular, the most loved, of all contemporary artists.’”⁶⁷ In the following year Wright Morris in the *Atlantic Monthly* repeated the exact declaration, calling Rockwell “the most popular, the most loved, of all contemporary artists.”⁶⁸ Typically, the source for this authoritative and absolute statement goes uncited. But in 1960, *Saturday Evening Post* editor Ben Hibbs repeated the phrase, this time with its source, himself.⁶⁹ Several years earlier, he had published the statement in the *Post*.

⁶⁷Manuel Gasser, “Norman Rockwell,” *Graphis; International Journal for Graphic and Applied Art* XII, no. 65 (May/June 1956): 212.

⁶⁸Wright Morris, “Norman Rockwell’s America,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 200 (December 1957): 133. Nonetheless, Morris formulated a considered critique of the illustrator that stung Rockwell, who read the *Atlantic Monthly* regularly while he only rarely looked at the *Post*. Laura Claridge, *Norman Rockwell: A Life* (New York: Random House, 2001), 418.

⁶⁹Ben Hibbs writing in his introduction to *My Adventures as an Illustrator* (1960), 13, which was serialized in the *Post*.

The oft quoted statement it turns out was based not on polls or anecdotal evidence, but on self-serving claims of *Post* representatives.⁷⁰ That this was part of a concerted public relations effort as much as any groundswell of grassroots affection is suggested by the fact that art editor Kenneth Stuart echoed Hibbs when he called Rockwell “an illustrator who, without doubt, is the widest-known and best-loved of our American artists.”⁷¹ And yet the phrase continues to resonate today as a statement bearing moral authority.⁷² It is one thing, after all, to claim that Rockwell is extremely popular, but another altogether to claim that this popularity reflects his essential rightness as a voice of the people.

With the forgoing example in mind, it should be clear that throughout this study I have endeavored to treat with caution the authority of my material, primary and secondary both. Many of the histories written on popular illustration prove upon examination less than rigorous. While few historians who take their craft seriously have directed their

⁷⁰For an example of a non-poll contrived by the *Post*, see “Who’s right about Rockwell,” *Saturday Evening Post* (July 16, 1955): 112; and “Who was right about Rockwell?” *Saturday Evening Post* (September 10, 1955): 164. The phrase itself was born much earlier, but with qualifiers. In 1925 Rockwell was claimed as “one of the best known and best loved of our American artists” in an essay bearing the rather less aggrandizing explanation: “For those who are not yet familiar with his work, Norman Rockwell is best identified as the young American artist whose covers so frequently appear on the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Literary Digest*, and *Life...*” Richard Kingsbury, “The Story of Norman Rockwell,” *American Art Student* VIII (Jan 1925): 9.

⁷¹Ernest W. Watson “What’s Going On at the *Post*: An Interview with Kenneth Stuart” *American Artist* IX, no. 7 (September 1945): 14. The *Post* continued to tout Rockwell widely, publishing an “album” of supposed most-loved covers in the issue of March 12, 1955 and serializing his 1960 autobiography.

⁷²E.g. “Today, I can say that Norman Rockwell is the most popular American artist of this century.” Karal Ann Marling, *Norman Rockwell* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. in association with the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1997), 9.

attention to American mass-market magazine illustration, the enthusiasts who fill this void have sometimes been over-eager to enliven their histories with ungrounded superlatives and half-gleaned evidence. Moreover, much of the primary evidence I examine -- even *objective* statistical tables and scientific reports -- are either highly motivated (especially when produced by divisions at Curtis Publishing) or based upon self-confirming assumptions (particularly studies of applied psychology which reproduce preconceptions about gender). For these reasons I have sometimes pointed out inconsistencies in specific claims, but more often treat the texts as well as the images as active representations of the interwar world. To paraphrase the journalist whose words close John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), When the legend become fact, *analyze* the legend.

The chapters that follow are by no means separate essays, although they are in many ways distinct. Chapter one attends to problems in the historiography of illustration. Rather than a review of literature, it is a study and analysis of the strengths and shortcomings in approaches to writing about popular illustration, as well as an argument for greater historiographic attention. The subsequent chapters each focus on a particular thematic issue -- images of boys and masculinity, of men and sexuality, of heterosexual coupling and race -- and together build up the larger argument for the role of *Saturday Evening Post* illustration in the fabrication of national identity through whiteness.

Recognizing that race is fabricated -- a major premise of this study -- is not tantamount to a claim that race lacks social meaning; quite the reverse. Nor can one take from the repudiation of essentialisms, the idea that race therefore does not matter, that color-blindedness is the way forward in social policy. To forget race is a grave mistake.

Such amnesia does not promise a future of meritorious equality liberated from racial considerations, but rather it leaves us with an ossified picture of human and social relations, one with a history deeply imprinted upon the present. That history needs to be recovered, examined, and understood in order to make sense of the basis upon which the social imagination of the present operates. Above all in this context, the process of making race must be presented so that the workings of the cultural within, against, and through the social come to be visible.

If I sometimes have felt compelled to apologize for this project -- given the *low* nature of its materials -- it has been helpful to recall Sir Ernst Gombrich writing that “even pin-ups and comics, rightly viewed, may provide food for thought.”⁷³ Whether I have viewed rightly, is another question, but certainly I hope in what follows to offer food for thought to anyone interested in visual culture and the formation of American national identity.

⁷³ Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 8.

Chapter One: “no longer an illustrator”¹

I. A White Horse Coming

In 1998, art historian Robert Rosenblum composed this description of an illustration by Norman Rockwell from three decades earlier:

The Problem We All Live With, a picture of an immaculately dressed black girl named Ruby Bridges being accompanied to school by four US marshals, while white crowds threaten and jeer, spotlights one of America’s ugliest realities. Here, in contrast to the tidy, regimented procession of white guards and black child, Rockwell gives us a city wall marked by the partly effaced graffiti scrawl ‘Nigger’ and the remnant of a hurled tomato, a visceral burst of pink skin and pulp that looks like the aftermath of a firing²

¹As a salient example of the ebb and flow of art historical assessments of artists and illustrators, I quote Frederic Remington here writing in 1909, upon a successful exhibition of paintings at Knoedler’s in New York, to John Howard, “I am no longer an illustrator.” Quoted in *The Popular West: American Illustrators, 1900-1940*, ed. James K. Ballinger and Susan P. Gordon (Phoenix, AZ: Phoenix Art Museum, 1982): 6.

²Robert Rosenblum, “American Studies,” review of *Norman Rockwell*, by Karal Ann Marling, *Bookforum* (Summer 1998): 3. Underscores mine.

In his lively account of this now-prominent image [Figure 2], Rosenblum expends relatively little energy in attending to visual evidence or context, favoring instead interpretation and narrative elaboration. And in alleging to describe the violent “white crowds [that] threaten and jeer” -- crowds manifestly absent from the picture itself, if not from the story behind it -- he lapses into the art historical equivalent of the comic malapropism, “Hark! I hear a white horse coming!” In fairness to Rosenblum this is less an oversight than an expedient, for he offers here not an extended meditation on the image but a commentary in a brief book review. Nonetheless, the passage reprises some fairly typical habits evident in the literature on the celebrated illustrator, Norman Rockwell and therefore warrants further comment. Here it will suffice to observe two of these tendencies, one concerning the relationship of illustration and text, and the other, the status of those *undepicted* on-lookers in relation to a presumed audience for the image itself.³

³Another such implicit theme, to which I will not attend at great length in this text, concerns the populism claimed for the cultural politics of the current U.S. revival and putative reconsideration of Rockwell’s work. Recently, public interest in the art, biography, and significance of Rockwell perhaps has achieved a pinnacle with *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, a touring exhibition of printed *Saturday Evening Post* covers as well as about eighty-five original oil-paintings co-organized by the High Museum in Atlanta and the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Mass. (hereafter abbreviated as NoRMS). Much media coverage and some notable academic commentary coalesced around this exhibition as it traveled to seven venues from November 1999 to February 2002, culminating to the outrage of some at the Guggenheim in New York. Academic interest in the subject is suggested by recent symposia and panels: “Rockwell Redux: Rethinking the Cultural Logic of Norman Rockwell,” co-organized by Alan Wallach and myself, Annual Meeting of the American Studies Association, Washington, D.C., 2001; and, “Culture, Criticism and the Art of Norman Rockwell,” co-organized by Linda Shearer and Michael Kammen for the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute and NoRMS, 2001. For representative responses from academic writers (for general audiences) see the exhibition catalog *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, eds. Maureen Hart Hennessey and Anne Knutson (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. for the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1999) and Karal Ann Marling, *Norman Rockwell* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. in association with the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1997).

i. The first of these points concerns what might be termed the *myth of illustration* typically informing discussions of Rockwell's -- and others' -- graphic work. The myth -- the fundamental supposition of pictorial subservience to text -- virtually obliterates illustrations *as* images. Instead, their very visuality is treated as if shot-through with a regulating text, rendering visual attention or even historical reading of little value. To be sure, "illustration" literally denotes pictorial elucidation of a given subject, yet this hardly accounts for the common belief that illustrations are in practice ancillary to text in a strong sense; that they carry little meaning themselves outside of the stories they reiterate.

Yet it is only at the risk of impoverishing illustration that such pictorial activity can be treated as an afterthought, a clever pictorial restatement, or even a succinct picture-story in itself.⁴ Accordingly, illustration may be better treated neither simply as mere addendum to text nor as wholly divorced from it. Between these two poles obtain the peculiar relations of text and illustration, story and picture, magazine and cover.

⁴If both critics and advocates of illustration have agreed that illustrations themselves are best understood as derivative of text, there is another, less familiar, perspective that inverts the dynamics of this relationship. Rather than perceiving illustration as a dependent addition to the narratives they accompany, some writers have argued that pictorial *presentation* possesses the power to overwhelm textual *evocation*. Henry James, in the preface to *The Golden Bowl* objected, "I, for one, should have looked much askance at the proposal . . . to graft or 'grow', at whatever point, a picture by another hand on my own [written] picture -- this being always, to my sense, a lawless incident" [New York Edition, 1909, ix, as cited in J. Hillis Miller, *Illustration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 69; and see 66-74]. Instead of pictures drawn to order and capturing a story's characters, settings, and dramatic situations, James sought in the photograph an image that "should exactly be NOT competitive and obvious, should on the contrary plead its case with some shyness, that of images always confessing themselves mere optical symbols or echoes, expressions of no particular thing in the text, but only of the type or idea of this or that thing" (xi).

As a result of habits of viewing immoderately determined by text and narrative, partisans of Rockwell too easily neglect complexities of his imagery. Instead, when they do seek meaning in images, they frequently discover such generalized if grandiloquent conclusions as “[his] images transcend him . . . for he captured what is common to us all” or he “forged a cumulative portrait of *real* people, making meaning out of the incidental.”⁵ Even his later work for *Look*, illustrations which might not seem readily assimilable to such ennobling and self-congratulatory language, is subsumed to the greater narrative of The People. Along with “proud strength,” “democratic principles,” and the “hopes and struggles of youth” seen throughout his corpus, “the injustice of bigotry in *The Problem We All Live With*” is included in the assertion that “Rockwell’s paintings powerfully portray the universal truths, aspirations, and foibles of humanity. His work is part of the fabric of America, and at its best it reflects our most fundamental beliefs about who we are as a people.”⁶

⁵“The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Massachusetts,” brochure produced by the museum in transition from its Old Corner House location to new quarters in Stockbridge, 1990. Ned Rifkin (director of Atlanta’s High Museum of Art), “Why Norman Rockwell? Why Now?” in *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, 20.

⁶Laurie Norton Moffatt, “The People’s Painter,” in *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, 26.

Rockwell himself sometimes undermined earlier attempts to apply that kind of rhetoric to his work. In one such instance, Arthur Guptill, editor of the first monograph devoted to Rockwell, wrote the illustrator requesting his preference for a sub-title for the forthcoming volume. Guptill proposed such ennobling suggestions as Painter for America's Millions, A Power with a Paintpot, Interpreter of America, Pictorial Reporter, Artist of the Plain People, An American Institution, the Dickens of the Paintbrush, Recorder of the American Scene, and Interpreter of the American Scene.⁷ However, the book was eventually published under the title, *Norman Rockwell: Illustrator*. And again, fourteen years later, Rockwell would modestly title his autobiography, *Norman Rockwell: Adventures of An Illustrator*.⁸

⁷Letter to NPR from Arthur L. Guptill (March 11, 1946): 1-2 in Archives of the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Business Correspondence, Box 6, Folder: "Watson-Guptill"

⁸Arthur L. Guptill, *Norman Rockwell, Illustrator* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1946). The latter is the 1960 autobiography. I am interested in the similarity of this and of Joseph Pennell's memoir entitled *The Adventures of an Illustrator* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co, 1925). However, according to Linda Szeckly at the time of his death Rockwell's library did not contain a copy of Pennell's memoir; and Thomas Rockwell (telephone interview, April 20, 1999) has no recollection of how the title was chosen for the 1960 volume.

But the grand narratives of national character and of the putative “universal humanity”⁹ of Rockwell’s work are there to be discovered precisely in so far as the images have been drained of any specific historical relations and made instead to stand for ideological niceties and affirmations. So, for example, a critic describing a painting [Figure 3] as depicting “a grandmother and her grandson saying grace in a bus-station restaurant while a crowd of secular travelers look on” glibly concludes that its “moral” is “Hey! People are different. Get used to it,” rehearsing the picture’s most conspicuous message -- the spirit of tolerance -- as its deepest meaning and as the only meaning worth attending to over against the interpretations of “ideologues” who would argue that the image is deeply immersed in forging cultural expectations and norms about family, spirituality, and public life.¹⁰ These universalist claims are trumpeted, moreover, as the expressions of a democratic imagery that would legitimate the people’s art over and against elitist arts. However much one may applaud the inclusive gesture that embraces “popular” or mass-marketed arts,¹¹ this particular vision of cultural democracy offers a fatuous

⁹Rifkin, “Why Norman Rockwell?” 20.

¹⁰The words in quotations are Dave Hickey’s from “Simple Hearts: shining hours/forgiving rhyme,” *Art Issues* (November/December 1995): 12-13, a nostalgic scene-from-my-youth piece trading on a hip, anti-intellectual attitude -- the column is “devoted to unfashionable enthusiasms, unlikely objects of desire, and other phenomena held in mysterious esteem by the author” (13) -- yet eschewing any but an affirmative perspective on American culture. Hickey similarly calls attention to his irreverence elsewhere, as in note 41 and in his widely appreciated *Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty* (Los Angeles: Art Issues Press, 1993) where he expresses “admittedly outrageous” views (12).

¹¹Throughout this discussion, I refer to “mass-market” and “popular” magazines and illustration. In line with illustrators themselves in the first quarter of the twentieth century, I generally reserve “commercial illustration” for advertising work. I do not mean to imply by “mass-market” a top-down model of culture, nor do I intend to suggest an authentic

populism devoid of political insight, though not of political implications. What is needed is an approach that reads illustrations not just as popular in reception, innovative in design, or well wrought artistically, but which sees them as agents in and appearances of a dynamic visual culture deeply connected to lived experience, fantasy and hegemonic ideology.

expression of the people by the term “popular culture.” Rather, these terms indicate material produced for large-circulation, commercial publication. The material examined here is best approached neither as mirror passively reflecting the social world nor as an engine driving culture experience, but as a material agent of culture that both produces and responds to meaning making experience. For a Frankfurt School perspective see Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1944 (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), 120-167 and, for an overview, Martin Jay, “Aesthetic Theory and the Critique of Mass Culture,” in *The Dialectical Imagination: a History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston & Toronto: Little Brown & Company, 1973), 173-218. See also, Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing ‘The Popular’,” in *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 225-240; John Michael Vlach, *Plain Painters: Making Sense of American Folk Art* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

If the myth of illustration restricts the way in which advocates conceive Rockwell and popular illustration, it equally inhabits the manner in which less complacent observers have understood this work. Any number of critics devoted to tenets of high art have failed to examine Rockwell's images. Where modernist formalism prevailed -- which is to say, throughout the dominant market of art objects and ideas in opposition to the mass-market of illustrations and stories -- the blemish of so bald a textuality could not be reconciled to artistic practices shaped, for instance, by injunctions to hew to the flatness of the canvas among other media-specific characteristics.¹² Similarly, any of those Romantic notions of unfettered artistic expression which, despite rigorous critique, still inform prevailing Western notions of the 'artist,' appeared irreconcilable to a Rockwell. As one critic wrote, "since most of Norman Rockwell's prodigious output was commissioned work subject to the approval of magazine editors or advertisers, one can't rate the thousands of images he produced. . . as fine art."¹³ While some suggest this speaks to the debasement of

¹²I do not mean to suggest, that it has been *only* or *primarily* the conceptual proximity of image and text in critical treatments of popular illustration that accounts for profound cultural investments in reifying the borders between the fine arts and illustration. Quite the reverse, it is the necessity of maintaining the distinct categories of art and illustration that has produced "textual subordination" as an apparent condition of illustration. This and other conditions, such as the taint of commercialism and lack of political commitment, are not formal causes of the *category* of commercial or popular illustration, although they certainly inform common definitions. If these were the sufficient conditions of popular illustration, arguments might not so readily confound the categories with the examples of, for instance, Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for Wilde's *Salome*, Georgia O'Keeffe's for Hawaiian Pineapple or de Kooning's for Container Corporation of America. See below as well as the introductory chapter on other criteria by which illustration is valued and dismissed.

¹³Roberta Smith, "The Complexities of Rockwell's Simple Images," *New York Times*, July 7, 1989, sec. III, 27. For a historical account of the idea of the artist in the late

illustration in the hierarchy of arts -- by contrast, pure painting, even narrative painting, rises above textual constraints -- I wish to emphasize here that the compulsive reference to a governing text obscures efforts to account for these images in full and as cultural objects. In other words, it is less illustration itself than its treatment by critics that needs to be accounted for here in order to clear a way to understand illustration between the world wars, on its own terms.

nineteenth-century American context, see Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996). For an exceptional study of the complications this ideal presented to commercial artists in the United States through the mid-twentieth century see Michele H. Bogart, *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). On the historiographic function of the artist see Catherine M. Soussloff, *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (Minneapolis & London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997) as well as the classic study by Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, trans. Alistair Laing, revised by Lottie M. Newman (1934; New Haven: Yale Univ., 1979).

However, it would be a mistake to overcompensate by treating illustration and text altogether in isolation from one another. There is something in an image that wants a text -- a story for an illustration, a title for a painting. Conversely, a gap or deficiency in texts demands to be filled by pictures. This is particularly true in those publications born of the ten-cent magazine revolution,¹⁴ but the amalgamation and conjoining of pictorial and linguistic graphics is familiar enough in such wildly varied contexts and objects as maps, ancient coins, medieval illuminated manuscripts, illustrated books and newspapers, or graffitied walls. In Dutch painting, as Svetlana Alpers has shown, texts -- in the form of depicted inscriptions, representations of words in books and letters, and implied “captioning” of theatrical gesture and facial expression -- make felicitous companions for realistic imagery.¹⁵ Even in high modernist art a tenuous but not insignificant relation has to be acknowledged between image and title (not excepting “Untitled” in which the artist’s name and near-total refusal of extraneous text inexorably immerses the image in “extrinsic” narrative webs).¹⁶ In the venerated spaces that enshrine art, too, texts and narratives have perhaps always formed key complements to paintings whether in the form of biblical episodes, wall labels, or authoritative ekphrasis.¹⁷ And, although the modern

¹⁴As discussed in the introduction, the development of the “ten-cent magazine” marked the birth of the illustrated mass-market magazine at the end of the nineteenth century.

¹⁵Svetlana Alpers, “Looking at Words: The Representation of Texts in Dutch Art,” chapter 5 in *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), 169-221.

¹⁶John C. Welchman discusses the signifying capacity of “untitled” postmodern artworks in *Invisible Colors: A Visual History of Titles* (New Haven & London: Yale Univ., 1997), 339-348.

¹⁷In the case of the cabinet of curiosity, typically cited as precursor to what today we

illustrated magazine participates in distinct and specific discourses that distinguish it from such other models as manuscript painting and so forth, it bears a morphological resemblance to them.

recognize as the museum, Susan A. Crane underscores the importance of offering a narrative for each object in the collection, "Curious Cabinets and Imaginary Museums," in *Museums and Memory*, ed. Susan A. Crane (Stanford: Stanford Univ., 2000), 72. On ekphrasis and the "museum" or picture gallery in antiquity see Norman Bryson, "Philostratus and the Imaginary Museum," in *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture*, eds. Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Univ. of Cambridge, 1994), 255-283.

Roland Barthes, proposing that the origin of “the signifying structure of ‘illustration’” lies in the classical period when it was “inconceivable” that certain published works might not be illustrated, suggests that “[t]oday, at the level of mass communications, it appears that the linguistic message is indeed present in every image.”¹⁸ For Barthes, this linguistic message -- in the form of titles, captions, dialogue, etcetera -- functions in part to contain the polysemy of an image to which it is attached, to “fix the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain [pictorial] signs” (39). This *anchorage*, as Barthes names it, is an ideological function that represses the playful polyvalence of images in favor of more-or-less determined messages (40).

¹⁸Roland Barthes “Rhetoric of the Image,” [1964] in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977), 38.

Barthes is right. One need only peruse the illustrated slicks, averting eyes from caption and text, to appreciate how uncertain and full of possibility the images may be absent textual constraint. But surely we can grant to images a similar power to affirm normative readings of texts. The terror of the floating chain of signifieds that Barthes identifies with the pictorial sign is consonant with the difference and deferral -- the *différance* as Jacques Derrida has identified it -- in the space between elements in the chain of linguistic signification.¹⁹ Accordingly, while captions and other text may fix the images to which they are attached, there are occasions when it may be illustration that secures facticity and specificity for the text. Thus, Henry James reminisced of his childhood reading of an *illustrated* edition of *Oliver Twist* that seemed “more Cruikshank’s than Dickens’s; . . . a thing of such vividly terrible images, and all marked with that peculiarity of Cruikshank. . . .”²⁰

Both writers offer useful models to think through illustration -- Barthes with his wild image caged by text, and James with a sinister engraving that destroys Dickens’s “scenes and figures intended to comfort and cheer.” A third view would attend not only to the crushing weight of image on text and vice versa, but also to the mismatch when two such signifying systems are conjoined. The artwork of Barbara Kruger offers a salient

¹⁹Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1982), 3-27.

²⁰James, *A Small Boy and Others* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1913), 119-120 called to my attention by J. Hillis Miller’s discussion in his *Illustration*, 70, as well as in “Graphic or Verbal: A Dilemma,” *Electronic Book Review* 7 (Summer 1998): <http://www.altx.com/erb/erb7/index.html>. James’s memory seems replete for instance with illustrated recollections picked-out by Phiz (Hablot K. Browne), the pictures in *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, and Felix O. C. Darley (59, 65).

example of how image and text when brought together may direct or control the free play of signification, and yet open up entirely original or latent meanings that extend understanding [Figure 4]. What I am proposing resists Barthes' reference to "the signifying structure of 'illustration'" and favors attention to multiple and historically framed structures.

The mass-market magazines that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century marked a quantitative leap in sheer number of pages, use of images, and circulation, and a qualitative transformation in periodical layout. Page after page of text and image were now combined in various formations: on a single page one finds letters and decorative titles, stories and illustrations, editorial matter and advertisements, photographs and drawings, cartoons blocked into columns of words, and so on.²¹ That this should be the case was by no means a settled matter at the turn of the century, particularly as regards advertising.

²¹At the *Saturday Evening Post* page layout evolved little under editor Lorimer so falling behind developments at other magazines. Although Lorimer was open to modest adjustments -- e.g. he began publishing cartoons in the 1930s -- it was new editors -- Wesley Winans Stout in 1937 and Ben Hibbs in 1942 -- who initiated substantial changes. See Frank Luther Mott, "The Saturday Evening Post," in *A History of American Magazines*, vol. IV (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1957), 709-712. For an important discussion of page make-up, reading patterns, and the relationship between editorial and advertising content, see Sally Stein, "The Graphic Ordering of Desire: Modernization of a Middle-Class Women's Magazine, 1919-1939," in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge: Mass., 1989), 145-61 [originally in *Heresies* 18 (1985)].

As late as the 1920s advertisers, agencies and academics were still debating the relative virtues of the “flat magazine” that collocated advertisements and stories on the same page and the standard magazine that massed commercial notices separately in the end pages. Professor Hugo Münsterberg protested against the shortsighted practice -- originating according to Daniel Starch between 1912 and 1915 -- that ignored the varied mental states of the reader. In reading a love story, Münsterberg claimed, there is a sympathetic attitude incompatible with the self-interested one characteristic of reading advertisements: “The two ways of mental behavior are so different that the one almost excludes the other.” Of the standard magazine, he observed, “the old scheme of separating safely the text pages from the commercial pages was not only more aesthetic and more tasteful, but it was in every way more profitable for the purse of the advertiser.” However, pioneering advertiser E. E. Calkins replied to Münsterberg that position was all important to advertisers and that this was best provided for in the flat format that maximized preferred positions next to reading matter. Starch concurred with Calkins, citing “scientific evidence” that the flat format produced the better returns because it situated advertisements where they would actually be seen.²²

Starch’s discussion and the various investigations he summarized make clear that

²²*Ladies Home Journal* editor Edward Bok took credit for one aspect of the development of the flat format. Having received a story from Rudyard Kipling that exceeded the space he had allotted it in the front of its intended issue, he was forced to carry over the final two columns to the back of the *Journal*. He immediately recognized the advantages of loosening space constraints on the front of the book and increasing the value of the advertisements throughout. In the next issue he elaborated this experiment and in 1896 inaugurated the method of “running over into the back” now taken as fundamental layout of larger magazines. Bok’s readers did not fail to object at first, but he finally prevailed. Edward W. Bok, *The Americanization of Edward Bok: The Autobiography of a Dutch Boy Fifty Years After* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1920), 234.

flat formats were associated with general-interest magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post* while the standard format was primarily reserved for highbrow literary publications such as the *Century* or *Atlantic Monthly*.²³ Evidently Münsterberg's preference for the "more aesthetic and more "tasteful" format was fed by concerns about both class and commercialism; what he called the "old scheme" was a nineteenth-century relic, a model that did not address or exploit emerging economics of national marketing.²⁴

²³See Daniel Starch, *Principles of Advertising* (Chicago & New York: A. W. Shaw Co., 1923), 774-80 which quotes at length both Hugo Münsterberg and E. E. Calkins from *Printers' Ink* (October 21, 1915).

²⁴Mass-market magazines would continue to manage the taint of commerce, establishing advertising departments that left the editorial side independent of such concerns, and policies designed to promote honest commerce. See for instance Edward W. Bok's biography of C.H.K. Curtis, *A Man from Maine* (New York: Charles Scribner's Son's, 1934 [1923]), 127ff.

Within the incertitudes of this unfolding aesthetic of commerce, the functional distinction and established hierarchy between text and image erodes.²⁵ For instance, note a scene in a short story where several elements conspire to enthrall an audience and weave a narrative. The single episode -- the protagonist resisting his infatuation for a young woman nonetheless finds himself embracing her as they step from an unsteady canoe [Figure 5]²⁶ -- is thrice treated in the pages of the *Post* by means of narration, illustration and caption. Despite the pronounced repetition, no aspect finally anchors meaning for any other. Just as illustrations appear to supplement a story, so too, captions ostensibly explicate pictures. Yet, in this composite medium clarification is rarely at hand: illustrators seek out moments of heightened narrative tension but their illustrations do not recapitulate entire stories. And the poetically elliptical captions -- “It would wobble just then, you might know! -- and leave her clinging to him” -- excised from the texts themselves to fix meaning upon illustrations actually promote ambiguity. This feedback loop, as it were, characterizing the image/text relationship remains unaccounted for in Barthes’ concept of a linguistic message that anchors the copious signifieds of an image.²⁷ Rather than providing a stabilizing force by propping image against text, those juxtapositions frequently offer a

²⁵As a general rule, principles of layout design for “slicks” such as the *Saturday Evening Post* proscribed placing important illustrations for stories in direct competition -- on the same or facing pages -- with illustrated advertisements. But illustrated advertisements do share space with editorial matter that is un-illustrated.

²⁶The illustration by Henry Raleigh is from a John Taintor Foote’s serial “Full Personality,” *Saturday Evening Post* (1933), which is discussed below in chapter 3.

²⁷Barthes does identify a “circular movement.” However, he does so in reference to the tendency of captions to reinforce a general “banalization” in the ideologically repressive photograph (40, note 1), whereas I wish to emphasize both image and text, and how one guides and troubles the other.

way into the rhetoric of production that informs them.

To be sure, illustration and text can in fact stand apart, but in the *Saturday Evening Post* during the interwar period they join to form a specific, articulated object. Word and text not only elaborate upon each other, but in the context of an illustrated magazine (or book), they derive their status with respect to each other and their synergetic action. Even on the cover of the *Post* where -- after about 1907 -- illustration rarely corresponded to a particular text or issue's content, the image does not stand autonomous. Nonetheless, cover illustrations are textually embedded as illustrations *of* the *Post* itself; as, frequently, story-telling pictures that propose implied narratives; and, I argue throughout subsequent chapters, as illustrations of normative American identities simultaneously developed in the body of the magazine.

What I am calling the myth of illustration, severs image from text and establishes a hierarchical relationship, rather than considering the phenomenological emergence of both together theoretically, and to some extent as a practical matter of author/illustrator collaboration. For instance, while an illustrator typically studied an off-print of a story or essay before executing drawings, this was by no means the only way of proceeding. Not only were some author/illustrator relationships collaborative, but in other cases, particularly in the late-nineteenth century, an illustrator might conceive a theme and then seek a writer to draft a companion story, the text, in essence, "illustrating" the images. The then little-known Joseph Pennell undertook to have his drawings of "A Day in the Marsh" placed in *Scribner's* in just this manner around 1880-1881. In other instances, as he wrote, Pennell had "no idea who were the authors of the articles I was illustrating. Merely a list of subjects to which I never paid the slightest attention, if possible, was given me by [the

editor of *the Century* A. W.] Drake.”²⁸

²⁸Joseph Pennell, *The Adventures of an Illustrator* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co, 1925), 61, 72, 82. For further comments on such working relations in the *Post* in particular see Brenda Ueland, “Art, or You Don’t Know What You Like,” *Saturday Evening Post* (May 24, 1930). For other examples see: Sybille Pantazzi, “Author and Illustrator: Images in Confrontation,” in *A History of Book Illustration: 29 Points of View*, ed. Bill Katz (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1994), especially pages 589-592; J. R. Harvey, *Victorian Novelists and Their Illustrators* (New York: NYU 1971), 2, 6-7, 9; and Richard A. Vogler “Cruikshank and Dickens: a Reassessment of the Role of the Artist and the Author,” in *George Cruikshank: A Revaluation*, ed. Robert L. Patten (Princeton: Princeton Univ., 1974 [1992]), 61-91.

Laboring under the myth of illustration and deferring the visual in preference to the textual, commentators on illustrative imagery posit an unproblematic legibility. This, in turn, justifies paying little attention either to the images themselves or to any lapses or knots they might actually expose in the texts. They become, as one critic supposed, like “posters [whose] impact, the whole sentimental story, is in the first glance.”²⁹ In so far as Rockwell was an acknowledged master of the legible visual narrative,³⁰ this description fits well enough, yet it remains an open question whether such denotative content should exhaust our interest in these works.

²⁹This quote from a syndicated article -- Richard Reeves, “Norman Rockwell Is Exactly Like A Norman Rockwell,” *New York Times Magazine* (February 28, 1971): 15 -- summarizes the critical perspective on illustration’s subordinate relation to text that obviates the need to dwell upon pictoriality. The same sentiment is expressed in Thomas Hoving’s laudatory essay declares of Rockwell’s pictures that “we can understand them in a flash” (Hoving, “The Great Art Communicator,” in *Pictures for the American People*, 29. However, partisans of illustration more usually tend to emphasize the extraordinary efforts and accomplishment in fitting pictures to stories. Indeed accuracy, veracity and truthfulness to details of stories and historical settings could be a thorn in the side of the illustrator: see for example, Norman Rockwell, *My Adventures as an Illustrator as told to Thomas Rockwell* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1960), 317-18; and Joseph Pennell, *Modern Illustration* (London & New York: George Bell & Sons, 1895) on Edwin A. Abbey’s “conscientious attention to detail and costume” (123) and Pennell’s own sardonic disdain for drawings that suggest “all the policemen in New York wear patent leather shoes.... [and] that when people are very poor in France, they rock their babies in log cabin cradles, cook their meals on American stoves and sit upon Chippendale chairs.”(131-2).

³⁰For Edward Hopper, Rockwell’s legibility was a fault. When his wife Jo mused that a figure at a window in one of his paintings might be checking the weather, he repudiated the suggestion saying: “You’re making it Norman Rockwell. From my point of view she’s just looking out the window.” Similarly, when Ralph Borge was asked to explain the significance of a scarecrow in his painting, he responded, “If I knew the answers, I would be Norman Rockwell. He can leave nothing to the imagination.” “Gold for Gold,” *Time* 65 (May 30, 1955): 72, quoted in M.W., catalog entry for *Sunlight on Brownstones*, 1956 in *Toward an American Identity* (Wichita Art Museum, Kansas, 1999), 158; Richard Reeves, “Norman Rockwell -- Just Like a Rockwell,” *Los Angeles Times* (February 28, 1971): F, 1-2.

There will be more to say about this, but for the moment it is sufficient to point out that Rosenblum is conversant with the narrative behind Rockwell's *The Problem We All Live With* and supplies the illustration with the image and voice of characters not in, although referenced by, the picture. The story of court-ordered desegregation of public schools in New Orleans had received intense national television and press coverage throughout its unfolding beginning 1960. But the events -- and particularly those described in *The Problem* -- had also figured in such landmarks on the American cultural landscape as John Steinbeck's first-person account of his *Travels with Charley* (1962) and Robert Cole's chronicle and psychoanalytic exploration of race conflict, *Children of Crisis* (1967).³¹

³¹I raise Cole's important study and Steinbeck's book as an influence on Rosenblum, not Rockwell, as discussed below.

Like Rosenblum, readers of the issue (January 14, 1964) of *Look* magazine where this painting was first reproduced were aware of those absent figures. The image appeared as an independently conceived two-page illustration inserted within an article on “How We Live” dealing briefly with race in America among other more prominent topics. Given this context the fact of the antagonistic on-lookers could hardly be ignored. And yet, with illustration, the imperative to *get* the story need not provide license to dismiss the complexity and ideological implications of pictorial construction and cultural signification. Rather than telling ourselves that the image is one of “moral courage,” we need to better understand the cultural significance of Rockwell’s undertaking in its historical context.³²

³²The phrase is Marling’s from a chapter largely devoted to this and related images. Marling discusses Rockwell’s own journey and influences in order to explain his personal motivation in pursuing this subject without saying much about the picture itself. Here, I am less interested in understanding what made Rockwell tick, than I am in considering what this image has to do with the figure of “Rockwell” and with the place of race in the ideal of being American. Marling, *Norman Rockwell*, 141.

ii. The second observation to be made about those typical critical responses to Rockwell similarly, if obliquely, concerns the unrepresented figures of Rosenblum's written sketch, the "white crowds." Rosenblum's imaginative literary description imparts to these multitudes a palpable presence and a terrifying agency through the ornamental modifiers that have them "threaten and jeer." And yet, immediately following is the clause noting "Rockwell gives us a city wall," a phrase with several repercussions for how the image is to be thought in relation to its viewers. First, it diminishes the imminence of the unruly spectral figures invoked in the text, by reassuringly recalling that the scene is pictured, that *we* are merely looking at what is given us. Second, and closely related to the first, the clause insists on a disarticulation between the imputed crowds and us, despite the pictorial geometry that places the viewer in and among the crowd. Finally, it proceeds from the assumption that readers recognize themselves as belonging to the community of us to whom Rockwell gives his picture.

This last point is important, and I think it therefore prudent that I justify to readers of my own text the exorbitant use to which I am putting Rosenblum. After all, as will be objected by anyone who cares to look up his review, I have focussed on a mere two lines -- less than a paragraph -- of the essay. My response is that Rosenblum's text is a usefully succinct example, as I have written, of habitual Rockwell-affirmative analyses. It is symptomatic of the terms most readily available to those who wish at the turn of the twenty-first century to recuperate Rockwell from within institutions of cultural legitimacy such as the academy or the art museum, while expressing solidarity with, as it were, the spirit of the people.

This has everything to do with the history of popular illustration and the role of

Rockwell in American culture in the first half of the twentieth century. The new tendency to legitimate Rockwell from the platform of venerable institutions -- the museum, the academy -- is almost inevitable in the face of the triumph of an insensate postmodernism that cannibalizes across aesthetic boundaries without understanding and deconstructing them. Thus it can be *cool* to like or, better, to appreciate Rockwell. Were the aesthetic boundaries between Rockwell and museum art *truly* blurred -- as feared by some and heralded by others -- there would be no difference on which to trade.³³ By maintaining the middle-brow distinction that holds Rockwell in his place, an elite, postmodern connoisseur can enjoy the cachet of slumming with the people, all the while possessing the judgment of taste. While this takes the *form* of a postmodern border crossings, it fails to fulfill a more rigorous postmodernism's nobler promise that would open to inspection and reevaluation the grounds of culture, the workings of taste, and the circulation of power.³⁴

³³As evidence of the coolness of Rockwell see Charlie Finch, "The Return of Bad Taste," *Artnet* (11/22/99): <http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/features/finch/finch11-22-99.asp>; Daniel Grant, "Rethinking Rockwell: a Popular Magazine Illustrator Is Winning New Respect from Museums and Critics," *The Christian Science Monitor* (Friday, October 29, 1999); and Deborah Solomon, "In Praise of Bad Art," *New York Times Magazine* (January 24, 1999): 32-35. But note that following the terrible loss of lives in the United States on September 11, 2001, there has been a new earnestness -- not at all cool -- about Rockwell: see for instance Deborah Solomon, "Once Again, Patriotic Themes Ring True as Art," *New York Times* (October 28, 2001).

³⁴The approach that art historians have been taking to Rockwell is notable for the way it collapses the distance between elite and common culture. Much of the commentary by this current generation of Rockwell critics -- drawn, not coincidentally, from the authoritative ranks of senior scholars -- drops its reserve, and immerses itself fully in the everyday pleasures of pictures. But rather than overcoming the structural framework that parses authority to intellectuality and subjection to the popular realm, the veil of authority is used to reaffirm the grounds of the popular and to undercut critical reflection. Although this is different from the way intellectuals have tended to approach non-elite culture at a distance -- whether a critical distance (Frankfurt School), an ironic distance (postmodern), or a rigorously intellectual but "fun" distance (camp) -- there is nonetheless, no dialectical

overcoming of the opposition of high and low. See Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York & London: Routledge, 1989), particularly his introduction.

These contemporary perspectives and the terms they insist on need be swept aside, or at least bracketed, to expose this history with some clarity, freed from the prevailing conservative norms that dominate the discourse of Rockwell and of many popular arts. The history I will offer can be no “better” if such quality is to be judged in terms of being *freer* from political orientation of any kind, of being value neutral. But it does have the virtue of acknowledging the ever present role of ideology even in its own practice, and of attempting to uncover the inconsistencies that our histories paper over.

Which brings me or, dare I say, us, back to the question of us. Although the use of the first person plural has a substantial rhetorical tradition outside of Rockwell studies, within this body of writing it has been an ever-present trope since perhaps the 1930s when Rockwell began to evolve from celebrity to American icon. It takes not the form of the nominative “we” employed to suggest a dualistic sympathy between writer and reader, *as we shall see*, but primarily the objective “us” that encompasses a much broader shared group identity. Thus, Rosenblum writes that Rockwell “gives us” a scene; and any number of examples of this gift making to a collective people can be found in uses to which the illustrator has been put. A 1931 endorsement, for instance, identified an important element of Rockwell’s artistry in “his choice of subjects that appeal to instincts and experiences common to all of us,” a sentiment repeated sixty years later in Rockwell Museum literature that marveled “he captured what is common to us all.”³⁵ And again, writing from the Oval Office, Ronald Reagan gave some life to us with a sketch of our wholesome, middle-class lifestyle tied to a domesticated vision of the land: “the values [Rockwell] cherished and

³⁵“Another Rockwell Calendar,” *The Red Barrel* (October 1931): n.p.; “The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Massachusetts,” brochure, op cit.

celebrated -- love of God and country, hard work, neighborhood, and family -- still give us strength, and will shape our dreams for the decades to come. . . . [His] pictures focus . . . on everyday Americans and the pleasures of home, outdoors, and family that all of us can enjoy.”³⁶ That these are, as the current catalog and exhibition have it, Norman Rockwell’s *Pictures for the American People* and that the American people is us, is clear enough.

This conceit of an exchange between Rockwell and ourselves, insures both the authorial function of Rockwell to bestow authentic Rockwells³⁷ (with all that this means) and assures for us a *prima facie* identity not readily controverted. The logic of the construction runs as follows: Rockwell painted America; he made gifts of these pictures to the American people; therefore we as viewers touched by these images share an identity as the American people. Such is expressed, in condensed form, in the rhapsodic language of popular art history: “Most of all, Norman Rockwell’s spirit lives on in his art reflecting what we as a people are and what we aspire to be. And capturing our essential strength

³⁶President Reagan’s homage to Rockwell is particularly fitting because here the American people (including working non-citizens) are *literally* represented in the sense that their tax dollars paid for the words penned by the President and polished by staff speech writers on White House office time. The text was written as the forward to *Norman Rockwell’s Patriotic Times*, ed. George Mendoza (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc. 1985), n.p.. For circumstances of the President’s involvement with this project, see the Mendoza volume as well as Herbert Mitgang, “A Presidential Plug,” *New York Times* (August 20, 1985): Sec. II, p. 4.

³⁷I am interested here and throughout not in Rockwell the man, but in Rockwell the “brand,” the discursive figure that organizes the meaning of the illustrations he signed. That is, in terms of what Michel Foucault has discussed as the author function, see “What is an Author?” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 101-120. For biographical readings of Rockwell see his autobiography, *My Adventures*; Marling, *Norman Rockwell*; and Laura Claridge, *Norman Rockwell: A Life* (New York: Random House, 2001). Another biography is forthcoming from Deborah Solomon.

and decency.”³⁸

³⁸*Remember When*, public television broadcast (March 5, 1995).

This symbolic exchange obscures questions concerning who is included among *us* and what constitutes an American. This discourse of identity runs up against history as it masks incongruous desires invested in Rockwell: that he be both a time-machine giving access to America's better, bygone days and that he continue to represent essential ideals and essences of all Americans in the present. Without -- until very recently, and then only dubiously -- recourse to aesthetic claims, paeans to Rockwell have long relied on his broad appeal and reputed ability to express the core of American identity. That this reputation was solidified through his illustrations from the first half of the twentieth century has set the stage for the impasse presented by the historical developments of 1960s and early 1970s. This is precisely what accounts for the prominence of the *Look* work in recent Rockwell literature, despite its indifferent appeal to most fans.

The desire to reconcile a nostalgic past with a tragic present as part of the same timeless truth instills a fundamental split in the identity and epistemological status of viewers invoked as *us*. This division is most evident around politics, social justice, and cultural authority all under challenge since the 1960s. And it reveals that Americans' very ability to dwell in American nostalgia through Rockwell, demands that "we" lie to ourselves about race in America by excluding it from questions of core national identity. American identity then is necessarily split from American history: the one pure and timeless, the other riven with injustice and error. Race is seemingly set aside as history, leaving American identity untainted.³⁹ The current restoration of Rockwell is

³⁹My characterization of race *set aside as history* resonates with Anne Wagner's argument that Andy Warhol achieved a manner of history painting only when he engaged with race (particularly when gendered male) in America for his 1963 *Race Riot* images. Wagner actually offers *The Problem We All Live With* (108-09) as an example of the *kind* of image

unthinkable as a separate undertaking from the recovery of the American innocence he painted most often. This is the insoluble conundrum of Rockwell in the twenty-first century, that his work should embody a timeless American character and incorporate American history.

Although *The Problem We All Live With* appeared in *Look* nearly two decades after the end of the second World War and well outside the primary chronological focus of this study, it warrants further consideration at this point in order to establish some relevant concerns. The illustration is one of a handful of images from the decade after Rockwell split with the *Post* in 1963 that have been key to his recuperation as an icon of liberal tolerance and true Americanism, an updating of a mythic pre-1960s America to account for contemporary concerns. The prevailing reading of these later images demands a corrective analysis in order to see *past* them to an earlier moment in the history of American mass-market illustration.

Warhol did not choose to reproduce in silkscreen (she acknowledges the Rockwell is later) because, it is implied, the Rockwell evades racialized masculinity, 111. Anne M. Wagner, "Warhol Paints History, or Race in America," *Representations* 55 (Summer 1996): 98-119.

Since the 1970s, sympathetic commentators have characterized the *Look* work as revealing Rockwell's authentic spirit as fair and liberal-minded. Turning from the work to the man, they have argued that Rockwell had until then labored under the restrictions of editors and advertisers who dictated what he might depict. One commentator makes a curious comparison between Rockwell's break with the *Post* and Martin Luther's challenge to the authority of the Medieval church.⁴⁰ Certainly, it is true that Rockwell was subject to different, perhaps greater, restrictions at the *Post* than during his subsequent few years with *Look*, and those restrictions are relevant to understanding the significance of the work. However, this significance does not lie in the artist's struggle per se, but in the cultural meanings of such struggles.

The much trumpeted social concerns of the 1960s evident in his images of Ruby Bridges, of the three freedom riders murdered in Philadelphia Mississippi, of the integration of a white, suburban neighborhood, and of Peace Corps work in Ethiopia, are typically framed not as a *mea culpa* for the imagery he had promulgated earlier, but as a revelation and extension of that collective image of America he had always portrayed. This work is presented as the production of Rockwell the autonomous artist, freed from encumbering, extraneous concerns and in touch with his deepest values and ours.⁴¹

⁴⁰Marling, *Norman Rockwell*, 136-137. It is true that Rockwell was subject to different, perhaps greater, restrictions at the *Post* than during his years with *Look*, and those restrictions are relevant to understanding the significance of the work. However, this significance does not lie in the artist's struggle per se, but in the cultural meaning of such struggles.

⁴¹But see far-right essayist, Fr. James Thornton's repudiation of the work of the 1960s and 1970s as a betrayal of Rockwell's "foundational view of life" which is best represented in the images from 1930s-1950s (a chronology which inexplicably ignores the teens and twenties which might be thought still more "foundational"). Mourning the bygone days of

conservative Americanism, the author exhorts his readers to “gaze often on the most noteworthy works of Norman Rockwell -- to see precisely what they portray, to see what has been lost, and to see what we must work to recover.” “Rockwell’s America,” *The New American* 10, no. 26 (December 26, 1994) on-line <http://thenewamerican.com/tna/1994/vol10no26.htm>. David Hickey, in a hipper, neo-bohemian, yet ultimately nostalgic essay, makes a similar argument that this work marks the loss of Rockwell’s authentic voice. For Hickey, that estrangement is effected by Rockwell’s exposure to the “Germanic vision of culture and childhood” he picked up from his acquaintances with psychologists Erik Erikson and Robert Coles and which led him to generalize from the particular rather than the reverse (Hickey, “The Kids are Alright,” in *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, 124). Rather than seeing Rockwell’s *Look* period as marking the loosening of constraints on the illustrator, both Thorton and Hickey see Rockwell as now immured by a new political reality. As mavericks, neither Hickey nor Thorton are particularly concerned to refute the “white bias” critique of Rockwell and therefore need not embrace the later work. Museums and mainstream writers, by comparison, have been less able to effect such a dismissal.

True enough, the *Post* did prohibit certain imagery. In his 1960 autobiography, Rockwell notes that for a long time he was not allowed to show anyone with a cigarette (later the prohibition applied only to images of women) or a beer (373).⁴² Eleven years later he added to the list of taboos, the restraint against depicting black Americans in anything other than stereotypical roles.⁴³ In any case, these were restrictions that Rockwell did not chafe against much. Moreover, it would be wrong to imagine the Rockwell of the *Look* years as an utterly undetermined agent free of either editorial exigencies or internalized cultural ones. Finally, whether or not Rockwell was finally liberated to explore his own values is not my point. The central question here concerns the way his significant expansion of subject matter has been used to rewrite the meaning of early work from the years when Rockwell mattered most to America.

⁴²On advertising censorship in the *Saturday Evening Post* and in Curtis magazines generally, see Ralph M. Hower, *The History of an Advertising Agency: N. W. Ayer & Son at Work 1869-1939* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. 1939, [New York: Arno, 1978]), 448-53.

⁴³In interview Reeves 1971, 42.

In conjunction with this image of *Rockwell unbound*, the earlier pictures for which he is best known are demonstrated to capture an essential truth about American identity, even if that truth could not be fully extended visually (or politically) to marginalized groups. The sleight of hand retroactively pardons omissions of race and ethnicity in Rockwell's America, substantiates the universality of his American spirit, and establishes a secure base for an updated -- if not up-to-date -- Rockwell. Thus is resolved the contradiction of claims for Rockwell's vision of a universal American identity in the face of a patently flawed cast of American characters.⁴⁴ Key to further examining this is precisely the question of what is not shown and of how we are to approach it: the audience as a product and function of ideology.

In Rosenblum's account of *The Problem We All Live With*, the distinction between the undepicted white crowds and the unspecified identity of us is absolute, although both belong to "one of America's ugliest realities," to the shared realm of history. The painting itself was completed for the issue of *Look* devoted to "How We Live," which compiled essays speaking directly to middle-class, white Americans. By contrast black Americans were figured there as strangers among us, outsiders who want "like the rest of us" a reasonable opportunity.⁴⁵

⁴⁴No longer do critics complain of finding in Rockwell's work "a land unpopulated by ethnic or black Americans" (Edwin McDowell, "Norman Rockwell, Artist of Americana, Dead at 84," *New York Times* [November 10, 1978]: Sec. I, p.29). Filling the void left by the "resolution" of the problem of race, is the primary quandary of today, "is it art or illustration?"

⁴⁵In this regard, the *Look* issue conceptually promotes black America from the status of absolute Otherness to that of Simmel's stranger, historically a trader (and a Jew) wanting opportunity, "an element of the group itself . . . whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it." Georg Simmel, "The Stranger" ["Der

Fremde," 1908], in *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*, ed. Donald Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 144.

Rosenblum's description draws upon the book he is reviewing -- Marling's -- which in turn calls forth earlier observers of events in New Orleans. Marling herself segues from Steinbeck's well known account in *Travels with Charley* of "the crowd [that] seemed to hold its breath" to her own brief description of the image, which leaves room for the impression of depicted crowds in the Rockwell image.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Marling, *Norman Rockwell*, 144. Linda Szekely, archivist at NoRMS, considers it unlikely that Rockwell was familiar with Steinbeck's account at the time since it was his wife Mary who read to him while he worked, and Mary would not have been interested in *Travels with Charley* (in conversation, April 1998). Nonetheless, Marling asserts that "*Travels with Charlie* [sic] . . . was Rockwell's kind of book," see "Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka: Norman Rockwell's *The Problem We All Live With*," in *Civil Rights in Oz: Images of Kansas in American Popular Culture*, The Franklin D. Murphy Lectures, XVII (Lawrence, KA: Spencer Museum of Art, Univ. of Kansas, 1997), 14.

Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles -- who in his *Children of Crisis* wrote about his work with the young Ruby Bridges and others in New Orleans, recalls in a more recent essay the pandemonium of outraged whites followed by “an audible spell of silence” falling upon Ruby’s arrival at the scene, and lasting until she and her escorts reached the door of the William Frantz Elementary School⁴⁷ [Figure 6 & 7]. Coles had stumbled upon school integration in New Orleans and undertook to study the effect on children, black and white, there and in other southern cities. After appeals against court-ordered desegregation were exhausted, the Orleans School Board finally chose two elementary schools in a white, working-class district where racial tensions were already high for initial attempts at integration. Three children were selected to attend McDonogh, while Ruby became the only African-American child at the William Frantz school. Subsequently, New Orleans erupted into riots, protests, and pickets at the schools. White parents -- some out of prejudice, others out of fear -- kept their own children out of school, and at Frantz Ruby was the *only* student for much of the year.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Robert Coles, “Ruby Bridges and a Painting,” 105. Marling writes that “Cole’s work was the spiritual force behind Rockwell’s big picture” (*Norman Rockwell*, 141) and points to a 1963 report of Cole’s work that she implies would have reached the illustrator. She also notes that “Rockwell knew Coles” and that they collaborated on *Dead End School* (1968). However, Marling’s arrangement of facts curiously suppresses the chronology by which Rockwell executed *The Problem* in 1964, but did not meet Coles, as the psychiatrist himself writes, until “the late 1960’s” (Coles, “Ruby Bridges and a Painting,” in *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, 111). Moreover, there is nothing in Coles’ 1963 report specific to the scenes transpiring as Ruby or other children arrived at school (Robert Coles, *The Desegregation of Southern Schools: A Psychiatric Study* [New York: Anti-Defamation League; Atlanta: Southern Regional Council, 1963]).

⁴⁸On New Orleans elementary school integration and the astounding state and public resistance, see Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Univ. of Georgia, 1995), 234-64; and Kent Rogers Lacy, *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York Univ.

Press, 1993), 70-75.

According to Coles, the youthful Ruby's own response to the Rockwell image a couple of years after, emphasized the momentary cessation that followed her arrival at the Frantz School. But she also implied that this depiction of the calm interlude failed to capture the violence represented in other versions of the larger events. "If you look at the [Rockwell] picture in the magazine," she said, "you'll see things going all right, nice and quiet, but if you looked at the television, back then, it was real bad."⁴⁹ For Ruby, the Rockwell captured a sort of momentary truth, but seemed inadequate to the experience she recalled by reference to television news reports.

It is the violence of the (textual) white crowd that transforms the scene of an escorted girl into an episode of cruel bigotry within the narrative of civil rights in the 1960s. Yet for Rockwell the throngs reported to chant "Two, four, six, eight, we don't want to integrate"⁵⁰ were unrepresentable. Indeed, much of what went on at "the show" -- a local designation reported by Steinbeck -- in front of the Frantz School seemed by many, to

⁴⁹Coles, "Ruby Bridges and a Painting," 110. When Ruby was first shown the picture she asked her mother, "Mama, do you think that's supposed to be someone like me, maybe me?" (110). Rockwell's model was Lynda Gunn a resident of Stockbridge who, it is reported, did not realize she was black until she made a 1971 trip to visit family in Washington, D.C., David Finkel, "The Individualist," *Washington Post Magazine* (May 21, 2000): 13. According to Marling (*Norman Rockwell*, 141), when Rockwell painted her, Gunn was the only black student at the local elementary school. In point of fact, the presence of blacks in the Berkshire County in which Stockbridge is incorporated had been decreasing for decades. In 1868, when W. E. B. Du Bois was born in the county at Great Barrington where a small community of blacks had settled in the eighteenth-century, African-Americans comprised two percent of the population. By 1960 only a quarter of the population was black.

⁵⁰Claude Sitton, "2 White Schools in New Orleans are Integrated," *New York Times* (November 15, 1960): 42.

be unrepresentable.⁵¹ As Steinbeck recounts, crowds gathered in the morning and afternoon to see the “Cheerleaders” -- anti-segregationist white women -- gather to denounce with “demented cruelty” and “selectedly filthy” language Ruby and any white child whose parents did not respect their racial picket line. “No newspaper had printed the words these women shouted. It was indicated that they were indelicate, some even said obscene. On television the sound track was made to blur or had crowd noises cut in to cover.”⁵²

⁵¹In fact, it is not certain that Rockwell intended the girl to be Ruby at the Frantz School. Some published photographs taken at McDonogh were cropped to show a single African-American girl escorted by U.S. Marshals (e.g. *New York Times* (November 15, 1960): 1) and could have served for his model. Also, published details were common to both New Orleans schools including girls in “pigtails and freshly laundered dresses” at McDonogh and one in a “stiffly starched white dress with a white ribbon in her hair” at Frantz, *ibid.*, 42.

⁵²John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (New York: Viking, 1966 [1962]), 228, 227. The head of these Cheerleaders, Una Gaillot later insisted that the protestors were “very lady-like” and rejected Steinbeck’s description declaring “[e]very lady down there was a lady.” *A House Divided*, documentary on desegregation in New Orleans (New Orleans, LA: WVUE, 1987).

Rockwell later observed of himself, “I don’t think I have an instinct to paint people with ugly ideas. You know, I don’t wanna paint evil looking people.”⁵³ Instead, he typically focusses on the particularities of the experience of a sympathetic protagonist: here, the young girl with “brave and jaunty pigtail”⁵⁴ trailing as she bravely defies adversity, or so *The Problem We All Live With* gets described.⁵⁵ However, it should be noted that at other times the same image seemed to depict the girl as a “bewildered Negro child,” a phrase lacking in heroism.⁵⁶

⁵³Norman Rockwell: *An American Dream* (Concepts Unlimited Film, 1971). Laurie Norton Moffatt, “The People’s Painter,” op cit, cites the same source but incorrectly transcribes Rockwell’s words as, “I can’t paint evil sorts of subjects” (26). The difference between subjects (i.e. subject matter) and people is, I think, significant and is in evidence in the *Look* work which acknowledges a great evil while evacuating the canvas of evil-doers.

⁵⁴Marling, “Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka,” op cit, 15.

⁵⁵Without mistaking the depicted girl for Ruby Bridges, it is worth noting that in Robert Coles’ *Children of Crisis: A Study of Courage and Fear* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967) Ruby was indeed a child both brave and frightened, stoically walking the gauntlet of white protestors, but so terrified of being poisoned as to refuse her peanut butter and jelly sandwiches (74-86). The adult Ruby Bridges Hall, however, recalls that she was oblivious to the aggression, thinking on the first day that the crowds gathered at the Frantz school were part of a Mardi Gras celebration (*News Hour* interview with Charlayne Hunter-Gault, February 18, 1997) and that she simply did not care for peanut butter (Richard Jerome and Ron Ridenour, “Keeper of the Flame,” *People* (December 4, 1995): 104. She does recall being frightened at other times [*News Hour*], but, remarkably, remained unaware that race was at issue until nearly the end of the school year when difference was introduced in the form of the first student to finally cross the pickets, a white boy (“Ruby Bridges Speaks Out” [interview] *WAN: World African Network* (January 29, 1998): <http://www.wanonline.com/entertain/entertain256.html>

⁵⁶M.B. “Norman Rockwell,” *Arts Magazine* 43 (Nov 1968): 58.

Rockwell would take a similar tack in *Philadelphia, Miss., June 31, 1964* -- frequently called "Southern Justice (Murder in Mississippi)" -- of 1965 [Figure 8], where the focus draws the viewer to the beleaguered civil-rights activists James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman in the early morning hours of June 21, 1964, moments before their murder by Ku Klux Klansmen near Philadelphia, MI. Standing in for the assailants themselves are the long, adumbrated shadows, brown and mottled as the dirt that will be bulldozed over the youths' bodies at the notorious earthen dam. But it would be a mistake to assume that Rockwell could not depict either inflamed crowds or the excited emotions of violent events that might have served to render an impassioned (white) crowd in the New Orleans scene. For instance, in his illustration for "Blacksmith's Boy -- Heel and Toe" (*SEP*, November 2, 1940) [Figure 9] and "Strictly a Sharp Shooter" (*American Magazine*, June 1941) [Figure 10] the central action takes place in the midst of unrestrained mob passion in which viewers are invited to take part -- not just observe. In the forging scene, the grizzled man with lofted wager at the lower-left (and a self-portrait of Rockwell at the middle far-left) plays the cynosure guiding attention towards the center of the canvas. Discussing these two images together, Rockwell recalled his research, visiting a fight arena to "drink up the atmosphere" and spending a morning "watching a blacksmith pound out horseshoes." In each instance he sought details "he would never have been able to think up" in support of his "rule never to fake anything."⁵⁷

⁵⁷Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 319.

Although Rockwell's *Look* work from the mid- and late-1960s responded to those critics who charged that his vision of America made no room for minorities (outside of stereotype), his later imagery -- apparently influenced by the liberal politics of his third wife⁵⁸ -- nonetheless also seemed limited by his own desire to find what was best in what he understood to be America.⁵⁹ As he sometimes declared in a defensive mode marked by awareness of his many critics, it had been his task to paint "life" not as it was but as he "would like it to be."⁶⁰ That is, even when undertaking his "worst enemy . . . the world-shaking idea,"⁶¹ he could not look straight on at evil in America. Rockwell's late version of America faces such grim realities as racial hatred and world poverty,⁶² and although it fails to indict with any specificity, it also seems to open the terrain of responsibility onto the broader audience not directly involved in the events.

⁵⁸According to Rockwell photographer Walter H. Scott, "She made him a liberal." Molly's influence upon Rockwell's turn to "social issues" in paintings like *The Problem We All Live With*, has also been noted by Peter Rockwell, Norman's son by his second wife Mary. Both from on-camera interviews in *American Masters: Norman Rockwell: Painting America*, co-production of Thirteen/WNET in New York and NHK, 1999 (90-minutes).

⁵⁹This theme -- that Rockwell painted, in some fundamental even transcendent fashion, America -- will be considered throughout this study. Briefly, skepticism seems to me to be the appropriate attitude towards such claims which (a) assume a restrictive notion with regards to the *who* of America; (b) posit an essentialized idea of a national spirit bringing to mind dubious interpretive patterns explored by founding academic historians of American art in the 1960s; and idealize Rockwell's work as evoking -- rather than participating in the fabrication of -- fundamental truths about this America.

⁶⁰Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 46.

⁶¹Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 389.

⁶²Although Rockwell's *Look* work includes no anti-war statements, he did -- later, and with prompting from his third wife Molly -- refuse a commission for the Marines in Vietnam, saying "I don't think we're helping the Vietnamese people lead better lives, do you?" Reeves 1971, 36.

This is so, in part, because Rockwell seems to have himself made half-steps towards understanding that racism is not something one simply does, but is a pervasive cultural form that inhabits even the unwilling. In his autobiography he had sheepishly admitted that he was not immune to the “racial prejudice” prevailing in the New York City of his boyhood -- a “stupid business” he says of the name-calling and “class feeling.”⁶³ Later and with greater insight, he responded to an elliptical question concerning his “Boiling Point” posed by *Esquire* magazine in 1962: “I was born a white Protestant with some prejudices which I am continuously trying to eradicate. I am angry at unjust prejudices, in other people or in myself.”⁶⁴ It was during his years with *Look*, venue for a prevailing liberal discourse on race, that he attempted to bring these ideas to his daily work of putting paint to canvas.

⁶³“We called Italians wops, Frenchmen frogs, Jews kikes.” Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 33. Notably, Rockwell does not comment as to the presence or absence of black Americans or of racist names for them among his peers.

⁶⁴“Norman Rockwell by Norman Rockwell” [interview], *Esquire* (January 1962): 69.

Thus, one can imagine that with *The Problem We All Live With* Rockwell would have wished that his viewers not just acknowledge racism from a distance, but that they ask themselves about their relation to it. Unlike the reportorial perspective in *Southern Justice* where, from an elevated vantage, viewers observe the encroaching dark shadows, *Problem* brings the viewpoint down to the level of the actors, somewhere among or in front of the unseen protestors. The child and escorts proceed across the image to the left, treading the concrete sidewalk that runs parallel to the graffitied and bespattered wall. The snapshot framing implies an uncertain distance: is the scene viewed through a camera's lens from a distance and behind police lines, or is it viewed from up close on the sidewalk? The cropped heads of the Deputy U.S. Marshals iterate the objective rule of Federal authority against the suspect judgment of a local police compromised by bigotry,⁶⁵ but also provides for a formal intimacy centered on the girl. Thus there is tension between knowledge extrinsic to the visual evidence that places the viewer among antagonistic onlookers held back at a distance, and the formal devices that bring the viewer near the scene. Tension, in other words between the known and the given.

The strategy disrupts the unity of "us" and puts in question *our* relation to those who would throw tomatoes and scrawl racial epithets. From the point where Rockwell places *us* as viewers we may recognize ourselves holding the line against bigotry or standing-by apathetically. Such is the dilemma of liberal reader of *Look* who never used

⁶⁵The image of Southern law in the era of Civil Rights as menacing, undisciplined, and trenchantly racist was captured in Charles Moore's *Life* magazine photographs of Birmingham police baiting protestors. See Charles Moore, "They Fight a Fire That Won't Go Out," *Life* (May 17, 1963), and Anne Wagner's discussion of Moore's work in "Warhol Paints History," op cit.

the word “nigger” and despised the KKK. To be sure *Look* readers included racists and the geometry of the image made a place for them in front of the unfolding scene. However, the uncomplicated juxtapositions of good and evil did not offer an agreeable message to bigots. One segregationist parent responded to the image: “That magazine tells you to ‘look,’ and I sure did; I thought ‘there she is, the nigra kid.’ You look at her and you begin to feel sorry for her -- a lot of people will, I’m sure. It’s not *her* we were against, you know. It’s the interference in our life by those folks up North, that’s what it was, that’s what we were saying.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶Coles, “Ruby Bridges and a Painting,” 111.

In the final analysis, Rockwell's mainstream audience would not have recognized itself as the authors of the cipher "KKK," but the distance between the absent antagonists (the white crowds) and the viewer ("us") is less pronounced than it is in Rosenblum's text. Rockwell seems to give himself even less cover. In light of his dawning awareness that -- to use words foreign to this profoundly laconic man -- his very subjectivity was formed in racist discourses, it might not be too much to suggest that the carefully drawn lower-case 'n' of in his signature insists on the sameness of that other, repulsive, sloppy, capitalized, block lettered 'N'.⁶⁷

⁶⁷There is much to be said about Rockwell's autographic habits. As a young professional he slowly wrestled his effeminate-seeming middle-name, Percevel, and then the initial P into submission (*My Adventures*, 31-32; discussed in Segal, 1996). Later, the *Post's* editor had to remind him of priorities, facetiously suggesting that his burgeoning signature should get no larger than the title of the magazine. "It was unconscious," he wrote, "the signature just seemed to grow by itself, naturally" (*My Adventures*, 179). Finally, his signature was less a personal mark, than a graphic image that he rendered in a wide variety of styles throughout his career as was true of many illustrators.

These and other viewing positions are brought together in the space before *The Problem We All Live With*, accounting for the peculiar lapses in how this image gets discussed. As in any number of window-on-the-world paintings arranged according to western perspectival systems, three agents compete for the position from which to behold the image: the artist, the implied viewer around which the perspective is constructed, and the actual viewer who comes to take this place. In addition, the narrative and the picture together -- like some crucifixion and flagellation images -- places that viewpoint in the midst of a group of other viewers (the white crowd). Finally, there is the subject position of us by which an individual looking at the painting perceives herself a part of a larger organism. The image offers a surprising range of competing positions to which the scene is presented.

The variety of subjects converging on this single coordinate has generally promoted uncertainty about how to read the viewer's share in this scene, and has contributed to a significant oversight in glosses on this image. If the narrative of the painting situates the implied viewer among the white protesters, the pictorial geometry suggests a figure standing about the same height as the depicted school girl. Together, perspective construction and narrative context designate a white child (for no black child would dare join this crowd) amid, or in front of, the gathering of enraged adults. News service photographs of events in New Orleans published at the time also focussed on the pitiable image of children attending school under the protection of federal marshals [Figure 11], but the low vantage point, establishing an intersubjective relation with one of these children, is Rockwell's. Also, particular to Rockwell is the stillness of the moment he captures in contrast to Civil Rights era imagery from the news press where conflict and

aggressive force are in evidence [Figure 12 & 13], and on the violent reaction of local residents.

The image figures the relationship between these two children, the one depicted and the one from whose viewpoint all is represented, but is little concerned with adults whether friendly but headless like the Marshals, or diabolical and unpictured as with the crowds. More than simply a platitude along the lines of “the children are the future,” *The Problem We All Live With* ties together the fate of both youths, black and white, suggesting that the hate turned against the one will no less consume the other. It is an eloquent restatement -- though not unproblematic in its objectification of the girl -- of the lesson of prejudicial resistance to social justice that saw black children subjected to a kind of psychic torture and white children denied public education at the hands of racist parents.

Rockwell would reprise and transform the theme in his *A Meeting: New Kids in the Neighborhood* (1967)⁶⁸ [Figure 14], a roseate celebration of suburbia as the solution to racial segregation (and as an escape from the urban turbulence represented by the riots in the Harlem riot in 1964 and the Watts riot of 1965).⁶⁹ As with *The Problem*, this illustration appeared in *Look* (May 16, 1967) in the double-page landscape format, and similarly places the drama against a bland grey backdrop. Here that ground gives way at left and opens onto a world of neat-trimmed lawns bathed in summer sunlight. In this

⁶⁸Rockwell did not title this work usually cited as *New Kids in the Neighborhood*. It was originally published with the overleaf caption “On the next // page, Norman // Rockwell Paints // A Meeting: // New Kids in the // Neighborhood,” *Look* (May 16, 1967): 51ff. Moffatt gives three titles: *Negro in the Suburbs*; *New Kid in the Neighborhood*; and *Moving In*.

⁶⁹1964 saw riots as well in New Jersey, Illinois and Pennsylvania. *New Kids* was conceived and published prior to the July riots that erupted in Newark and Detroit in 1967.

suburban scene, situated far from the casual geography and confined vistas of Orleans Parish, virtually all spatial and human relations have been inverted. The scene is now reversed with the little girl (still in sashed dress, hair ribbon and ankle socks) facing stage left. With the frame of view expanded, the school-yard wall is revealed to be moving-truck and the four, headless marshals have become a brother and three new acquaintances, friendly but cautious with hands behind backs. The antagonism that intersected the canvas of *The Problem We All Live With* at a perpendicular angle has been transferred to the lateral plane where it is diffused with a touch of humor in the wary looks exchanged by cat and dog. Further perusal of the new neighborhood reveals that the *Problem's* unseen face of hatred has been telescoped to a distance where it peers suspiciously from behind drawn curtains that shut out the sun that brightly lights the children. And just as surely as the children will soon take-up play together (baseball for the boys!!), the outmoded prejudice of adults in their dark isolation will be forgotten by this generation.

The sentiment of *New Kids*, of course, has not played out in American society, suburban or otherwise. The positive identity embodied in the next generation does not lie in hope alone, but in the transformation of culture and identity. A related disappointment lies in the way the current revived interest in Rockwell -- with a major traveling exhibition and texts by prominent scholars, curators and critics of art and society -- has turned to wishful thinking and away from analysis. In all of this, at the moment of the most extensive and sustained examination of Rockwell to date, the point of Norman Rockwell seems to be missed precisely in the manner I have been pointing to in Rosenblum's text. That is, the illustrations are dislocated from the print and historical context to museum walls as part of effort to make them art, and the question of "us" is lost under the rubric of The American

People.⁷⁰

⁷⁰However, Anne Knutson makes a similar point, “*Saturday Evening Post*” in *Norman Rockwell Pictures for the American People*, 143-44.

II. Reflections on Paper

The present study aims to return illustration to the magazines whence they originate and to examine what these pictures have to do with the organization of American identity under the emergence of mass culture, focussing on popular illustration in the United States from about 1917 to 1945, that is between the World Wars. Specifically, its central subject matter is the work of J. C. Leyendecker and Norman Rockwell executed for the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*. During this period, the *Post* became the world's most circulated magazine, with Leyendecker and then Rockwell its best known regular contributors. Although, Leyendecker today is little remembered except by enthusiasts of early-twentieth century illustration,⁷¹ the *Post* and, to a larger degree, Rockwell are generally recognized -- remain, one might say, elements of mainstream cultural literacy -- at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Moreover, Rockwell recurs in popular political and cultural discourse as the very coin of wholesome American values and small-town innocence that prevailed before the "Fall" of the 1960s.⁷² But it is misleading to consider

⁷¹In recent years, there has been increasing interest in Leyendecker among collectors and scholars. Richard Martin wrote several essays on Leyendecker and fashion (see bibliography); in 1997 NoRMS exhibited *J.C. Leyendecker: A Retrospective* (November 8, 1997 - May 25, 1998) organized by Roger Reed of The Illustration House, a New York gallery dealing in illustration. Currently Michael Murphy is researching a dissertation at Washington University, St. Louis, "J.C. Leyendecker and Arrow Collars: Costume, Advertising and Male Gender in American Visual Culture."

⁷²For example, various writers sought jarring notes by shattering a dinner table scene worthy of a "Norman Rockwell portrait of American innocence" with allegations of incestuous "rape and sex abuse" [Donna Christine Smith, "The Specter of Incest," *The Washington Post* (May 27, 1994) D1] and by setting up a town "sprung from the brush of Norman Rockwell" for a fall in the face of accusations of a "racially tinged fracas that has embroiled the virtually all-white school" [Marjorie Rosen Leah Eskin, "Racial antagonism," *People* (January 31, 1994): 60]. Among politicians, then presidential candidate and Senator Phil Gramm (R, TX) acknowledged in a speech he penned after

only this retrospective view that caricatures the 1960s and the preceding, Edenic decades. Instead I want to return to the period when these cultural meanings were still crystallizing.

As the previous paragraph suggests, the rationale for the present study is, in part, quantitative (the *Post* sold a lot) and extensive (it sold everywhere). That is, the *Post* was big, and its illustrators were well-known and appreciated by a tremendous audience. As such, it should be studied as a means to further knowledge of American culture during a specific era. At a moment when print was king -- reaching far more people (and classes of people) than vaudeville; predating radio; and, with its reach extending *into* homes, offices, railway cars and diners, more pervasive and less localized than film -- the *Post* achieved unprecedented volume in circulation. And even as radio and the talkies eroded the leisure-time dominance of newspapers, magazines and books in the 1920s, the *Post* remained for decades a substantial force in the public life of the United States.

losing the Louisiana primary to Pat Buchanan, that his own vision of America after four years of a conservative Gramm presidency “sounds an awful lot like a Norman Rockwell painting.” Ironically, he was writing this speech on the end of affirmative action and Rockwell, as his plane departed New Orleans. James Bennet, “Politics: In the Pack; Unbowed but Disappointed, Gramm Pushes On in Iowa,” *New York Times* (February 8, 1996).

If the magnitude of reception itself generates interest, so does the duration of the impact of the *Post*. Remaining prominent for five decades from about 1910 and leading the magazine field through the thirties, the *Post* participated in the transformation of American culture especially during the first half of the twentieth century. Not only did its increasing circulation depend upon and simultaneously spur technological and social developments from printing and increased literacy to national transportation and increasing leisure time, but the magazine helped to usher in the nascent consumer economy and culture of the US. By creating in its audience a truly mass-market, the *Post* provided the just what the producers of emerging national brands most needed: agents of mass-consumption.

Regardless of the impressive figures of circulation and longevity, this is not a statistical analysis, and quantitative distinction is not its singular reason for being. The *Post* and its illustration have proved, throughout this century, to be powerful foci of social and individual identificatory investment. The magazine played a significant role in the political, social and cultural life of the nation and, I will argue, in the production of the elemental building blocks of the nation, individuals conceived of as Americans. By tapping into, iterating, transforming, and presenting seemingly common images of Americans and American cultural life, the *Post*, both intentionally and unintentionally, gave its readers formulae for perceiving themselves, at the most mundane level, as citizens of a nation and partners in their identity.

Given the *Post's* tremendous impact in the United States and the ubiquity with which it was promulgated, criticized, and consumed, as if it were a mirror on America, the questions remain, what impact did it have and what kind of mirror it constitute? In the chapters that follow, I argue that it was a mirror designed to produce national identity

inflected by and undergirded by beliefs in biological destiny. Such destiny was encoded in the various races of man; explicitly debated by eugenicists and implicitly informing virtually every facet of white American self-representation. The natural category, the norm the preservation of which was much discussed by politicians, civic leaders, and scientists, was largely invisible as an analyzable product in the cultural realm.

Whiteness -- embracing heterosexuality, gender norms, and middle-class codings -- was itself not the explicit subject of such representation, but the referent. In producing Americans the *Post* necessarily had to produce whiteness as a self-evident and immutable category.

Rather than exploring the connections between whiteness and American identity, Rockwell scholarship has generally focussed elsewhere. This work has emerged in fits and starts -- and recently in a growing volume -- since the early 1970s when Brooklyn Museum Director Thomas S. Buechner authored a Rockwell coffee-table book and then hosted at his museum (and wrote the catalog text) a show organized by Bernard Danenberg Galleries in New York.⁷³ Although the "Rockwell revival" Buechner predicted only materialized a flood of popular books at the time,⁷⁴ another event served as the scholarly -- if not the cultural -- catalyst of growing interest in Rockwell, the *Post* and, by

⁷³Thomas S. Buechner, *Norman Rockwell: A Sixty Year Retrospective* (New York: Abrams, 1972), 7, and Buechner, *Norman Rockwell: Artist and Illustrator* (New York: Abrams, 1970). A decade earlier, Buechner had already contributed "A Matter of Opinion" to *The Norman Rockwell Album* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), 126-128.

⁷⁴The Brooklyn Museum exhibition in 1972 generated substantial New York press coverage and commentary, but this did not translate into a blockbuster show. According to recriminating memos in the museum's archives, the director and various staff members were disappointed with ticket and exhibition catalog sales (see Chapter 2, footnote 113).

extension, illustration in general: this was the appearance of the first *catalogue raisonné* devoted to Rockwell's work.

The publication in 1986 of *Norman Rockwell: A Definitive Catalogue*⁷⁵ made it possible for the scholar and commentator to develop a more-or-less comprehensive view -- with little research -- of the breadth of Rockwell's published oeuvre (and even included personal works; mostly sketches and portraits, a few landscapes, and even the nude of Jackie Wells). Here, in the convenient, if oversized two-volume set published by The Old Corner House (predecessor to NoRMS), one could peruse with ease -- and without recourse to microfilm, special collections, the rare periodicals room, and private collectors -- an authoritative collection of reproductions. If not actually "definitive" as the title claimed, the incomplete catalog was to inspire numerous observers of the American scene from the late 1980s and on.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Laurie Norton Moffatt, *Norman Rockwell: A Definitive Catalogue*, 2 vols, Stockbridge, Mass.: The Norman Rockwell Museum, 1986.

⁷⁶Moffatt acknowledges in a Preface "how incomplete the material really was" and notes that as the book went to press she was already learning of new works. Moffatt, xx.

It immediately drew a perspicacious review from philosopher and art theorist Arthur Danto who, though perhaps erring in overgenerously judging it a work of “stupendous and thorough” scholarship, nonetheless understood both the political and scholarly ramifications the publication presaged. Presented with the catalog, Danto wondered in print “so where are the monographs, the iconographic studies, the densely hermeneutic *Artforum* essays, the Frankfurt School-inspired poststructuralist analyses in *October*, the brilliant retrospectives at the Beaubourg or the Palazzo Grassi? Why the silent consensus that Norman Rockwell is no great shakes as an artist?”⁷⁷ In his review, Danto paints a picture of savvy art theorists conversant in the sublime qualities of Duchamp’s “fountain,” brought to their knees trying to defend their disavowal of Rockwell. If his point were that the criteria of the art/illustration distinction are slippery, transitory and unfixed, it might hold. (Indeed, I will discuss the critical discourse of art against illustration elsewhere in this study.) However, Danto wants to suggest that the dislike for Rockwell among art world denizens is not a product of thoughtfulness, but of quiescence to long-standing orthodoxy; an aesthete’s knee-jerk response to the old image of Rockwell. And the absence of Rockwell scholarship as late as 1986, he explains as the vestigial leftist rejection of a stool pigeon of capitalism. Ultimately for Danto, not himself wedded to relativist positions, Rockwell cannot be given full artistic honors because he just tried so hard to please that he could not paint something truly honest.

⁷⁷Arthur C. Danto, “Freckles for the Ages: Norman Rockwell,” *New York Times* (September 28, 1986): Arts, 12.

As Danto noted of the catalog, it was not meant for popular consumption as a costly volume offering a comprehensive collection of mostly smallish black-and-white reproductions rather than the thematically selected, full color affair of a picture-book. Rather, it was the publication of John Updike's 1990 essay on a Rockwell poster hanging in his office water closet that offered the latter-day imprimatur of a literary culture to Rockwell's reputation. In his essay published in *Art & Antiques*, Updike takes Rockwell seriously and ratifies his vision as one that shows his viewers how to look so that they might see the simple beauty of the world around them, to "see . . . for the first time."⁷⁸ However, academic writing on Rockwell remained sparse. A handful of essays in the 1980s and early 1990s offered thoughtful, historically contextualized insight into the aspects of Rockwell's work,⁷⁹ although few have taken this material as a central object of

⁷⁸Updike, "An Act of Seeing," *Art & Antiques* VII, no. X (December 1990): 98. Updike does not fail to make now-*de rigueur* flattering allusions to Vermeer and van Eyck echoed by Dave Hickey, "The Kids are Alright," in *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*; Arthur Danto in "Norman Rockwell: Painting America" (Public Television Broadcast, 1999); "Collecting: America's Vermeer?" *Forbes* 164, no. 13 (November 29 1999); Maynard Good Stoddard, "Norman Rockwell's Double Life," *Saturday Evening Post* 266, no. 6 (November/December, 1994). Mid-century, the telling comparison for Rockwell neighbor Dorothy Canfield Fisher was Hieronymous Bosch, see *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Presents 75th Anniversary Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture by 75 Artists Associated with the Art Students League of New York* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1951), n.p.

⁷⁹See for instance, C(hristopher) E. Brookeman, "Norman Rockwell and the *Saturday Evening Post*: Advertising, Iconography and Mass Production, 1897-1929," in *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology Across England and North America*, ed. Marcia Pointon (Manchester and New York: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994), 142-174; Sarah Burns, "The Country Boy Goes to the City: Thomas Hovenden's *Breaking Home Ties* in American Popular Culture," *The American Art Journal* XX, no. 4, (1988): 59-73; Melissa Dabakis, "Gendered Labor, Norman Rockwell's 'Rosie the Riveter' and the Discourses of Wartime Womanhood," in *Gender and American History Since 1890*, ed. Barbara Melosh (London

study. As late as 1994, Michele Bogart was unable to find enough submissions to form a complete panel for an American Studies Association session marking the centenary of Rockwell's birth.⁸⁰ Clearly the effects of Moffatt's catalog had not yet taken hold, nor had the renewed public interest orchestrated largely by NoRMS coalesced in academia.

and New York: Routledge, 1993), 182-204; William Graebner, "Norman Rockwell and American Mass Culture: The Crisis of Representation in the Great Depression," *Prospects* 22 (1997): 323-356; David Howes, "Picturing the Constitution: Sociology of the Art Of Alex Colville and Norman Rockwell," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 21, no.4 (1991): 383-408; Lester C. Olson, "Portraits in Praise of a People: A Rhetorical Analysis of Norman Rockwell's Icons in Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'Four Freedoms' Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983): 15-24; Robert B. Westbrook, "Fighting for the American Family: Private Interests and Political Obligations in World War II," in *The Power of Culture: Critical Essays in American History*, eds. Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears (Chicago, 1993), 195-211.

⁸⁰For the call for papers, see American Studies Association, *Newsletter* 16, no. 4 (December 1993): 6. Bogart cited insufficient submissions in personal correspondence, January 30, 1994.

In concert with the production of the 1986 catalog, the Old Corner House on Main Street -- low-budget antecedent to the current multimillion dollar Rockwell museum on the former Linwood estate just outside of town -- was working up its expansion plans.⁸¹ The high-profile undertaking was bolstered in the early 1980s when fund raisers at the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Mass., enlisted prominent figures of both the right and the left, including politicians (Ronald Reagan and Edward Kennedy) and cultural figures (then-business man and not-yet-presidential-candidate H. Ross Perot and film maker Steven Spielberg).⁸² The funds supported a number of undertakings, but especially the design and construction of the new museum by architect Robert A. M. Stern, wizard of domesticated postmodernism, whose 27,000 square foot building draws, as promotional literature says, upon classical and vernacular architectural sources.⁸³

⁸¹Ironically, Rockwell's own images of small-town life were perceived in Stockbridge -- a town of about 2,200 inhabitants in 1985 -- as a threat to small-town life. As the museum pushed forward with its project, a move to block the plans emerged and precipitated a local referendum. One town selectman identified increased tourism and inflated property values as undesirable potential impact of the museum's growth. In the end Stockbridge supported the museum's move and expansion by a two-thirds majority (with 55% of eligible voters polling). See "Stockbridge Uneasy Over Rockwell Museum Plan," *New York Times* (February 9, 1986): Sec. I, 54.

⁸²"The Campaign for Norman Rockwell," brochure (Stockbridge: Norman Rockwell Museum, 1990). These funding efforts raised \$9.2 million.

⁸³Stern had the perfect theory (and an appropriate, not to say good, design) for Rockwell, one which approximated the terms of art, illustration and mass-culture. Modern architecture, he explained, is characterized by the interaction of three paradigms: the classical, the vernacular, and the process paradigm. The first term, the classical paradigm, consists of the inherited rational and humanist compositional methods and basic forms of the Graeco-Roman worlds -- "arguably the language and tradition of Western architectural culture." The vernacular paradigm, "is based on a belief that the classical paradigm is elitist and that the architecture of the Modern world should find a local basis for form." The final term of the triad, the process paradigm, attempts to integrate industrial production for mass populations as a condition of the Modern era. Robert A. M. Stern, *Buildings and*

Projects, 1981-1985, ed. Luis F. Rueda (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 12.

Meanwhile, historian Jan Cohn produced a serious book length study of the *Saturday Evening Post* under the editorship of George Horace Lorimer, updating the laudatory volume John Tebbel had written forty years earlier.⁸⁴ It was Lorimer who brought Rockwell to the *Post*'s fold and who steered the magazine throughout Rockwell's first two decades as one of the magazine's cover artists. The subject of Cohn's biography has been itself of little interest to art historians not already drawn to topics in twentieth century illustration, but for those writing on the milieu of mass-market illustration it has proved indispensable. Dave Hickey can be credited with stirring the waters for scholars of art and visual culture with his 1995 article.⁸⁵ As with a number of other scholars dipping their pens to comment on Rockwell, Hickey's article draws its energy from nostalgic reverie on simpler times encapsulated in a childhood memory.⁸⁶ Although Hickey's piece

⁸⁴Jan Cohn, *Creating America: George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1989); John Tebbel, *George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co, 1948).

⁸⁵Hickey, "Simple Hearts: shining hours/forgiving rhyme."

⁸⁶Similarly, Karal Ann Marling gathers populist legitimacy for her comments as an art historian from her recollected pleasures of Sunday afternoon visits with her grandmother spent pouring over the pictures in popular magazines, and declaration that "Norman Rockwell is a big part of my life."; Wanda Corn recalled weekly gatherings with her father and siblings to parse cover images as an education in appreciating Rockwell, an appreciation she was to unlearn as a graduate student and which she has recently undertaken to reacquire. One might go so far as to identify a subgenre evident in the writing of many senior scholars on Rockwell in which the author journeys into the past to a Main Street of her youth or of American innocence. This may be accompanied by a conversion narrative -- couched in deeply religious tones -- in which the aesthete or intellectual has her eyes opened to the importance and mastery of Rockwell. Such was the case for Rosenblum: "I was educated in the religion, one might almost say, of modern art.... But here we are in 1999, . . . [a]nd there's this, I find, tremendous feeling of liberation. . . [T]he real 'Eureka!' experience came about two, three years ago when I -- by accident -- went to the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. I just happened to be passing near there and I thought, 'Why not?'. [O]n any number of counts,

did strike a fresh note in its willingness to attend closely to Rockwell, it failed to bring serious questions to its loving image of American folk culture. By contrast, however, my own 1996 *Art Bulletin* article, which does consider Rockwell critically in terms of cultural meaning, failed to generate any considered response among scholarly art historians.⁸⁷

this work suddenly looked resurrected to me, and I thought, ‘You know, we have to take this guy seriously.’ He’s a fabulous painter.” Significantly, Neil Harris, who contributed a critical essay to the recent NoRMS catalog, recalled only that Rockwell’s images seemed far removed from -- even disdainful of -- his urban childhood experience. Marling, *Norman Rockwell*, 8-9; Corn, Harris and Rosenblum all in *Talk of the Nation*, public radio panel hosted by Melinda Penkava, with Peter Rockwell, Robert Rosenblum, Wanda Corn, and Neil Harris, National Public Radio broadcast, November 24, 1999).

⁸⁷However, at least one *ARTNews* correspondent and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* wondered if the essay’s appearance was indicative of sea-changes in art history. Scott Heller, “What Are They Doing to Art History?” *ARTNEWS* (January 1997): 102-105; see also “Hot Type,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 31, 1997). In Germany, the article was picked up by the daily press, see Claus Pias, “Percy muß sich wehren,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (April 16, 1997): 5.

When Karal Ann Marling's *Norman Rockwell* appeared in 1997, it joined the plethora of popular press books and articles offering insistent encomia to the illustrator. Resistant to any ideas smacking of ideological critique, the book nonetheless offered well-informed commentary drawing on Marling's impressive knowledge of American cultural history. Rockwell is presented here as nothing less than "an artist, that is: a real artist. A great artist."⁸⁸ In the vocabulary of this work, such an assessment puts his illustration beyond serious critical evaluation. The book is a hybrid, a picture-book (no endnotes) with certified art historical insights and a scholarly pedigree (being co-published by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art). It is the first monograph to endow Rockwell with intellectual legitimacy for a general audience. From the clarion first line -- "Norman Rockwell is the most popular American artist of this century" to the ambitious final paragraph on Rockwell, Christmas, sanctification, immortality, democracy, and equality of man, the book is relentlessly affirmative.⁸⁹ If it is a model for a populist picture history, it is one drained of the questions most pressing in any study of popular culture: those attending to power, knowledge, and meaning rather than to

⁸⁸Marling, *Norman Rockwell*, 9.

⁸⁹The final paragraph begins, "Rockwell will always point the way home for Christmas. He will make us feel, as a nation, a little better than we are. . . .", and continues by describing Rockwell's images as offering "a light that sanctifies" and "an inkling of immortality." The final words of the book discover in Rockwell (and it is significant that the reference is to Rockwell, not to his images, suggesting that they are absolutely identical) "a belief that democracy must work, that all of us have been created equal" (Marling, 149). The stunning religious imagery of these words make explicit assumptions that America and democracy itself are essentially Christian. The theme is taken up again in Karal Ann Marling, *Merry Christmas!: Celebrating America's Greatest Holiday* (2000) which also places mainstream (Protestant and white) Christian traditions at the center of national identity.

celebrity.

The recent catalog for the exhibition *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People* is less bold in its claims for Rockwell. Rather than relying on assertion, it returns to the familiar rhetoric that walks the line between illustrator and artist. For instance, the central and longest essay of the catalog, by two of the co-curators, lays out Rockwell's biography, notes major themes in his oeuvre, and details his working procedures. It primarily attends, in other words, to his role and practice as an illustrator. However, a concluding section refocuses on Rockwell not in his working context, but in a genealogical structure that situates him as the true inheritor of traditions of American art, particularly nineteenth-century genre painting. Avant-garde practices with their "enigmatic imagery, difficult themes, or erudite messages," it is explained, had forsaken this role when they went astray from the people.⁹⁰ The rhetoric is similar to that promulgated in the old *Post*, although here Art is being held up as the criterion against which to measure illustration.

⁹⁰Judy L. Larson and Maureen Hart Hennessey, "Norman Rockwell: A New Viewpoint," in *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, 63.

Much ink has been spilt on this art/illustration distinction in a debate that says little about the illustrator's work as historical object, but reveals quite a bit of the cultural contestation over symbols, taste, and power. Danto thinks that Rockwell's absence from museums is not explained along these lines and writes, "It cannot be, as his enthusiasts insist, that we draw an invidious contrast between (real) artists and (mere) illustrators." To support the assertions he gives a handful of examples in which disreputable figures -- from Bouguereau to Disney -- have been more-or-less rehabilitated in museum exhibitions of the late-twentieth century. Of course, Danto is a bit carried away in these claims, for even "serious critical reviews and semiotic analyses by Umberto Eco" do not Art make.⁹¹ Moreover, in Rockwell's case I would argue, the issue has not been framed as his cultural relevance (he gets plenty of credit for this), but in terms of his artistic relevance. His works may be owned by the National Museum of American Art, the Corcoran Gallery or even the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but they appear there less in the context of great art than as sociological documents.

The lesson of Danto's reconsideration of Rockwell is that there is a limit to what may be learned from even an intelligent gloss that fails to critically engage with historical and cultural context. The seemingly difficult question of Rockwell's absence from the art scene is more easily untangled once one addresses that other problem, "what is art?" or "why isn't this kind of illustration art?" Hubris, indeed, to suggest an answer! Better to reformulate the questions to ask, what was illustration, what did it do, and for whom? One can begin to answer these questions by examining the illustrations themselves particularly

⁹¹Danto, 1986

their vaunted *realism*.

III. *Post* popular illustration.

Certain oppositions at the heart of *Saturday Evening Post* realism provided a logic to the humor of Robert Robinson's *Gallerie Cubiste* on the cover of the *Post* (June 27, 1914) [Figure 15]. Published in 1914, the image echoes vituperative responses to the Armory Show's landmark presentation of international modern art in the United States, but speaks more directly to concerns of *Post* illustration.

Robinson had already established the interests of this "Old Codger," as he was known, in a dozen earlier covers in which the small-town patriarch passed leisure time debating politics at the general store or complacently noting reports of "Wheat [prices] Going Up" [Figure 16--*Saturday Evening Post* (April 26, 1913)]. On a European tour however, the Codger appears uncharacteristically dapper in his urbane attire. Despite the sophistication of a combed goatee and kid gloves, his guide to the *Gallerie Cubiste* offers little counsel in the unsettling presence of what ought to be a delightful portrait of blossoming womanhood, as in one of Harrison Fisher's trademark "pretty girl covers" [*Saturday Evening Post* (Dec. 24, 1910), [Figure 17]. Theodore Roosevelt gave words to the incomprehensible appeal of such a modernist canvas when he wrote, "There are thousands of people who will pay small sums to look at a faked mermaid; and now and then one of this kind with enough money will buy a Cubist picture, or a picture of a misshapen nude woman, repellent from every standpoint."⁹²

⁹²Theodore Roosevelt reviewing the International Exhibition of Modern Art in "A Layman's Views of an Art Exhibition," *The Outlook* CII (March 29, 1913): 718.

But Robinson's cover picture resonates more specifically with the medium of illustration than does Roosevelt's outrage. Juxtaposed to the one-point perspective defining the rational space of the Paris gallery, the fractured surface of the mock 'cubist' canvas clearly defies the Codger's -- and the *Post* reader's -- customary grammar of pictorial form and space. In this art gallery encounter the girl with her bifurcated vision -- one eye an unseeing blank, the other excessive in its regard -- is as incapable of apprehending the Codger's world as is he of penetrating 'hers'. On one side of this divide -- contained within the multiple articulations of the picture frame -- is modern art figured as foreign, unintelligible, radical and aligned with a grotesque femininity. By contrast, realist illustration -- the cover itself -- appears legible, conventional, homespun, and entirely compatible with our familiar Codger and his masculine concerns of commerce and politics.

Such oppositions were organized within the *Post*'s promotion of mass-market illustration as the paragon of an *art of America*, an art which it valued over modernism and Old Master painting alike.⁹³ This campaign for illustration entailed contesting and shaping the ideological content of both realist art and the American identity it was to encapsulate. To secure the integrity of its brand of realism and its vision of industrious, conservative Americanism, the *Post* grounded its rhetoric in anti-intellectual common sense. Declaring "the mystery and the mummery thrown about art have always been excessive," the *Post*

⁹³The *Post* mocked knee-bending to European culture, as when A. Livingston Gump, proprietor of the famous San Francisco department store, recalled a client of new money who declined to sit for a likeness explaining, "We're going abroad in the spring and we'll have our portraits painted by the Old Masters." A. Livingston Gump, "From Saloon to Salon," *Saturday Evening Post* (June 20, 1936): 73.

reasoned, “the man who found a simpler and easier way to his satisfactions can hardly be blamed for taking it.”⁹⁴

⁹⁴Gilbert Seldes, “The Art Bogy,” *Saturday Evening Post* (January 12, 1929): 130.

Moreover, this common sense was fixed in a seemingly disinterested white ideal. *Post* realism would embody an inexpressible whiteness while forging images that accorded with the magazine's imagined American national character. Sanguine realism *a la Post* and national identity were thus fused in an organic conception of whiteness, one resistant to analysis because ineffable. It bears emphasizing in this context that whiteness is hardly a matter of images for, by and about "white" people, but one of creating fictive cultural categories on which social relations -- that is, power relations -- operate. Without discounting material aspects of racial constructions (e.g. the disparity of access to economic opportunities) we should note that material conditions operate on objects (racialized groups and individuals) which are not *a priori* things in the world. Race does not exist outside its discursive production in cultural life, a production that must be renewed with each generation. Further, whiteness in the United States can not be understood reductively as skin color, but needs to be approached as a complex of denotative characteristics including class, sexuality and gender norms, nationality, race and ethnicity. Whiteness cannibalizes these codes of identity, incorporating them into its body as it vanishes into a universal ideal.

It is precisely this kind of universal ideal that is unselfconsciously evoked whenever ekphrasis (such as Rosenblum's at the head of this chapter) evokes "we," "us" or "viewers" without a historical rudder to guide looking. Rather than placing ourselves before these images, the following chapters will endeavor to resituate illustration in its moment. The goal is not to reproduce the experience of the illustrated magazine, but to provide a critical perspective relevant to the investments and pleasures that illustration has offered.

Chapter Two: *Realizing Boys*

I. Local Color

“A perusal of it will be both valuable and interesting--at least to members of the white race.”
--Paul Popenoe on Lothrop Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color*.¹

In 1940, living and working as a successful cover illustrator in Arlington, Vermont, Rockwell quipped, as a journalist reported it, about the ready availability of amateur boy models:

“There’s no race suicide on our street so I have plenty of material,” he laughed. “The rub comes because well-to-do suburban kids don’t wear their clothes long enough to make them their own. A coat’s got to be frayed at the cuff or torn at the elbow before it really looks like a boy’s coat.”²

¹Paul Popenoe, from a review that is generally positive though critical of the journalistic style and mean spiritedness of Lothrop Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color*, in *Social Hygiene* (October 1920): 573-74.

²Allan Keller, “Gold in the Paint Pot: Norman Rockwell Paints Homespun Models,” *New York World-Telegram* (1940 [prior to the June 6 dateline given on an adjacent article]): second section, page 21. The short article, it should be noted, contains at least two errors suggesting Rockwell was “indigenous” to small town or suburban America, and that he did not use photographs or a balopticon.

In several ways it is a strange comment, one to which I will return throughout this chapter. To be sure Rockwell had long been associated with images of boys at play and at school in small-town and rural America. Yet, by 1940 he was hardly the “boy illustrator” he had been in 1913 when he set out on his professional career at *Boy’s Life* first as illustrator and then as contributing art-editor. At the *Saturday Evening Post* his first covers of 1916 and his entire first decade of production for that magazine were dominated by images of such boys, accounting for about two-thirds of his output for this, his favored employer.³ However, in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, fewer than a third of his *Post* covers were devoted to picturing American boyhood, while a handful more featured girls.⁴ In fact, by the late 1920s the *Post* was not necessarily encouraging Rockwell’s boy pictures. Instead, editors endorsed an entirely different sort of cover image. In 1927, Lorimer wrote, “My dear Rockwell: ‘Pioneer’ is just about high water mark for *Post* covers and on the strength of it we are going to raise the anti \$250 per [cover].” Rockwell replied “I greatly appreciate you

³Rockwell’s work for other magazines and for advertisers followed more or less the same outlines. This article reports on Rockwell’s recent illustrations for Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (New York: Heritage Press, 1936) and *Huckleberry Finn* (New York: Heritage Press, 1940), work which would have reinvigorated his reputation for gaminesque subject matter.

⁴According to Thomas Buechner, Rockwell included children in ninety percent of his *Post* covers from 1916 to 1919 and on fifty percent of the those covers from 1920 to 1929; see Thomas S. Buechner, *Norman Rockwell: Artist and Illustrator* (New York: Abrams, 1970), 78. My estimations differ largely according to my attention not to images that feature boys or children more generally, but to those that are thematically devoted to them. In any case, both sets of numbers attest to the same trend. Rockwell later thought that he painted so many “old men and kids” during the 1920s and 30s because they combined humor and pathos, and kids especially evoked a sense of nostalgia, Rockwell, *My Adventures as an Illustrator as Told to Thomas Rockwell* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1960), 248-49.

generous spirit and I will try my best to show you that I do.”⁵ But *Pioneer* (July 23, 1927), with its abstract designs flanking a heroic bust of Lindbergh, remains unique in the illustrator’s corpus of work [Figure 18]. Rather than turning to American heroes, Rockwell augmented his previous themes with a broader range of “typical” Americans.

Beyond the undue emphasis his quotation placed upon boys as the primary subject matter of his work at this late date, Rockwell reveals a tension within his avowed efforts to grasp something true: he both insists on the *authenticity* of amateur models -- “he won’t have a model from a professional agency in his studio”-- and decries their *actual* manner of dress for his purposes. Between the inauthenticity of too-new clothes and the effort to capture images for his covers, images which were claimed as “an American institution, as honest a part of the native scene as the Model T Ford or baked beans and brown bread,” lies an ideal -- part nineteenth-century barefoot boy, part *real* boy that was child of such organizations as the Boy Scouts -- in which America herself is supposed to be rooted. Rockwell was, he says, pursuing an American type. But above all, his words casually raise the specter of race through the language of eugenics and perhaps by reference to then outmoded ideas of *character building* that sought to mold American youth earlier in the century.⁶

⁵The raise was the equivalent of about \$2,300 in 1998 dollars. Lorimer to Rockwell, June 30, 1927; Rockwell to Lorimer, July 6, 1927. Wesley Winans Stout (1890-1971) papers 1913-1954, Box 3, Folder “Rockwell, Norman,” Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington DC.

⁶“won’t have professional” and “American institution” Keller, “Gold in the Paint Pot,” *op cit.*

Indeed, the environs of Arlington were primarily populated by native born whites as Rockwell suggested. He had moved there the year previous with his second wife and their three sons. By this time he was widely known and much loved after twenty-six years of *Post* covers, although the iconic status he would achieve with his *Four Freedoms* paintings was still several years off. Moving from the wealthy enclave of New Rochelle, NY where with his first wife he had participated in a smart-set lifestyle, rubbing shoulders and sipping bootleg gin with writers, illustrators and other celebrities, Rockwell and his family adjusted their social life to keep step with the square-dance-and-town-meeting pace of Arlington.⁷ According to the census of 1940, the black population of Bennington County (in which Arlington was incorporated) comprised less than two-tenths of one per-cent of the residents, while nationwide the figure stood at nearly ten per-cent. County wide, in a population of 22,286, only 54 “Negroes” were counted by census takers, with 5 additional individuals accounted under “Other Races” and another 1,400, or 6.3%, listed as “Foreign-born White Persons. “Therefore, native born whites made up over 93% of the population with the total percentage of the whites including the foreign born being 99.8%.⁸

Clearly, the numbers bear out Rockwell’s facetious assessment of local demographics. Yet the particular phrasing of the observation -- Rockwell’s recourse to the concept of “race suicide” and the connection he draws between a presumed-typical idea of race and middle-class youth -- enlists language and conceptual models originating in the

⁷Rockwell’s autobiography develops an affectionate paean to the honest reserve of Vermonters and to the strong social bonds among New England farmers. *My Adventures*, 338-44.

⁸Statistics drawn from the United States Historical Census Browser:
<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/>

scientific field of eugenics (and, as will be discussed below, social concerns about “character building” in boys) as it had come to influence thinking about the course of the nation during the previous four decades.

The following section of this chapter examines eugenics arguments and their cultural influence at some length in order to establish the widespread impact of this socio-scientific phenomenon. Beyond demonstrating a general relevance of this popularized discourse, this discussion attends to how eugenics interests drew on concepts of race and class to forge notions of American identity through whiteness. Moreover, a close reading of certain eugenical arguments will uncover what can be termed a *racialized vision*, a way of viewing the world that is deeply inflected by race. This vision specifically seeks to make aesthetic judgments that see and shape racial beauty, although the task is frustrated by the very concepts of race employed. By following this line of argument, it can be shown that the concept of a racialized aesthetic not only pertains generally to the arts, but was seen to draw upon -- and feed -- traditions and practices of painting and illustration. In light of this, subsequent sections will first establish concerns relevant with eugenics in Rockwell’s career as an illustrator and then return to the problem of the cultural reproduction of whiteness in the specific case of managing boyhood.

II. The Art of Seeing White /or/ Little White Lives

Eugenics, so dubbed by the British theorist Francis Galton in 1883, promised race betterment and afforded a legitimating discourse that conveniently concurred with

class-based English racism while offering a seemingly objective analytic methodology.⁹ By the time the eugenic idea was linked in the United States to the rediscovery in 1900 of Mendel's research in plant heredity,¹⁰ it had taken root as a profoundly influential form of knowledge circulating not only among intellectuals, but throughout American culture. In the United States, where eugenics took hold in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Galton's ideas of the hereditary superiority of the ruling class were applied broadly to address concerns about miscegenation, immigration, racial degeneration, class status and global political relations (i.e. between the "civilized" and the "dark" nations). By encouraging superior individuals to breed with like (positive eugenics) it was thought that the best of "the race" could be fostered; correlatively, the suppression of breeding among undesirable classes (negative eugenics) afforded control of the quality of the general population. The idea of eugenics -- of race betterment -- was clearly indebted to the idea of race itself, for which it provided historical narratives and biological mechanisms.¹¹

⁹On Galton's eugenics, see Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1985), 5-19. It no doubt displeased Galton to discover that social radicals the likes of George Bernard Shaw and Havelock Ellis embraced eugenics as an argument for braking down barriers of class as an obstacle to biologically desirable marriages (Kevles, 21).

¹⁰On the impact of Mendel's work see Hamilton Cravens, *The Triumph of Evolution: American Scientists and the Heredity-Environment Controversy, 1900-1941* (Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1978), 39-41, 159-60.

¹¹For brilliant contemporary accounts of race that offer specific critiques of the eugenic idea, see Ralph J. Bunche, *A World View of Race* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1936), especially chapter 1; and Louis Leo Snyder, *Race, a History of Modern Ethnic Theories* (New York, Toronto, Longmans, Green and Co., Alliance Book Corporation, 1939), especially chapters 1 and 2. On the history of race, also see Julian S. Huxley and A. C. Haddon, *We Europeans; a Survey of 'Racial' Problems* (New York & London: Harper, 1936), 16-51.

The goal was to promote and maintain racial purity for the betterment of *mankind*, a concept which in practice generally endorsed an Anglo stock at the historical and spiritual core of America. While the language and ideas of eugenics quickly suffused social life in the United States -- influencing legal doctrine, immigration laws, child rearing, educational theory and practice, etc.¹² -- the matter of demonstrating racial superiority necessitated anthropological, sociological and historical arguments that accounted for the particularity of a racial character that had produced American political democracy and competitive economic domination.

¹²See Marouf Arif Hasian, Jr., *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1996), chapter 2, "From Cradle to Grave"; and Kevles, 57-69.

It is worth noting that eugenics was not simply a *white science*, although in the hands of white-identified writers its rhetoric reached an unspeakably offensive pitch and its social efficacy served terribly the aims of nativists. There was some support -- and much criticism -- for eugenics ideas to be found in the African-American press, even in the pages of a liberal magazine like the *Crisis* which averred, "Eugenics is interested in breeding for tomorrow a better negro."¹³ Even W.E.B. Du Bois -- who had met the eugenics popularizer Lothrop Stoddard in a series of heated debates on questions of race -- derived support for his advocacy of a talented tenth (the upper echelon of African-Americans who would lead the race) from eugenic arguments. In the pages of *Birth Control Review* in 1932, Du Bois wrote in phrases consonant with textbook eugenics, though shifting the issue of heredity from race to fitness *within* a racial group, "the mass of ignorant Negroes still breed carelessly and disastrously, so that the increase among Negroes, even more than the increase among whites, is from that part of the population least intelligent and fit, and least able to rear their children properly."¹⁴

¹³Albert Sidney Beckham, "Applied Eugenics," *The Crisis* (1924): 177-78, quoted by Hasian, Jr., *Rhetoric of Eugenics*, 1996, 64-65. See Hasian, Jr.'s extended discussion of "Race and African-American Interpretations of Eugenics," Chapter 3, 51-71.

¹⁴W.E.B. Du Bois, "Black Folk and Birth Control," *The Birth Control Review* (June 1932): 166-167; in the same issue Elmer A. Carter, makes similar arguments in "Eugenics for the Negro" (169-170). See also Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900-1940* (Cambridge & London: Harvard, 2001), chapter 3, "Against the White Leviathan," especially 138-50. For Du Bois' vigorous refutation of Stoddard's racist positions see Guterl, 142-144. A record of one of these debates is found in W.E.B. Du Bois and Lothrop Stoddard, "Report of Debate Conducted by the Chicago Forum, 'Shall the Negro be Encouraged to Seek Cultural Equality?'" *Chicago Forum Council*, 1929 (my grateful thanks to Jane Kuenz, Dept. of English, University of Southern Maine for sharing a copy of this pamphlet with me). Du Bois' position is more readily located in *Pamphlets and Leaflets by W.E.B. Du Bois*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (White Plains, NY: Krauss-Thomson Org. 1986), 222-229.

“Race suicide,” the term Rockwell used, has been credited to sociologist Edward A. Ross’s 1900 formulation that identified the menace posed by low reproductive rates among better classes of Americans relative to higher fertility among non-white immigrant populations.¹⁵ Through their fecundity, he argued, such immigrants threatened to overwhelm the racial character of the United States and to undermine its economic and political destiny. Within two years, Theodore Roosevelt, then in his first term as President, was employing the same visceral terminology to stimulate in the American public concern over the racial threat posed from the outside by immigrants and from the inside by inattention to the purposeful shaping of Americanism in character and body. Roosevelt tied active fertility of white, middle-class Americans to patriotism arguing in 1910, “the chief of blessings for any nation is that it shall leave its seed to inherit the land. The greatest curse is sterility, and the severest of all condemnation should be that visited upon willful sterility.”¹⁶ This evil of “a race casting its germ-cells -- its precious jewels of heredity -- into oblivion’s bottomless sea,” as the Boston preacher Phillips Brooks declaimed in a shipboard oration, was an unforgivable, because irrevocable, error.¹⁷

¹⁵Ross is, politically, an instructive case. He was dismissed in 1900 from Stanford University (and thus would make his career at University of Wisconsin) for the liberal, Populist views he espoused. Yet, he did not find himself at odds with such elite conservatives as Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard with whom he joined in promoting eugenic ideas. On Ross’s politics, see Cravens, 131-33.

¹⁶Theodore Roosevelt, “Citizenship in a Republic,” Speech at the Sorbonne, Paris, April 23, 1910 in Herman Hagedorn (ed.), *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt* (24 vols; New York, 1925), Vol XIII, 506-529.

¹⁷Albert Edward Wiggam, *The Fruit of the Family Tree* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, 1924), 16. Brooks, who died in 1893, is here quoted employing “race-suicide” on an occasion actually predating the term’s attribution to Ross. I pursue the matter no further here, but can only note that Wiggam and his anecdotal treatment of the episode are

dubious.

The electrifying phrase inspired ornate prose from political leaders and prominent orators throughout the early decades of the century.¹⁸ Yet it was Theodore Roosevelt, above all others, who most nearly made the phrase his own by making a point of putting it before the American public from his bully pulpit.¹⁹ Jacob Riis, writing in his 1903 biography of Roosevelt, already found himself compelled to offer an apology for what some thought of as the President's rhetorical excesses and for his public calls for greater procreation: "People laugh a little, sometimes, and poke fun at his 'race suicide', but to him the children mean home, family, the joy of the young years, and the citizenship of to-morrow, all in one."²⁰ Indeed, the *New World-Telegram* report had Rockwell emit a

¹⁸More than a "minor national phobia" as some scholars have diagnosed it, race suicide was a national obsession with deep roots, a developed scientific discourse, and lasting effects. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York, 1973), 147, quoted in Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt & the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge & London: Louisiana State Univ., 1980), 150, n 16.

¹⁹Margaret Sanger (1879-1966), sensational advocate of birth control in the United States, quotes Harold Bolce writing in the *Cosmopolitan* (New York) for May 1909, where he notes Ross as the "teacher who invented the term 'race suicide,' which many have erroneously attributed to Mr. Roosevelt." *Woman and the New Race*, with a pref. by Havelock Ellis (New York: Brentano's, 1920), Chapter V, note 2. Gail Bederman, too, argues that the term is Ross's, see Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago & London: Univ. of Chicago, 1995), 280 n.133. But see my note 17.

²⁰Jacob A. Riis, *Theodore Roosevelt the Citizen* (New York: Outlook Book Co, 1904, [copyright 1903]), 353. Riis himself may have felt skeptical about Roosevelt's hereditarian ideas at the time, for by 1914 he would lash out at those who fixated upon heredity declaring himself sick of such talk. "There is just one heredity in all the world that is our--we are all children of God. . . ," wrote Riis as he insisted on the centrality of environmental, not genetic, causes in accounting for those "whom we make bad." Jacob A. Riis, "The Bad Boy," in E. F. Robbins, ed., *Official Proceedings: Vol. I, Proceedings of the First National Conference on Race Betterment* (Battle Creek, MI: Race Betterment Foundation, 1914), 243-45 cited in Steven Selden, *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 7-8.

giggle as he intoned the portentous phrase so many years later.

Yet the specificity of Rockwell's expression in 1940 -- the negation of its local effects in the claim that "there's no race suicide on *our* street" -- recalls Roosevelt's ability to mobilize tremendous numbers of Americans with just such a term. Roosevelt registered his own astonishment at this power when, in 1903 with regard to a missive of his having received much public comment, he noted, I "found to my utter astonishment that my letter . . . had gone everywhere, and the population of each place invariably took the greatest pride in showing off all the children."²¹ And in doing so, crowds would boisterously affirm to the president, "No race suicide *here!*"²² Rockwell, nine years old at that time, apparently readily imbibed the catch phrase of the former Governor of his own home state.²³

²¹Theodore Roosevelt to John Hay, August 9, 1930, in *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. Elting E. Morison et al., vol 3 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ., 1954), 549, quoted in Bederman, 203. The "letter" was one written by Roosevelt in October of 1920 to Bessie Van Vorst regarding her book *The Woman Who Toils* on the conditions of factory working women (see Bederman, 202).

²²Bederman, 203-4.

²³Eugenics was in the air for Anglo-Americans coming of age in the early decades of the twentieth-century. Lectures, debates, societies, and clubs constantly hummed with eugenic talk, providing a patois that, for instance, the Princeton undergraduate F. Scott Fitzgerald could employ for a humorous song of "Love or Eugenics" in 1914 (see Hasian, Jr., *Rhetoric of Eugenics*, 1996, 37), and which the same writer could famously exploit for *The Great Gatsby* (1925) in which Tom extols the Nordic-philic work of the fictional Goddard's *Rise of the Colored Empires*, a barely disguised reference to Stoddard's *Rising Tide of Color* (for insightful discussions see Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* [Durham and London: Duke Univ., 1995], passim; and Mark Gidley, "Notes on F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Passing of the Great Race," *Journal of American Studies* 7, no. 2 (August 1973): 171-81).

Against the puissant if temporally distant cultural backdrop of Roosevelt decrying race-suicide as anti-American and his enthusiastic supporters exhibiting the fruits of their patriotic loins while clamorously denying any “race suicide here,” Rockwell could assume (as did the reporter who used the quotation as an entrée into a description of a neighboring family that supplied their seven children as models for the illustrator) that there was still currency to the thought. Moreover, Rockwell’s playful complaint that the well-to-do suburban kids wore their clothes too-new for his frolicsome images, made the pertinent connection between the preponderance of healthy young white boys in Arlington and their middle-class status. These actual boys were, in other words, too-much the hot-house flowers of respectability to embody the *real* boy in which Rockwell specialized and which was widely advocated by reformers during the early decades of the century. Several years later -- after eugenics language had been discredited by the taint of Nazi race theory and by increased civil rights activities -- Rockwell would leave much of this implicit as he continued to insist that, “as long as my fundamental purpose is to interpret the typical American, Arlington affords the ideal residence.”²⁴

I should pause here to make clear that Rockwell was not a white supremacist and that he *likely* recoiled from hard-core eugenics arguments, even those advocated by the *Post*. Though a political liberal with early awareness of racial injustice, he nonetheless remained for the most part publicly apolitical and privately disengaged.²⁵ If Rockwell’s

²⁴Arthur L. Guptill, *Norman Rockwell, Illustrator* (New York: Watson-Guptill, third edition, 1970 [1946]) : 33.

²⁵However, at the time of his death, his studio wall bore (as it still does) a 3 x 5 card with the following truism in uppercase type “The real test of a liberal is the willingness to listen fairly to a person with opposite opinions”.

language when speaking about an abstract, ideal American was imbued with racial ideas, it was because the language was not wholly his own.²⁶ Rockwell too was the product of a culture which his imagery helped to shape.

²⁶Laura Claridge's excellent, recent biography of Rockwell cites the rare occasion of a 1948 private correspondence signed by Rockwell and his wife along with Dorothy Canfield Fisher and her husband in support of a sorority at the University of Vermont that had for the first time admitted an African-American woman. Claridge, *Norman Rockwell: A Life* (New York: Random House, 2001), 339-40. Letter to President Millis, Univ. of Vermont, June 3, 1948.

As Rockwell indicated, the connection between race and class was not a transient one. Rather it was forged in the conceptual and material organization effected by the activities of both eugenicists and character builders who understood that the best of American racial stock lay in the better classes of American boys. While character builders generally addressed specific classes in separate context, some seeking to foster the best of Anglo-American youth, others merely endeavoring to Americanize and control the obstreperous children of immigrants and the poor, eugenicists typically treated together the “upper and middle classes” as distinguished from the rest.²⁷ Eugenics popularizers articulated a virile sense of entitlement and unmitigated class bigotry, but they lacked a concept of class identity or class politics as either cultural or historical-material formations, a shortcoming pointed out by contemporary critics.

²⁷Lothrop Stoddard habitually joins the concerns of the “upper and middle classes” arguing in one instance that in Europe they together suffered under the “crushing burden of taxation” which drives down their birthrate. *The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 120. Madison Grant’s hopes to “curb the influence of these aliens and to prevent their pernicious control by politicians” spurred his arguments against the “Americanization programs of some worthy people” that would make naturalization too easily grasped. Grant, *The Conquest of a Continent or the Expansion of Races in America* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1933), 350-51.

Ralph J. Bunche, then a young Professor of Political Science at Howard University, argued that the problem of race was “merely one aspect of the class struggle” (89) and proposed that blacks in the United States were less members of a racial grouping than they were identified with the American working class. “The Negro must develop, therefore, a consciousness of class interest and purpose, and must strive for an alliance with the white working classes in a common struggle for economic and political equality and justice.”²⁸ Bunche thought eugenicists’ fetishized race fears left them oblivious to “class, tribal, religious, cultural, linguistic, nationalistic and other differences among both black and white peoples.” They could not see, he wrote, that “class will some day supplant race in world affairs. Race war then will be merely a side-show to the gigantic class war which will be waged in the big tent we call the world.”²⁹ In his *World View of Race* the threat of the *rising tide of color* (the title of Stoddard’s widely read 1920 book) was the misprision of the myth of race for the primary fact of class.

²⁸Bunche, 1936, 89 & 90. Although Du Bois’s *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935) called attention to the absence of an understanding of race in the annals of labor history, it would be another five decades before labor history recognized the importance of this insight in works like David Roediger’s *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London & New York: Verso, 1991). As Andrew Neather observed in a 1995 review essay, “the problem is not so much that historians are not studying workers of color, but that the field of labor history has failed to integrate workers’ experience of race into the longer-standing narratives of class and union development,” Neather, “‘Whiteness’ and the Politics of Working-Class History,” *Radical History Review* 61 (Winter 1995): 192. Other seminal works emerging around the same time as Roediger’s include Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London and New York: Verso, 1990); and Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race: Volume One: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London: Verso, 1994).

²⁹Bunche, 1936, 95 & 96.

By contrast, eugenicists tended to treat class stratification as an essentialized expression of the more fundamental phenomenon of race. That is, members of each race, where properly bred, tended to find their place in their respective, natural social classes where their innate traits found most suitable expression: class was seen as an expression of race. Even so, eugenicists had to act within the secondary, social arena if they hoped to shape the primary racial makeup of the nation, and therefore frequently did shift their address to the epiphenomenal -- in their view -- realm of class. Journalist, author and Chautauqua lecturer Albert E. Wiggam, whose *The New Decalogue of Science* had just earned a place among the best-selling books of 1923,³⁰ elaborated the conceptual connection between class and race in his *Fruits of the Family Tree*. There he admonished “women of the well-to-do classes,” by which he meant middle- and upper-classes, to bear as many as four, five or even ten children in order to make up for any deficiencies on the part of their sisters. Further he insisted, in an argument designed to refute the work of birth control activists the likes of Margaret Sanger, that:

there is no such thing as race-suicide. It is always *class-suicide*. And it is always the wrong class. There is immense danger that our birth controllers will influence limitation of families in the one class that ought not to limit its birth-rate to any very great extent. Because the ones who will listen to them are the more intelligent. And when the more intelligent disappear, as *they are disappearing in America*, civilization disappears with them.³¹

Yet, Wiggam saw hope in the “two-edged sword” of birth control that would likely provide

³⁰The same year, *Ladies Home Journal* editor Edward W. Bok’s *The Americanization of Edward Bok* was in its third of three years on the list reflecting the intensified debates on immigration and continued interest in Americanizing immigrants.

³¹Albert Edward Wiggam, *The Fruit of the Family Tree* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, 1924), 323, italics in original.

for the regrettable increase of “the shiftless and stupid at the lower end of the scale of social worth, [but also of] . . . the unselfish, patriotic, domestic, home-loving, child-loving, motherly and fatherly at the upper end.” The happy result of the latter, Wiggam predicted, would be that “voluntary parenthood is going to produce a more unselfish, more moral, loyal, clean-minded, patriotic class at the upper end of society.”³² There was, in this procedure, at least a way to breed not just the race, but the *patriot*, that is the *American* proper.

³²Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, 322-23.

If, in Wiggam's opinion, birth control was not the best method for such ends, he made it clear that what the nation most needed were policies addressing a race-class convergence to effect "social reconstruction." His own work was, as he considered it, a contribution to what would be "the discipline of race-culture" that would treat all the considerations of eugenics enumerated as the "problems of psychology, of biology, of economics, of political science, of practical politics, of climate, of race, of art, history, education, morals, religion and of all those forces which play ceaselessly, whether he will or no, upon the organic nature and destiny of man." In other words, eugenics was a kind of anthropology (Wiggam's characterized it as a sociology) that would offer the total treatment of man as organism, social being and individual creator with the goal of fostering improvement.³³ His inclusion of art in that enumeration was not a gratuitous gesture for, as will be discussed below, Wiggam proposed to employ the arts as a barometer of a kind of *eugenic aesthetic* and as a tool for race betterment.

³³Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, Preface, n.p. Although other eugenicists, Madison Grant for one, seconded Wiggam's class conscious, ergo anti-immigrant interpretations of eugenics, some liberal advocates of eugenics dissented on this count; see Hasian, Jr., *Rhetoric of Eugenics*, 1996, 112-138.

Wiggam's remarkably popular books were not the stuff of science, but working eugenicists did tolerate them for the attention and support they provided to their shared endeavors. From the 1920s on popularizers and geneticists drifted apart as the former propounded Nordicism and the latter emphasized the importance of environment and evolution.³⁴ By the 1930s critics had dubbed eugenics a "pseudo-science,"³⁵ and even its erstwhile advocates began to doubt the central role of the tenet of hereditarianism. As Hamilton Cravens has argued, in the 1920s, scientific understanding of group distinctions began to shed its attachment to nineteenth-century notions of permanent and historical races that persisted over time. Instead, scientists would distinguish between race as a biological grouping and ethnicity as a cultural grouping. As a result races increasingly became understood in terms of culture, and culture brought history into the question of racial difference. Thus the European races became ethnic groups, and ethnic groups became the basis of changeable peoples that might meet in a melting pot such as the United States. As race dynamism displaced race stasis the value of judgments of racial superiority and inferiority became less relevant, and scientific interest turned to the inevitable historical development and change in peoples. Moreover, the role of cultural, social and environmental conditions were increasingly seen as central to explaining perceived differences between races. Nonetheless, determinist and hereditarian arguments persisted

³⁴Immigration debates of the early 1920s particularly highlighted these differences (Cravens, 173-180).

³⁵Huxley and Haddon, 1936, vii. But note Hasian's caution against the tendency to treat "eugenics as a temporary aberration, an irrational political appropriation of genetics," a tendency that leaves unexamined the idea of genetic science as a value-free area of knowledge (Hasian, Jr., *Rhetoric of Eugenics*, 1996, 3-6).

within this cultural understanding (culture was thought to catalyze innate biology that then become fixed in race as something set at birth and subsequently changeless). But in 1928 Melville J. Herskovits's work *The American Negro: A Study in Race Crossing* displaced the idea of race with the concept of population as a group of individuals sharing a gene pool. In this view, no longer was there a black race, but numerous black populations that, like all populations, experienced historical change.³⁶

Yet the popularizers like Wiggam, Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard stayed the old course, so that scientific developments would be retarded in reaching the general public. These "worshippers of the great white race," as Du Bois characterized them, continued as well to treat race and class as two sides of a coin, essentially inseparable.³⁷ And if this dyadic coin was the key material of human betterment, it bore concomitant normative expressions of sexuality and familial structure as fundamental to a healthy social organization.

³⁶Hamilton Cravens, "Scientific Racism in Modern America, 1870s-1990s," *Prospects* 21 (1996): 471-490.

³⁷W.E.B. Du Bois, referring especially to Grant and Stoddard, in "Back to Africa," *Century Magazine* (February 1925): 534-48, quoted in *Pamphlets and Leaflets by W.E.B. Du Bois*, vol. 2, ed. Herbert Aptheker (White Plains, NY: Krauss-Thomson Org., 1986), 181. I should emphasize here that while I agree that race and class are deeply interconnected topos of experience, I strongly resist the eugenic tendency to collapse the two into a single expression of *good breeding*. Race and class, as I argue, are coordinated under whiteness, but they nonetheless must be understood as distinct formations with their particular logic and functions.

Efforts to realize these principles would eventually take shape in the Eugenics Society of The United States of America organized in 1921 following the Second International Congress of Eugenics. The Society sought to transform American society “for the improvement of the American population” by influencing education, promoting exhibitions and competitions for “best family traits,” undertaking public relations campaigns, driving restrictive immigration legislation, segregating and sterilizing “defectives” (the “insane, feeble-minded, epileptic, criminalistic and paupers”), encouraging and directing research agendas, and undertaking “education of the legislators” to enact an eugenic code similar to public health codes. By turning a “searchlight of eugenics” onto the entire range of human activities, the Society sought to “gradually train public opinion to do the same thing.”³⁸

Such endeavors were already well underway as evidenced, for example, by the development in the nineteen-teens of college courses in eugenics.³⁹ In 1918 a widely used textbook by Popenoe and Johnson on *Applied Eugenics* appeared (and would continue to

³⁸Statement of The Eugenics Society of The United States of America prepared by Irving Fisher (Yale Professor of Political Economy and Chairman of the Society), as reprinted in Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, Appendix, n.p. This meeting took place at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, a context usefully discussed in Donna Haraway, “Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936,” reprinted in *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 26-58. For a critical response to Haraway, see Michael Schudson, “Cultural Studies and the Social Construction of ‘Social Construction’: Notes on ‘Teddy Bear Patriarchy,’” in *From Sociology to Cultural Studies: New Perspectives*, ed. Elizabeth Long (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 379-398.

³⁹The 44 colleges and universities offering courses in eugenic in 1914 would increase by 1928 to 376 (Craven, 53), while scores of high school biology textbooks cited and recommended eugenics as an important field of knowledge (Selden, 63-83).

be revised and reissued through a 1933 edition).⁴⁰ The introduction to the first edition, was an endorsement by Edward A. Ross arguing that the book

⁴⁰For an overview of *Applied Eugenics*, see Selden, 54-55.

“should command the attention not only of students of sociology, but, as well, of philanthropists, social workers, settlement wardens, doctors, clergymen, educators, editors, publicists, Y.M.C.A. secretaries and industrial engineers. It ought to lie at the elbow of law-makers, statesmen, poor relief officials, immigration inspectors, judges of juvenile courts, probation officers, members of state boards of control and heads of charitable and correctional institutions”⁴¹

Beyond transforming the institutions and laws that organized social life, eugenicists sought to instill and affirm forms of knowing and perceiving -- a point of view, and perhaps it would not be too much to say, a form of vision -- inflected by racialist thinking. Because eugenics was a young and still evolving field, many of its advocates sought converts primarily to its message and only secondarily to its methodologies. Thus, Popenoe urged “it is more important that the student acquire the *habit of looking* at society from a biological as well as a sociological point of view, than that he put his faith in the efficacy of any particular mode of procedure.”⁴²

⁴¹*Applied Eugenics*, xii.

⁴²Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: MacMillan, 1918), vi, italics added.

Taking seriously those eugenicists who argued it was more important to *see* eugenically than to understand eugenic theories, I am less interested here in the sensational success and eventual failure of eugenics itself to instill a *conscious* sense of “racial duty”⁴³ in the American public, than I am in the *unconscious* tenor of language, of mode of thought, and of visual habits that it represented and which inform popular illustration. Eugenics arguments drove home what proved to be powerful ideas about race, heredity, family and society, but eugenics promoters could say little about race itself. If they knew race when they saw it -- and measured it and quantified it, they did not question the customs and habits that permitted them to discern it in the first place. What, besides intuition or common sense, allowed them to perceive differences of race before they could evaluate them? Certainly, innumerable systems were developed to assign racial meaning to every conceivable quality from skull shape and size to human locomotion, or from intellectual capacity to aesthetic understanding of various racial groups. Yet, eugenicists did not grasp the role of culture -- their own culture -- in shaping a racialized vision. It is little wonder then that the discoveries of eugenic theories were easily assimilated if not anticipated by prevailing common sense and vice versa.

⁴³Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, 311 and passim.

The apparent common sense of eugenic arguments about distinct races possessed of differential abilities presented tremendous obstacles to those contemporary critics -- among them Bunche, Franz Boas, Julian Huxley and A. C. Haddon, Louis Snyder, and Du Bois -- who attacked white supremacist ideas with great eloquence. Snyder, for instance, recognized the "race myth" as "a mechanism devised to strengthen the all-pervading force of nationalism, which became in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a dominant force in history and a veritable religion" and which he tied to the development of international trade.⁴⁴ Against the context of the emergence of racial consciousness in the Balkans, continued lynchings in the United States, and self-congratulatory Aryanism of Germany and Italy, Snyder saw race as the most powerful phenomenon driving local, national and global relations. And yet the use of the word *race* "has resulted in a nebulosity, a disorder and lack of precision, which confuse the individual, whether scientist or educated layman" (5). Examining assumptions about the very nature of race, Bunche showed that racial classification systems had proved untenable -- that the general trend of physical characteristics of a group are meaningless in terms of individuals who will inevitably overlap from one group to the next -- and attempted to subvert race altogether as infinitely less intelligible or relevant next to questions of economic disenfranchisement. Herbert Miller saw race as a concept of social organization with little biological meaning, asserting "every day it becomes more difficult to tell what a race is. It is almost an hypothetical concept. . . ."⁴⁵ Du Bois, in a powerful passage that bears quoting at length,

⁴⁴Snyder, *Race, a History of Modern Ethnic Theories*, op cit, 312.

⁴⁵Herbert Adolphus Miller, "Race and Class Parallelism," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 140 (Nov. 1928): 1.

identified in race an “astonishing paradox.”

In the first place, the increasingly certain dictum of science is that there are no ‘races,’ in any exact scientific sense; that no measurements of human beings, of bodily development of head form, of color and hair, of psychological reactions, have succeeded in dividing mankind into different, recognizable groups: that so-called ‘pure’ races seldom, if ever, exist and that all present mankind, the world over, are ‘mixed’ so far as the so-called racial characteristics are concerned.

Notwithstanding these facts, and indeed, in the very face of them, we have serious discussions of race in the United States and of race relations; scientific investigations, based on race measurements; and widespread assumption among intelligent people that there are between certain large groups of men ineradicable, and, for all practicable purposes, unchangeable racial differences; and that the limitations of race can, to some extent, be measured; and that the question of the relations between these groups is the greatest of social problems.⁴⁶

⁴⁶W.E. Burghardt Du Bois, “Race Relations in the United States,” in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 140 (Nov. 1928): 6.

But such head-on critiques denouncing the significance of race as compared to that impact of social conditions -- let alone questioning the actuality of race -- defied deep-seated beliefs supported by the evidence of sense perception itself (and, it should be added, received little ink in the most influential magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post*). One had only to look at Others, it seemed, in order to *see* race. Against assertions of the primacy of environmental influences, Madison Grant could make the reply, “speaking English, wearing good clothes and going to school and church does not transform a Negro into a white man.”⁴⁷ Despite the remarkable ignorance of such arguments,⁴⁸ they continued to be effective in public discourse where they were supported by a totalized racial ideology. Some black critics cited the popular, illustrated press, as among the agents propagating racist ideas among whites. In the South, one writer saw that hateful stereotypes were not only passed from parents to children, but that “this propaganda is drilled into the boy, it is illustrated by newspapers and magazines; the Sunday School literature which he studies emphasized the truth of it; the pulpit from which he hears the gospel preached sanctions it.”⁴⁹ As an example of such propaganda, the author cites bigoted notions of

⁴⁷This indeed had been a major theme of Thomas Dixon’s classic racist novel *The Clansman* (1905) and the D.W. Griffith’s film based upon it *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). Grant (quoted in Hasian, Jr., 55), *The Passing of the Great Race: or The Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1916), 226. A 1934 essay quoted the same passage in arguing that Americans like Grant, Stoddard and Wiggam shared the outlook of Nazi race theorists, John Langdon-Davies, “Nazi Science and Ourselves,” *The Forum and Century* 91, no. 5 (May 1934): 311, Wiggam is named on 312.

⁴⁸Howard Long exclaimed, “One who reads the work of Stoddard and Grant cannot fail to be amazed at their apparent ignorance” about the relevance of environment to intelligence. “On Mental Tests and Racial Psychology -- A Critique,” *Opportunity* 3 (May 1925): 134-8, quoted by Hasian, Jr., 58.

⁴⁹Joseph C. Carroll, “The Race Problem,” *Journal of Applied Sociology* XI, no. 3

African-Americans boys carrying razors, raping white women, stealing chickens and watermelons, shooting craps, and exhibiting ignorance, indolence and deceit.

(January-February 1927): 266-271. Quoted in Hasian, Jr., 62.

By no means limited to the South, these and other prejudicial images were common currency of the Northern press as well. A mild, liberal-minded instance very close to Madison Grant's expression of the fundamental irreducibility of the different races is to be found in a 1932 *American Magazine* short story about Giuseppe, an extremely sympathetic waiter. Giuseppe, the Italian immigrant who only wants to "stay in his place" when it comes, for instance, to a white woman who makes overtures towards him -- indulges an impossible fantasy as he looks upon two young men at one of his tables: "No matter how long he lived in America he could never look as American as they with their tall, fine figures, their pink and white complexions, their light hair brushed back so sleekly from their foreheads. But maybe the *bambino* [his son] some day could look like them. Maybe they were college boys. Maybe the college could make his boy *look* like that some day."⁵⁰ But of course, neither clothes, nor even a Bachelor's Degree, would make the dark-complected Giuseppe's *bambino* American in the mode of those brash, pink-skinned diners. The disconnect in those musings performed by the character of Giuseppe, a disconnect between what college can do -- impart skills, knowledge and critical faculties -- and what the Italian waiter needs it to do -- make his son look like a white boy -- underscores the visual coding of race that trumps "Americanization."

⁵⁰Oscar Graeve, "Americans, they are Funny," *American Magazine* (January 1932): 51, italics added. The *American Magazine* was a popular illustrated monthly for which Rockwell sometimes worked, although it was distinctly second tier with substantially smaller circulation, cheaper paper, and lower production values than the *Post's*.

The implicit racial ideology of the *Saturday Evening Post* too was congenial to eugenic and racist attitudes which it sometimes plainly employed to forward its conscious political goals. Under the conservative editorship of George Horace Lorimer, the *Post* would have been sympathetic to such ideas as expressed by Stoddard, “We know that our America is a White America. . . . And the overwhelming weight of both historical and scientific evidence shows that only so long as the American people remain white will its institutions, ideals and culture continue to fit the temperament of its inhabitants-- and hence continue to endure.”⁵¹ Typically, however, the *Post* phrased its concerns not by extolling the superior qualities of White America, but by exposing the threat to America posed by -- and the innate limits of -- immigrants.

⁵¹Lothrop Stoddard, “Report of Debate Conducted by the Chicago Forum, ‘Shall the Negro be Encouraged to Seek Cultural Equality?’” quoted in Hasian, Jr., 55.

It was in this capacity that Lorimer began using Kenneth Roberts, in 1919, as a nativist writer exposing the dangerous and avaricious immigrant.⁵² Lorimer, with the aid of Robert's dexterously turned phrases, made of the *Post* a potent force in the battles over immigration. Contributing its voice to the efforts that culminated in the restrictive congressional legislation of the 1920s, the *Post* played a key role in the passage of the severest curtailments represented by the 1924 Immigration Act.⁵³ Prior to the First World War, the *Post* argued contradictory positions, sometimes castigating the restrictionist as an "ignorant man of education" who did not understand the need for a supply of good labor, sometimes decrying the flood of immigrants as *inassimilable*.⁵⁴

⁵²On Roberts as Lorimer's henchman on immigration, see Jan Cohn, *Creating America: George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), esp. 152-155; and Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Twenties and Thirties* (New York: New York Univ., 1989), 46.

⁵³James Playsted Wood, *Magazines in the United States; Their Social and Economic Influence* (New York: Ronald Press, 1949), 159. While the 1921 Johnson Act (a.k.a. "The Quota Act" or "Immigration Act") limited immigration to 3% of the number of such foreign-born nationals in the US in 1910 (vetoed by Wilson, but signed by Harding), the Johnson-Reed Act (1924) scaled immigration back to 2% of the 1890 population, with a ceiling on total immigration set at 150,000 to take effect in 1927 (postponed to 1929).

⁵⁴*Saturday Evening Post* (February 1904), cited in Rita J. Simon and Susan H. Alexander, *The Ambivalent Welcome: Print Media, Public Opinion and Immigration* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993), 67. For a useful discussion of the *Post*'s response to immigration in the twentieth century, see Simon and Alexander, 66-82.

By 1918, however, the magazine's position was consolidated into an increasingly vitriolic anti-immigrant stance. At first, based generally upon concerns about labor supply and demand, the *Post's* arguments turned to a broader rhetoric concerning national identity, political normalcy, and modernity. Foreigners became subversives and communists who would poison the American population. The new immigrants -- unlike the old stock from Western Europe and Scandinavia -- had no intention of contributing to the nation, but were "indigestible" Eastern or Southern Europeans who came only long enough to gather funds before returning to their home countries.⁵⁵ Or, perhaps, they were Mexicans, too "incompetent to advance or even to sustain the civilization already established in the United States."⁵⁶ In 1923, Roberts introduced ideas supported by experts in eugenics to make his case against immigrants, concluding, "If America doesn't keep out the queer alien mongrelized people of Southern and Eastern Europe, her crop of citizens will eventually be dwarfed and mongrelized in turn."⁵⁷ In 1927 the *Post* congratulated itself on its "nonpartisan" campaign for the "self-protective control of immigration" and against the Myth of the Melting Pot with the claim that "legislators and publicists the country over declare that The *Saturday Evening Post* was the most effective single agency in bringing about this vital reform."⁵⁸ This was the attitude that dominated at the *Post* until after the US entered the Second World War when its stance on immigration began to soften

⁵⁵Kenneth Roberts, "The Rising Irish Tide," *Saturday Evening Post* (February 14, 1920): 4.

⁵⁶K. Roberts, "Wet and Other Mexicans," *Saturday Evening Post* (February 4, 1928): 11.

⁵⁷K. Roberts, *Saturday Evening Post* (April 28, 1923), quoted in Simon and Alexander, 72.

⁵⁸Frederick S. Bigelow, *A Short History of the Saturday Evening Post: "An American Institution in Three Centuries"* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Company, 1927), 10, 11.

a little.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the magazine would continue to advocate conservative quotas as late as the 1960s.

⁵⁹By this time, the magazine was beginning to appear out-of-step. In 1941, the *New Yorker's* "Talk of The Town" (April 11, 1941: 9-10) took a recent *Saturday Evening Post* article, "The Case Against the Jews," as a sign of the demise of anti-Semitism because "it's a fact that lately every time the Post espouses a cause, that cause becomes both dead and absurd, like a stuffed moose."

But in the 1920's the *Saturday Evening Post* offered itself as a soapbox for eugenic ideas like those of Stoddard who explained the “Racial Realities in Europe.”⁶⁰ Even the *Post*'s editorial page flirted with eugenics, recommending white supremacist works by Grant (*The Passing of the Great Race*) and Stoddard (*The Rising Tide of Color*) as books that “every American should read” to understand the “immigration problem.” Here, Lorimer, generally the author behind the editorial pen, attacked the “mythical magical melting pot” with its supposed power to “make Americans out of any racial scrap-humanity cast into it.” These new writers on immigration, he argued, cut through such sophistry with clear-sighted science freed of sentiment. Lorimer found this level-headed thinking in a passage of Madison Grant's that he quoted approvingly: “These immigrants adopt the language of the native American [i.e. whites]; they wear his clothes; they steal his name; and they are beginning to take his women, but they seldom understand his ideals, and while he is being elbowed out of his own home the American looks calmly abroad and urges on others the suicidal ethics which are exterminating his own race.”⁶¹ The same themes were picked up two weeks later in another editorial, titled “Self-Extermination,” which juxtaposed our “old native stock” to the “alien peoples whose centuries of inherited slum training enable them to underlive men and women of the early American strain.” Advocating the passage of restrictive immigration under legislative consideration, Lorimer turned to “Prof. Edward A. Ross” (highlighting the *Professor's* intellectual credentials despite Lorimer's frequently stated antipathy towards the

⁶⁰Lothrop Stoddard, “Racial Realities in Europe,” *Saturday Evening Post* (March 22, 1923), cited in Cohn, 186.

⁶¹“The Great American Myth,” *Saturday Evening Post* (May 7, 1921): 20.

intelligencia as a class) who had imagined the epitaph that would be due the nation if the alien influx continued unchecked:

“To the American Pioneering Breed
The Victim of Too Much Humanitarianism and
Too Little Common Sense”⁶²

⁶²“Self-Extermination,” *Saturday Evening Post* (May 21, 1921): 20.

* * *

In the first half of the twentieth century the ubiquitous and diverse, even contradictory, eugenic and other racialist perspectives held in common an investment in ideals of whiteness that legitimized prevailing social hierarchies. Where the social agenda of eugenics offered a bitterly racist, crudely essentialising surface which was vigorously contested by some, whiteness -- as an ideological formation, rather than an instrumental idea -- operated in a subtler fashion, too ethereal despite being fully incarnate to offer so evident a point of attack. As I have already suggested, eugenicists recognized the efficacy of integrating their ideas into the social fabric of the United States by disseminating them not as doctrine, but as habits of mind cultivated through various social institutions. They sought, in other words, to effect change at the level of ideology through institutional reforms that coordinated their own agendas with existing prejudice and expectations of racial norms, in the process giving body to much of what was implicit in conceptions of American identity during this period. In doing so, eugenicists turned to cultural expression as both an embodiment of racial qualities and a tool for shaping them. Between the forthright, literal articulation of race in eugenic texts and a finespun, implicit constitution of whiteness, eugenicists conceived of *vision* itself shot through with racialist thinking. This eugenic “habit of looking” that Popenoe and Johnson counseled readers of their textbook to cultivate seems to have found expression in instances as diverse as Rockwell’s perceptual organization of his Arlington community according to race -- discussed at the head of this chapter -- and Wiggam’s ability to derive racial knowledge from even -- as we shall now see -- portrait painting.

For Wiggam, the history of art presented a visual record of racial evolution by literally documenting the advancement and degeneration of human beauty in particular populations. Portraiture, regardless of its subjective distortions, became in Wiggam's hands evidence of the momentary progress of physical refinement embodied in the individual sitter. Just as an anthropologist might discern from fossilized deposits in sedimentary layers of earth frozen moments of time, Wiggam perceived that art had "caught evolution on the wing" (271). Here he followed the lead of Massachusetts Institute of Technology biologist (and charter member of the eugenicist Galton Society) Frederick Adams Woods, who studied paintings for indications of race-based changes in physiognomy.⁶³ Wiggam, in his pursuit of the racial basis of beauty, poured over Wood's photographic collection of portraits organized by geographical origin of sitters, and with Mrs. Wiggam visited various galleries and studied numerous volumes of paintings.[Figure 19] Thus, was he able to determine that, while Southern Europeans made little progress in pulchritude, Northern Europeans of Nordic stock displayed marked improvement in beauty over the course of three centuries since the Renaissance.

⁶³Selden, 13. See F. A. Woods, "Portraits of Early Americans," *Journal of Heredity* 10 (1919): 212-222, cited in Frank Hamilton Hankins, *The Racial Basis of Civilization: A Critique of the Nordic Doctrine* (New York & London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 356, note 129.

But Wiggam, again following a suggestion of Woods', went a step further and located a catalyst for this evolution in beauty, a cause that was in fact art. Specifically, he pointed to the historical spread of Greek art as a mechanism for disseminating "ideals of physical beauty [which] led men especially to learn to admire that type of womanhood." Admiring such beauty, these men were compelled to select it and thus "to perpetuate their type of beauty in their sons and daughters" of the upper classes.⁶⁴ By comparison, the lower classes whose "hard labor for generations has broken down the delicate, lovely, high strung, beautiful girls, and either killed them or else destroyed their beauty so early in life that they failed to get husbands," were oblivious to such aesthetic models.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, 272. Wiggam presented the same arguments in his a chapter titled "The Eight Commandment: The Duty of Art," in *The New Decalogue of Science* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1922), 205-216.

⁶⁵Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, 273. Here and throughout I have left these arguments uncontested. It is not my aim to write a history of eugenics, but to draw on the language and mind of eugenics to gain insight into thinking about race and ethnicity in this period. However, it should be pointed out that while there is legitimate debate and research to be pursued on the relationship of genetic and environmental influences, eugenicists of this period typically display gross ignorance of Darwin's foundational work on evolution as they employ outrageous rhetorical arguments based upon calumny, emotional appeals and faulty reasoning. Here, it might be added, that Wiggam displays an appalling ignorance of portraits as representations. Although he suggests portraits are records of at least ideals of beauty, he does not recognize that depiction of outward appearance is subject to historically varying kinds of concerns. Yet, these writers cannot be dismissed as eccentrics and exceptions.

Thus, as part of a program of racial progress, Wiggam proposed that Americans must be trained to exercise their aesthetic judgment so that they would procreate appropriately. The benefit of beauty contests and eugenicist sponsored better-babies shows, as he saw it, was precisely this: “they represent a splendid piece of work for national eugenics . . . [and] a step in teaching the youths of America to know a good man or woman when they see one.”⁶⁶ Thus, Wiggam returned again to art -- or artists -- as fundamental to racial improvement. Because artists were uniquely attuned to beauty, they could identify and explain beauty overlooked by others. Wiggam gives anecdotal examples of artists he knew who had convincingly expounded upon the aesthetic virtues of bad weather, the harmony of line and subtle attractions of an apparently unremarkable woman, and the “beauty of Lincoln.”⁶⁷ If art were not exactly a racial science, it was certainly a practice which developed skills and techniques fundamental to the betterment of the race, because beauty was but an outward manifestation of physical vigor and mental acuity. As Wiggam concluded such practices as “the teaching of art in our schools” would elevate human beauty, a consequence of which would be the elevation of “intelligence and human excellence.” The resulting “expansion in the whole moral output of the race” would feed the evolution of noble civilization itself.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, 276.

⁶⁷Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, 276-77.

⁶⁸Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, 279. Wiggam insisted that good looks and good minds were complements; see Albert E. Wiggam, “New Styles of American Beauty: Brains and Pulchritude Now Go Together,” *World’s Work* LVI (October 1928): 648-658.

In fact, Wiggam's vision was closer to trends in popular culture than one might assume, finding expression in, for instance, the Miss America Beauty Contest. When members of the Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce sought a judge of feminine pulchritude for the first competition in 1921, they turned to illustrator Howard Chandler Christy famous for his sprightly Christy Girl. The event did not overtly engage eugenic ideas, but in a context taking the whiteness of its contestants for granted, Christy's expertise in painting the American Girl -- discussed below -- helped identify the best of her breed.⁶⁹ For the second Miss America contest the following year, the roster of illustrator/judges was expanded to include, in addition to Christy, James Montgomery Flagg, Coles Phillips, Charles E. Chambers, and Norman Rockwell, among others.⁷⁰ This group was expected to bring a collective aesthetic judgment to the practical task of identifying the most beautiful American woman. Organizers of the contest sought to emphasize the aesthetic rather than the salacious, and contest publicity underscored the absence of such features as makeup and bobbed hair that might suggest loose morals.⁷¹ This was just the type of activity of which Wiggam approved for disseminating eugenic habits and promoting the race.

⁶⁹Similarly when art editor Sid Hydeman asked a half-dozen white illustrators to discuss "their ideas of 'perfect beauty' in women", they *naturally* drew verbal pictures replete with markers for white women (blonde, brunette and reddish hair; "greenish-gray eyes"; "white skin"). Sid Hydeman, *How To Illustrate for Money* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1936), 48-49.

⁷⁰For a humorous account of judging the contest that finds Rockwell in a lady's corset, see *My Adventures*, 209-215.

⁷¹Overt sexuality was not welcomed by many members of the beach-side resort community; see Lois W. Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 265-270.

For Wiggam, art possessed the dual capacity both to reflect and, more importantly, to inflect racial evolution. As he put it in his best-selling *New Decalogue of Science*:

. . . art, as nothing else, sets up rich ideals of mate selection between man and woman. It teaches men and women what is and what is not beautiful, what to select and what to reject in each other. And mate-selection between man and woman is the supreme cause of racial glory and decline. Art absolutely creates for us our ideals of human beauty and inner excellence. And our ideals of beauty and inner excellence determine the basis of all evolution, mate-selection. (213)

. . . Such art [one that understands and incorporates scientific eugenics] will lead men forward to a better human nature. Art will then become what it should be and is, man's highest contribution to the processes of his own evolution. It will lead men by its gentle selective processes and its creative ideals toward a wiser, saner, healthier and more beautiful human race. (216)⁷²

⁷²Albert E. Wiggam, *The New Decalogue of Science*, discussed in "The Eighth Commandment: The Duty of Art," 205-216. Wiggam offered *The New Decalogue* as a scientifically informed update of the decalogue delivered to Moses at Sinai. His text is directed to an unnamed Statesman, the occupant of the "Executive Mansion," and offers to correct his woeful ignorance of biology and of eugenics so that the Statesman might better wield his power that holds the destiny of civilizations.

Despite the confidence of Wiggam's texts -- their promise of the resplendent dawning of an improved "human race" -- they reveal a concern about the credibility of vision. Indeed, one brochure designed to draw listeners to his Chautauqua lecture featured an illustration of a family tree of chickens and asked, "Would you ever guess by looking at these bluish chickens that some of their children would be black or white? No. What then can you tell by looking at an IMMIGRANT at Ellis Island . . .?" [Figure 20]⁷³ Wiggam speaks not of an understanding of the nature of beauty as a quality in itself, but of the perception of beauty in visible forms. The models of beauty, he suggests, are there before ones eyes, one has only to learn to see them. There is then an implied danger in the fact that Wiggam's fellow country men do not yet know how to see, that they lack the aesthetic training that will allow them to perceive racial perfection and to reject its opposite. The individual trained (especially through cultivation of the visual arts) to see racially will protect the race from genetic degradation.

Among eugenicists, Wiggam and Woods were exceptional in their use of art as evidence of physical race progress, as was Wiggam in his instrumentalist program for race betterment through aesthetic education. Still their work was embraced by the general public and accepted by researchers.⁷⁴ Far from purveying "quackery", they were received

⁷³Albert Edward Wiggam, "The Apostle of Efficiency," [19--?], 8 page flyer, Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries. Underline and uppercase as in original text.

⁷⁴For example, the sociologist Frank H. Hankins cited Woods' research as "more or less" convincing, Hankins, *Racial Basis*, 356. On the influence of Woods' work in the scientific community, see also Cravens, 230 and Selden, 102.

as offering insightful perspectives.⁷⁵ Moreover, the anxiety over vision embodied in Wiggam's text was carried over in the work of other eugenicists who expressed what amounted to a concern about the instability of common visual codes of race. The apparently self-evident idea that race possessed visible properties was for these writers perilously challenged by the phenomenon of *passing*, whether real or imagined.

⁷⁵Even Wiggam's sensationalized messages garnered him the respectful attention of the national press. When he told the Wisconsin Teachers' Association in Milwaukee that American women were becoming unattractive and unintelligent because only half of all college women were getting married and then having only two children, the *New York Times* picked up the wire-story. "Our Women Losing Beauty and Intelligence, as Homely and Dull Multiply, Says Biologist," *New York Times* (November 6, 1925): 1.

Madison Grant gave expression to this fear in a chapter on “The Legacy of Slavery,” where he observed that in the Northern States “there can be seen many yellow and light-colored individuals, who are Negro in every other respect. . . . Many of the dark immigrant Whites are themselves darker in color than the yellow Negroes and this enables some of these light Negroes to ‘pass’ as Whites. This problem is one which will increase in gravity.”⁷⁶ Following further discussion of Mulattoes, Grant returned to this anxious situation to add, “The ‘pass-for-white’ does so purely by virtue of his physical characters which approximate those of his white ancestors. His intellectual and emotional traits may insidiously go back to his black ancestry, and may be brought into the White race in this way.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶Grant, *Conquest*, 283.

⁷⁷Grant, *Conquest*, 285. The themes of passing, with its usual message that “blood tells.” and of the mixed-race black -- typically the “tragic mulatto” -- occupy substantial space on the shelves of the history of American literature and film. Some writers, and in particular African-American writers, in the period under consideration explored these topics critically in their fiction as in for instance Walter White’s *Flight* (1926), Nella Larsen’s *Passing* (1929), and Jessie Redmon Fauset’s *Plum Bun* (1929), among others. However, in the mass-circulation popular magazines such themes devolved into a “battle of the bloods” in which *true* racial characteristics emerged despite surface appearances (see the sarcastic indictment of such literary treatments, and of their favorable critical reception, in Martha Gruening, “White People Hate Themselves!” *The Christian Century* LIV, no. 43 [October, 27, 1937]: 1327-28.)

For Grant and others the “mulatto menace” was keyed precisely to the problem of the visual.⁷⁸ If a non-white could pass as white (without in some phenomenological sense *being* white), then what would guard against *breeding down* the race?⁷⁹ Presumably Wiggam’s aesthetic training would not suffice as prophylaxis against the mulatto who *looked* white (recall the tragic mulatta, quadroon or octoroon of sentimental literature was invariably a beauty). Although some eugenic research may have been designed to facilitate detection of the pass-for-white -- for instance, the study and analysis of race based gestural modalities⁸⁰ -- the problem of the mulatto was more often raised as an argument supporting increasingly restrictive policies concerning immigration and miscegenation. Nonetheless, the purported indeterminacy of appearance as regards the mixed race individual, alongside the desire to *see* race, presented a salient problem for fantastic eugenical fears of passing.⁸¹ In this regard, the mulatto constituted a scotoma in the

⁷⁸Grant, *Conquest*, 286. Cécile Whiting makes a similar point concerning the visual ambiguity presented inherent to the mulatto in her discussion of complexities of black self-representation that accounts for the prevalence of scientific racism within American culture in the 1920s and 1930s, see Cécile Whiting, “More Than Meets the Eye: Archibald Motley and Debates on Race in Art,” *Prospects* 26 (2001): 449-476.

⁷⁹Grant assumes a limited model of black-for-white passing which he would likely wish to extend to Jew-for-Christian and even straight-for-gay passing. But note that near contemporaries were aware of more complex models. Thus one anti-racist sociological study observed that, in order to rise beyond menial labor to which prejudice held them, “Mexicans sometimes try to pass for Spanish, and Negroes for Mexicans, in order to get employment,” B. (Bertram Johannes Otto) Schrieke, *Alien Americans; a Study of Race Relations* (New York: Viking, 1936), 47.

⁸⁰See the discussion of eugenics and gesture in Chapter IV.

⁸¹This may be an effect of the structure of passing itself. As Carole-Anne Tyler put in a discussion of passing-for-straight, “passing can only name the very failure of passing, an indication of a certain impossibility at its heart, of the contradictions which constitute it: life/death, being/non-being, visibility/invisibility, speech/silence, difference/sameness,

racialist visual field.⁸²

knowledge/ignorance, coming out/mimicry. Passing is the effect of a certain affect, an uncanny feeling of uncertainty about a difference which is not quite invisible, not quite unknown. . . ." Carole-Anne Tyler, "Passing: narcissism, identity and difference," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6, n.2-3, special issue on *More Gender Trouble: Feminism Meets Queer Theory* (Summer-Fall, 1994).

⁸²Certainly the figure of the mulatto and the trope of passing troubled cultural discourses beyond those specifically interested in eugenics. For instance, for a discussion of southern judicial efforts to come to terms with the challenge the mulatto presented to the visible and to the locus of race see Teresa Zackodnik, "Fixing the Color Line: The Mulatto, Southern Courts, and Racial Identity," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001): 420-451.

In a sense these hereditarian eugenicists were prisoners of common sense, categorical racial definitions that they sought to verify through scientific discourse. What they conceived as “the White race” lacked coherent organizing principles of its own, being essentially defined by the crisis of its own instability. Unable to give definition to what the White race was -- though declaring its historical continuity and characterizing its preeminence -- they turned to negative definitions. Thus, Grant insisted upon the necessary purity of the superior race by explaining that “The cross between a white man and a Hindu is a Hindu; the cross between a white man and a negro is a negro; and the cross between any of the three European races and a Jew is a Jew.”⁸³ For all his bigoted bluster about purity and superiority, Grant also revealed the vulnerability of this conception with its White blood that demanded detection of and isolation from even a single drop of extraneous blood that would condemn generations to racial recidivism.

⁸³Grant quoted in John Langdon-Davies, “Nazi Science and Ourselves,” *The Forum and Century* 91, no. 5 (May 1934): 310. This is, of course, the one-drop rule which received renewed, governmental sanction in 1925 when the Virginia Assembly’s “Bill to Preserve Racial Integrity” explained that the “term ‘white person’ shall apply only to the person who has no trace whatsoever of any blood other than Caucasian.” The General Assembly instructed the State Registrar of Vital Statistics to “prepare a form whereon the social composition of any individual, as Caucasian, Negro, Mongolian, American Indian, Asiatic Indian, Malay, or any mixture thereof, or any other non-Caucasian strains, and if there be any mixture, then, the racial composition of the parents and other ancestors, in so far as ascertainable, so as to show in what generation such mixture occurred, may be certified by such individual, which form shall be known as a registration certificate.” House Bill No. 311, Paragraph 7 provided for the definition of “white person” in prohibiting miscegenation. The Bill is reproduced in Frank F. Arnes, “The Evolution of the Virginia Antimiscegenation Laws,” (M.A. Thesis, Department of History, Old Dominion College, 1966), appendix, 92.

The two demands -- the need for purity and desire for visibility -- were addressed (and maintained) in cultural expressions that would insist on the exaggerated Otherness of stereotype. Employed thus, the demands both legitimized the normalcy of whiteness and posited markers of difference sufficient to forestall the kind of anxiety that arose around the visual indeterminacy of race. Such expressions encompassed the continued recirculation and invention of distinct physical characteristics of race in graphic matter, as well as the related use of “dialect” in speech attributed to black and other minority characters in print, radio, and film.⁸⁴

⁸⁴Toni Morrison has proposed that the use of Africanist idiom to establish difference but also, in the twentieth century, “to signal modernity” is precisely one of the topics in American literature in need of study. She observes that commonly the “dialogue of black characters is construed as an alien, estranging dialect made deliberately unintelligible by spellings contrived to disfamiliarize it...” Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Random House, 1993), 52.

Assuredly, racial and ethnic stereotyping is not the exclusive purview of white-identified individuals. Dialect, for instance, was employed by a number of African-American writers for different purposes, sometimes devolving to stereotype. Kevin Gaines has argued that James D. Corrothers leveraged his own position as an educated black man against the derogated linguistic culture of his black characters whom he cast in terms of violent, undisciplined and ignorant minstrel stereotypes.⁸⁵ By contrast, writers as diverse as Richard Wright, who criticized Zora Neale Hurston's "facile sensuality," and Zora Hurston, who suggested that Wright's rendering of dialect showed him to be "tone-deaf," transformed dialect into a form free of connotations of inferiority by abstaining from apostrophes and dropped consonants which tended to obstruct sense and flow.

Racist stereotypes -- from wherever they issued -- were not just instantiations of the Other as it appeared to the white imagination, but tended to simultaneously articulate whiteness itself. Such clarity of statement of race compensates for the problematic underlying vision that ought, indeed must see race, but ultimately cannot. The obviousness might mask the contingent and coercive racial vision, offering it easy lessons of detection to alleviate the problem of the finer distinctions occasioned by the mulatto, among others.

⁸⁵Kevin Gaines, "Assimilationist Minstrelsy as Racial Uplift Ideology: James D. Corrothers's Literary Quest for Black Leadership," in *American Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (September 1993): 341- 368. Although Corrothers's "assimilationist persona relied on dialect that went further into the forbidden terrain of minstrelsy than most other black writers dared," (343), he achieved a kind of critique, according to Gaines, by revealing that underlying uplift ideology of the middle class were tensions and contradictions of gender and racial difference. Black leaders wishing to represent themselves as above and different from racist stereotypes, Corrothers showed, nonetheless used those stereotypes in representing their own progress (346).

A vision so deeply imbricated with race could hardly fail to generate equally racialized image making practices. Even in those images in which race was not evidently featured by means of difference (i.e. in those illustrations featuring the norm of *white* people engaged in *white* activities), the resultant aesthetic of whiteness must be understood similarly as inter-racial. Whiteness never refers only to itself (nor does it refer only to race as I emphasize below).

All the same, there was no dearth of conviction about race, although that confidence tended to give way to qualifications. A eugenicist like Stoddard could enumerate *ad nauseam* differential physical descriptions of skin color, hair color, hair type, eye color, skull shape, stature, and so forth of the main races he had identified even if he found some physical characteristics “definite but difficult to describe.”⁸⁶ Others could write of the common conception of “our ‘Average American.’ Without doubt he is tall and stalwart, preferably with blue eyes, blond hair, fair skin and oval head, highly intelligent, inventive, possessed of a broad sense of humor, religious and gifted with a fine moral sense, and endowed with the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ love of liberty and respect of law.” And although this characterization was admittedly “a half truthful one [it yet played] an important part in the national psychology.”⁸⁷ The degree to which individuals might convince themselves that they possessed racial identity and that that racial identity was something more than a social contract, a cultural effect, or a mark of privilege -- that it was, in fact, a God-given or natural fact, to this degree they might give race actual significance

⁸⁶Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), xiii-xiv.

⁸⁷Hankins, 7-8.

that obscured its fundamental role in organizing social experience.

The operations of representation in the graphic arts provided an always-provisional, but somehow comforting image on which to hang these beliefs. Thus, for instance, the matter-of-fact textbook presentation of The Mean Man [Figure 21, from *Applied Eugenics*] -- rendered in a *direct* style of uninflected lines, generalized features, isolated clarity, and colorless austerity -- could seem to resolve the antinomies of difference and unity that plagued linguistic discourses on the visual and race. More to the point, popular illustration, too, could perform this function, upholding the American ideals over which eugenicists felt such concern. Thus, an advertisement for Wiggam's lectures on the theme of beauty and racial progress warned, "The American Woman is Rapidly Becoming Ugly," and evoked the popular pretty girls limned by Charles Dana Gibson and the *Post's* Harrison Fisher as representatives of that ideal [Figure 22, 23 & 24]:

When the low immigrant is giving us *three babies* while the Daughter of the Revolution is giving us *one* it means the Gibson and Harrison Fisher Girl is vanishing. Her place is being taken by the low-browed, broad-faced, flat-chested woman of lower Europe. If this continues it means a progressive loss of racial excellence, intelligence and power.⁸⁸

Even as mass-market illustration, too, might catch evolution on the wing and proffer visual racial models, it did not resolve inherent uncertainties over vision, race and representation.

These contradictions were further elaborated in relation to Howard Chandler Christy's World War I Liberty Loan poster, "Americans All" [Figure 25, Americans ALL!, 1917].⁸⁹

⁸⁸Albert Edward Wiggam, "The Apostle of Efficiency," op cit. The sculptural arrangement selected to illustrate the good and beautiful mother with "Her Son" was executed by Nellie Walker who herself chose never to marry or have children, see Charlotte Streifer Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors* (Boston: G.K. Hall), 121-23.

⁸⁹Gilbert Seldes, the cultural critic introduced above in the introduction, would later

Christy rendered an allegorical figure of America -- lofting a laurel, bedraped in the national flag, and clothed in a sheer tunic (looking suspiciously like bloomers) -- flanked by the Honor Roll of the ethnically diverse names of men who served when called: Du Bois, Smith, O'Brien, Cejka, Haucke, Pappandrikopolous, Andrassi, Villotto, Levy, Turovich, Kowalski, Chriczanevicz, Knutson, Gonzales

produce a remarkable radio program promoting racial and ethnic inclusion and tolerance by examining the contributions of various groups in the United States under the title "Americans All -- Immigrants All" (CBS, 1938, organized in conjunction with government agencies US Office of Education, Department of the Interior, Service Bureau of Intercultural Education) The title, according to Michael Kammen (*The Lively Arts: Gilbert Seldes and the Transformation of Cultural Criticism in the United States* [NY & Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1996]: 261), was taken from a phrase President Roosevelt had intoned, although Christy's poster demonstrates it had earlier currency, although I have not located a decisive source for the phrase.

Werner Sollors has observed that Christy's roll call of ethnic diversity is not bodied forth in the white skin and Anglo features of the allegorical figure. Here, he follows Martha Banta's suggestion that the poster contained a double message of assimilation to a norm designated as inassimilable to such ethnics. The poster could be read, Sollors argues, both inclusively and exclusively.⁹⁰ Sollors points out that unlike what he dubs the "Mulatto madonna" with an Indian headdress -- for instance, the bronze Statue of Liberty topping the Washington Capitol (1863) -- the poster image was pure Christy girl, and resisted racial typing of Others. For both Sollors and Banta, the image stabilizes the text in a manner more decided than I have been suggesting. As Sollors writes, the named ethnics "are told to be 'Mr. American' by conforming to something that they might never become physically" (a perspective echoed in the story of Giuseppe the waiter discussed above).

⁹⁰Werner Sollors, "Americans All: 'Of Plymouth Rock and Jamestown and Ellis Island'; or, Ethnic Literature and Some Redefinitions of 'America,'" (New York University Press): <http://www.nyupress.nyu.edu/americansall.html>. Martha Banta, *Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

Christy himself had a great deal to say about his conception of the American Girl to which he devoted much attention in pictures and text as in his book *The American Girl* (1906).⁹¹ There he sketched out an ideal of American femininity not strictly limited by class or national origin, arguing that “the twentieth century, will see the evolution of the highest type of womankind the world has ever produced. With the downfall of artificial distinctions [e.g. class, as in England] will come a corresponding elevation of those qualities that make a natural nobility. . . . And apart from sentiment, uninfluenced by any narrow patriotism, trying simply to see clearly the causes at work and their necessary results, we may confidently declare that the American girl in the future will become a veritable queen of the kingliest of races” (11-12). The specific “admixture of races” Christy has in mind has endowed in “her veins not only the vigor of northern blood, rather strengthened than weakened by its transportation to the British Isles and then across the seas to our own land, but also something of richer color derived from the intermingling of the larger strain of Celtic with more than a mere touch of the Latin races. Added to her inherent qualities there has been the influence of climate. . .” (13)

Nonetheless, Christy comes up against conceptual limits that bar him from imaging race crossing that extends beyond the borders of Europe and the United States. His American Girl is far more complex than “some being of unmixed race, subject to simpler conditions, and in a state of civilization that had come to some well-fixed conclusions in regard to its own status.” Yet, rather than endorsing a profound genetic diversity in the language of race, blood and veins, he instead shifts the ground to cultural diversity of art,

⁹¹Howard Chandler Christy, *The American Girl* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co. 1906). Text and illustrations by H. C. Christy.

religion and athletics, writing “She is the product of a half a dozen civilizations; she has been brought up from childhood on an eclectic system that strives to combine the best features of all.... What with German music, French art, English literature, Irish humor, Scotch theology, and Austrian etiquette--to say nothing of Japanese physical culture and a touch of Hindu theosophy, it is a wonder that there is any trace of true native Americanism left in the fair creature. She is a composite photograph of all civilizations” (112-114).

Not all contemporaries of Christy’s poster read it thus. The inherent uncertainty at the core of whiteness allowed some viewers to believe not that there was a necessary or indelible contradiction between words and image purporting to symbolize America, but that the poster proposed, however mistakenly, that this woman was precisely the promised vigorous mulatto of race mixture. Thus, Madison Grant dutifully enumerated the names on the Honor Roll (transposing “Haucke” to “Jaucke”) and incredulously commented, “The one ‘American’ in that list, so far as he figures at all, is hidden under the sobriquet of ‘Smith,’ and there is, we must presume, an implied suggestion that the very beautiful lady is the product of this remarkable melting pot.”⁹² Grant’s outrage over the poster is two-fold: first, like the names in the draft lists of World War I which were a “shock to the country” when published, it indicated how “native American” stock was being submerged;

⁹²Madison Grant, “Closing the Flood-Gates,” in *The Alien in Our Midst; Or, “Selling Our Birthright for a Mess of Pottage”*; *the Written Views of a Number of Americans (Present and Former) on Immigration and its Results*, eds. Madison Grant and Chas. Stewart Davison (New York: Galton Publishing, 1930), 20-21. The other “American” name, of course, that of Christy himself placed directly in line with the roll. Notably absent from the list are any Asian names. Given the Jim Crow segregation of the army at the time it is unlikely that one was meant to read any of the names as designating an African-American, even that of “Du Bois.” The cultural valence of “Du Bois” in 1917 remains a subject for further research.

second that it exemplified the most fearful type, a mongrel racial type, as he would have it, is permitted to pass as a *beautiful lady* “of pure Nordic type.” Christy, in short, had failed to make difference visible.

The message of popular eugenics was a crude and opportunistic articulation of racist thought dressed in scientific guise, one which is easily dismissed today as an irrelevant pseudo science. However, in its methods -- effecting national and state legislation, curricular reform in public school, local fairs and pageants, and so on -- eugenics was an effective tool for instilling the necessity of seeing racial difference as a primary signifier of identity, nationhood and modernity. In this regard, it was a significant source of the *background radiation* of race contaminating American cultural experience during the period. The peculiar methods and arguments that Wiggam proposed for seeing race and training racial thinking through art and aesthetics are not merely curious idiosyncracies, but speak to the structure of racial thinking and its investments in vision.

Among scholars writing on popular illustration, the question of race has been more of an obstacle to burke, than an issue for which to account. That seems to be a legitimate approach in so far as this illustration appeared in magazines which, like the *Saturday Evening Post*, were produced for, by and about white people. Yet, at a fundamental level the assumption that white people constitute a self-evident category existing outside of their cultural articulation and social fabrication ignores the effects of just such organs as mass-media in general and the *Post* in particular. In focussing on the *Saturday Evening Post* the present study necessarily gives voice to an area of American culture dominated by white-identified editors, artists, writers, and advertisers, rather than, for instance,

examining any of the numerous popular and literary publication produced by African-Americans during this period.⁹³ From top to bottom, virtually all employees at Curtis Publishing would have thought of themselves as white if they felt compelled to think about it at all. Aside from any individuals who may have undertaken to pass for white at these presses (about which nothing is presently known), the primary roll played by African-Americans in the production of the *Post* and similar magazines would have been limited to janitorial and elevator operation. The many biographies of the *Post* and its makers, and the *Post* itself offer very little from the perspective of individual Americans identified as black. However, there is much to be discovered about the structure of ideas about norms and others, about how these circulate through mechanisms of capitalist culture, and about how imagery becomes suffused with ideological content about race, class, gender, nationality and modernity.

If the voice of the *Post* does not allow, say, an elevator operator at the famous Curtis Building on Independent Square in Philadelphia to speak, that voice nonetheless -- and with little motivation or pertinence -- repeatedly invokes such marginal figures. The ineluctable turn to the Other inevitably speaks only of the position of privilege. In this instance, one might think of an anecdote told by Bok, the editor Curtis Publishing's first giant magazine, the *Ladies Home Journal*.

⁹³Among the exemplary works dealing with some of the thousands of papers and magazines produced from within and for minority communities in the United States, see Abby Arthur Johnson & Ronald Maberry Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics: the Literary Politics of Afro-American Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Amherst : University of Massachusetts Press, 1979): 31-125.

In his autobiography Bok recounted an incident involving Washington, an African-American elevator operator in a publishing house who declines a white salesman's entreaties to purchase a book on mechanical engineering that includes a chapter on elevator construction. The elevator operator begins by claiming he has no time for reading as he is too busy working, and then by declaring he has no wish to run the elevator any better than he already does. However, pressed by the salesman who aggressively dismisses these excuses, the "darky," as Bok describes him, tries a third tack: "'No, boss, no dat's just it,' returned Wash. 'Don't want to learn nothing, boss,' he said. 'Why, boss, I know more now than I git paid for.'"⁹⁴

Bok's telling allows "Wash" a Brer Rabbit cunning in this one of his "Publishing Incidents and Anecdotes" and even lets the initial excuses that play on stereotypes of the lazy, ignorant negro, fall away as mere evasions playing upon the white salesmen's prejudicial expectations. But Bok also retains the defamatory appellation and the conclusive refusal of self-improvement and progress so that "Wash's" apt social analysis is cast a mere joke, a joke in which he stands for the antimodernity of the negro by rejecting instrumental, technical knowledge. It is precisely through such narratives coding racial identity that the *Post* is inflected as white, and not because the people who make and read it are expressing and identifying with their essential whiteness.

⁹⁴Edward W. Bok, *The Americanization of Edward Bok: The Autobiography of a Dutch Boy Fifty Years After* (New York, C. Scribner's sons, 1922 [1920]): 141-42. Boosted by a 1921 Pulitzer Prize for Autobiography, the volume appeared on the list of top-ten best-selling books from 1922-1924 (his biography of Curtis also made the list 1923, while his *Twice Thirty* secured a spot on the list for 1925).

The presumption of whiteness by scholars can lead to evident distortions and oversights; even to the erasure of race. For instance, one critical discussion of a *Post* cover by Rockwell (March 17, 1934 [Figure 26]) featuring an encounter between a white woman, well-heeled in her riding habit, and a raggedly dressed black child argues, “It could just as well be a poor white boy -- what is important in the painting is class and status, our national preoccupations in this time.” The writer justifies the position with the claim that in the 1930s “white America hardly gave a thought to blacks.”⁹⁵ (Could the same substitution be made then for the fallen rider?) The assumption of an unproblematic white identity of *Post* makers and consumers obliterates race at the very moment it emerges -- in the body of the boy.

Similarly, Rockwell’s later work for *Look* which places race front-and-center has been used to endorse the idea that the absence of race in his early work meant it was not about race in any significant way. The prevailing rhetorical strategy has been to acknowledge that Rockwell rarely depicted minorities in his *Post* covers, but to attribute this omission to editorial restrictions and not to Rockwell’s vision of America. The *Look* illustrations then appear to issue from the liberated Rockwell expressing a true commitment to racial justice.⁹⁶ Thus, race is dispensed with as something external to the images, a mere fact of history surrounding that does not deeply touch the illustrator’s image making practices.

⁹⁵James A. Monsonis, paper for Annual Meeting of the Popular Culture Ass./American Culture Ass., Toronto (March 1990): 5, 4, copy available at the Library of the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge.

⁹⁶Most recently exemplified in the catalog for *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, 43.

When Rockwell declared the visible absence of race suicide as he looked around his little burg, he was in fact calling attention to the abundant presence of whiteness. And if the children inhabiting Arlington made up the ranks of his models, then his projective vision -- the vision which saw children as models, and models as painted images, and painted images as reduced and reproduced illustrations, this vision too was a racialized one. Just as cheering crowds had proudly displayed their progeny to President Roosevelt decades earlier, Rockwell held up his neighbors' boys to the *American* public in a gesture which promised racial vitality in the same moment that it raised the specter of racial annihilation, of total suicide. This is not an aberrant phenomenon, but one which film scholar Richard Dyer, in theorizing whiteness, has described thus: "white power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular, but also because when whiteness *qua* whiteness does come into focus, it is often revealed as emptiness, absence, denial or even a kind of death."⁹⁷ No doubt Dyer writes of whiteness coming into *focus* because his primary interest concerns the image captured by the camera's lens. But, as I have been suggesting, race and therefore whiteness is -- in the United States -- coupled with the visual, even when race is not readily visible.

⁹⁷Richard Dyer, "White" *Screen* 29 (Fall 1988) 44.

Explicit interest in the health of “the race” extended beyond the immediate realm of eugenicists finding a potent expression in the concerns that drove character builders. Character builders devoted their efforts to developing strategies and organizations that would transform the raw material of boys into the stuff from which American manhood would develop, thus ensuring one pillar of race betterment. In so doing, they drew together prevailing concerns and perceptions of race and gender. Popular illustrated magazines proved important to these efforts because they reached and were enthusiastically consumed both by boys and their parents. The remainder of this chapter examines pictorial representations of boys in the *Saturday Evening Post* in relation to the project of character building. The discussion turns first, in section III, to the background, evolution and reputation of Norman Rockwell in order to contextualize and establish his early practice as a prolific illustrator of boys. Section IV then discusses character building and popular illustration in the context of race and gender norms drawing on arguments made in previous sections about anxieties over epistemological status of the visual perception of race.

* * *

III. “Immortalized in Wax”⁹⁸: Making Norman Rockwell

⁹⁸Arlington restaurateur Frank Hall tried to convince Rockwell, John Atherton, and Mead Schaeffer to allow him to commission and display wax figures of the illustrators working at their easels, declaring, “you’ll be immortalized in wax.” *My Adventures*, 379-380.

In 1911, at the age of seventeen, Norman Rockwell began a career as a professional illustrator working first on commission for book illustrations and then more regularly for the Boy Scout magazine *Boy's Life*, where he soon earned the post of contributing art editor. During the next four years he found himself “up to . . . [his] neck in illustrations for young people’s magazines” [Figure 27].⁹⁹ The magazine stories and books he embellished frequently called on him to produce sober images of earnest boys negotiating obstacles encountered in forests or at sea, or confounded by social and occasionally romantic difficulties. His youth and his primary subject matter of these years earned him for a time the fitting sobriquet “Boy Illustrator.”¹⁰⁰

Later in life, Rockwell enjoyed the pleasant irony that, despite his reputation as the painter of small-town America, he had been born -- February 3, 1894 -- in the quintessential metropolis of New York City. Although his father’s family had once held substantial wealth and his mother took great pride in an English aristocratic ancestry, by the time of Norman Percevel’s birth the family’s fortune and status had both declined. Rockwell recalled his youth growing up in modest circumstances, and described episodes of acute embarrassment in the face of his own social indiscretions which, he thought,

⁹⁹*The Norman Rockwell Album* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), 15. For biographical information I draw primarily on my skeptical and parsed reading of Rockwell’s autobiography, *My Adventures as an Illustrator*, as told to Thomas Rockwell (New York: Abrams, 1960) as well as many articles and books published during Rockwell’s lifetime (these are cited where appropriate). For in-depth biographical material on Rockwell and his models, see the fine new biography by Laura Claridge, *Norman Rockwell: A Life*, op cit, as well as Donald Walton, *A Rockwell Portrait: an Intimate Biography* (Kansas City, Kan.: Sheed Andrews and McMeel, 1978) and Susan E. Meyer, *Norman Rockwell’s People* (New York: Abrams, 1981). The Walton biography should be read with caution: informants close to Rockwell have suggested, in confidence, that some events are made up.

¹⁰⁰*The Norman Rockwell Album*.

bespoke his lower middle-class background . Still, his family remained respectably pious, such that Norman and his younger brother Jarvis were conscripted into the church choir by their parents. This religiosity, however, did not stick, and as an adult Rockwell would decline to attend church services, even treating the theme with humor as in his 1959 *Post* cover lampooning the irreverence of a worldly suburban father who prefers a smoke and the Sunday paper to joining his family for Easter church services [Figure 28].

In his autobiography, Rockwell describes a boyhood plagued with anxieties and punctuated by unpleasant encounters with his urban environs. Among his companions he stood out as an awkward and pigeon-toed boy, his face veiled by large, round eyeglasses that earned him the despised nickname “Mooney.” He nonetheless participated in all the games and pranks of his neighborhood playmates including, as he later recalled with contrition, incidents of racially motivated name-calling and expressions of “class feeling.” Urban encounters with indigent drunks and rancorous couples enhanced, by contrast, his cherished memories of summer trips away from the city.¹⁰¹

Against this recollected backdrop, he would later characterize his early interest in drawing as a compensatory practice, one that afforded him a little admiration from his peers, but more importantly gave him a sense of self.¹⁰² Other boys, Rockwell recalled, formed their identity through their athletic prowess (his brother was a notable example), but “all [he] had was the ability to draw.” It did not seem like much at the time, but as he

¹⁰¹For “Mooney”; class feeling and race epithets; and early childhood memories, respectively, see *My Adventures*, 51, 33, & 31-43.

¹⁰²*My Adventures*, self-image 51; racial prejudice 33; distaste for city and appeal of country 41-44;

wrote, “because it was all I had I began to make it my whole life. I drew all the time. Gradually my narrow shoulders, long neck, and pigeon toes became less important to me. My feelings no longer paralyzed me. I drew and drew and drew.”¹⁰³

¹⁰³*My Adventures*, 52.

When Norman was about thirteen, the family moved to the sleepy town of Mamaroneck along the Long Island Sound. Circumstances there for the Rockwells were much improved, if still modest. It was a time of which Norman would recall, “we weren’t poor, we were just unbelievably middle class. Just exactly in the middle.”¹⁰⁴ As a high-school freshman, Rockwell began taking weekly leave in order to attend the Chase School of Art on a part-time basis (c. 1908), and in his sophomore year he left Mamaroneck High School altogether, becoming a full-time student at the National Academy of Design at the age of 15. Finding the Academy’s program “stiff and scholarly,” he enrolled at the Art Students League in New York in 1910. There he devoted himself to the study of the human figure and illustration under instructors George Bridgman and Thomas Fogarty. From the beginning, illustration was the profession he aimed at, for he “really never thought seriously of going into fine arts.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Rockwell narrating the Academy Award winning short film (Best Short Subject, Live Action) *Norman Rockwell’s World... An American Dream* (Concepts Unlimited, Inc; Films Incorporated/PMI, 1972), directed by Robert Deubel and written by Gaby Monet.

¹⁰⁵*My Adventures*, on NAD, 65-66; on pursuing illustration, 70. League records indicate Rockwell also studied illustration with E[rnest] Blumenschein in 1911 and 1912. In 1924 he returned to study etching with Eugene C. Fitch. See Archives of the Art Students League of New York, student records of Norman Rockwell for 1911-1912, 1912-1913, and 1924-1925, as well as the respective seasonal catalogs listing instructors. Records for 1910-1911 are missing. Years later, the Art Student League’s longtime superintendent recalled that Rockwell had been “a quiet, unassuming, hardworking chap, [who] was not always successful in getting the coveted number one spot in the Bridgman [anatomy] class”, see Christian Buchheit, *Reminiscences* as told to Lawrence Campbell (New York: Art Students League, private printing, 1956), 30.

Like his fellow students, Rockwell admired and identified with the work of celebrated American illustrators such as Howard Pyle (1853-1911), Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911), Frederic Remington (1861-1909), and the Leyendeckers (J.C. 1874-1951, Frank X. 1877-1924) particularly their inspiring attention to historically accurate detail and compelling visual narratives. In addition to English illustrators Arthur Rackham (1867-1939) and George Cruikshank (1792-1878), he esteemed the expressive qualities and technical virtuosity of high art painters from Rembrandt and Vermeer to Whistler and Picasso. He deplored the pandering of Charles Dana Gibson's pretty-girl pictures which he joined his peers in declaring "degrading to our noble profession."¹⁰⁶ Although, modernist practices held little interest for Rockwell in his own art -- excepting when he agonized about his position as a commercial illustrator and undertook some brief experiments in the 1920s -- neither he nor his young colleagues saw much distinction between the fine arts and illustration. They did, however, disdain other, debased spheres of artistic practice as Rockwell testified writing, we "signed our names in blood, swearing never to prostitute our art, never to do advertising jobs."¹⁰⁷ But the nature of the field of illustration itself was in transition with the proliferation of cheap illustrated magazines

¹⁰⁶*My Adventures*, 70-1. Rockwell may have had other reasons for registering a distaste for Gibson's work in his autobiography. At a banquet to raise funds for a monument commemorating veterans of World War I, toastmaster Gibson failed to introduce Rockwell alone among the New Rochelle artists seated at the speaker's table, mortifying the young illustrator, *My Adventures*, 192-3.

¹⁰⁷*My Adventures*, 70. The fine arts could demand a similar compromise as registered by Alfred Stieglitz when he "said that the art business reminded him, though he had never been in one, of a house of prostitution, where women, even virgin girls, were at the command of men with money; money ruled," *Alfred Stieglitz Talking: Notes on Some of His Conversations, 1925-1931*, ed. and forward by Herbert J. Seligmann (New Haven: Yale, 1966), 40.

(which needed advertisers who in turn needed illustrators), the increasing use of photography, and the demise of handsomely decorated books which had seen their zenith during the so-called Golden Age of Illustration that waned with the deaths of Remington, Pyle and Abbey. Distinctions between illustration and commercial art were slackening and, as one art editor wrote, it was becoming common “in some artistic circles to look down upon the illustrator as a ‘commercial craftsman,’ a person who merely executes the ideas of others without using any creative thought or genius of his own.”¹⁰⁸ Rockwell’s own practice would soon include the production of successful and highly sought after advertising and calendar illustrations.

Rockwell’s first inroads into a professional career included illustrating a didactic children’s book called *Tell Me Why Stories* before landing the position at *Boy’s Life*. *Boy’s Life* like others of the emerging youth magazines for which Rockwell worked (including *American Boy*, *Everyland*, *St. Nicholas* and *Youth’s Companion*) was intended to entertain white, middle-class adolescents and to promote the same ideals of American citizenry embodied in the Boy Scouts and the YMCA movements. Though working regularly and earning a respectable salary, Rockwell sought a more distinguished venue for his art, a more prestigious magazine reaching an adult audience. Meanwhile, he was able to afford a succession of shared studios in New York City and then in New Rochelle where his family

¹⁰⁸John D. Whiting, *Practical Illustration: A Guide for Artists* (New York & London: Harper and Bros., 1920); written in 1919 per p. 44. Whiting defended the “strictly commercial artists” who accomplished much in overcoming in their line of work the myriad restrictions that would “discourage the average landscape painter.” But Rockwell himself chafed at being called a “commercial artist,” insisting on being called an “illustrator” even on advertising assignments (telephone interview with Thomas Rockwell, April 20, 1999).

had taken up residence in a boarding house after his mother -- a constant invalid in Rockwell's telling -- became too ill to herself manage a household.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹Episodes of Rockwell's autobiography are stamped in the mold of nineteenth-century literary models (Dickens for instance), including his accounting of his strict and distant parents, Warring and Nancy. In his telling, an unassertive father is dominated by a passive-aggressive, hypochondriac mother for whom Rockwell continues to harbor particular scorn. Distrustful of the illness that kept his mother confined to bed oft-times and which left her little able to deal with housework, Rockwell recalled Nancy as selfish and vain. Indeed, one is put in mind of Harriet Beecher Stowe's Marie St. Clare from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) whose headaches are a "forte" for getting attention and controlling the household (on this nineteenth-century figure see Diane Price Herndl, *Invalid Women: Figuring Feminine Illness in American Fiction and Culture, 1840-1940* [Chapel Hill-London: Univ. of North Carolina, 1993]: 50-64). Laura Claridge's biography goes some way towards complicating this picture of Nancy Rockwell. However it is telling that most accounts of Rockwell fail to treat his autobiography as a representation demanding a critical reading. Thus, the catalog of the recent Rockwell exhibition reduces Nancy to the caricature of "a self-proclaimed invalid" (Judy L. Larson and Maureen Hart Hennessey, "Norman Rockwell: A New Viewpoint," in *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, 33), while Karal Ann Marling calls her "an invalid by choice" and, sardonically, "poor sick Nancy" (*Norman Rockwell* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997]: 11, 12).

With the encouragement of his friend and studio-mate, the cartoonist Clyde Forsythe, Rockwell finally resolved, despite his self-doubts, to submit his work to that great show window of illustration, the *Saturday Evening Post*. The *Post* employed dozens of top illustrators for its covers, but its lead artist at the time was J.C. Leyendecker whom Rockwell revered, and in certain regards emulated. Setting his sights on the *Post* Rockwell struggled to paint a sample image of a sophisticated society couple in the style C. D. Gibson (who was not in fact a main stay of the *Post*), but was soon convinced that his strength lay in genre scenes, realistically rendered pictures of everyday life. He was, as Forsythe put it, “a terrible Gibson, but a pretty good Rockwell.” Rockwell finally presented the *Post* editors with two finished canvases depicting scenes of boyhood and several like sketches. All were approved, and within two months his first illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post* appeared on the cover of the issue for May 20, 1916. In his words, he “had arrived.” Having broken into the field of illustration for adult magazines, Rockwell was soon submitting work to *Life*, *Judge*, *Leslie’s*, and the *Country Gentleman*. By the early 1920s he would gain substantial recognition and could be selective about his assignments, working only for the most prominent magazines.¹¹⁰

Throughout Rockwell’s forty-seven year association with the *Post*, he continued to undertake a variety of assignments including calendars, books, and advertisements. Among his best known works are the annual Boy Scout calendars painted from 1924 to 1976 (he missed only two years); his illustrations for new editions of Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1936) and *Huckleberry Finn* (1940); and the long series of

¹¹⁰*My Adventures*,”terrible Gibson,” 133; “arrived,” 137.

pencil-drawn advertisements for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company done from 1950 to 1963. In 1943, the *Post* published his *Four Freedoms*--illustrating the essential principles declared by President Franklin D. Roosevelt--which soon became highly-publicized and successful war bond posters. Each of these has in common the optimism and moral salubrity Rockwell depicted throughout his seven decade career.

Still, it was his long-standing affiliation with the *Saturday Evening Post* that marked Rockwell's cultural reception. Between the World Wars and under editor Lorimer, the *Post* advanced illustration as a particularly American art. Illustration was characterized there as speaking a common sense visual language in opposition to modern art as a rarified and intellectualized foreign import.¹¹¹ In short, illustration was interleaved in the magazine's conservative and isolationist positions on culture and politics. This legacy, combined with the *Post*'s pronounced decline in the late 1960s and unsteady revival as a discredited voice of nostalgia during in 1970s, would leave Rockwell himself as a

¹¹¹As much as this rhetoric sounds compatible with American Scene painting, I have found little evidence that the *Saturday Evening Post* supported regionalist artists. In the 1930s a variety of popular magazines including *Survey*, *Saturday Review of Literature*, *New Republic*, *Literary Digest*, *Better Home and Gardens*, *Newsweek*, *Scribner's*, *Time*, *Arts and Decoration*, *Travel*, and *American Magazine of Art* covered regionalist painters Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, and John Steuart Curry. The *Saturday Evening Post* did not. Not until the 1940s did the *Post* recognize regionalist art, and then only briefly. The cover of the April 18, 1942 issue carried a reproduction of Grant Wood's *Spring in Town* (1941) while some numbers in the early 1940s ran Thomas Hart Benton's commissioned advertising work for Lucky Strike. On the latter, Erika Doss writes that it took Benton several attempts to produce images acceptable to the client, and although these "looked like regionalist art, they lacked any of that style's original political and social provocation. Featured as advertisements in *Time* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, Benton's pictures were accompanied by just a few sentences of copy. . ." that emphasized objectivity matched to "the equally impartial 'realism' of Benton's art." Erika Doss, *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism: from Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991), 235.

representative of obsolescence.

In 1963, Rockwell left the *Post* and soon, for a brief period, expanded his repertoire of themes to encompass explicitly controversial social issues. Until this time he had applied his high-detail realism to folksy scenes--usually witty, sometimes poignant--of what appeared to be everyday life in America. As critics would note, this image of the nation's people was generally restricted to white, middle-class, and heterosexual families. Rockwell later explained, in part, that longtime *Post* editor George Horace Lorimer had instructed him "never to show colored people except as servants."¹¹² And so they appeared throughout the *Post* and, occasionally, in Rockwell's *Post* oeuvre. By contrast, Rockwell's work for *Look* magazine in the mid 1960s explored black-white race relations and the social turmoil which followed the civil rights movement and subsequent legislation. Best known of these is his 1964 image of Ruby Bridges escorted by deputies from the U.S. Marshall's office, as she integrated a white elementary school in New Orleans in 1960 (*Look*, January 14). Thus, it was only in the last decade and a half of his life that Rockwell's own liberal views might have become readily apparent to a broad public.

¹¹²Richard Reeves, "Norman Rockwell Is Exactly Like A Norman Rockwell," *New York Times Magazine* (February 28, 1971): 42.

This late turn towards inclusive subject matter came packaged in Rockwell's brilliant, if familiar realist style which itself seemed anti-progressive to many art scene observers. For them, Rockwell's illustrations, though technically accomplished, lacked artistic freedom, intellectual engagement, and creative insight. Still, he remained popular with a substantial portion of the American public. This disparity was played out when art critics dismissed a popular 1968 exhibition of his canvases at a New York City gallery, and again in 1972 on the occasion of a Rockwell retrospective held at the Brooklyn Museum.¹¹³ Any reconsideration of Rockwell's aesthetic and historical significance proposed by these exhibitions was further stymied after 1969 by the apparent crass commercialism of an agreement permitting the Franklin Mint to produce versions of his well-know earlier images as porcelain figurines and silver coins. These matters rested on his death in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, November 8, 1978.

¹¹³The 1968 (October 21 - November 9) exhibition was reviewed in M.B. "Norman Rockwell" [exhibition at Bernard Danenberg Gallery, New York], *Arts Magazine* 43 (November 1968): 58. The 1972 Brooklyn Museum exhibition which traveled to nine venues including the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and the M. H. De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco was organized by the Danenberg Galleries with a catalog, *Norman Rockwell: A Sixty Year Retrospective* (Bernard Danenberg Galleries: NY, 1972) written by Brooklyn Museum Director Thomas S. Buechner. The exhibition was widely noticed in the press, but attendance was disappointing. As the *New York Times* (Sunday April 9, 1972) noted, "[a] guard in a deserted gallery [of the Brooklyn Museum] complained bitterly that he'd expected mobs for Rockwell: more than for van Gogh! 'Rockwell's a real realist; they only came to van Gogh 'cause he cut his ear off.'" Memos circulated by museum staff noted, "[d]espite the fact that we didn't get the expected crowds, we did get a remarkable amount of [press] coverage" and that catalog "sales proved disappointing," Jan Henry James to Duncan F. Cameron, June 16, 1972; and Tom Donnelly to Sarah Faunce, May 15, 1972, Brooklyn Museum of Art Archives, Records of the Office of the Director (Duncan F. Cameron), Folder: "Collections: Exhibitions, Norman Rockwell," April 1971 - August 1972.

Despite the failure of earlier attempts to present a convincing reassessment of Rockwell, since the 1980s and 1990s he has been widely reasserted as a significant cultural figure. Popular interest in his work hardly abated, as attested by the proliferation of Rockwell picture books. In the early 1980s a major fund raising campaign to build a new home for the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (then the Old Corner House) drew substantial support from prominent politicians figures including then President Ronald Reagan and Senator Edward Kennedy, indicating that with regards to Rockwell's reception, so-called traditional values might be severed from conservative politics. Most recently, at the turn of the twenty first century, Rockwell has been reinscribed as an iconic American figure by the successful traveling exhibition, *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People* (November 1999 - February 2002). Critical reviews and responses to this exhibition have largely debated, without settling, the question of Rockwell's status -- artist or mere illustrator -- in the postmodern age. His name continues to serve as short-hand for idyllic values of family and community, and his images recently have been revived in nostalgic (and cynically profiteering) responses to events of September 11, 2001 -- notably by the *New York Times* which presented an altered version of the World War II era *Freedom from Fear* as an advertisement bolstering its own authority to "Make sense of our times."¹¹⁴ These deeply nostalgic associations recollect, or reformulate, an America of the past, one imagined as modern, prosperous, homogeneous, and free of social ills that plague the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

¹¹⁴"Make sense of our times // *The New York Times* // Expect the World®" (November 11, 2001): B12.

IV. Boys Will Be Boys

However, in 1916, Rockwell, although still unknown to the general public, was enjoying his first success as an illustrator. On the strength of his reception at the *Post*, he was emboldened to immediately marry Irene O'Connor. Rockwell quickly achieved celebrity status as an illustrator.¹¹⁵ Within two years of his first cover, the *Post*'s subscription list swelled beyond the benchmark of two million (with probably ten millions of readers),¹¹⁶ and the weekly could claim the greatest magazine circulation in the world. The achievement was remarkable for a journal which in 1897 had only 2,000 subscribers. That year, Cyrus H. K. Curtis, then publisher of *Ladies Home Journal*, purchased the *Post* in order to "assert his masculinity" in the magazine field and "to publish a magazine for men," as his publicity agents would later claim. The *Post* continued as a men's magazine, but by the 1920s found that its audience included a significant number of women (over 50 percent by the 1940s). Still, "the editors never sewed frills on the magazine," though it eventually assumed the identity of a family publication. George Horace Lorimer, the *Post* editor who first hired Rockwell, guided the magazine's keen interest in business, which it touted in profiles romanticizing the meteoric rise of young entrepreneurs and captains of

¹¹⁵This first -- loveless, as Rockwell described it -- marriage of fourteen years ended in a divorce initiated by Irene who "had fallen in love with someone else" (*My Adventures*, 292). The event was covered in the society pages of the *New York Times* as were Rockwell's subsequent second engagement and remarriage to Mary Barstow. (see *New York Times* (January 14, 1930): 19; (March 30, 1930): 31; (April 18, 1930): 22 and (April 19, 1930): 20. For biographical treatment of Rockwell's marriage(s), see Claridge, *Norman Rockwell: A Life*.

¹¹⁶Of magazines in general, "it is estimated that five persons read each copy," Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising* (New York and London: D. Appleton & Co., 1916), 80.

industry. While occasionally opening its pages to progressive voices, the *Post*'s fundamentally conservative views were pro-business, combative toward government intervention in free enterprise, antilabor, and anti-immigration¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷On circulation, Frank L. Mott, "The Saturday Evening Post," in *A History of American Magazines*, vol. IV (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 694; for "frills," See anonymous [Ashley Halsey, Jr.], *A Short History of the Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing, 1949), 14. On the *Saturday Evening Post*, see Mott, 702–8; James Playsted Wood, *The Curtis Magazines* (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1971); Helen Damon-Moore, *Magazines for the Millions: Gender and Commerce in the Ladies Home Journal and the Saturday Evening Post, 1880-1910* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1994); and Jan Cohn, *Creating America: George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1989).

In *Boy with Baby Carriage*, his first *Post* cover, as in most of his illustrations for magazines aimed at adults, the depiction of boyhood has become an occasion for humor rather than for the serious treatment of high adventure or social conflict typical of Rockwell's earlier work for juvenile magazines [Figure 29]. The tightly wrought visual narrative purports to relate an ordeal particular to *American* boyhood—evinced by the baseball uniforms—in which two insolent lads taunt and grimace at a third pushing a baby carriage and wearing a citified outfit. Though he is only a youth, this boy's handsome attire mimics the accouterments of an over-accessorized middle-class gentleman: pin-striped suit, pink-striped dress shirt, necktie, double collar, derby, leather gloves, buttonholed red carnation, and, indistinctly, a crooked walking stick. The baby's bottle straining the breast pocket of his jacket punctuates the otherwise neat ensemble. Although he advances at a brisk pace—the string of his hat guard trails behind him—the woven wicker baby carriage seems stalled in the enveloping white ground.¹¹⁸ A tiny red shoe rests on the side of the carriage, while inside only a blanket and a white, beribboned bonnet suggest the infant's body and head.

The boy's antagonists, clad in the matching jerseys and caps of an organized baseball team, pass in the opposite direction but pause momentarily for some fun. Turning back, they act out the antics of a broadly comic -- vaudevillian even -- parody of manners. At the far left, the dark-haired, gap-toothed boy wraps his left arm around his torso to support his (hidden) right elbow. With his index finger under his lower lip, pinky

¹¹⁸The cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* was so vignettted typically, although not without exception, until the 1940s.

extended, and wildly cocked cap he mocks the self-conscious and perhaps feminine gestures of a man of cultivation and breeding who casts an assessing gaze upon a fellow dandy. The tousled-haired boy in the middle raises his cap—again, the pinky is extended—in a burlesqued offering of greetings to a lady.

The scorn of the athletic boys seems directed both at the protagonist's neglect of manly sporting activities in favor of the female role of child care, and at the same time to his presumptuous and mishandled adoption of an adult male's role and attire. Even contemporary etiquette books recognized that "there can be nothing quite so humiliating to a child as to be dressed in an outlandish fashion that renders him conspicuous. . . . A boy should be dressed like a little boy."¹¹⁹ Here, the double-breasted jacket and the derby cloak the boy in the stodgy maturity of an elder statesman, while the hat guard fastened to his lapel evinces the timorousness of an unmanly boy, a sissy. His performance of a woman's chore and the overly refined dress deny the dapper youth access to the camaraderie of boyish play and, apparently, to masculinity. Excluded from the physically oriented homosocial world of the baseball players, he is instead domesticized through his performance of familial obligations in the public sphere of the boulevard or park. Rockwell's formal construction of the image underscores this gulf between opposed domains through his treatment of the interior of the carriage's hood as a padded and buttoned grey cavity.

¹¹⁹Lillian Eichler, *Book of Etiquette*, I (Oyster Bay, NY: Nelson Doubleday, 1921), 256.

Thomas Buechner, described *Boy with Baby Carriage* as depicting the “forced separation of the individual from the group and the assignation of the function of one sex to the other, . . . basic human situations which involve all of us vicariously.”¹²⁰ Here Buechner evokes practices of cultural policing that enforce normative gender roles. But, instead of considering how this image works through and on culturally determined codes of masculinity, Buechner attends to underlying essentialist assumptions. These subsume the idea of performed sex and gender roles to unnamed, because so familiar, innate *functions* of a particular sex. By assigning child rearing to women as a universal charge—a basic human situation—Buechner casts this gender–role ridicule as a social means of maintaining biological order.

Rather than asserting Universal experiences, I would like to consider ways in which *Boy with Baby Carriage* engaged cultural--not biological--issues of gender. At least two aspects of this image foreground as unfixed not only gender but also sex: the infant in the carriage and the dress of the perambulating boy. Seemingly ancillary to the boy’s predicament, the infant in the baby carriage presents a figure without secure gendering, thus incarnating consonant issues. Rendered as no more than a blanket, red bootee, and white bonnet, the bantling has elicited contradictory suppositions from commentators who, while concurring that it is a sibling, disagree as to whether a “baby sister” or a “baby brother” is depicted.¹²¹

¹²⁰Thomas S. Buechner, “A Matter of Opinion” in *The Norman Rockwell Album*, 127. Buechner’s works on Rockwell include the text for *Norman Rockwell: Artist and Illustrator* (Abrams: New York, 1970); *Norman Rockwell: A Sixty Year Retrospective*.

¹²¹Respectively, Thomas S. Buechner, “A Matter of Opinion,” op cit, 127; and Manuel Gasser, “Norman Rockwell,” *Graphis; International Journal for Graphic and Applied Art*

XII, no. 65 (May/June 1956): 210. Sixty-one years later Rockwell identified a “baby sister,” Norman Rockwell, “Forward,” in *200 Years of American Illustration*, ed. Henry C. Pitz (New York: Society of Illustrators, 1977), 11.

Although, the pink ribbon adorning the bonnet would seem to late-modern eyes a feminine (and female) attribute, in the early decades of the twentieth-century infants and young children under age six, regardless of sex, were typically dressed in similar loose-fitting gowns and graced with long curls. These fashions, popularly assumed to be imposed by mothers who ruled the domestic realm, were not in fact ungendered, but coincided with feminine codes. When boys reached the age where they could attend school and play outside the home, their tresses were shorn and they were permitted to don short pants or knickers.¹²² An event typically cast -- and rendered by Rockwell -- as a mother's loss and a boy's greatest joy [Figure 30, Boy at Barber. *Saturday Evening Post* (August 10, 1918, cover)].¹²³ That such codes were less fixed than they came to be after World War II is indicated by contradictory statements such as the advice offered to retail salespeople by a training guide that, "[w]hether the child is a boy or a girl *sometimes* determines the color the mother will choose. For infants, pink is used for boys, blue for girls, but when the boy becomes older, blues and tans are preferred"¹²⁴ While dissenters, who were not at all pleased when mothers extended a preference for pink to their older boys, might approvingly cite the imperious entry for "Pink" in a men's wear guide: "Pink—a color not to be worn by boy babies."¹²⁵

¹²²See E. Anthony Rotundo, "Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920," *Journal of Social History* XVII (1983): 16.

¹²³Rockwell himself is seen at age 2 in a photograph wearing a loose dress and curls, *The Norman Rockwell Album*, 14.

¹²⁴Natalie Kneeland, *Infant's and Children's Wear* (Chicago and New York, 1925), 88, emphasis added.

¹²⁵William Henry Baker, *A Dictionary of Men's Wear* (Cleveland 1908), 187.

Placed approximately at the center of an image explicitly taking a muddled gender role for its subject, the indeterminate sex of the child presses questions of gender identity: not only whether the infant *is* in fact a boy or a girl, but what gender, what sex, will it *become* as it matures and comes to embody codes like those played-out amongst the three boys?

The second aspect, more central to the narrative, concerns the protagonist and the conflicting cultural codes in his dress and accouterments. On the one hand, his derby, or bowler hat, prominently juxtaposed with the baseball caps, could evoke an open profusion of codes of class and gender. This bowler's deployment to a variety of ends by Charlie Chaplin's little tramp, by Georgia O'Keeffe in photographs by Alfred Stieglitz, and, later in Europe, by René Magritte in his Surrealist paintings acknowledged and augmented the overt multivalence.¹²⁶ Whether a sign of machine-age anonymity, male privilege, or middle-class propriety, the bowler tops its bearer with an emphatic, if polysemous, masculine sign.¹²⁷ On the other hand, the feminine implications of the baby's bottle distending the boy's breast pocket, its evocations not only of care giving, but also synecdochically of the mother herself, contradict the bowler. Like the indeterminacy of the infant, these visual cues, the one neither irreducible to nor contained by the other, center on questions about the construction of gender in this image, while undercutting any

¹²⁶The contemporary examples of Chaplin and O'Keeffe date from 1916 through the 1930s and the late teens on, respectively. Magritte's images with bowlers are later, beginning in the mid-1920s.

¹²⁷See Fred Miller Robinson, *The Man in the Bowler Hat: His History and Iconography* (Chapel Hill, N.C., Univ. of North Carolina, 1993), although this work deals primarily with the bowler in a Western European context.

assurances about connections between sex and biological functions.

The contradictions and uncertainties contained in these cues stand in contrast to the certainty of the athletic boys in their elaborate uniforms. The pleasures of the latter concern not only group affiliation, play and secure masculine identity, but also draw on affirmations of identity through class, race and nation. Rockwell does not evoke the unregulated play of either sandlot baseball or the urban variant of stickball, but the well-organized, segregated team sport for middle-class American boys.

Baseball—particular to the United States at the time—and other team sports attracted both working and middle-class boys, but were not open to women and girls, unlike croquet and cycling in the nineteenth century. Formalized by the businessmen of New York's Knickerbocker Club in 1845 and widely popular by 1860, the sport was securely professionalized by the formation of the National (1876) and American (1901) Leagues. In the late nineteenth century, adults standardized baseball for youths through junior league programs and then college teams that established uniform rules and diminished regional variations. With the increasing rationalization and commercialization of this play, adults introduced uniforms and specialized equipment to effect standardization, social control and safety.¹²⁸

Rockwell's illustration seems to countenance a youthful masculinity constructed around physical prowess in preference to a fussy, family-oriented image of boyhood. Such an account dovetails with an incipient stage of what Theodore Roosevelt dubbed the

¹²⁸See E. Anthony Rotundo, "Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Meanings for Manhood*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago, 1990), 34–35.

“strenuous life,” a response to anxiety about manliness which perceived salvation of the Anglo–Saxon race itself in well–reared American adolescents.¹²⁹

¹²⁹Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life; Essays and Addresses* (New York) 1910 [1900], appeared in the same year as his editorial in *St. Nicholas* entitled “What We Can Expect of the American Boy” (May 1900). The latter was reverently reprinted in the March 1919 issue following Roosevelt’s death in February.

And yet, in travestyings confusions about gender codes, this image hints at coexisting, sometimes competing, terms for middle—class, white masculinity. Specifically, beyond the familiar masculinity defined in terms of bodily fortitude, well documented by historians of the period, this and other Rockwell illustrations point to a masculinity dependent upon correct judgment in matters of dress, a kind of sartorial masculinity. In *Boy with Baby Carriage* the value of *decorous* sartorial splendor is intimated, but virtually eclipsed, by the send—up of immoderate attention to male dress. However, other Rockwell illustrations more clearly sanction felicitous observance of normative dress codes, primarily through the dividends awarded superior heterosexual sex appeal. For instance, in an image such as *Shall We Dance?* from 1917, the elder boy with his suave gestures and sophisticated evening wear enjoys the attentions of a rapt belle, to the dismay of his rival in knickers, who loses out on a promised dance [Figure 31].¹³⁰ The alternative and often overlooked sartorial masculinity indicated in these images will become more evident in the next chapter which addresses the fop, the mature kin to the sissy.

¹³⁰Laurie Norton Moffatt, *Norman Rockwell, a Definitive Catalogue*, vol. I (Stockbridge, Mass.: Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, distributed by Hanover, N.H.: the University Press of New England, 1986), 75 gives the title as *Two Men Courting Girl's Favor*, an apparent misnomer in view of the youth of the figures. *Shall We Dance?* is preferred by the copyright holder.

The sissy served Rockwell handily as the unique comic figure in his work for juvenile magazines. As he later mused about an illustration for a story in *St. Nicholas* [Figure 32], “About the only subject which an illustrator for young people’s magazines was permitted to treat humorously was rich, sissyish kids. The readers all identified with the regular fellows behind the car and laughed with them at the conceited, pompous sissy.”¹³¹ The story itself, “Making Good in Boy’s Camp,” recounted the fictional experiences of several young boys each of whom started out summer camp on the wrong foot, but eventually shaped up. The rich kid called Percy--it “was n’t his real name ; but it should have been” -- is maligned as much for his inability to dress himself without a butler’s assistance at thirteen years of age as for his sartorial excesses. Rockwell’s image depicts the moment when “Percy arrived in camp the most dressed-up lad you ever saw.” In the background, behind the engine compartment of the cabriolet, campers gawk at the new arrival in hilarious disbelief. But Percy -- with hat-box laden chauffeur close to hand -- pauses facing dead-front and poses gloved-hand on hip in the fashion of an aristocratic portrait or even a clothing advertisement. Having arrived, Percy suffers through several narrative incidents in which he dishonors himself and his tent partners. Dismayed to find that through his finicky antics he has gotten “his new camp suit so mussy!” he undertakes to clean it himself. And when he does finally wash his own stockings and then builds a decent bunk, he achieves a measure of self-reliance that the other campers can respect. His narrative concludes, “He had not only caught on, but he had made good. And so -- well, though they did call him Percy when he arrived, they called

¹³¹*The Norman Rockwell Album*, 23.

him Bill when he went home!”¹³² The boy’s name, Percy, is conjoined in a special relation with the sissy. As the noted observer of the American scene H. L. Mencken remarked somewhat later in his lexicographic work *The American Language*, “many aristocratic English given-names, [including] Reginald [and] Percy, are commonly looked upon as sissified in the United States, and any boy who bears one of them is likely to have to defend it with his fists.”¹³³

Rockwell registered a particular sensitivity to the connotations of the name Percevel and its variants in his autobiography. As a young illustrator signing his work, Norman Percevel Rockwell reduced his middle name, Percevel, to a P. and then dropped it altogether despite, as he wrote in his autobiography, “my mother’s earnest protestations.” Recalling that she had always insisted he sign his name in full and how he “lived in terror” of being called Percy, Rockwell unpacked some of the codes he recognized in the name:

My mother, an Anglophile (I wore a black arm band for six weeks after Queen Victoria died) and very proud of her English ancestry, named me after Sir Norman Percevel (“Remember, Norman Percevel,” she’d say, “it’s spelled with an *e*; *I* and *a* are common”), who reputedly kicked Guy Fawkes down the stairs of the Tower of London after he had tried to blow up the House of Lords.¹³⁴

¹³²Ralph Graham, “Making Good at Boys’ Camp,” *St. Nicholas* XLIV (1917): 839–40.

¹³³H. L. Mencken, *The American Language* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1936, [1946]), 518. In 1925, *Vanity Fair* let “A Group of Artists Write Their Own Epitaphs” receiving among others, this from the influential New York drama critic who described a cross-dressing performer as “amibisextrous”: “Here Percy Hammond Lies, At Least He Had a Pretty Name.”

¹³⁴*My Adventures*, 31.

He chafed at his mother's misplaced pride in their English ancestry, but also fretted at the "queer notion that Percevel (and especially the form Percy) was a sissy name, almost effeminate."¹³⁵ Thus, the early twentieth-century sissy—an effeminate male marked by his sartorial excesses, evoked wealth and European aristocracy. In other words, the "sissy" marked, largely by dress, deviation from a masculine norm of the middle-class American boy.

Anxiety about such unmanning -- even niggling concern over proper names -- was not just Rockwell's, but belonged to the larger culture. Mencken had found other examples to give Rockwell's personal angst a general application, including a note about a singularly accomplished seaman who was likely "the only man afloat in the coast guard who could afford to admit the name of *Claude*," a statement followed up with the question, "Could he have borne up so well under the name of 'Percy'?" Both names, the author implied, would devastate the manhood of a lesser mariner.¹³⁶ These concerns had not only to do with the English aristocratic connotations of "Percy," but also addressed a more generalized distrust of things European. Thus, Willa Cather employed "a very good French name," *Claude*, for an American character who admitted it was "a sissy name" in English (and one which in French was also "un peu ... romanesque").¹³⁷

¹³⁵*My Adventures*, 32. The sissy appears again in *My Adventures* (428) as Rockwell records the progress on his 1959 family tree *Post* cover.

¹³⁶Mencken cites a note submitted by Howard F. Barker to *American Speech* III (April 1928): 347, who in turn refers to a *Christian Science Monitor* profile of one Captain Cochrane (emphasis in original).

¹³⁷Willa Cather, *One of Ours* (1922), ellipses in the original dialog.

And the morbid fear of sissification could strike even the most supremely self-confident of adult males, including Edward Bok, editor of the *Ladies Home Journal*. Writing in his self-congratulatory, best-selling autobiography, Bok explained how he came to forswear the public lecture circuit. Seeking to understand why, when he traveled, men seemed to shy away -- “men, for some reason or other, hold aloof from me They stand at a distance and eye me, and I see wonder on their faces rather than a desire to mix” -- he recounted his close questioning of a trusted friend, a scene in which he refers to himself, as he does throughout the book, in the third person:

“Yes, and I can’t quite get it. At home, my friends are men. Why should it be different in other cities?”

“I’ll tell you,” said Riley. “Five or six of the men you met to-night were loath to come. When I pinned them down to their reason, it was I thought: they regard you as an effeminate being, a sissy.”

“Good heavens!” interrupted Bok.

It was “unpleasant” for Bok, and “from that day to this he never lectured again.”¹³⁸

These concerns -- registered by Rockwell, Mencken, Cather, Bok and others -- were not simply a matter of individuals having to surmount or succumb to the taunting and disdain of their peers. Rather it had become at the turn of the century an issue of grave, national concern. The consolidation of masculinity in the disciplined and fortified male body had, at that time, displaced an earlier conception of masculinity premised on the cultivation of self as a creature of the business or spiritual world.¹³⁹ At the beginning of the twentieth century the pursuit of healthy boyhood, too, became a subject of national

¹³⁸Edward W. Bok, *The Americanization of Edward Bok: The Autobiography of a Dutch Boy Fifty Years After* 22nd edition (New York: C. Scribner’s sons, 1922 [1920]), 319-320.

¹³⁹E. Anthony Rotundo, “Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920,” *Journal of Social History* XVII, 1983, 23-27.

debate in response to fears that new family and professional roles for women, the close of the Western frontier, and the rise of urban living would drain the middle-class of its vitality. Responses to changing social patterns and perceived threats were largely shaped by contemporary theories on adolescence.

At the turn of the century, against the backdrop of smaller middle-class families with fewer servants and with working fathers absent from the home, motherhood assumed increased importance in domestic and child-rearing matters. Some social commentators perceived the waning presence of fathers as an impediment to the healthy development of boys. If these critics looked to public schools to provide boys with a refuge from a domestic environment governed by women, they were disappointed there as well. Increasingly amongst the students girls outnumbered boys while at the front of the classroom women superseded men as teachers.¹⁴⁰ The growing presence and authority of women in schools, according to these critics, supplanted male influence on boys, while the environment, premised on sedentary activities, weakened their young male bodies.¹⁴¹ Sunday schools were thought still less conducive to producing “real” boys who were thought to resist sermons by squirming in class while harboring a “wholesome dislike for the youthful prig--especially if he was a religious prig.”¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰Critics of boys’ education took note that while in 1879 fifty-nine percent of teachers were women, in 1920 the percentage had risen to eighty-six; see David Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870–1920* (Madison, Wis., 1983), 48–49.

¹⁴¹Jeffrey P. Hantover, “The Boy Scouts and the Validation of Masculinity,” *Journal of Social Issues* XXXIV, no. 1 (1978): 186–87.

¹⁴²Henry Cabot Lodge, *Early Memories* (New York, 1913), 72, quoted in Macleod, *Building Character*, 1983, 48.

Other observers characterized city life itself as an enervating influence, a threat to masculinity and white racial heritage alike. One commentator wrote in 1902 that urban parents “are frequently pained to find that their children have less power and less vitality to endure the rough side of life than they have themselves. . . . Families who live in the city without marrying country stock for two or three generations . . . later are unable to rear strong families.”¹⁴³ As it appeared to Lothrop Stoddard, “The whole course of modern urban and industrial life is disgenic. Over and above immigration, the tendency is toward a replacement of the more valuable by the less valuable elements of the population.”¹⁴⁴ Such dissipation sometimes connoted, beyond a degraded stock, the suggestion of racial impurity. On the one hand, large cities in general -- especially Northern cities which were thought by eugenicists to lack the admirable, rigid social barriers of the South -- seemed to offer unwanted opportunities for passing and intermarriage. On the other hand, there was the countervailing emphasis placed upon the Negro’s “lower vital capacity [which] puts him at a disadvantage [to] others.” A disadvantage not evident on the plains of Africa, but most debilitating in the context of “modern, Nordic industrial civilization” for which the Negro lacked the necessary “self-control and the capacity for co-operation.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, the city -- otherwise the consummate symbol of modernity -- could pose a retrogressive hazard by its concentration of immigrants and blacks who were thought to be evolutionarily, that

¹⁴³Luther Gulick, “Studies of Adolescent Boyhood,” *Association Boys*, I (1902): 149–50, cited in Macleod, *Building Character*, 1983, 49.

¹⁴⁴Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), Chapter XII: The Crisis of the Ages.

¹⁴⁵Madison Grant, *Conquest*, 285.

is genetically, anti-modern.

Among members of the white middle-class, new working patterns for urban industries drew men from the home, subjected them to enfeebling work environments, and interrupted traditions of father–son apprenticeships through the intervention of corporations. Medical discourse, too, substantiated fears of modern urban life, identifying neurasthenia as an affliction affecting both men and women of “the in–door–living and brain–working classes.” In boys the disorder was treated with outdoor physical exercise.¹⁴⁶ Modernity, it seemed, was toxic to white manhood.

¹⁴⁶George M. Beard, *American Nervousness* (New York, 1881), 98, cited in Macleod, *Building Character*, 1983, 49. Medical journals reported approximately equal numbers of cases of neurasthenia in men and women between 1870 and 1910; see F. G. Gosling, *Before Freud: Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community 1870–1910* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 97.

To counter the influence of these perceived social developments, a variety of groups sought to shape the character of the nation's youth, through the general rubric of boys' work. Boys' works organizations in American cities and towns included the popular Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), founded in 1851 to ease the transition of young men arriving for the first time in large cities, and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), formed in 1910.¹⁴⁷ Concerned adults—by profession “boys’ workers”—in urban, rural, and farming communities formed extra-scholastic organizations to benefit and manage boys from various classes. Character building, a narrower term than boys’ work, focused specific attention on preparing white, middle-class boys to become responsible men. Through extra-scholastic activity designed to discipline youths, character-building groups sought to instill in middle-class boys in particular probity, rectitude, and robust physical health. The YMCA began boy’s work in the 1870s and applied itself to character building in earnest in about 1900. The character builders recruited a “better class of boys,” avoiding the “rougher element;”¹⁴⁸ this was left to other organizations and clubs that specifically targeted working-class and street boys (perceived as a delinquent lot, which included \newsboys, bootblacks, and scavenging urchins) and aimed merely to occupy the idle time and divert the dangerous

¹⁴⁷Macleod, *Building Character*, 1983, xii, 112–13.

¹⁴⁸"Do not so generally or publicly advertise . . . that the rougher element shall be attracted; rather make [your meeting] known by personal effort among the better class of boys." John D. Chambers, "Boys' Work," *Watchman XIII* (1884): 141, quoted in Macleod, *Building Character*, 1983, 77. Macleod, 75, 217–18, also notes that some YMCAs had fees that were prohibitive for the lower classes.

excess energies of youths who would never amount to much.¹⁴⁹ Still other organizations dealt with farm and rural boys. Male character–building organizations, forged into discrete, reproducible units (as in the Boy Scout troop or the local Y), multiplied in cities and towns across the nation, drawing impressive numbers of adult leaders and young members.¹⁵⁰ These segregated clubs and troops discouraged mixing of classes and races, promising to uphold social barriers serving race purity.

¹⁴⁹Macleod, *Building Character*, 1983, 3.

¹⁵⁰The Boy Scouts, founded in 1910, enrolled 361,000 boys and 32,000 scoutmasters by 1919. Junior membership in the YMCA grew from 30,675 in 1900 to 219,376 in 1921. See Macleod, *Building Character*, 1983, xi, 120.

Character builders found legitimation and motivation for their cause in the first modern theoretical formulation of adolescence, lasting from the age of about thirteen until the early twenties, by the psychologist G. Stanley Hall. Hall—remembered today for bringing Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung to lecture at Clark University in 1909—theorized adolescence as a distinct, extended, and precarious stage between childhood and adulthood. Though formulated for an academic audience, Hall’s theories, disseminated in popular abridged editions, resonated with popular conceptions and cautionary literature on adolescence and were eagerly embraced by general readers.¹⁵¹ Hall, like the BSA and the YMCA, focused on middle-class youth as the most critical and promising social group through which to advance the development of Western culture, a project which would culminate by “ushering in the kingdom of the superman” so as to attain “the summits of human possibility.”¹⁵² His neo-Darwinian framework shifted attention to the middle class and away from “the undervitalized poor . . . moribund sick, defectives and criminals, because by aiding them to survive it interferes with the process of wholesome natural selection by which all that is best has hitherto been developed.”¹⁵³

¹⁵¹See Dorothy Ross, *G. Stanley Hall, The Psychologist as Prophet* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), xiv, 337, 333. John Atherton, “On The Official Boy Scout Handbook,” *Revue Française d’Etudes Américaines* 12 (April 1987): 282, mentions Hall in his discussion of Rockwell illustrations for Boy Scout calendars. On Hall in relation to youth movements, see Macleod, *Building Character*, 1983, and David Macleod, “Act Your Age: Boyhood, Adolescence, and the Rise of the Boy Scouts of America,” *Journal of Social History* XIV, no. 2 (1982): 3-20.

¹⁵²Hall, quoted in Ross, 318–19.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, 318.

This last phrase was perfectly congenial to eugenic thinking as expressed for instance in Madison Grant's explanation for the flourishing of black Americans despite their alleged lower vital capacity as the result of "white sanitation and hygiene" that distorted the processes of natural selection which could thus "no longer be relied upon to solve the problem by a gradual elimination of the Negro in America."¹⁵⁴ Hall's interests in genetic psychology placed him squarely in the eugenical camp. Indeed, notwithstanding his work in and influence upon education, he argued that genetic make-up would always hold greater significance than social efforts.¹⁵⁵ Early scout leader and promoters -- among them Taft, Roosevelt, Jeremiah Jenks of Cornell University, and Stanford University President David Starr Jordan -- were themselves invested in the new eugenics. The conceptual emphasis on genetic predisposition limited the influence a Scoutmaster might effect in the development of a boy's character. This, far more than local demographics, accounted for the efforts to treat boys from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds in separate organizations and in different groups.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴Grant, *Conquest*, 285-86.

¹⁵⁵See Selden, 42-3; and Cravens, 63-66, 75-76.

¹⁵⁶Hasian, Jr., *Rhetoric of Eugenics*, 1996, 38-42.

Hall's work explicitly raised the specter of feminization in his description of male adolescent development involving successive, stratified phases through which a boy would pass, including a "generalized or even feminized stage of psychic development" which the adult male must outgrow.¹⁵⁷ His views on feminization and social institutions, expressed in various articles including "Feminization in School and Home" of 1908, drew angry criticism from educators, but also won the support of New York governor Theodore Roosevelt, who praised "the sound common sense, decency and manliness in what you [Hall] advocate for the education of children."¹⁵⁸ Both Roosevelt and Hall—the latter proceeding from the explicit assumption that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, conceived of adolescence as a critical stage through which the vitality of "the race" might be enhanced by encouraging the appropriate habits and virtues.¹⁵⁹

This "race," for Hall as for Roosevelt, exhibited nationalistic as well as genetic components, referring to both Anglo-Saxon—sometimes Western European—ancestry and a unique, American mind-set. When Roosevelt advocated militarily supported expansionist policies in "The Strenuous Life," he asserted that the "stronger and more manful race" (18) must prevail in any conflict between nations. That such manfulness of the race was founded upon the character of the individual Roosevelt made evident in his aphoristic statement, "as it is with the individual, so it is with the nation" (6).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 339.

¹⁵⁸Ross, 317–18; Roosevelt, quoted in *ibid.*, Ross (318, note 18), from a letter to Hall dated November 29, 1899.

¹⁵⁹ Ross, 332–33.

¹⁶⁰Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," in Roosevelt 1910, *op cit*, 18 and 6.

Having recognized the need to manage adolescence, and bolstered by a tenable theoretical framework, boys' workers found further incentive for their mission in the nationalistic rhetoric of expansionism that followed the closing of the American frontier. F. J. Turner's 1893 address on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" held that the unique national character of the American people was the product of their evolution in confronting the ever-present, though now bygone, frontier. In its place the city increasingly defined American social life at some peril to values established in the conquest of the frontier.¹⁶¹ Echoing sentiments of the frontier thesis—its nostalgic acknowledgment of the passing of the untamed West and the consequent need for new kinds of frontiers to secure manliness, Daniel Carter Beard, an early BSA leader, argued:

The Wilderness is gone, the Buckskin Man is gone, the painted Indian has hit the trail over the Great Divide, the hardships and privations of pioneer life which did so much to develop sterling manhood are now but a legend in history, and we must depend upon the Boy Scout Movement to produce the MEN of the future.¹⁶²

The Boy Scout movement, then, aimed to counteract the debilitating influences of women, the city, and modern life, taken to be the antithesis of the uniquely American experience of the frontier. By selecting the best American stock and subjecting it to artificial approximations of the rigors of Colonial and pioneering life, the BSA would restage the

¹⁶¹For a discussion of concerns shared by Turner and Roosevelt about the course of American civilization and how these shaped the Scouting ideal, see David E. Shi, "Ernest Thompson Seton and the Boy Scouts: A Moral Equivalent of War?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* LXXXIV, no. 4 (1985): 380–81. See Roosevelt May 1900, op cit, 423–24, for his paean to the character-building qualities of "the prairie and the backwoods and the rugged farms" as compared to the degenerative influences of "big Eastern cities."

¹⁶²Boy Scouts of America, fourth annual report, *Scouting*, I, 1914, 109, quoted in Hantover, 189.

theater of evolution within the vitiating precincts of modernity.

If the BSA was to fill the gap left by the demise of the American wilderness and the manly attributes instilled by the frontier, it was to do so in opposition to the excessive cosmopolitanism of Europe, an opposition implicit in the malediction “sissy” and in the images Rockwell would soon render.¹⁶³ Thus, James West, the first Chief Scout Executive of the BSA wrote, “The REAL Boy Scout is not a ‘sissy.’ He is not a hothouse plant, like little Lord Fauntleroy.”¹⁶⁴ In evoking Frances Hodgson Burnett’s enormously popular 1886 novel, West placed the Boy Scout in opposition to the title character who wears a lace-collared velvet suit and long hair, thereby casting the “sissy” as a distinctly feminized clotheshorse who, though he might succeed abroad by good manners and charm, hasn’t the character of a real American boy.

Advice literature directed at middle-class mothers also recognized the connection between the figures of the sissy and little Lord Fauntleroy in terms of their shared appearance. One such guide, implicitly intended for women as the dominant agents of childrearing in the family, cautioned that at the age when a boy departs the domestic sphere for school, “he desires above all other things to avoid the opprobrium of ‘sissy’ [and must

¹⁶³F. A. Crosby, “Boy Scouting--What It Really Is,” *The World To-Day* XX (1911): 221, cited in Shi, “Ernest Thompson Seton and the Boy Scouts,” op cit, 379.

¹⁶⁴James West, “The Real Boy Scout,” *Leslie’s Weekly* (1912): 448, cited in Hantover, 191. “Sissy” gained its sense of an effeminate man or boy between 1885 and 1890, coinciding with the virtual invasion of America by Little Lord Fauntleroy, who according to one observer was “an impossible kid that started a clothes cult”; see Baker, op cit, 150. On the term “sissy” also see Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: a Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 100.

not be dressed to] suggest a likeness to Lord Fauntleroy in his ruffles and long curls.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵Margaret Story, *Individuality and Clothes* (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Co, 1930), 65–66.

The sissy, then, can be understood as a stigmatizing term, explicitly demanding conformity to normative masculine identities in terms of nationhood, middle–class unity, and gender. Frequently, but not exclusively, defined by dress, the sissy is a denigrated figure repeatedly deployed to differentiate the proper and acceptable from the degenerate and repulsive. Thus, the figure of Percy in the *St. Nicholas* illustration provides regular fellows with the occasion to define their own identity against that of a vaguely alien, rich, effeminate snob.

In counterpoint to the sissy, the *real* boy enjoyed ennobling praise. This rough and tumble “manly little man,” as described in the copy of a Black Cat hosiery advertisement illustrated by Rockwell, possessed all the spunk and innate nobility of Roosevelt’s “American boy,” even under the watchful eye of a schoolmistress [Figure 33].¹⁶⁶ Like his clothes, he is emphatically “made–in–America,” rejecting the characteristics of “the Little Lord Fauntleroy you read about in storybooks.” This real boy—conventionally conceived strictly in terms of character and bodily fortitude—could equally exercise fashion sense and consumer savvy to effect his transition to manhood. This much is suggested by a clothing advertisement from the *Post* depicting a youth in his first suit—master of the young pup he grasps effortlessly in one hand—and headed, “Now he’s a man!” [Figure

¹⁶⁶The real boy could present difficulties for advertisers attempting to exploit the discourse of motherhood. One manufacturer of bathroom fixtures attempted to address maternal concerns about hygiene with the incongruous claim that, “Even real boys enjoy washing hands and faces at this lavatory” accompanied by an image of boy in sailor uniform supervised by either a mother or maid. Maddock Bathroom Equipment, *House and Garden* (January 1925): 116.

34].¹⁶⁷ But tasteful clothes alone, would not necessarily make the boy a man. Just as real boys might become sissies under the undue influence of mothers and urban society, they were in equal danger, according to the chief of the Scouts, of aging from “robust, manly, self-reliant boyhood into a lot of flat-chested cigarette-smokers, with shaky nerves and doubtful vitality,”¹⁶⁸ a danger which Rockwell himself depicted in a 1917 cover for *Life* magazine [Figure 36, *Tain’t You, (Miss Perseval)*, discussed in Chapter Three].

¹⁶⁷The advertisement copy extols a young man’s preference for clothes of manly style, high quality, and good value, but also invokes his “war-time duty to spend wisely.” Although advertisements for goods from clothing to automobiles praised the sparing and judicious use of resources, such thriftiness was already framed in peacetime as a masculine quality to be cultivated by male consumers.

¹⁶⁸E. T. Seton, *Boy Scouts of America: A Handbook of Woodcraft, Scouting, and Life Craft* (1910), xi, quoted in Hantover, 189.

Another of Rockwell's advertising images, this one for boy's apparel, locates a ground between the jeers of the baseball players in *Boy with Baby Carriage* or worse yet the mortifying image of Lord Fauntleroy, and the masculinity sought by character builders and represented by the rough and tumble real boy who was as likely to shun his mother's idea of becoming duds as he was to skip out on Sunday school. Given that the illustration is an advertisement, it comes as little surprise that the resolution of tension between sartorial celebration and the vigor of the real boy is accomplished through the apotheosis of the brand name label. In *It's a "Best-Ever" Suit--Y' Betcha!* a jaunty boy with tousled hair proudly displays the manufacturer's label inside the jacket of his new ready-made suit [Figure 35].¹⁶⁹ Like Percy who had made good at boy's camp, the Best Ever boy is a true peacock. Yet, despite the evident pleasure he takes -- and the personal investment he makes-- in his handsome attire, he is no sissy himself. The role is left to the figure standing behind him, at right, that familiar skinny boy in a bowler and unfashionable outfit who gazes at the *Best-Ever* suit with decided adoration—the real sissy who covets becomingness too assiduously. But neither is the young consumer an unbending adherent of the cult of physicality or of the youth activities of character builders, for those ideals are embodied in an equally admiring, even stunned boy outfitted for baseball. The effect of this estimable suit draw the attention of even the dog who faithfully validates the boy's masculine ability -- his mastery -- in determining quality, style, value, and appearance

¹⁶⁹The advertisement is undated, but features the face (and initials) of favorite model Billy Paine who posed for all three boys in *Boy With Baby Carriage* and who died after a tragic fall from a roof well before 1922. See Elisabeth Smith, "Creator of Boy Pictures Wants to Make Sketches of Girls Instead: Norman Rockwell Puts Regular Guys on Covers, For He Draws Them Best," *The Evening Telegram* (New York: Sunday, July 9, 1922): 7.

without degenerating into effeminacy. In *It's a "Best-Ever" Suit--Y' Betcha!* the precise locus of masculinity is neither physical prowess nor personal discrimination. Rather, masculine attributes in this image obtain under the aegis, candidly exposed, of the maker's label. Manliness here does not reside in or on the body, but is purchased and applied to it under the sign of the brand name.

This simultaneity of the personal skills and qualities of the consumer and of a branded pride bespeaks the formation of a masculine personality that discriminates in the market place.¹⁷⁰ Warren Susman has argued that personality -- as a mode of self-presentation, an attribute to be trained in the individual -- emerged in the first decade of the twentieth-century to displace character -- a term encompassing permanent internal qualities.¹⁷¹ The activities of character builders somewhat complicate this picture of superficial and malleable personality displacing a deep and abiding character, for they proposed to shape character within -- for the most part -- the limits of genetic disposition. But personality need not be imagined a completely original formation just as character need not be seen as retiring demurely to the wings. Personality and character coexisted in a dynamic relation that would continue to evolve. Though *character* may have born nineteenth-century overtones, it remained a powerful feature of twentieth-century culture. Raymond Williams offers as one of his *Keywords* an entry on Personality that asserts, "a personality, or a *character*, once an outward sign, has been [in the twentieth century]

¹⁷⁰See Christopher Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914* (Manchester Univ. 1999).

¹⁷¹Warren Susman, "'Personality' and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture," in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 277.

decisively internalized, yet internalized as a possession, and therefore as something which can be either displayed or interpreted.”¹⁷² And to this we must add, of course, commodified. The general distinction that emerges between personality and character concerns the relation between surface and depth, between form and meaning, and probably signifies not the replacement of one trait by the other, but reconfigurations of the status of representation and of ideas of self. Character continued to represent a deep seated aspect of individual makeup, but one that was happily malleable especially in the young. And it galvanized the activities of character-building organizations and capital business concerns such as the *Saturday Evening Post*.¹⁷³

¹⁷²Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 235. Williams acknowledges -- and I concur -- that despite the convergence of personality and character that he defines, there are senses in which the two can be distinguished.

¹⁷³See Chapter IV on the *Post* boy.

Chapter Three: *American Clothes Make the Man*

Masculinity, even during the interwar period, was not hegemonic. Different ideals circulated and dominated in different social sectors. Middle-class masculinity coexisted with ideas held among members of the working and upper class, just as different ethnic groups held distinct ideas of manhood. Here, I am interested in how masculinity functioned in the *Saturday Evening Post* and in how illustration was conceptually able to participate in its formation and propagation. Therefore, I will be centering my discussion around the *Post* and related materials. The masculinity under discussion, then, concerns that white middle-class consumer manliness that participated fully in mainstream American institutions. The relationship between, on the one hand, ideas and images of masculinity propagated in the popular media, and, on the other hand, the lived experience of gender roles cannot be assumed an equivalence. Ideals of gender are not experience, although they nonetheless that possess the power to profoundly shape the experience of gender.

In the nineteen tens and twenties an elegant sartorial masculinity, hinging on correct judgment in matters of men's dress, gained prominence in mass-circulation magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post*. Undoubtedly, this ideal was seized upon by advertisers, especially of clothing, to sell goods, and yet it also enjoyed a popular reception among magazine readers. The sartorial man coexisted with and complemented the more familiar masculinity of vigorous physicality advocated by Theodore Roosevelt among others, while standing in opposition to the vilified fop among others. Amongst the fop's salient and detestable features were a pronounced investment in his own appearance and dress -- and his sometimes excessive attention to manners and the niceties of

decorum -- that marked him as suspiciously effeminate. By contrast, the man of sartorial taste deftly negotiated demands for urban refinement, patriotic fervor, class aspiration, and racial salubrity to produce a manly effect.

Advertisers of men's clothing sought to navigate a path which placed emphasis upon dress without impugning a potential customer's ideal of masculinity. The Arrow Collar man famously rendered by J. C. Leyendecker was one such successful figure: piercingly handsome, unquestionably masculine, stunningly fashionable, and seemingly happiest in the company of men. Neither fop, slender fashion plate, nor strenuously manly, the Arrow Collar man -- and companions -- marked a 'queer,' if not homosexual, territory for the modern man. And yet, even while Leyendecker's -- and sometimes Rockwell's -- male figures open onto uncertain sexual terrain, they ultimately participate in the re-centering of normative whiteness.

I. Men in Suits

As Rockwell made the transition from youth magazines such as *Boy's Life* where one of his stock characters was the sissy, to higher profile work for mass-circulation adult magazines, he expanded his repertoire of humorous types to include the fop. I want to begin here with the fop as a first step in this chapter's examination of what popular illustration contributed to the contemporary discourse of middle-class masculinity and American national identity beginning in 1917 when the United States conscripted its first recruits to service in the War. The war itself did not significantly shift the notional terms of masculinity, largely because of the continuity in longer-standing social developments from the period after Reconstruction through the second decade of the twentieth century. Theodore Roosevelt's influential framing of masculinity as bodily fortitude itself owed

much to the expansionist and jingoistic rhetoric surrounding the Spanish-American War of 1898. Certainly images of uniformed soldiers performing honorable duties or strutting arm in arm with attractive civilian women circulated widely, but these only confirmed the existing terms of corporal masculinity with its bellicose connotations. In fact, the war had less of an impact upon some social patterns bearing on masculinity than might be supposed.¹

Through humorous evocations of the maligned fop, Rockwell explored the limits of masculinity in the public realm. The sartorial masculinity framed by these images was one based upon fashion and taste rather than on the bodily fortitude that has dominated our understanding of early twentieth-century masculine ideals. Despite distinctions between sartorial and physical masculinities, both provided models for middle-class social agency in marked contrast to images of brawny working-class male bodies that served as emblems of industrial power in advertisements in the same journals.

¹For instance, while some feminists advanced lofty claims during the war that “at last, after centuries of disabilities and discrimination, women are coming into the labor and festival of life on equal terms with men” (unnamed female orator, 1917, cited in David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* [New York, 1980]: 285), such hyperbole amounted to wishful thinking. Although, upward of a million women undertook work during the war, few did so for the first time, resulting in only a negligible net increase of women in the labor force. Even as women moved into some jobs previously closed to them, they lost ground by 1920 in the overall labor force relative to 1910.

Just as the real boys I discussed in the previous chapter threatened to devolve into sissies under the undue influence of mothers and urban society, they might equally age from “robust, manly, self-reliant boyhood into a lot of flat-chested cigarette-smokers, with shaky nerves and doubtful vitality”²-- an apt description of the contrast between the admirably truant scamp and the gawking fop depicted in “*Tain’t You*,” Rockwell’s first cover for *Life* from 1917 [Figure 36].³ In this image, an impish boy with a tell-tale open box of chinks protruding from his pocket stands with his back to a knotted wood fence bearing the stick-figure likeness of a gentleman with hat, eyeglasses, cane, gloves, lit cigarette, and mustaches.⁴ The boy’s recreant companion disappears around the fence, while the youthful illustrator remains, smiling affably at a dismayed man who leans forward, heels slightly raised off the ground, in an attempt to discern the drawing. The boy, caught in the act of caricaturing the fussy airs of this gentleman, perhaps his schoolteacher, boldly denies the resemblance, declaring, in the words of the caption: “Tain’t You.” But, of course, the chalk-scrawled inscription on the fence above the

²E. T. Seton, *Boy Scouts of America: A Handbook of Woodcraft, Scouting, and Life Craft* 1910, xi, quoted in Jeffrey P. Hantover, “The Boy Scouts and the Validation of Masculinity,” *Journal of Social Issues* XXXIV, no. 1 (1978): 189.

³When *Life* published Rockwell’s illustration, the magazine enjoyed a circulation second only to that of the *Post*. Founded in 1883, *Life* was published in New York as a humorous weekly until 1936, when its name was purchased by Time Inc. under Henry Luce and moved to Chicago, where it was introduced as the famous pictorial magazine.

⁴The chalk portrait is signed with the slightly obscured initials “BP,” referring to the model Billy Paine, a Rockwell favorite who also posed all three of the youths of *Boy with Baby Carriage*. Rockwell frequently played with identities by inserting in his pictures textual references to his models and to himself. Here, in a private joke, he gives his own middle name Percevel to the image of the effeminate man (see chapter II). However, he publicly asserts a masculinity for the parodic art practiced by the rambunctious boy, an art aligned with and issuing from his own illustrative practice.

image, “MISS PERSEVAL,” contradicts him, and the lanky man answers the figure in the drawing down to the smoke curling from his cigarette.⁵ But how do we account for him as “*Miss*”? Turning the pages of the mass-circulation weeklies in order to examine male dress provides some answers.

Clothing advertisements in the *Saturday Evening Post* of the late teens typically depicted tall, slim men of aquiline features wearing suits finished with tapered waists, mid-width lapels, and cuffed trousers that reveal a stockinged ankle.⁶ The advertising copy accompanying these images frequently emphasized appropriate male dress as an initiation into adult manhood, a profoundly national expression, or a recognizable characteristic of masculinity. The remarkable attenuation of the illustrated figures was not incompatible with demands for visible physical masculinity evinced in advertising copy, such as that for Brandegee-Kincaid Clothes, offering both “Body-lines adapted to the American figure” and “Manliness which avoids that effeminate look upon which American taste frowns” [Figure 37].

⁵Mary Laing, personal correspondence, June 27, 1996, calls attention to the gap between the M and the ISS, suggesting that the ISS may have been added hurriedly. To my eye, this gap, like a virgule or at least a moment of hesitation and uncertainty, reprises the ambiguity of gender in the image of the adult (he MISSEs the mark although he might have MISTERed or Mastered it), but also reflects a demand for a normative either/or binary conception of sex.

⁶Reportedly, spats were virtually universal before 1910 when low-ankled shoes replaced them, making socks prominent. Thereafter socks were manufactured in lighter weights and brighter hues. The knut, a suburban incarnation of the fop before 1914, was distinguished especially by his bright socks. See James Laver, *Dandies* (London, 1968), 109.

No doubt -- as with any ideal -- the look of that elongated manliness was beyond the reach of individual readers of the magazine -- even with the aid of high-waisted trousers and cinch-waist coats. As one advertising researcher wrote of contemporary images of men in 1916: "since the tendency to extreme attenuation of body to be fashionable has set in, a photograph would obviously be of no use, for it would be impossible to find a living human being whose picture would show the required type of bodily architecture."⁷ This observation suggests something of fashion and the structure of consumer desire arising from, in this instance, proximity to an impossible body type. To find oneself stirred by the presence of this photographically-impossible creature, to ache to possess it or its qualities is to feel the force of that desire. That this desire seemed better suited to the graphic arts than photography indicates not only an inadequacy of photography, but speaks to the surpassing realism of illustration in the mass-market magazine. That is, although in the realm of mass-produced imagery photography may be thought more closely *tied* to the real in the sense that it can represent only actual body types (in editorial matter, it quickly supplanted drawn works for the decoration of non-fiction subjects), illustration at this moment and in this context still possessed greater power to *impart* reality to ideals, to make them live.⁸ Thus one commentator noted the potential of a well-designed poster to achieve

⁷Henry Foster Adams, *Advertising and Its Mental Laws* (New York: MacMillan, 1916), 300.

⁸Because of its early date, I'll leave aside Pennell's obstreperous challenges to the accuracy of the photograph "which is so imperfect that it seldom records one fact altogether correctly." Relevant still to the early twentieth-century, Pennell rejects the truth of the photograph which *à la* Muybridge too sharply renders a trotting horse's legs or the spokes of a carriage's turning wheels, leaving "the whole affair. . . instantaneously petrified or arrested." And even where the photographic image "is correct, it destroys all feeling of

“an intense realism more real than a photograph because of its power of suggestion.”⁹

Measured against the visual standard established in mens clothing advertisements, Perseval can hardly be faulted for his own unimposing figure or for the range of his accessories, excepting the spectacles that betray his weak eyes. But he does bungle his appropriation of contemporary fashion, with his “high-water” pants, the absurd turn of his hat brim, the loose cut of his jacket, and the color medley he sports including a pink hat band, blue striped shirt, red tie, blue–green suit, and orange socks.¹⁰

Perseval overshoots appropriate dress codes and reveals himself a fop. “The fop,” a contemporary advocate of dandyism explained, “is a near relative of the fool and a pure dandy may never be that. . . . The fop lacks discrimination; he does not know when he has obtained his effect and continues blindly on till he has exposed all the machinery that might have mystified if properly manipulated.”¹¹ The true dandy might delight in finery, but knew to retain a certain enigmatic reserve evident, as discussed below, in Leyendecker’s images.

size, impressiveness, and dignity.” For the partisan of graphic arts, illustration achieved a phenomenological truth exceeding mere fact. Joseph Pennell, “Camera Club Conference: Photography as a hindrance and a help to art,” *British Journal of Photography* XXXVIII, no. 1618 (May 8, 1891): 295.

⁹Edward McKnight Kauffer, “The Poster,” *Arts & Decoration* 15, no. 1 (November 1921): 44.

¹⁰“High-water--a derisiv [sic] term for trousers too short for the wearer,” rendered thus in the author’s own idiosyncratic “simplified spelling.” William Henry Baker, *A Dictionary of Men’s Wear* (Cleveland, 1908), 131.

¹¹Neil Stack, *Some Phases of Dandyism* (New York, 1924), 104–5.

It is not only of interest that the fop was concerned with clothing, but also that clothing concerns were interested in the fop. W. H. Baker's *Dictionary of Men's Wear*, intended to serve those in "the trade" as well as a "popular" audience,¹² fills nearly three hundred pages with earnest and flippant definitions of words peculiar to men's wear, "fop" included. Thus, "**Fop**-a cross between dandy and dude," is a hybrid that hints at Baker's delight in stigmatizing terms shoring-up correct male dress. The dictionary includes entries for: "**Dandy**-a beau; not quite a dude" (although also "**Dandy**-something out of the common; first-class"); "**Dude**-not worth description"; "**Dandified**-dandyish; foppish"; "**Coxcomb**-a pretentious, conceited dandy." Among these, only the entry for **Beau**, "a man devoted to the care and adornment of his person and to matters of social etiquette; a dandy, a fop, a lady's man," tenders a definition proper.¹³ Other entries dispense with definition, indulging in a litany of epithets directed at any instance of feminized dress in a man. The dictionary makes explicit (in its own idiosyncratic "simplified spelling") its stake in masculinity in such definitions as "**Sheath trousers**—one of the idocies of 1908, ascribable, doubtless, to the hysterical feminin revival of directoire immodesties and their pernicious effect upon some men too invertebrate to uphold the precious responsibilities of their sex [sic]." The effusion of censorious definitions of effeminate and ostentatious male dress indicates an obverse positive definition of appropriate fashion that confirms a man's

¹²Baker, *A Dictionary of Men's Wear*, xii, xiii.

¹³Baker's efforts are impressive. He goes on to include entries along these lines for "Blood", "Exquisite", "Gallant", "Lizzie", "Macaroni" (with a historical note), "Mollycoddle—sissified males, usually distinguishable by the omnipresent cigaret...and chronic ogling of pretty girls [sic]", and "Masher—a dandified sumpinorother, often incarcerated when discovered; a Lizzie [sic]."

dressing closet as a site for the production of masculinity.

The necessity of discriminating between a legitimate masculine interest in dress and the effeminate implications of an excessive investment in one's clothing is expressed also in retail clothing trade handbooks, trade magazines, and manuals intended for training sales staff (men would wait until 1933 for their own fashion publication in the form of *Esquire*).¹⁴ These guides counseled discretion in language so as to avoid displeasing connotations. One manual identified the values sought by male customers as serviceability, comfort, style or fashion, appearance ("a look of good quality"), a trade name, and becomingness.¹⁵ "Talking points" -- techniques for addressing the concerns of individual customers -- treated the last value, becomingness, with circumspection.

As one expert salesman says, "Men are interested in whether or not a thing is becoming, but we don't use that word. We tell a man, 'This hat is good on you,' or 'This is better on you than that.' . . . Don't you believe it when men say they are not interested in getting becoming clothes. They are, but they don't use that word."¹⁶

¹⁴On *Esquire*'s immediate roots in retail marketing for the menwear industry, see Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois, 1964), 273-79.

¹⁵Fredonia Jane Ringo, *Men's and Boys' Clothing and Furnishings*, in series Merchandise Manuals for Retail Salespeople (Chicago/New York, 1925), 10.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 12, 14-15.

Without clarifying why men might avoid “that word,” the section concludes by implicitly relegating it to a feminine lexicon. Unable to confess a personal interest in his appearance with regard to clothing--in other words, its becomingness--the customer ascribes responsibility for it elsewhere: he “frequently says his wife or mother does not like a certain thing on him.”¹⁷ Advertisements for men’s clothing, like the floorwalker or sales assistant of the department store and retail shop, emphasized the other talking points, leaving becomingness to the eye.

It may be that the stakes raised by becomingness included the customer’s sexuality. This much is suggested by an image of a narcissistic and effeminate clerk who does not allow the customers gathered at his sales counter to interrupt his preening, an apparent lampoon of the sexual orientation of men who take too much interest in their appearance [Figure 38]. The relationship between effeminacy and homosexuality in twentieth-century popular discourse, as well as in the medical and juridical literature, raises the question of same-sex desire. The problem is partly one of iconography and visual patois. What cross-section of the *Post*’s audience was equipped and prepared to read an image of an effeminate man as an image of a homosexual, and according to what visual cues? Would such a reading have been routine or willfully aberrant? But more to the point, I am interested in how such aberrance is already encoded, if only by negation, in any expression of heterosexual masculinity. I will return to this last point in the sections follow on Leyendecker’s work and on *Post* fiction.

¹⁷Ibid., 15.

Well into the twentieth century, homosexuality was not conventionally understood in terms of object choice or even according to the act of sexually engaging a same-sex partner. Rather, the homosexual, or invert, was defined in terms of his feminine attributes, including the assumption of a “passive” role during sexual intercourse and of effeminate mannerisms and dress. Masculine men might--and did--engage in same-sex liaisons, but were nonetheless considered “normal.” In other words, sexual typing depended on adherence to gender conventions rather than sexual acts.¹⁸

¹⁸George Chauncey, Jr., “Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era,” *Journal of Social History* XIX, no. 1 (1985): 189-211.

The elusiveness of changing iconographic codes of homosexuality in particular presents an obstacle to a queer reading of “*Tain’t You.*” Notwithstanding occasional, explicit statements of such cues--as when sex-researcher Havelock Ellis reported anecdotal evidence of the homosexual’s preference for the color green¹⁹--the indices are largely ephemeral, and much research remains to be done in the period around World War I when Rockwell was breaking into print.²⁰ It is possible, if not probable, that *Miss Perseval* could have been read by Rockwell, his editor George Horace Lorimer, and the larger part of the *Post*’s audience as a homosexual. If so, it redoubles the efficacy of illustrations of clothing to make manly men. Yet even Miss Perseval’s willowy body type alone was not

¹⁹Havelock Ellis, *Sexual inversion*, 3d edition (Philadelphia, 1921), 126; some of Ellis’s examples are drawn from European contexts. Ellis notes as well an American report that “it is red that has become almost a synonym for sexual inversion, not only in the minds of inverts themselves, but in the popular mind.” (350-1). See also Chauncey’s reference to certain visual cues of homosexuality, including red ties and the color green sometimes in suits (52), to support his thesis that “gay men were highly visible figures in early-twentieth-century New York”; George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 3. But also note mainstream trade press reports as in a headline: “Green Shirt’s Popularity Gaining Daily, Wholesale Market Reports // Color Now Third in List of Favor, Blue First--May Try Wine Red” in the generically titled *Daily News Record* (October 12, 1927), collected in Clippings Binder: “Shirt Notes 1926-1927,” Archives of the Cluett Peabody Co. Inc., Rensselaer County Historical Society, Troy, NY.

²⁰For a comprehensive view of homosexual life in an eastern metropolis, see George Chauncey, *Gay New York*, op cit. Chauncey reproduces images of homosexual men from the popular press, especially *Broadway Brevities*, but these date only as early as the 1930s. Richard Meyer’s recent work offers an important account of these issues in the visual arts at this moment, see especially his chapter on Paul Cadmus in *Outlaw Representation: Censorship & Homosexuality Twentieth-Century American Art* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 33-95. See also *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*, ed. Jonathan Katz (New York: Harper and Row, 1983) which reproduces postcards from the 1910s depicting effeminate, if not homosexual, men. For a discussion of contemporary, private art images featuring men in the context of same-sex erotic situations, see Jonathan Weinberg, *Speaking for Vice: Homosexuality in the Art of Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, and the American First Avant-Garde* (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1993).

necessarily a signal of homosexuality.

The opening text of a Brandegee-Kincaid advertisement declares, “*The American Figure-- / The American Taste-- / The American Climate. / All three must be studied in designing clothes for Americans,*” thereby forging a link between this reedy figure and Americanness and dress sense [Figure 37]. Nonchalantly swinging a cane in one hand while fingering a cigarette in the other, this exaggeratedly slim figure embodies manliness. As such this image of the middle-class American at leisure represents an ideal not addressed in dominant accounts of masculinity, which frame it in terms of the cult of physicality and the canonical, hardened body.

This alternative ideal is also evident in an advertisement that reworks John Trumbull’s *Declaration of Independence* so that the assembled members of the Continental Congress, depicted in a moment of pervasive quiescence, assume self-conscious poses to display their twentieth-century attire. The advertisement invokes the “real American” and the “Yankee,” deflecting the European and aristocratic connotations of the company’s name, The Royal Tailors [Figure 39]. Beyond rejecting Old World connections, the extensive copy posits a link between a natural American temperament -- with its inclination toward freedom of choice and self-expression moderated by monetary prudence -- manliness, and dress sense.²¹

²¹A body of literature directed to women, including home economics books and journals as well as sewing guides, forged similar links between fashion and national identity although these rarely address men and their clothing. *The Journal of Home Economics* in particular rejected Paris in favor of a patriotic, native preference for fashions that served hygiene, modesty, and economy. See esp. Ethelwyn Miller, “Americanism the Spirit of Costume Design,” *Journal of Home Economics* X, no. 5 (1918): 207-11; Ethel Ronzone, “Standardized Dress,” *Journal of Home Economics* X, no. 9 (1918): 426-28; and Marion

Men of INDEPENDENCE demand self-expression, even in their clothes-buying.... Your real American has always stood for self-determination; for freedom of choice and action, not only for the nation but for the individual. In whatever he builds or buys, he must express himself: his own preferences and selective ability.... It is **just naturally** his American temperament to want what he wants as he wants it.... There is a Yankee economic reason, too...the ingenuity that produces the best at the least cost. In Europe a custom-tailored suit costs thrice the price of a ready-made. But not in America.²²

Here is the definitive articulation of the relationship between sartorial masculinity and nationhood. Within the cut of a man's clothes cohere both his individuality and his nationality, as well as his will to action and his discriminating taste, and the satisfaction of his desires. In the copy's preferential comparison of America to Europe one can read, perhaps, the neo-darwinian justification of nationalism and class dominance upon which G. Stanley Hall, character-builders, and imperialists like Roosevelt all drew. As the copy declares these characteristics come "just naturally." As "real" and "natural" though these men may be, it bears remarking that the advertisement constructs manliness with little or no reference to bodily fortitude.

Weller, "The Clothing Situation," *Journal of Home Economics* X, no. 9 (1918): 401-8.

²²*Saturday Evening Post* (July 10, 1920), 130-131, emphasis in original.

Indeed, the virtue of corporal strength did not necessarily accord with middle-class subjectivity and, in the *Post*, generally coincided instead with the working-class body. Thus, in advertisements for industrial belting, the internal combustion engine, and spark plugs, square-jawed, brawny, and shirtless men wield tools and operate machinery, but enjoy no relation to manliness per se [Figure 40-42]. The bare-chested workers as symbols of pliable force, like the machines they run, possess no agency. Although these advertisements depicting male bodies of great physical strength repeatedly evoke power, the men themselves lack any autonomous jurisdiction. In each image these bodies--it is easy to speak of such generalized figures as bodies rather than men--perform the bidding of an invisible authority that choreographs the movements of these hulking somnambulists.

Historically, the Continental Motors advertisement [Figure 41] claims, the drudgery sustained by the human body “stood in the way of human progress.” As in the work-gang vainly flailing sledgehammers at a mammoth spark plug [Figure 42], these advertisements depict the bodily strength of labor as regressive, even antimodern. Regardless of the variations on this theme of the laboring body -- be it Hindu, factory worker, or work-gang -- the convention that strips the body of its clothing prevails. Within bounds of modesty these images literally divest the working-class figure and the foreign laborer of clothes, and metaphorically dispossess them of agency. The outlander and the worker whether exoticized, eroticized, or classicized merely feature the effective power of the machine, fetishized as a symbol of modernity.²³ Manliness lies elsewhere.

²³For an insightful discussion of race and masculinity in the United States in the late-nineteenth century see Gail Bederman, “Civilization, the Decline of Middle-Class Manliness, and Ida B. Wells’s Anti-Lynching Campaign (1892-1894),” in *Gender and*

American History since 1890, ed. Barbara Melosh (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 207-39.

This is not to say that the deskbound middle-class man entirely forswore athleticism and bodily fortitude, those modes of manliness which abide alongside sartorial masculinity. In the *Post*, their simultaneity may even drive narratives that seek to adopt both types to a nativist rhetoric (as in the discussion of the short story “Full Personality” below). And, as we shall see, Leyendecker’s famously masculine, yet slim, Arrow Collar man is a very near cousin to the athletic figures he sometimes observes storming the college football field or dominating swim races. But before leaving behind the desubjectified working class male body, I want to emphasize that as a figure of difference that body may at the same time serve as avatar of the bourgeois self, frustrating any absolute alterity.

In a 1921 advertisement advising “Men who observe the niceties of dress are as critical about the ‘inside’ of their coat as they are of the ‘outside,’” an image of a well-suited deskworker is shadowed in his efficient, if clerkish, activity by a powerfully muscled body [Figure 43]. The vaporous form emanates from the businessman’s waist, as if to make manifest an unseen, vital aspect of his character, an indubitable appeal in an age of anxiety over the wizened physique of deskworkers. The conceit of the naked hulk as an allegorical figure of the ‘inside’ of the coat, the lining, suggests in a way that the executive stands for the ‘outside’ of the coat. The two are inseparable, two sides of a coin. A correlative proposition fuses the white-collar worker with his powerful, inner unskilled laborer. Since this illustration is not intended as a Marxist critique of the exploitation of labor by capital (it makes a pretty good start in that direction despite itself), it is better read as an expression of the kinds of qualities not readily expressed through images of middle-class men, but which may be nonetheless desirable.

This last advertisement underscores the way such ideals of social identity inevitably exceed an individual's ability to adhere to them. The sartorial ideal -- as near as one might come to attaining it having studied it in manuals, observed it in advertisements, admired it in fiction, and followed the expert advice of sales clerks -- proves insufficient to embody a totalized masculinity. While the copy of the advertisement expounds the importance of a coat's interior construction with its function to give "body" and prevent wear exceeding the merely visible, the illustration supplements the ideal of sophisticated masculinity with its very opposite, the brute strength of the laboring body. The visible sartorial man is revealed incomplete and insufficient, possessing a core anxiety about its inattention to the body which drives it to reach for incommensurate images.

This shirtless, stalwart body is utterly alien to the office environment or to any *modern* labor. Although the figure's exact activity is ill defined, it might be reasonably interpreted as brandishing a sledgehammer. Assuming that the right palm is, like that of the office worker, upturned while the left palm faces down, the bar that passes in front of the body and appears to connect the two hands suggests a long handle. Whereas lifting, pushing and pulling are all generally accomplished with both palms facing the same direction, wielding a long-handled hammer or ax is among the few activities effectively performed with palms an opposed grip. The figure's wide-spread arms suggest that the right hand has been brought close to the striking end of the tool in order to gain leverage for the upward swing of massive hammerhead.

If the sledgehammer possesses an iconic status in American culture it is as the tool of regressive, racialized labor. In particular, it claims folk status as John Henry's steel-driving hammer of his legendary contest against the steam-powered drill [Figure 44,

John Henry Monument].²⁴ Although Henry outraced the machine, he did not survive the day. His hammer signifies anti-modern labor -- heroic but ultimately doomed by progress -- inflected as fundamentally African-American.

Admittedly, the sledgehammer in the advertisement might just as well be an ax, or possibly a horizontal structural element such as a fence, but the identification is uncertain. Yet it must be noted that this figure with its blunt features and vigorously cross-hatched, close-cropped hair suggests a physically imposing African-American, and depicts the ethereal complement of the white-collar worker. As a corollary one might think of the widely recognized image of heavy-weight champion Jack Johnson who laid out successive contenders to be America's White Hope [Figure 45].²⁵ However, any threat this figure might present is literally contained by the deskworker's body in *his* decisive, if strangely unproductive gesture of throwing away a piece of paper. The undisguised bifurcation of this figure along race- and class-based lines is atypical, but nonetheless representative of the conceptual organization of white masculinity and of whiteness.

²⁴John Henry, it may be recalled, was a freed slave driving steel for the railroads.

²⁵These included Jim Jeffries who Johnson defeated in the infamous 1910 bout at Reno which precipitated race riots in cities throughout the U.S. Although Johnson (1878-1946) lost the title to Jess Willard in 1915, he continued to box until 1927. Thereafter the press continued to seek him out especially at the time of the Louis/Schmeling fights in the 1930s.

Issues raised by this double figure will be further developed in relation to J. C. Leyendecker's more subtle construction of the man of fashion. Leyendecker's advertising imagery, including his Arrow Collar man, was spectacularly successful in promoting corporate sales and winning broad public admiration for the image of manhood it presented. Although little is known of Leyendecker's biography, in recent decades his work has been interpreted in light of his lifelong partnership with a male secretary as unproblematically reflecting his presumed homosexuality. At this point in time, there is little more than circumstantial evidence, innuendo, and silence upon which to hang Leyendecker's sexuality.²⁶ Little more, that is, excepting the corpus of images reproduced in the magazines he worked for from the mid-1890s until his death in 1951. Granting that he did share a romantic attachment with his model/secretary Charles Beach does not necessarily justify the assumption that Leyendecker *put* his sexuality into his images. Rather than taking Leyendecker's "gay" images as expressing the artist's life-experience, I mean to study his training and stylistic development for signs of the kinds of investments he made in his illustrative practice. Establishing a theory of how Leyendecker used his art will open other paths to approach the erotic power they possessed in the cultural at large and how they relate to the construction of race.

II. A Suitable Style

²⁶On silence and sexuality in art history see Whitney Davis, "'Homosexualism,' Gay and Lesbian Studies, and Queer Theory in Art History," in *The Subject of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly & Keith Moxey (Cambridge, [England] & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 123-24.

In the first decade of the twentieth century J. C. (Joseph Christian) Leyendecker added artfulness -- not to say Art -- to a commercial pictorial mode, infusing the generic imagery with excitement and personality, if not actual individuality. Contemporary experts in advertising proposed, "If we compare an old clothing cut with the Leyendecker design, we may see one of the greatest strides that skill in advertising has made"²⁷ [Figure 46 & 47]. From earlier modes Leyendecker frequently retained certain features such as the sparse scenery that heightened focus on the clothes/man, the quotidian exchanges of greeting or pleasantries, scenes of privileged leisure and occasional office settings, and the prevalence of homosocial contexts [Figures 49 & 51]. Leyendecker, in conjunction with advertising executives and copymen, permitted the figures greater proximity to the viewer, bringing them forward from an impersonal distance to fill the frame and dominate the relative weight between image and text. Instead of the parade of unmemorable heads on unremarkable bodies, figures such as his Arrow Collar Man (for Cluett, Peabody and Co., approx. 1905-1930) or those appearing in his House of Kuppenheimer advertisements (approx. 1908-1932), are endowed with vitality and distinction. His images for these and other brand-name manufacturers -- including Interwoven Socks, Kellogg's cereals, Chesterfield Cigarettes, and Timken Roller Bearings -- created for the products distinct, consumable personalities.²⁸

²⁷Calkins and Holden. *Modern Advertising* (New York and London: D. Appleton & Co., 1916), 43.

²⁸The dates given here are subject to revision. Leyendecker illustrated advertisements for Interwoven from 1908 until about 1930. Schau names Leyendecker's Hart Schaffner & Marx advertisements as among his most important (*J.C. Leyendecker* [New York: Watson-Guptill, 1974], 33, 81), but reproduces none of his illustrations for this

manufacturer. The archives (held in a closet in the Chicago offices of HartMarx, the corporate descendent of HSM) contain few references to Leyendecker or his work. All such references date his work for HSM to 1914 and 1915. Examples of the work of other HSM artists including JS [possibly John Sheridan], W. C. Booth and Samuel Nelson Abbott are sometimes similar to Leyendecker's. Other approximate dates are Kellogg's (c. 1917, many of the original canvases are held at the Haggin Museum in Stockton, CA), Chesterfield Cigarettes (c. 1918), and Timken Roller Bearings (c.1944).

Leyendecker, and particularly the men of his clothing advertisements, achieved sufficient prominence to make appearances in contemporary theater, poetry, parody and fiction, where they alternately served as shorthand for sophisticated elegance, impressive marketability, or commercial refuse. In 1923 George S. Kaufman & Marc Connelly concocted a musical comedy under the title “Helen of Troy New York” (Troy being the national collar manufacturing capital) which included a male collar model.²⁹ In F. Scott Fitzgerald’s short story “The Last of the Belles” the photograph of a deceased brother shown by his sister to suitors as the ideal they must match reveals “a handsome, earnest face with a Leyendecker forelock.”³⁰ Other examples include a poem by e.e. cummings,³¹

²⁹A review of the play declared, “There wasn’t a dry collar in the house when the audience joined in the fun with shouting and laughter.” [”Helen of Troy, New York” reviewed], *The New York Times* (June 20, 1923). See also the advertisement for the Broadway show *New York Times* (June 17, 1923). My grateful appreciation to Carl Wright for sharing these citation on his website devoted to J. C. Leyendecker formerly located at <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/8255/leyendecker.html>. On the play, see Malcolm Goldstein, *George S. Kaufman: His Life, His Theater* (New York: Oxford, 1979), 94-102.

³⁰F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Last of The Belles,” *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, intro. by Malcom Cowley (New York: MacMillan, 1986), 242. Schau (81) has noted this story as well. Fitzgerald may have been pandering to magazine readers in this story that first appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* (March 1929). Only four years later in 1933 he would cringe at “the possibility of being condemned to go back to *The Saturday Evening Post* grind . . .” (Michael Kammen, *The Lively Arts: Gilbert Seldes and the Transformation of Cultural Criticism in the United States* [New York & Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1996]: 428, note 65).

³¹e.e. cummings, ‘Poem, or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal’ (1926) cited in Nick Yablon *The Arrow Collar Man: Masculinity and Advertising, 1905-1930* (University of Chicago, Master’s Thesis, 1995). See the analysis Lewis H. Miller, Jr., “Advertising in poetry: a rereading of e. e. Cummings’s ‘Poem, or Beauty Hurts Mr Vinal’,” *Word & Image* 2, no. 4 (October-December 1986): 349-362.

a humorous story titled “Autobiography of an Ad-Girl,” (1909),³² Malcolm Cowley’s sardonic “Portrait by Leyendecker, To Sinclair Lewis” in *The Broom* (1923),³³ and Cole Porter’s hit song of the 1930s “You’re the Tops.”³⁴

³²In which is chronicled the life and products of an advertising character’s career from infancy to old age, including her marriage to Tom the Arrow Collar Man. “Christine Brands” is both protagonist and *author* of the piece. Christine Brands, “Autobiography of an Ad-Girl,” *Advertising and Selling [Profitable Advertising]* 19, no. 1 (June, 1909): 74-76. Cited in David Clayton Phillips, *Art for Industry’s Sake: Halftone Technology, Mass Photography and the Social Transformation of American Print Culture, 1880-1920* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1996: <http://pantheon.cis.yale.edu/~davidp/halftone/chap3.html#68>; since moved to <http://dphillips.web.wesleyan.edu/halftone/>).

³³Malcolm Cowley, “Portrait by Leyendecker, To Sinclair Lewis,” *The Broom* (New York & Berlin) 4, no. 4 (March 1923): 240-47 (Krauss Reprint Corp, NY 1967), a citation shared with me by Michael Murphy.

³⁴One chorus declares, “You’re the top! You’re an Arrow collar.” Carole Turbin cites this and discusses a number of these popular fictionalizations of the Arrow Collar Man in her “Collars and Consumers: Changing Images of Manliness and American Business,” *Enterprise and Society* 1, no. 2 (2000).

Although his work for Arrow Collar included a plethora of neck-and-head images with collars framing handsome faces [Figure 48], his advertising imagery is notable for putting the body into men's clothing. Where other illustrators were content to inflate clothing over shapeless figures, Leyendecker employed dramatic plunging folds and strong contrast to suggest the presence of a fit body beneath even trench coats. Comparing the gradated tonal rendering of an unsigned House of Kuppenheimer advertisement to Leyendecker's boldly-drawn piece for the same manufacturer, also unsigned, suggests the latter's firmer grasp of and interest in human anatomy [Figure 49 (on deck) & 50 (bench warmer)]. Even where the copy called attention to the body's presence by observing that a coat -- the "Theodore Jr.," no less, with its Rooseveltian connotations and its "vigorous styles" -- is "slightly body tracing at the waist," the anonymous artist typically treated the figures as a set of well-styled clothing crowned by a more-or-less generic head [Figure 51 (at the park, HofK, 1908)].³⁵

However, to look at Leyendecker's work from a few years earlier when he undertook his first independent commissions for commercial work, is to see him still developing artistic skills and formulating an approach to problems of design. His illustrations from this period differ significantly from later professional work, and, under examination, illuminate the strategies he would evolve to produce his wildly popular imagery.

³⁵In fact, Leyendecker's images were commonly *constructed* by combining a head with a separately rendered body, as has been the custom in much portraiture. His typical procedure included the production of a numerous separate, highly finished studies of heads, hands, bodies and clothes elements, that could be combined in a final composition by "squaring up" the separate elements to a uniform scale on a single canvas.

Leyendecker was born in Montabaur, Germany in 1874. His younger brother, Frank Xavier -- who would also become an illustrator and would sometimes be confused with J.C. -- was born there as well three years later. In 1882 when J.C. was eight the family emigrated to the United States settling in Chicago where his father joined his own brother as an employee of the McAvoy brewery. By this time, J.C. “was already covering schoolbooks with rudely colored examples of [his] work.”³⁶ J.C. and Frank soon left school to take up apprenticeships in engraving and stained glass respectively.³⁷ Both Leyendecker brothers showed promise in the arts, but the family’s limited resources were primarily directed to supporting the art school studies of the older sibling, J.C.³⁸

³⁶Leyendecker in “Keeping Posted,” *Saturday Evening Post* (October 15, 1938): 108. This is the single most comprehensive primary biographical account of Leyendecker, offered by him in some 450 words.

³⁷In Chicago, a sister Augusta was born. There is some evidence of a third brother who may have also studied art. An obituary that ran in *The Art News* XXII, no. 29 (April 26, 1924) mentions Frank left behind “two brothers and a sister,” while the *New Rochelle Standard-Star* (April 19, 1924) noted he was “survived by his brother, Joseph, a brother Adolph of Kansas City, and one sister, Augusta M.” Three years after Frank and J.C. last studied at the Art Institute, the student catalog listed one “Leyendecker, Adolph,” *The Art Institute of Chicago. Circular of Instruction of the School of Drawing, Painting, Modeling, Decorative Designing and Architecture, 1897-8 with A Catalogue of Students for 1896-7* (Chicago, 1897).

³⁸Norman Rockwell, *My Adventures as an Illustrator as Told to Thomas Rockwell* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1960), 196.

Although his earliest published works would include illustrations for books (an edition of the Bible; a pair of novels) and inside pages of magazines, he became widely recognized as an illustrator of advertisements and magazine covers. On the strength of his first cover for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1899 when the weekly magazine was still in a formative stage,³⁹ J.C. and Frank, who was winning his own commissions, moved to New York City (1900) and later to New Rochelle (1910).⁴⁰ Within a decade he established the decades-long relations with manufacturers that would support his deliberately prodigal lifestyle. Leyendecker's signature graced the *Post's* cover until 1943 when he was dropped after an art department redesign. He continued to work for a number of other magazines until his death in 1951.

³⁹Leyendecker, as he later wrote in a private letter, was at the time still “a struggling young artist.” JCL to Mrs. M. Fitch, New York City, February 12, 19?? [re. Dr. Marden of *Success Magazine* commission of “The Three Wise Men” (1900)], a copy of the letter is to be found in the files of Society of Illustrators, New York. The reference line of the letter reads, “JCL/CB.”

⁴⁰In 1900, the brothers took a studio at 7 East 32nd Street, then in 1907 they moved to a house near Washington Square in Greenwich Village and studios in the Beaux Arts Building at Sixth Avenue and 40th Street. In New Rochelle they took houses at Pelham Road and at Wild Cliff before building a mansion with studio space at 40 Mount Tom Road in 1914. See Schau, *passim*; and Regina Armstrong, “Frank X. Leyendecker: An Appreciation,” *New Rochelle Standard-Star* (1924).

In 1896, J.C. joined a field of 700 entrants with his submission to *The Century* magazine's Poster Contest. His design took first prize (second place going to established illustrator Maxfield Parrish), winning Leyendecker a cash prize and as well as the cover of *The Century*'s Midsummer Holiday Number (August 1896)⁴¹ [Figure 52]. The prize image offers up a bare-breasted art nouveau three-quarter length figure of summer's inflorescence. Leyendecker combined a dry, woodcut-like touch used for line and ground with an even, gold-brown fill suggestive of gold-leaf for the flowing locks to achieve a rough-hewn artisanal impression. The textured surface of the support (or Leyendecker's *imitation* of such a surface) was rendered on a scale that reproduced brilliantly on the magazine's presses. Nonetheless, the figure's face appears carelessly smudged while her hands, which clutch the sheer material of her dress's train and form a cradle for the cut yellow roses, are merely a clumsy gathering of date-shaped fingers. The inconcinnity of the hands in some ways served Leyendecker in this exploration of a robust craftsmen's version of the refined *style Métro*, which William Morris might have admired. But those hands nonetheless lack the delicacy of the voile drapery or of the image's rosaceous theme itself. A contemporary commentator writing in *Brush and Pencil*, a magazine published by Art

⁴¹"Local tone [J. C. Leyendecker receives poster prize]," *Arts for America* 5, no. 5 (1896): 202-203. The cover of that issue gives the contest judges as Elihu Vedder, F. Hopkinson Smith, and Henry A. Hardenburgh. A reproduction of Parrish's submission is to be found in "The Century Prize Posters," *The Critic* 25 (May 16, 1896): 357. According to Sylvia Yount Leyendecker's poster took first place not because it was judged a finer example, but because it hewed closer to the contest criteria (specifically the stipulation of an image reproducible in three colors) than did Parrish's. *Maxfield Parrish, 1870-1966* (New York: Abrams in association with the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1999), 42, 46. On the *Century* contests see F. Weitenkamp, *American Graphic Art* (New York: Henry Holt, 1912): 326-27.

Institute of Chicago students, attributed Leyendecker's sometimes ungainly drawing to his emphasis on stylistic flourishes noting, "his commercial work, relying, as it does, largely upon brilliant handling for its success with the public, is too often, I must confess, poorly drawn."⁴²

⁴²Frank B. Rae, Jr. "J. C. Leyendecker, Illustrator," *Brush and Pencil* 1 (September 1897): 16.

The *Century* poster was Leyendecker's last major work prior to departing Chicago with Frank for study at the *Académie Julian* and *Académie Colarossi*⁴³ in Paris, and one might well expect to see developments, if not improvement, in his work as both brothers plunged into full-time study abroad. Indeed, in Paris, J.C. and Frank both were said to have won numerous honors in the Academies with J.C. even securing an exhibition at the Salon de Champ-de-Mars in 1897.⁴⁴ "The American students in Paris," noted a journal published

⁴³About the Leyendecker's studies at the *Académie Colarossi*, there seems to be no current information suggesting what courses they took there, when, or with whom. However, it may be conjectured that the *Colarossi* provided an opportunity to economically fill-in-the-gaps in their training at the *Julian*. Along these lines, eleven years earlier Frederick William MacMonnies noted in his diary: Was advised by Mr. Saint Gaudens to go into Julian's studio if I could not do better so wanted to see what it was like. . . . There are many American students studying there. . . - too expensive. Expect to have to study at Collorosi's [sic] Academy day and night and study for the Concours at the École des Beaux Arts. (Entry for September 24, 1884, Frederick William MacMonnies diary, 1884-1885, in the Frederick William MacMonnies Papers. Gift of Louise Wysong Rice, 1988. Archives of American Art).

⁴⁴Schau refers to the recollections of "fellow classmates" that have J.C. "invariably" winning monthly prizes awarded by Bouguereau (20). Immediately after his return to the United States, Chicago arts papers reported that during his time there J.C. captured "four prizes at Julien's [sic] and a picture on the line at the Salon" (Rae Jr., "J. C. Leyendecker, Illustrator," [1897]: 15), and that in "the ateliers of Paris . . . he gained distinction and renown" (George R. Sparks, "Something About Posters" *Brush and Pencil* 1 [September 1897]: 13). According to the 1897 *Catalogue Illustré*, Joe exhibited a "*portrait de mon frère*" in the 1897 *exposés au Champ-de-Mars* (see *Exposition Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Catalogue Illustré des Ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture et Gravure Exposés au Champ-de-mars, Le 24 Avril 1897* [Paris: Societe Nationale des Beaux-Arts, 1897], facsimile reprint in series "Salon of the *Nationale*" [New York & London: Garland, 1981] and, for a reproduction of the image, 88. In Rockwell's version, the Colarossi is more prominent: "Joe at once became the star pupil at the Académie Julien [sic] and at Calorossi's [sic] Twenty years later, when I visited Paris, they still talked about Joe Leyendecker at Calorossi's [sic]. Some of the figure drawings were still hanging on the walls; the teachers used to cite them as outstanding examples of the art of drawing the human body" (196). However in Leyendecker's own brief autobiographical account in the *Post*, he mentions only the *Académie Julian*, see "Keeping Posted," *Saturday Evening Post*

there, “are distinguishing themselves. Mr. H. M. Hartshorne, and Messrs. J. and C. [sic] Leyendecker have recently been decorating the walls of Julian Academy, right and left with their prize drawings.”⁴⁵

(October 15, 1938): 108.

⁴⁵“Notes,” *Quartier Latin* 1, no. 4 (November 1896): 125.

During his eighteen months in Paris and after his return to Chicago,⁴⁶ J.C. continued to produce commercial works -- particularly posters, but also to work for trade journals and, so-called, "little magazines." J.C.'s illustrations throughout these years betray a continued interest in subsuming expressive qualities to pictorial ones, as well as a heuristic procedure of stylistic variation. To continue with the case of the hand, as already discussed briefly regarding the *Century* magazine, Leyendecker can be seen habitually adapting it to various stylistic experiments while evincing little sense of its capacity as

⁴⁶According to Michael Schau's chronology in *J.C. Leyendecker* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1974), 47, Joe and Frank "begin two years of art study" in Paris in September 1896 and return to Chicago in August of 1897. These dates are repeated everywhere in the secondary literature on Leyendecker which, like the present study, greatly relies on Schau's research presented in a twenty-four page essay in a generously-illustrated volume. Of course the number of months spanned by these dates is only eleven. An additional confusion is suggested by Catherine Fehrer's research on the *Académie Julian* the records of which, though incomplete show the Leyendeckers enrolled at the *Julian* 1895-1896, Frank working under J.-P. Laurens and Benjamin-Constant; and J.C. studying with Bouguereau, J.-P. Laurens, and Benjamin-Constant, see "List of Students Enrolled at the Julian Academy" in *Julian Academy, Paris 1868-1939* [catalog of Spring Exhibition] (New York: Shepherd Gallery, 1989), n.p. (N.B. It may be that this entry indicates the Leyendecker's arrived at Julian some time during the 1895-86 academic year, although September 1896 should have been the beginning of the next academic year). However, contemporary accounts state the boys were in Paris for "eighteen months." Thus, in a September 1897 article Rae Jr. ("J. C. Leyendecker, Illustrator," [1897]) wrote that J.C. "left Chicago some two years ago" [i.e. about September of 1895] and spent eighteen months there (15). H. R. Willoughby ("The Leyendecker Brothers," *Poster: The National Journal of Poster Advertising and Poster Art* [Chicago, Poster Advertising Association, Inc.] 14, no. 3 [March 1923]: 6) confirms or repeats a reported stay of eighteen months. Sparks (13) confirms a limiting date for the stay, writing in September 1897 that "[J.C.] lately returned to our midst from the ateliers of Paris." My best guess therefore is that the Leyendeckers returned to Chicago in August of 1897, the date Schau gives, after a year and a half sojourn that began around February of 1896, well before September. Finally, the September or autumn arrival date is supported by a brief note that "in the fall [the young Leyendecker] intends to leave America to spend a few years in Europe" (Unsigned. "J. C. Leyendecker, Artist," *Inland Printer* XV [September 1895]: 620). I leave it to future researchers to further secure or emend these dates.

vehicle of either emotive expression or gestural communication. Thus in his 1897⁴⁷ *Chap-Book* poster the rondure lines of the reader's lightly-modeled dress with its gently swelling volumes are echoed in the insistently graceful and somewhat shapeless fingers lightly grasping the back of the couch (upon which it is impossible to say just how the figure sits) [Figure 53]. Or again in a poster for *Up To Date* (1899) magazine, Leyendecker forgoes outline altogether, simply painting color and shape, with hands suitably slurred to match the discomposure of the wind-blown fashions [Figure 54]. These and other examples similarly treat the hand -- until sometime between 1898 and 1904 -- as simply another feature of the scene depicted or else conceal it altogether as in the October 1897 *art nouveau* cover for *Four O'Clock* [Figure 55].

⁴⁷Schau gives the date as October 1897 (23), but a caption (68) dates *The Chap-Book* poster to 1899 as does the list of color plates (10). However, according to Library of Congress catalog entries, *The Chap-Book* was continued as *The Dial* after July 1, 1898 (vol 9, no.4), making the 1899 date improbable.

All this warrants attention for several reasons all pertaining to Leyendecker's training and professional experience at the time, and to the quality of his later accomplishments as a draughtsman. By 1896 Leyendecker had been studying part-time for about seven years under artists whose pedagogy emphasized close examination of human anatomy and modes of realist representation that built figures from this knowledge. He had entered the Chicago Art Institute as a part-time student in 1889 when he was about 16 years old. There he followed a traditional course of art study emphasizing drawing from casts of antique sculpture and from life. He took at least some classes with "Vanderpool" [sic] whom he named as one of his three significant teachers, along with Jean-Paul Laurens and Benjamin-Constant at the *Académie Julian*, in his 1938 autobiographical comments written for the *Post*.⁴⁸

He supported his evening studies at the Art Institute through work at the engraving firm of J. Manz and Company in Chicago where he began as an unpaid apprentice in 1889, graduating to a salaried position within six months. Saved-money and "frequent" raises supported the additional courses he undertook during work holidays.⁴⁹ In 1894 J.C. produced sixty illustrations for a *Bible* printed by Manz for Powers Brothers, and the next year several more for Anthony Hope Hawkins' *Dolly Dialogues* and Frank F. Moore's *One Fair Daughter*. Leyendecker advanced steadily so that another young apprentice engraver, Ralph Fletcher Seymour, arriving at Manz in the Autumn of 1898 found the twenty-four

⁴⁸Op cit. For a brief discussion of the history of the school of the Art Institute at this time, see Roger Gilmore, *Over a Century: A History of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1866-1981* (The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1982).

⁴⁹Ibid.

year old Leyendecker had ascended to chief artist. To Seymour, Leyendecker seemed “a remarkable personality, the undisputed leader of all commercial artists in America. . .[and one] equipped with remarkable facility as a first rate artist”⁵⁰

⁵⁰These, it should be noted, are Seymour’s reflections forty-seven years later, in Ralph Fletcher Seymour, *Some Went This Way: A Forty Year Pilgrimage Among Artists, Bookmen and Printers* (Chicago: Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Pub., 1945), 37.

Seymour was not alone in his declared admiration of Leyendecker at the time. As a beginning student J.C. earned praise, and minor criticism, in print from Vanderpoel himself whose review of works in a student exhibition credited one of J.C.'s early wash drawings as "superb," a sketch as "full of dash," and a third entry as "boldly executed, but lack[ing] in refinement of greys."⁵¹ Having won the *Century* poster prize in May of 1896 and begun a series of a dozen covers for *Inland Printer* in 1897⁵² -- and with nearly a year and a half of Paris study under his belt, Leyendecker received high praise from Chicago critics writing in *Brush and Pencil*. They acknowledged that J.C. was yet something of a talent in the raw, but offered accolades, heightened perhaps in championing a hometown favorite, to "Chicago's most promising artist" and one "of whom Chicago especially should be proud, since we can claim him as a citizen."⁵³ And if these critics believed him "acknowledged preeminent" among commercial illustrators they also perceived time- and money-saving shortcuts in alleging Leyendecker's tendencies to work too fast and without models. In the final assessment, however, they would conclude "he really *can* draw -- as witness his prizes at Julien's [sic]--[so] one can afford to be lenient with this

⁵¹The exhibition was of student work done outside of class during the summer of 1894, and J.C.'s entries were all cityscapes without figures. See J. Vanderpoel, "Exhibition of the Chicago Art Students' League," *Arts for America* III, no. 8 (February 1895): 227, 226, 224.

⁵²These were exhibited under the auspices of *Inland Printer* at the "Kimball Cafetier in the basement of the New York Life Building on LaSalle Street." For reproductions of images shown, see "A Leyendecker Exhibition," *Brush and Pencil* 1 (January 1898) 109-110. The address is given as 153-155 Monroe Street in a booklet associated with the show, "An Exhibition of Original Poster Designs by J. C. Leyendecker . . . January 11-31, 1898" (Chicago: Henry O. Shephard, 1898)

⁵³Rae Jr., "J. C. Leyendecker, Illustrator," (1897): 16; Sparks, 13.

carelessness.”⁵⁴

⁵⁴Rae Jr., “J. C. Leyendecker, Illustrator,” (1897): 15-16. The same charge of a “carelessness in drawing” resulting from working too fast and without models recurred twenty-six years later in an otherwise admiring article, see Willoughby, “The Leyendecker Brothers” (1923): 22. These critiques notwithstanding, or perhaps precisely because the censure stung, Leyendecker and his later commentators emphasized the fact that he repudiated any use of photography, worked always from a model (until the final stages of painting), insisted on bringing each work to absolute completion, and was a fine draughtsman. See, for example, Herbert Kerkow, “Leyendecker--Creator of an American Type” *Commercial Art VII* (July-September 1929): 18; or the anecdote recounted by Charles Beach in “Leyendecker Remembered as Perfectionist; Cover Designer Preferred Art for Masses,” *New Rochelle Standard-Star* (July 28, 1951): 1, 2. According to Rockwell, throughout his career J.C. took on too much work and compromised his art in order to meet deadlines. If however, no deadline were involved “Joe worked with agonizing slowness (Rockwell, 197).

By comparison with the “mature” imagery more securely associated with the name “J. C. Leyendecker”, the early poster images suggest an art student in search of a signature style. If by, say, 1906 (but more consistently after 1907) a recognizable manner has emerged, during this early period he appears to be trying on different hats. Whether or not one is given to reading an artist’s *sincerity* in his work, these early images do not seem to spring from a sense of commitment to a particular style or aesthetic ideal nor do they particularly speak of a struggle for either personal or emotive expression. Instead the varied styles of these and other early works, each pursued momentarily with vigor, if not with a convincing result, bespeak a search for a superficially recognizable technique: at one moment it is art nouveau *à la* Mucha, at the next it is a muddled impressionism following Chase, and later, in his *Century* work of about 1902 for instance, there will be the nineteenth-century academicism of his French masters [Figure 56]. J.C. was by no means unique in this regard, but his tendency towards serial pictorial variegation did draw the notice of one contemporary commentator who noted his impression in an exhibition review of seeing “Mucha’s influence”; “a strong infusion of Carlos Schwabe”; “suggest[ions of] Abbey”; “English influence”; and the impression of “post-Murger or Berenger--in the ‘garret at 20-year-old’ stage.”⁵⁵

⁵⁵I. McDougall, “Art and Artists: Exhibitions Next Week,” *Chicago Post* (January 15, 1898). Like other critics discussed above, McDougall faulted Leyendecker’s lapses writing, “Perhaps three out of the thirty are defective in composition, but most of them are admirably arranged, even to the lettering, that stumbling block of poster and cover designers.” The notice offers an attentive account of this Kimball Cafetier exhibition.

Through such early technical experiments, it seems, Leyendecker sought a personal style -- a graphic personality, one unique but not revolutionary, distinctive but not so idiosyncratic as to draw rejection slips from art editors. If, as one advice manual stressed, “personality is the quality of being Somebody,” that is a recognizable somebody whose worth derives from communal or social recognition, then such personality belonged to the public realm, and was distinct from simply being *someone* in the private sphere.⁵⁶ In the same way, Leyendecker’s graphic personality seems one of public presentation rather than of personal expression.

⁵⁶Henry Laurent, *Personality: How to Build It*, trans. from French by Richard Duff (New York, 1915), 25, quoted in Warren Susman, “‘Personality’ and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture,” in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 277. Marcel Mauss has traced a history of personality, “from a mere masquerade to the mask, from a role to a person, to an individual, from the last to a being with a metaphysical and ethical value, from a moral consciousness to a sacred being, from the latter to a fundamental form of thought and action....” Mauss, *Sociology and Psychology, Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London, Boston & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979 [*Sociologie et anthropologie*, 1950]), 90. Although his history stops short of that definition in the OED that emphasizes a person who is “a focus for some form of public interest” (from about 1889), there is a symmetry in the etymology (also noted in OED) that draws on the Latin concept of a mask used by a player or of one who plays a part in a performance.

It should be noted that the same *Brush and Pencil* writer who took Leyendecker to task in 1897 for his rushed drawing found significant *depth of feeling* in J.C.'s early work, writing, "his conception, is always original and unexpected, -- if I may use the term -- at times sturdy, and again tender, with now and then a touch of pathos which shows a feeling quite surprising in one so young. How full of life and joy, for example, is the golden-haired girl of his Century prize poster, yet how pathetic his old park gleaner in 'November'"⁵⁷ In spite of this testimony, it remains difficult to see in the *Century* cover even this level of expression in a figure so static and generalized that its individuality pales next the spindly red poppies surrounding her. Leyendecker does not show or illustrate "life and joy" that the critic perceived, but educes it through formal means. Perhaps this is what one of our critics saw when he suggested bluntly of his illustration, "[I] believe he can improve on this

⁵⁷Rae Jr., "J. C. Leyendecker, Illustrator," (1897): 15. Rae finds this pathos in one of two (known) versions of J.C.'s *Inland Printer* cover work of November 1896. He refers to a "gleaner" in describing this nude allegorical figure of the cicada of La Fontaine's fable of "La Cigale et la Fourmi" in which, according to the English-language version, a cricket that impishly sang throughout the Spring begs food from -- and is refused by -- the sanctimonious ant who has stocked a winter's supply. The same version of Leyendecker's "La Cigale" also appeared as a separate promotional poster for the November issue of *Inland Printer* (the poster is reproduced in "An Exhibition of Original Poster Designs by J. C. Leyendecker . . . January 11-31, 1898" [Chicago: Henry O. Shephard, 1898]. A second version is reproduced in Roger T. Reed, "J. C. Leyendecker: A Retrospective," *American Art Review* IX, no. 6 (December 1997): 133, but it is unclear whether or how it appeared in 1896. In any case the cover/poster version of "La Cigale" shows a nude female figure huddling against the winter chill in three-quarters rear profile with somewhat bestial features. Nearby her in the winter-forest setting are a lute and a single black crow taking flight. In the version published by Reed, the nude figure is again hugging herself, only now looking directly towards the viewer just as one crow takes flight leaving a second perched upon the neck of the lute. Along the bottom edge is lettered "La Cigale." The two versions are stylistically distinct. The theme "La Cigale" was a more-or-less standard one in late-nineteenth century figure painting, undertaken for instance by the American Wyatt Eaton (see Sadakichi Hartmann, *A History of American Art*, vol. 1 [Boston: L.C. Page & Co, 1902]: 221-222).

class of work.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸Sparks, 13.

Leyendecker, like some other illustrators, was developing a style which at its best would evoke an emotive response rather than offering highly keyed visualizations of passions and ideas themselves. His images are at their affective weakest (wonderful cartoons, but insubstantial paintings) when he reaches for images *of* rather than trusting in his viewers' responsive capacity. J.C. saw himself as a poster artist and was at his best when he conceived a painting not bound by the narrative constraints of illustration, something which he most often achieved in advertising images. At an extreme, some viewers seem to have responded powerfully to his Arrow Collar man images, experiencing an amatory frisson leading to epistolary declarations of love.⁵⁹ But the man himself never appears an affective being.⁶⁰ In those early illustrations that do seek to express, for instance, ardent feeling or impassioned psychological states -- fear, as in the frontispiece to the Charles B. Hudson novel *The Crimson Conquest* (1907), or spiritual inspiration for Alfred Domett's "The Great Guest Comes," *Century* (December 1902) -- Leyendecker is awkward and unconvincing, resorting to theatrical gestures of the silent screen that fall short of the academic ideals of restraint and dignity in which he had been trained [Figure 57

⁵⁹Schau (30) claims that each month Cluett, Peabody received fan mail "by the ton" for the various Arrow Collar models, as much as 17,000 letters in one month in the early 1920s. There is no such correspondence retained in the archives of Cluett Peabody Co. Inc., at the Rensselaer County Historical Society, Troy, NY. Of course, any such craze can not simply be ascribed to an artist's style, but must be seen in the light of specific cultural developments including, in this instance, celebrity, mass-culture, and modes of youth sexuality. For evidence of such fan mail see below, note 95.

⁶⁰One thinks here of Charles Dana Gibson whose "Gibson Girl," created in 1890 and an absolute sensation for years thereafter, is frequently evoked as companion figure to the Arrow man. Other dispassionate figures took a similar if lesser hold of the public imagination as in the fade-away work of Coles Phillips which offers another case of stunning men and women rendered in dramatic technique with seemingly irresistible charm.

& 58]. Much of his later *Post* cover work, too, aimed at broadly comic effects that overran his capacity for compelling ambiguity [Figure 59].

III. Handsome Men

There are a few more points to be made about Leyendecker's bedeviled rendering of hands, alternately clumsy, inchoate or obfuscated, before bringing together the two observations I have been pressing for in regard to Leyendecker's early work (its surprising infelicity of drawing and its protean manner) as a means to characterize his use of style. These ungainly depictions of hands are remarkable in light of the fact that he would soon demonstrate -- even flaunt -- a mastery over their rendering. In later work hands, as both anatomical constructions and dramatic characters, are seen confidently performing their role in every scene with apposite economy. Take almost any image after 1910 and see ten fingers intertwined, or two digits choreographed in the act of lighting a match or, again, a clutch of fingers confederated in the firm grasp of an apple and peeler. In an undated Arrow Collar advertisement reproduced as [Figure 60, smoke], the form and action of both hands are subordinated to the prevailing composition and pictorial style while at the same time suggesting desired characteristics of the figure, its powerful grace, decisive gesture, and dexterity in the minutest task.

Leyendecker, it seems, would later become intensely attuned to the depiction of this extremity. Rockwell recalled of his friend, that if asked for a critique Joe would give a "real critique; he thought nothing of starting a picture all over again. 'No,' he'd say, 'the

hands are out of drawing. The nose doesn't fit. You'd best scrap it and start over.'"⁶¹ Such commitment to the controlled proportion of the hand is hardly evident in the early image that graced the cover of the brochure for his Paris exhibition of 1897 [Figure 61, Frank].⁶² In this apparently expressionistic rendering of his younger brother Frank, J.C. sets the broadly outlined, light-toned hands center-canvas against the dark suit and evanescent hat, exaggerating the degree to which they are *out of drawing*. It is difficult to square this drawing with the report that when Rockwell himself undertook life drawing at "Calorossi's" [sic] twenty years later, he found that the professors there "still talked about Joe Leyendecker.... Some of his figure drawings were still hanging on the walls; the teachers used to cite them as outstanding examples of the art of drawing the human body."⁶³

⁶¹Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 199.

⁶²The original was included in the exhibition, *Schau*, 22.

⁶³Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 196.

And yet, the hands of the *Century* and the *Chap-Book* do seem to defy the pedagogy of Leyendecker's most influential teachers. Leyendecker himself offered little insight into his studies at the Art Institute, leaving but a few scant words on the subject. However, only months after he left, his teacher at the Art Institute John Vanderpoel did publish a series of a dozen essays on aspects of figure drawing which appeared in *Brush and Pencil* from 1899 to 1900. Vanderpoel was a central figure in the Chicago art school and had great influence on students there. One commentator observed, "What Vanderpoel says, and what he thinks in regard to art is considered authentic. . . . His pupils feel that he is their friend, and their success is due to his conscientious teaching."⁶⁴ Vanderpoel would further formalize these teachings in his famous instructional handbook for art students on *The Human Figure* which first appeared in 1915 and remains in print today. Throughout the manual, Vanderpoel emphasized the artist's proper concern with "the external and the apparent. . . . Whether he be figure painter or illustrator, in order to render the human form with success, he stands in need of skill in the use of his knowledge of structure, of his understanding of action and of his insight into character." He offers few words concerned with anything like artistic expression or the emotive qualities of graphic form. Instead, Vanderpoel impressed upon his reader the practical importance of understanding the relation of various parts of the human anatomy, the transformations those parts underwent through movement, the relations between structure and surface, and the ability to perceive the form giving function of planes.⁶⁵ However, in a chapter on "The Hand and Wrist," he explains that, "the hand,

⁶⁴Unsigned, "Biographical sketches," *Arts for America* 3, no. 5 (1894): 149.

⁶⁵John H. Vanderpoel, *The Human Figure* 13th edition (Chicago: The Inland Printer, 1923,

equally with the head, should receive special attention, for the reason, first, that it is generally seen; second, because of its character and the part it plays in expressing an emotion or action; and thirdly, because of its intricacy and the difficulty, due to its numerous parts, of handling it in masses and planes, except when the hand is closed.”⁶⁶

Without placing undue emphasis on the transitory comment about the part the hand *plays in expressing an emotion*, it can be noted that nowhere else in this volume does Vanderpoel discuss such emotive expression, not even in sections devoted to the head and the features of the face.

[1st ed. 1915]), 5. However, note that some of the early essays attended to mechanics of anatomy as in John H. Vanderpoel, “Figure Drawing, the Arm and Hand,” *Brush and Pencil* 5, no. 6 (1900): 274-277.

⁶⁶Chapter XIV, page 121.

To be sure, there was nothing unusual in Vanderpoel's relative emphasis on the role of the hand -- perhaps not even excepting his neglect of the face and head. When George Bridgman, longtime instructor at the Art Students League in New York where he was renowned for his teaching of anatomy, put his lectures into print he devoted an entire volume to the topic in his *Book of a Hundred Hands* (1920). This included a three page meditation on "Expression" where he observed that the "well schooled" face may dissimulate, but because "rarely is the hand so trained . . . it may reveal what the face would conceal." He also asserts that modern psychology suggests how the hand involuntarily expresses psychic life. A hand, for Bridgman, will express "mental states."⁶⁷ A nearly contemporary manual similarly notes that the hand may communicate -- as in the actor's art -- by means of a "gesture language" and that the application to graphic arts is obvious. "But in other ways," it adds, "the hand reflects to some extent the character and mode of life of its owner."⁶⁸

⁶⁷George B. Bridgman, *The Book of a Hundred Hands* (Dover 1971, unaltered reprint of Edward C. Bridgman edition of 1920), 15, 17, 16. Several of Bridgman's books remain in print. Another of Bridgman's anatomy books, *A Hundred Figure Drawings*, was banned from the mails by the US Post Office in the 1930s, see Sara Dodge Kimbrough, *Drawn from Life: the Story of Four American Artists* [William Dodge, George Barnard, Frederick MacMonnies, and George Bridgman] *whose friendship & work began in Paris during the 1880s* (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1976), 74.

It has been estimated that in his 43 years at the Art Student's League in New York he taught upwards of 70,000 to 80,000 students (my sources are "Bone & Muscle Man" a printed article, for which I have no citation yet, kindly provided in photocopy to me by Deane G. Keller, himself a painter and expert instructor in figure drawing and anatomy; and materials from the ASL files which Stephanie Cassidy -- doctoral candidate in the Dept. of History, Univ. of California, San Diego writing on the early history of the Art Students League where she also serves as the archivist -- has generously made available to me). I discuss the racialized aspects of the discourse on anatomy for artists in Chapter IV.

⁶⁸Arthur Thompson, "The Hand" Chapter VIII in *Handbook of Anatomy for Art Students*

And Leyendecker does, at length, show himself both adopting this theatrical dictum -- although with less of the melodrama seen in the earlier illustration for *The Crimson Conquest* -- and rendering in hands tell-tale signs that elaborate the makeup of a figure.

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 222.

In this light, all the more pronounced is the indifference of his later work to expressive gesture in particular and to pictorial affectivity in general. Absent from one major strain of his mature work -- as with his early posters and covers -- is the sense of an imagined emotional presence of either the figure depicted or of the artist behind the image. Even his characteristic foregrounding of the paint stroke itself -- see for instance his Arrow Collar advertisement from 1912 where raw strokes of paint dance over the surface [Figure 62 and 63, detail] -- fails to register the *artist's presence* in a manner commensurate with claims made for, say, Jackson Pollock's gestural paintings or Van Gogh's vigorously worked surfaces. Leyendecker's paint stroke is bold without immediacy, calculated rather than ardent. The effect may have reverberated in J.C.'s critical reception which sometimes muddled his identity with that of his doppelgänger, Frank. As one writer commented, "the brothers Leyendecker are confused in the public mind and many people think of them as one," while another claimed it enough to conjure the name Leyendecker, "Whether 'F.X.' or 'J.C.' is quite immaterial, for these two brothers hold jointly and singly a unique place in the illustrating world."⁶⁹ The perception is given graphic expression in a cartoon depicting the "The Leyendeckers" painting side-by-side, dressed in identical formal wear, in a grand studio decorated with menswear props [Figure 64].⁷⁰

⁶⁹Willoughby, "The Leyendecker Brothers," (1923): 5; and "The Rose Garden of Two Popular Artists," *House & Garden* (November 1918): 34.

⁷⁰The cartoon probably dates from between 1918 when the Leyendecker's New Rochelle home received popular press coverage and 1924 when Frank died, and may have been published in *Life* (New York), to judge by style, typography and page layout. The signature in the photocopy I have from files at The Illustration House, New York is indistinct. The artist could be Gluyas Williams or Gardner Rea. I am grateful to Roger Reed and Frederic Taraba of The Illustration House who kindly allowed me access to their files.

Even if one observer noted very early that, “In Mr. Leyendecker’s work there is uniformly great depth of feeling, and a breadth and a strength that is remarkable in the work of so young a man,” other sympathizers soon felt it necessary to defend the illustrator against “captious critics [. . . from whom] it is by no means uncommon to hear stupid criticisms” including charges of “tinny” and “mannered” work.⁷¹ One of those flippant critics composed the unkind compliment, “Few of our illustrators know more about the anatomy of an automaton, or catch more perfectly its life and grace.”⁷²

Leyendecker for his part aimed at an image with impact. The *Post* quoted him as saying a good cover “carries further and hits harder. It hits harder because it is a symbol; it is concentrated and says what it has to say in a straight line.” Such a cover is not primarily a vehicle of personal expression, even where the style is the artist’s own. Leyendecker, sounding like Ruskin,⁷³ declared a “man’s technic is merely the easy way of expressing himself once he has learned the necessities of his art.” To this he added the thought, “Every young artist imitates older men whom he admires. At some point, if he is a good artist, he

⁷¹Unsigned, “J. C. Leyendecker, Artist,” *Inland Printer* XV (September 1895): 620; Unsigned, “Some Drawings by J. C. Leyendecker,” *The International Studio* XLV/179 (January 1912): 4. Similarly, Jerome Mellquist later called “Leyendecker a metallic but effective poster-maker,” Mellquist, *The Emergence of an American Art* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1942), 161.

⁷²Unsigned, “A Letter to the Editor,” *Collier’s* (March 23, 1907). This long, carping letter bemoans the work of contemporary illustrators of the class belonging to the “Home for Too Prosperous Artists.”

⁷³Ruskin began his discussion of contemporary, late nineteenth-century art from the premise that “Painting . . . with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but by itself nothing.” John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, ed. and abridged by David Barrie (New York: Knopf, 1987), on the “Definition of Greatness in Art,” 6.

ceases to imitate and begins to originate. Of course, no technic is really original. It is a many-layered composite of older technics plus, it may be, a little that is the artist's very own."⁷⁴

⁷⁴Wesley Stout, "Yes, We Read the Story," *Saturday Evening Post* 204 (June 25, 1932): 40. In a letter of 1950 written in response to a private inquiry from a novice illustrator seeking general advice, Leyendecker characteristically described his process, materials and use of model in purely practical terms without a hint of artistic elevation (JCL to Ial Radom, December 25, 1950, reproduced in Schau, 35).

The disconnect between Leyendecker's technique and the sense of a human presence behind it was noted by Rockwell in a chapter of his autobiography devoted to his youthful admiration of Leyendecker's work and to their later friendship. As an art student Rockwell studied Leyendecker's illustrations closely, and as a young professional he loitered at the New Rochelle train station just to catch a glimpse of Leyendecker during his commute. Around 1920, they finally met and began a friendship of "over twenty-five years."⁷⁵ Later he would develop a more critical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in the work of his friend "Joe."

⁷⁵"twenty-five years", 195. The dates are a little confusing. If Rockwell and Leyendecker met in 1920 their friendship should have lasted thirty-one years until Leyendecker's death in 1951, or twenty years until they last saw each other a little while after Rockwell moved away from New Rochelle in 1939. Rockwell's autobiography is a rambling affair which he casually dictated evenings after painting, so that his son Tom could later write up the text. Norman was more concerned with weaving an entertaining story than recording an accurate personal history. As he said, "I'll just put down everything as I remember it. I don't have time or patience to write letters and hunt up people to verify whether or not I had my left front tooth pulled when I was seven. Maybe I was eight." *My Adventures*, 21.

Conceivably, Rockwell's critique drew on his defensiveness about his own art practice and his increasing use of photography. While Rockwell eventually came rather sheepishly to substitute photographs for working directly from the model -- he recalled William Oberhardt angrily declaring him a "Judas!" for doing so (327) -- Leyendecker frowned on the practice and continued in the academic tradition of working from live models. It may therefore have been self-serving when, in the course of considering Joe's personality faults that contributed to his professional decline, Rockwell noted that the older illustrator "refused to make the slightest alteration in his system" (206) including employing a camera. Then there is an awkward scene in which Leyendecker enters Rockwell's studio at a moment when hundreds of photographs are scattered about the floor, leaving the two illustrators to carry on a conversation without so much as glancing at the evidence.

Whatever mixed emotions may have informed them, the terms of Rockwell's critique are nevertheless relevant. Rockwell suggested that Joe's work was driven less by pictorial or expressive concerns than by extrinsic considerations: "'Buy more than you can afford,' he used to say, 'and you'll never stop working or fret so over a picture that it never gets done. If every day you have to save yourself from ruin, every day you'll work. And work hard.'"⁷⁶ And of Joe's work itself he thought perhaps "there had always been more technique than feeling in it. He didn't look at a picture as the depiction of a scene, a scene with flesh-blood-and-breath people in it; he saw it as a technical problem. . . . And technique

⁷⁶Rockwell recollection of Leyendecker's credo, *My Adventures*, 197.

alone is a pretty hollow thing.”⁷⁷

⁷⁷Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 205. Schau quotes the same passage but refutes Rockwell on the grounds that magazine readers respond to “human warmth and imagination” and that Leyendecker was successful because he himself “was a sensitive, aware, feeling man throughout his life” (33). I take no issue with either of these claims (although I do demure from the implication that images displaying human warmth must necessarily come from a sensitive artist). However, I do think that Rockwell’s assessment is essentially valid, and that even if a magazine audience was not specifically interested in technique as Schau argues, that doesn’t preclude responding to it. Nonetheless, Rockwell’s observations about Leyendecker need to be read critically.

Rockwell's concerns about the problem of expression and technique in Leyendecker's work received a different sort of critical treatment in a fictional context, one which also elaborated upon the inherent tensions between commercial and fine art practice for these illustrators. In Harold Speakman's novel *This Above All* (1924), American artist Garrison Spaulding arrives in New York in 1913 armed with a full quiver of graphic styles acquired from the magazines of Europe where he has been studying art -- at the *Académie Julian* -- the previous two years. At Washington Square he discovers "the attic" where he takes up the bohemian lifestyle of a garret-dwelling artist along with his boisterous and impoverished co-residents, an architect, a writer, and another painter. Each is defined largely by how he negotiates the relationship between his art, his indigence, and the necessity of living by commercial means, rather than by artistic production. Hungry and broke, Garrie too takes up commercial art, work which increasingly deadens his creative potential. To achieve the "modern note" and "foreign touch" demanded by advertisers, he surreptitiously consults his trunk-full of foreign illustrated books and magazines (39-40). The "assistance" he permits himself in the practical matter of commercial work soon plagues his creative ability so that his own paintings increasingly echo the manner of Frank Brangwyn, the Spaniard Sorolla, Whistler, Homer, Ryder and any number of painters impressed upon his memory and artistic vision (150-1). Yet, even in a despair that draws him close to suicide, his destiny is, as the book's title suggests, to somehow be true to himself in and through his art. Recalling the advice of Shakespeare's Polonius -- "This above all: to thine own self be true! And it must follow, as the night the day . . ." ⁷⁸ -- he

⁷⁸Harold Speakman, *This Above All* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1924),

realizes he must reject the temptation of death and find a personal truth, his own artistic voice in paint. Returning to his easel,

157. The complete lines are, “This above all: to thine own self be true, // And it must follow, as the night the day, // Thou canst not then be false to any man.” Hamlet, (I, iii).

[h]e mounted a large canvas on which to begin a painting from one of his sketches. But this work which he had spiritedly planned for and looked forward to, now seemed utterly repugnant. Every brush-stroke was a labored and prodigious effort of will. But above the dim and intricate maze which life now seemed, one steadfast thought shone with intense clearness. The need for honesty.⁷⁹

It is possible to conceive Speakman's abbreviated description of Spaulding's canvas as bearing formal resemblance to Leyendecker's illustrations. The prominent brush strokes which stand so forcefully *for* brush strokes (placed with effort and will) as much as for imagery are J.C.'s and Spaulding's both. As Leyendecker had done fourteen years earlier, the fictional Spaulding attended the *Académie Julian* under Jean-Paul Laurens. Musing on the *Académie* he had left only months before, Spaulding would recall "that seething upper-story *atelier*, with its compositions and portraits by Jules Guerin, and Corwin Knapp Linson, and the Leyendeckers, and other Americans of an older generation. . . ."⁸⁰ However, for Spaulding the artist, if not for Leyendecker the illustrator, those labored daubs lacked honesty where honesty was the only quality of any value.

Spaulding finds himself in a struggle with the formal means of painting which for him are tainted by the intrusive memory of paintings seen and by the encroaching and

⁷⁹Speakman, 152.

⁸⁰"Jean-Paul Luarens" [sic] and Leyendecker, Speakman, 16. These must be the prize-winning student drawings by the Leyendeckers that still hung at the *Académie Julian* well after Frank and Joe returned to Chicago. Perhaps Speakman or an informant would have seen these hanging at the school were they remained until, according to Schau (20), they were destroyed during the second World War.

repugnant commercial art world. Notably, he breaks free from the oppressive influence of his modern masters and takes his first bearings of the path leading back to himself when he stumbles upon a sketch he had done in an exotic Chinatown interior, an image free of imitation, most nearly true to himself;

There had been just one sketch which did not seem to be a cuckoo cry of some other man. It was the interior of a Chinese joss house in Mott Street, but it was so badly painted that he had tossed it aside and forgotten it.
(153)

This image leads him on a journey (to China!) by which he will eventually find himself. Thus Spaulding would ground his technique in his unique individuality (for which Speakman uses the maladroit term “personality”, where he means to signify the internal and private):

It was a strange and rather terrible thing to feel that in spite of most herculean efforts, one’s mind was gradually becoming sterile, blank, denuded One thing he did learn. Gradually, as he sat before his easel, he saw the fallacy of striving after technique.

‘Technique,’ he said with conviction to his canvas, ‘is not after all a matter of brush strokes or little tricks, as I thought, or of using certain colors on one’s palette, or painting in a higher or lower key. Technique is a man’s own personality shining right through the paint and unconsciously expressing itself in everything he does....Of course, if a man has deadened his personality by aping other men. . . . [ellipses in orig, page 153]

But for Leyendecker these terms, and Rockwell’s, miss the mark. Leyendecker understood illustration in a way that Speakman’s Spaulding could not and in a way that Rockwell -- the extraordinarily self-doubting painter -- could never trust despite his phenomenal success. Rockwell always regretted that his career began after the waning of the Golden Age of

illustration. To him it meant that one could no longer be -- like Pyle, Remington, Rackham, Cruikshank, or Abbey -- both artist and illustrator, but that the two were rent asunder. Leyendecker, however, did not share these concerns, never seeming to fret over what it meant to paint for reproduction and never ardently pursuing the status and celebrity that Rockwell valued so deeply.

Rockwell sought affirmation, acclamation and perhaps even love through his painting and admitted he was “very sensitive to public reaction” to his work.⁸¹ He desperately wanted to be recognized and frequently put himself before the public eye as everything from a beauty contest judge to an advocate for treatment of Hansen’s disease, as well as through authorized books including an autobiography.⁸² Not only did he worry that he would lose the affection of his audience, but for a time he harbored an irrational fear of losing his eyesight.⁸³

⁸¹*My Adventures*, 393. He recorded in a work journal in 1959, “June 14: Low mood. No fan mail to speak of in a week. I don’t exactly *live* on fan mail. . . . But it’s like a vitamin supplement for me. Without it I feel logy, depressed, out of sorts. . . . [F]an mail is the only contact I have with the people I do covers for.” (*My Adventures*, 438-39).

⁸²*My Adventures*, 209ff; Unsigned, “Aid Fund for Lepers,” *New York Times* (Dec. 21, 1927): 29. Rockwell tells a self-deflating anecdote about his thrill at being recognized as *the* Norman Rockwell and subsequent failed attempts to elicit a similar response (*My Adventures*, 191-192). When his autobiography was published, Rockwell awaited the critical response anxiously and gratefully acknowledged at least one favorable review. After reading Dorothy Adlow’s notice of the book in the *Christian Science Monitor* (March 3, 1960), he wrote her, “I was scared to death about the reviews but your review was so kind and thoughtful...” Rockwell to Adlow, March 19, 1960, in Papers of Dorothy Adlow, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library.

⁸³“I remember my father once saying that he once went through a period where he decided he was about to go blind,” Peter Rockwell in interview with Neil Conan, National Public Radio, Weekend Edition, broadcast June 2, 2000.

By contrast J.C. left no record to suggest he pursued art as a compensatory practice for a fragile ego. He certainly sought to establish a professional reputation and to that end forged a recognizable style. But he did little to create a myth for himself excepting those few occasions when he and Frank opened their home and garden, of which he was exceedingly proud, to popular domestic architecture and landscape magazines.⁸⁴ When he did consent to present a public face in the *Post* after years as its foremost cover artist, editors felt compelled to preface his comments by observing:

One request which has perhaps been repeated more than all others since this page began two years ago, has been for some information on J. C. Leyendecker. . . Our delay in giving you this information is due entirely to the artists's reticence; Joseph Christian Leyendecker's dislike of personal appearances has become legend.⁸⁵

Leyendecker's very style was shaped to some degree by this attitude which distanced his *self* from his public personality, and his inner life from his performance on canvas.

Understanding Leyendecker's approach to developing a style as graphic personality rather than as personal expression tells us something about the look of his canvases, but only accounts for one aspect of the imagery. These observations provide the foundation for a further elucidation of the power of Leyendecker's pictures -- the images for men's clothing advertisements, but also certain themes in his cover illustrations -- to connect with magazine readers. Without wishing to unduly complicate these ephemeral

⁸⁴See "The Rose Garden of Two Popular Artists," (1918) op cit; and Louis R. Metcalfe, "The House of the Messieurs J.C. and F.X. Leyendecker," *Country Life* XXXVI, no. 2 (June 1919): 52-3. The brothers Leyendecker built the house on Mt. Tom Road in New Rochelle together. J.C. made the mansion and its gardens his avocation and lived there until his death.

⁸⁵"Keeping Posted," *Saturday Evening Post* (October 15, 1938): 108.

illustrations for the sake of making them seem interesting, I want to spend some time looking at these images in order to get at why they seem different.

IV. Suitable Men

In the last twenty-five years some scholars and writers have identified a significant ambiguity in Leyendecker's images, leading them to describe his men as possessing a "superior, all-knowing air of confident homosexuality"⁸⁶ or his pictures as offering "the first American representations of gay sensibility to gain wide distribution."⁸⁷ These interpretations are motivated in part by knowledge that Leyendecker had a life-long relationship with his live-in secretary (perhaps his first Arrow Collar Man model), as well as a desire to read the presumed homosexuality of that relationship in his images. Statements advising, "To get in touch with Leyendecker's sexuality, it helps to look closely at the [illustrations],"⁸⁸ treat the pictures as expressing Leyendecker's inner life, and imply a continuity between his presumed homosexuality and that of any viewer seeking to discover a vital gay force within American culture. Recognizing that gay voices and

⁸⁶Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West* (Routledge and Kegan, 1986), 132.

⁸⁷I take it as significant that James Gifford here invokes "gay sensibility" as a single, monolithic notion rather than citing a *particular* gay sensibility that might have been suggested by the images. James Gifford, *Dayneford's Library: American Homosexual Writing, 1900-1913* (Amherst: Univ. of Mass, 1995), 121.

Other writers treating homosexuality in Leyendecker's images include David B. Boyce, "Coded Desire in 1920s Advertising," *The Gay and Lesbian Review* 7/1 (Winter 2000): 26-30, 66; and James M. Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York: Viking, 1999), 234-35.

⁸⁸Roger Austen, "Wave of the Past," *Christopher Street* (January 1977): 32.

images have been hidden *from* and *by* history, these scholars have found it productive to read homosexuality *in* history by reading across the grain of the historical record, by refusing the face value that obliterates signs of homosexual experience. I am sympathetic to and would engage in such a countervailing practice myself, but have reservations about overreaching assumptions that too-quickly close-in on a *homosexual explanation* rather than a *queer interpretation*.

As I see it, one of the problems with the direction of current interests in “outing” Leyendecker is the consequential delimiting of the category of homosexuality itself. Because so little is known about J.C., it has proved tempting to embellish from scarce facts to full-blown narratives that fit romanticized models. What can be claimed with a degree of certainty is that the notably handsome Charles Beach lived in the Leyendecker mansion in New Rochelle for about fifty years, that he was one of J.C.’s models and later his assistant -- Beach called J.C. his “friend” and “Boss,”⁸⁹ that he was perceived by some (Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 202-5) as alienating J.C. from his brother Frank and sister Augusta, and that neither Leyendecker and Beach both appear never to have married. Beach remained deeply loyal to J.C. after the latter’s death. The relationship appears atypical to be sure, but it is a mistake to elaborate from what is known to such claims as, “Leyendecker’s life changed when he met and fell in love with a Canadian, Charles

⁸⁹Beach quoted in Ed Wallace, “Arrow Collar Man ~ He Lives in the Echoes: Still Handsome, He Burns Sketches That Made Him [Charles Beach],” *The New York World-Telegram and Sun* (January 22, 1952). This material kindly provided in typescript form by Carl Wright. I have not yet been able to obtain a copy of the original by which to confirm it.

Beach.”⁹⁰ There is a danger in animating sparse facts with imagined scenarios -- in insisting on amorous love and homosexuality where there is friendship and homosociality -- of a sclerosis of sexual categories in which men who live together are homosexuals, and legitimate homosexuals are men who live together in relationships mirroring idealized heterosexual marriages (J.C. the hard-working wage-earner; Beach the handsome, emotional helpmate). And yet, the proper corrective is not silence. Obviously there might be personal reasons that account for an obscured homosexual life, and it would be a mistake to ignore the historical reality of pressure to conceal a male-male romance. In lieu of specific, relevant evidence, the productive course is to retain a sense of uncertainty, to admit and explore plausibility without letting the romance of biographical narrative exceed what we can know and say with confidence. Doing so offers a more productive path towards learning about J.C. and about “homosexuality” in his illustrations than does overlaying of our own hopes and fantasies on the lives of these men.

Fashion historian Richard Martin, has taken note of the seeming ambiguity in Leyendecker’s images while trying to distance himself from essentialist assumptions about sexuality and picture making:

Leyendecker was gay, but I would not argue that the Arrow Collar Man was gay, even if potentially a gay-receiver, one to whom homosexual men might have also wanted to proffer their affections. A gay man does not necessarily make homoerotic art when he is representing another man or even when representing an ideal. . . . The homoerotic is only tangentially engaged with the sexual orientation of the artist; rather it arises in the work of art in transmission and context and reception.

⁹⁰Cooper, 132.

Martin is right to offer these cautions; however in the next sentence he adds, “There were Leyendecker images in the second decade of the twentieth century that do qualify in my opinion as homoerotic images.”⁹¹ He continues with a discussion of advertising images for Cooper Company underwear, Kuppenheimer suits, and above all Gillette razors. His argument is frequently nuanced, but leaves me a little uneasy. In particular, it does not articulate what distinguishes a homosocial scene from an “incontrovertibly homoerotic” one, and offers assertions such as “we are witness to an obvious display of affection” -- in for instance the jockey image that I discuss below-- where such affection is simply not evident [Figure 65, at-the-races].⁹²

What properties appear to invest these images with a homoerotic thematic? For Emmanuel Cooper and, closely following his arguments, for James Gifford, the homoerotic is found not in obvious scenes of male-male ardor, but emerges from what they characterize as Leyendecker’s ambiguous images. By ambiguity they both mean to suggest that in Leyendecker’s illustrations sexual desire is evoked without foreclosing the possibility that it is shared between men. A typical scene is said to have “an ambiguity which offers a variety of readings.”⁹³ Of a 1910 Arrow Collar advertisement [Figure 66, golf club with collie], both note that between men “there is an ambiguity about their look,” and more generally that “men address themselves to each other whilst ignoring the

⁹¹Richard Martin, “Gay Blades: Homoerotic Content in J.C. Leyendecker’s Gillette Advertising Images,” *Journal of American Culture* 18, 2 (Summer 1995): 75-76.

⁹²Martin, 76. Although Martin does not provide a date or source for the image, he gives a description sufficient to make the identification.

⁹³Gifford’s text (122) mis-attributes this phrase to Schau, though it is Cooper’s.

women.”⁹⁴ In other words, men look not at women but at men, and they do so in a manner that is not clearly accounted for by a sanctioned and sanctioning heterosexual activity or context.

⁹⁴Cooper 133, 132. Roger Austen makes similar observations in “Wave of the Past,” *Christopher Street* (January 1977): 32.

I too am convinced I see that ambiguity, and I admit that it is tempting to read it as issuing from and confirming Leyendecker's supposed homosexuality. The appeal of such a counter reading is marked for anyone interested in exceeding the bounds of a hegemonic concept of culture. But there are several factors not accounted for here which invite a nuanced reading that ultimately cannot secure these as *homosexual* images. While I endorse the suggestion that the images would have been open to potential *subversive* readings -- vis a vis heterosexual norms -- as picturing a heightened eroticism shared among men, they cannot be reduced to such. I prefer instead to consider how they at once queer and endorse conventional gender ideals.

What strikes me in Cooper's and in Gifford's accounts is that the ambiguity of the image (an ambiguity equated with the presence of homosexual themes or of homoeroticism) emerges from failures of the dominant code. Specifically, these are failures to assert the heterosexual norm while precluding all other possibilities, to guard against ambiguity and anchor heterosexual meanings. But such a determinate image does not exist, for it can be no more than a fantasy of a totalized discourse that has secured all of its terms. In so far as heterosexuality derives its content as a meaningful category in part through its relation to other categories (homosexuality, androgyny, etc.), it can not be secured independently of them. If some "heterosexual" images are more determinate than others, they must nonetheless submit, by virtue of evoking heterosexuality, to a broad discourse of gender roles and sexuality that undermine *prima facie* norms.

As a very brief example of what I mean, consider a 1922 advertisement with a Leyendecker image of a young couple preparing to ornament their home with a new garden [Figure 67]. To obtain the evident heterosexual relationship of the couple, the image draws

on codes of femininity (demure beauty, subservience and complementarity to masculinity, dependence, domesticity) and masculinity (intellectuality, leadership, physicality, sartorial comportment, mastery of the natural world) -- both inflected by class and race. But the strictures of the multiple demands of the subject matter -- domesticity, gender, labor, desirable appearance, and so forth -- trouble the image: a sweet couple, yes, but not at all prepared for the labor they are about to undertake as *an investment in the good appearance* of their domestic environment. Her dainty gesture along with his garden manual, sparkling hoe, stylish boater and crisp lounge suit make ridiculous the ambitions of their project. In this way, the attempt to manage these codes within even this modest, manifestly heterosexual conception, distresses the attempt at propriety upon which their normative sexuality hinges. Heterosexuality is always already ambiguous.

But the look of ambiguity often claimed for these images assumes that homosexuality is *necessarily* evoked by the exchange of glances between men and that there are no scenarios that account for those exchanges. For if men address each other visually and the implied narrative accounts for the sustained look *within* a heterosexual visual economy, then it is not clear wherein lies the ambiguity Gifford and Cooper identify, unless it is in Leyendecker's conjectured homosexuality. And while some of Leyendecker's images seem to distribute male figures according to conventions of heterosexual romance (figure 66 for instance in which the fair-haired man, like the woman, is seated relatively passively and made available for scopophilic delectation) it is not so much that the look is ambiguous, but that prevailing codes of sexuality are indeterminate.

In shifting the emphasis from the ambiguous look of depicted figures as an axiomatic sign of homoeroticism to "codes," I want to attend specifically both to

conventions of men's advertising and to how Leyendecker's images tender a model of viewing by which they are apprehended. The images are more profoundly erotic than ambiguous looks suggest. And the eroticism depends not so much on whether men can be contrived to look at men with inordinate attention -- as they often do -- but instead depends on how Leyendecker exploits a structure of graphic desire to queer the images, to refuse to substantiate a totalized heterosexuality. Instead of following a procedure that anthropomorphizes depicted figures, ascribing to them human emotion, it is more to the point to consider how the images worked for their viewers. These magazine readers included not only gay-identified men and others disposed to perceive "gay images," but men and women of varying sexualities -- especially buyers of men's clothing -- who may also have responded libidinally to the images. As one manufacturer put it, "the Leyendecker faces prompted men to buy Arrow collars all over the world and disturbed thousands of women into writing love letters to the Arrow Collar Man, c/o Cluett, Peabody."⁹⁵ In other words, the palpable seductiveness of Leyendecker's advertising illustrations would have remained incoherent to many viewers if it depended upon their awareness of the "gayness" of an ambiguous look.

⁹⁵"Cluett, Peabody," *Fortune* 15 (February 1937): 114, I am grateful to Michael Murphy for sharing this and other citations with me from his dissertation research in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Washington University, St. Louis.

In accounting for the strangely lingering regards that men turn upon each other in Leyendecker's images, a first step is to examine the broader context of commercial illustration for men's ready-made clothing manufacturers. Many of these advertisements share with Leyendecker's images a remarkable ambiguity, an indifference towards women, and a knowing exchange of glances between men. That is, the same catalog of significant ambiguities Leyendecker commentators have cited. Moreover, the scenarios and copy (e.g. prevaricating fish stories told among men in states of undress, [Figure 68]) sometimes seem to demand readings that challenge the heterosexual credulity of twenty-first century eyes.⁹⁶

⁹⁶B.V.D. advertisements along these lines run from at least 1915 to 1926 and are rendered by at least two different anonymous artists. On Leyendecker's contribution to the visual culture of men's underwear see Richard Martin, "Fundamental Icon: J.C. Leyendecker's Male Underwear Imagery," *Textile & Text* 15, no. 1 (1992): 19-32.

Leyendecker's illustrations, though uniquely popular, drew on existing pictorial conventions of their genre. Similarly themed and seemingly ambiguous advertisements include those done for the House of Kuppenheimer noted above [Figures 49 & 51], as well as a scene of three figures at an undelineated out-of-doors spectacle [Figure 69, HoK, 1910]. In the last, a stylish woman with camera at the ready observes some off-page event while the two male figures either exchange glances with each other or form links in a chain of viewing beginning with the standee and ending with the photographer. Between the three figures is an empty seat awaiting an occupant, but which is really only accessible to "YOU," the viewer, addressed by the text. The copy for the advertisement concerns a convertible coat that is "really two coats in one." It goes both ways or at least "can be worn two ways." The text seems to promise that any ambiguity will be resolved by reference to the image, for "The illustration tells the story."

This body of images is queer indeed -- that is, it has the power to trouble conventional notions of gender and sexuality -- but it is not patently homosexual.⁹⁷ In fact, these images trade upon a *legitimate* "heterosexual" role performed by that lingering gaze that has been remarked as ambiguous. The look is not simply a knowing, cryptic glance, but functions as an index of the critical assessment and mutual admiration shared among men in judgments of sartorial taste, a theme common to all of these advertisements. Who better to affirm the reader's own good taste in admiring a Kuppenheimer style than (the representation of) another well-dressed man, never mind the attractive woman who, in any

⁹⁷The examples I illustrate are all from the House of Kuppenheimer, but the phenomenon is not unique to this firm's advertisements.

case, may be oblivious to manly concerns?

If such ambiguous scenes selling menswear were not Leyendecker's own invention, neither did his own images conform wholly to his artistic will. The copy, cropping, context and, in some instances, conception would have been out of his control.⁹⁸ In this regard compare, for instance, two versions of a Kuppenheimer illustration of 1919 [Figure 70 & 71] where cropping and border changes do not substantially transform the potential for reading homoeroticism, but also the versions of an Arrow advertisement of 1912 [Figure 72 & 73] which do undergo a significant change by eliminating one of two male figures.

⁹⁸Leyendecker appears not to have objected to having his images reconfigured in so far as he continued to work under these conditions for many years. By comparison Rockwell responded angrily when unapproved changes were made to his work. Claridge (365-366) discusses one such incident concerning a *Post* cover of September 24, 1949, "Before the Date," in which a horse's head was removed prior to printing. In 1942 Rockwell wrote the *American Magazine* from Arlington to complain that his signature had been removed from one of his illustrations in the July issue: "I feel it is unpardonable that a man's original creative work should be altered without so much as asking him or notifying him of it. . . . [I]t is definitely a blow to the dignity and prestige of American Illustration, and as I have a deep respect and devotion for my profession I cannot see any such step taken without vigorously protesting it. If this is to be the policy of the magazine in the future, I will gladly return the two manuscripts I have." Rockwell to Mr. Sumner Blossom, editor *American Magazine*, NY, June 9, 1942. Box 10: "business correspondence 1940-1942, NoRMS, Stockbridge, Mass.

Nonetheless, one can identify specific developments Leyendecker introduced to this genre, elaborating the erotics of these images. This seems to have something to do with how he capitalizes on characteristic features of vision and disguises touch, or contiguity, to create scenes of charged potential. With an image such as the 1924 Kuppenheimer advertisement, evidently set at the races, the eye is drawn to the heads, not only as a point of conceptual interest, but also by ordinary compositional strategies [Figure 65, spectator and jockey]. Situated just beneath the bold Kuppenheimer trade name, the light tones of the upper torsos and heads of the figures are set against the capacious negative space rendered in a barely modulated, very dark green-black. That inky background (as well as the jockey's diminutive size that might be confused as a figure at a small remove) exaggerates the interval between the heads, so that the natty young gentleman's line of sight seems to traverse a substantial distance before it reaches the jockey -- passing just behind him towards some unseen event. But as the viewer's eye travels down the bodies and over the transition obscured by the confusing form of the saddle and gear, spatial relations become warped. The lateral expanse separating the two figures is unexpectedly collapsed, their knees perhaps just touching behind the stirrup (again the tack acts as a screen). At the same time, the spatial relationship is reversed: where the racegoer's upper torso and head seemed closer, the jockey's knee and lower leg are clearly nearer the viewer in the lower half of the image.

This "bad" perspectival construction might recall early allegations that J.C. sometimes rushed through a job and worked without a model, or that he had relatively limited experience with constructions in depth (although this is in fact an extremely

shallow picture).⁹⁹ In another light, it might be viewed as a conscious pictorial strategy, like those employed in so many rule-breaking images populating the history of perspective; think of Dominico Veneziano's St. Lucy's Altarpiece (c.1445) in which the Madonna is situated in our earthly space where the base of her throne is grounded *before* the columns, but appears at a reverential distance *within* the portico of the sacred architecture [Figure 74]. Leyendecker's image exhibits the same push/pull perspective which needs not be treated as mere error. Rather than elevating the mundane to the transcendent, the advertisement imparts to vision a taction that imparts these images of cool and distant men with imminent palpability.

⁹⁹As noted in the discussion of his early poster work these allegations were contradicted by later statements by and about Leyendecker. Moreover, those sketches which survived after his death -- Beach destroyed many on Leyendecker's request -- confirm that his working process was highly involved and time consuming.

Whether error or stratagem, Leyendecker's decorative conception typically *seems* to suppress interest in relations of depth even in preference to avoiding such distortions. Indeed, Leyendecker insisted that fundamental to poster and cover art was the negation of the dimension of space extending into the picture plane: "The amateur draws an illustration, and offers it as a cover. Whereas a cover at its best is truly a poster, more related to murals or sculpture than to illustration. It should tell its story on one plane, without realistic perspective and distance. And that story should be told in pantomime, without explanatory legend."¹⁰⁰ The usual organization of his canvas subordinates -- and flattens out -- spatial relations in favor of a lateral address between figures, primarily accomplished by glances, and normally iterated by the horizontal lines of furniture, fences, railings and automobiles set squarely in line with the frame [Figures 75-footrace, 76-library, 66-golf club]¹⁰¹ To further underscore the flatness of these compositions, he sets them against blank or shallow stage-like backgrounds, suffusing the whole with even lighting and high-key tones. By these means he achieves such "a distinct silhouette [that the] reader will notice it at a greater distance, and though he can't make out the design, still the design will pull him in."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰Presumably he is thinking of relief sculpture. Quoted in "J.C. Leyendecker," *American Artists* no. 10 of a Series (Philadelphia: Gatchel & Manning, Inc., January 1940): n.p.; Wesley Stout attributed nearly identical words to Leyendecker in "Yes, We Read the Story," *Saturday Evening Post* 204 (June 25, 1932): 40.

¹⁰¹Many of these are two page advertisements in which the landscape format would naturally call for emphasis on the horizontal plane. However, these observations hold equally in the case of the vertical format images discussed here.

¹⁰²Leyendecker quoted in Wesley Stout, "Yes, We Read the Story," *Saturday Evening Post* 204 (June 25, 1932): 40.

If the *look* dominates the axis parallel to the picture plane (the one with which the viewer's gaze can not *align*), in many images the de-emphasized relations taking place along the line of sight *into* the picture are left largely unmarked as if here there were nothing more to see than figures set against abbreviated ground. Yet, in these images, there is a kind of visual erotic subterfuge at work that takes advantage of the de-emphasized significance of relations in depth. Because figures typically do not openly interact across the space *into* the picture, that dimension appears to bear little interest. And where figures overlap by happenstance, they remain studiously oblivious to each others presence. This mindful indifference to physical contiguity charges the steady gazes of figures in many of these images [cf. figures 65-jockey, 75-footrace, and 77-swimmer] with the burden of denying significance to that proximity. The closeness and even contact between figures evident in the visual construction of the images is contravened by the episode represented with the recurrently averted gazes denying any interaction, particularly -- but not only -- in images of men. These figures then share both proximity and the common activity of looking at something *else*, usually a man whether by implication or depiction

These relations unfold differently but with similar charge in other images, particularly in those conceived for the expansive horizontal format of costly double-page advertisements. In one such image two men sit facing, if not addressing, each other across from either end of a floral chesterfield. Ensnared together in this parlor scene, they exchange looks, but neither speaks [Figure 62, men on sofa].¹⁰³ The momentary

¹⁰³The image appeared in print as an advertisement, not as reproduced here, reversed left for right to correct the button on the suit jacket, and with text -- concerning the stylish madras collars and new shirts -- filling the space between their heads.

visitor -- he has taken off one glove but not his hat while, perhaps, awaiting his outing party in the company of the stay-at-home reader who, in turn, pauses to politely acknowledge this intruder -- assumes a courtly pose matched to his dandy's outfit. (One thinks by contrast of how tea and conversation *explain* similar scenes of social calls by nineteenth-century American painters). In the reader is embodied a compatible vision of manliness, one which, although less concerned with the refinements of fashion accessories, relies upon the very crispness of his shirt and sharpness of his pants-crease to declare the firmness of his bearing. The direct visual engagement of the two figures across the breadth of the illustration sustains the entire interlude; the apparent interlocutors remain close-lipped and refrain from conversational gesture. Ostensibly indifferent to the viewer's gaze and immersed in the world they inhabit, the figures yet do nothing to justify their presence there. Just as a viewer must examine the figures to appreciate the appeal of their features and clothing, so the figures seem to scrutinize each other. The aggressive visuality of the illustration entails the sartorial discrimination requisite for a certain masculine type, but one which misses the mark. The sartorial gaze does not operate in intimate settings such as this, but belongs -- like the flaneur -- to the realm of public consumption (as one advertisement showing seven college men singing together in private rooms has it, "When you gather around the banjo you don't want to have to think about your clothes"¹⁰⁴).

¹⁰⁴Illustrated by JS (John Sheridan), advertisement for Hart Schaffner & Marx clothes , *Popular Mechanics* (1914).

A salient feature of these and other figures throughout the corpus of Leyendecker's advertising images, is that they never quite do whatever it is they are doing. In his Kuppenheimer at-the-races advertisement for instance, the man, casually immobile as he leans on his cane, is above all a spectator. We see his line of vision and notice that he carries field-glasses in a leather case hanging from one shoulder. And yet, he evidently is not spectating . . . just as the jockey is not riding. Similarly, playgoers in their box-seats neglect the stage looking instead across the picture plane towards other congregants, while golfers leave their clubs sheathed in leather bags. None of these figures undertakes their ostensible activity: all are engaged in looking at things unseen, or, conversely, looking at each other in significant silence. And this represented vision seems to accrue meaningfulness in the absence of any other narrative function.

Such is the case with a 1922 Kuppenheimer advertisement set at an aquatic contest [Figure 77, swimmer and fan]. The swimmer, neither wet nor at the ready, and the fan, who neglects to voice enthusiastic cheers despite his megaphone, engage in the implied competition only, and pointedly, through vision. Their gazes align in a trajectory extending well beyond the frame of the advertisement into the external space of the viewer. The pictorial theme revolves again around looking at the unseen, even as the male body is presented to be seen. Just as the figures depicted are invited to gaze upon the male body in the context of the swimming meet and to gauge its athletic prowess, the viewer of the image, whether male or female, is so encouraged to take unselfconscious pleasure in looking, but also to judge. The theme, as ever, may be looking, but the eroticism lies in the model of appraising vision offered to and enacted by the viewer.

V. Full Personality

This mixture of visual pleasure, erotics and judgment is the theme of the opening scene of “Full Personality,” a serialized short story by John Taintor Foote published in three successive issues of the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1933.¹⁰⁵ The story is not, within the massive body of *Post* fiction, outstanding, but it is particularly relevant here in its exploration of the contest and collaboration of the man of body and the man of taste. The narrative places these two masculinities in crisis and then orchestrates their restitution through the establishment of heterosexual romance and negotiations of racial difference. However, in formulating masculine American identities suited to the conditions of modernity, the story also divulges their frailties.

The protagonist Martin, is a debonair and mature bachelor stymied, as the story opens, by the dramaturgical problem of getting the “dead Chinaman” offstage in the second act of his play. Summering with friends Tom and Elinor at a fashionable upstate New York community where all social life revolves around “The Lake,” the playwright intends to hide from society and work. However, he gets caught-up in a wager that the sophistication of age -- his own -- will vanquish even an outstanding example of youth by winning the favor of the acknowledged female beauty of the resort. In the process he rediscovers, much to his surprise, romantic, heterosexual love.

¹⁰⁵“Full Personality” ran in the *Saturday Evening Post*, January 14, 21 and 28, 1933. Foote would go on to earn screenplay credits in Hollywood for a number of successful movies including *Broadway Serenade* (1939), *Swanee River* (with Al Jolson, 1939), and *The Mark of Zoro* (1940).

In its most straightforward aspects, the narrative revolves around and is resolved in heterosexual coupling, but it originates in fact with a homoerotically charged encounter on a crowded diving float. There Martin, a waterlogged flaneur, first spies the beautiful, but sullen youth whose attentions are coveted by the young ladies of The Lake. Thus, the story opens with the very words “Too good looking!” issuing from the “hideous gashes” of a girl’s painted lips. Martin casts about until his eyes fall enviously upon the extraordinary creature that is Hugo. The scene that unfolds, with its languorous masculinity, scrutinizing male-male gaze, and pronounced indifference to attractive women -- recalls an overpopulated Leyendecker image, although Henry Raleigh’s illustration of this scene eschews the Leyendecker-type and instead indiscriminately employs the same sinuous line to register male and female figures [Figure 78 & 79].¹⁰⁶

He continued to stare . . . at a bronze god, half lying on the edge of the float, languidly stirring blue-green lake water with its legs.

He knew he shared with his own sex an honest distrust of beauty in the male. Too often such beauty owed its being to a delicacy of line that damned the result with effeminacy. Englishmen of their day must have withdrawn instinctively from Byron and Shelley...

Not in this case, however! Martin rolled over on his side to take his defenseless back away from the sun, conscious that his own white arms and legs now looked strangely feminine. Despite their undoubted muscularity, their pallor did not help them to compete with the tanned body and limbs of the youth at whom he had been gazing. Not in this Case! This was a man!
(3)

¹⁰⁶Henry Patrick Raleigh (1880-1944) did not finish high school. Instead he went to work before undertaking studies in art at the Mark Hopkins Art Institute of the San Francisco Art Association. Thereafter he worked as an illustrator for the *Examiner*, and then, in New York for the *World* and the *Journal* from about 1898. Then he began work illustration books and magazines until around 1940 when he could no longer secure clients. In 1944 he fell to his death from a hotel window. See *American Illustration: The Collection of the Delaware Art Museum* (Delaware Art Museum, 1991): 204.

The barely concealed eroticism of the scene is less the product of a writer working under censorious oppression -- for homosexuality is really not Foote's theme -- than a condition of the attempt to bring together two visions of middle- and upper-class masculinity. The virile physicality of the mentally-average Hugo and the man-of-world sophistication of the ever-thoughtful Martin are not mutually exclusive, but when brought together they each tend to expose in the other the fragility of heterosexual masculinity. On the diving float, the intensity of Hugo's body and his extraordinary economy of movement -- he rises without effort, dives without splashing, swims without rippling -- fascinates and repels: "And then, as he watched his Viking, Martin became victim of an extraordinary conflict of emotions, a sort of mental paradox." The effect is a menacing anality -- his *defenseless back* -- from which Martin retreats. Although the story's eventual denouement will find normative heterosexual relations installed all around, here Hugo's overbearing masculinity threatens Martin even while arousing an interest that abides until Martin finally pairs-off with the beautiful Daphne. But at this moment, feeling himself made *strangely feminine* in Hugo's presence, Martin instinctively retreats. In this passage, as in the larger structure of the story, heterosexual relations do not stand alone, but develop out of the interplay of multiple sexualities.

The eroticism here depends not only on Hugo's powerful physique, but upon what amounts to a visual ode to eugenic purity of blood. Martin fancies Hugo a "poem of the flesh in motion"¹⁰⁷ and a Norseman fit to wield "the Viking sword [a ...] crushing

¹⁰⁷This is a sign of his masculinity but also underscores his overdetermined Aryanism to the extent that it recalled the work of German eugenicists studying gesture and movement who believed Nordic types moved with economy and control, as opposed to the rocking

two-handed blade.” Hugo’s none-too-subtle phallic power is repeatedly linked to his seeming Nordic heritage (he is in fact the son of a German brewer consigned to a “sanitarium for inebriates”),¹⁰⁸ the *superior race* according to eugenic schemes advocated in the popular accounts of writers like Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant among others. Martin, for his part, is tainted by his long string of dalliances throughout Europe, most recently with a Countess, that seem to have dissipated him, leaving him with a sophistication perilously close to that suspicious Byronesque figure. What we have then are two ideal American types -- the man of body and the man of taste, each of whom must sublimate a vaguely European character flaw to adapt himself to the specific conditions of modernity in the US. The story at the end of the final installment gives the promise that each will achieve his full potential: Hugo by adopting the competitive spirit he lacks and making a try for the U.S. Olympic swim team; Martin by renouncing his own avowed bachelorhood and taking the first step towards writing -- not another Broadway hit, but the “Great American play” itself.

motion or lack of restraint found in Mediterranean types, blacks, Jews and others. These theories were popularized in the United States in translated texts such as Baur, Fisher and Lenz, *Human Heredity*, already in a third edition by the date of “Full Personality.” See my discussion in Chapter IV.

¹⁰⁸Hugo’s father Herman Mower, of course, is German, and was himself something of a specimen of manhood. The character flaw that left him alcoholic goes unnamed, but perhaps he never fully embraced his masculinity, something suggested the approximate anagrams of his name “her,” “man” and “woman”.

Women too need to be disciplined to normative sexuality. While Marjorie, for example, knows already to sacrifice her own desires for the good of Hugo, Daphne takes pleasure in an innate ability to dominate men with her *full personality*. Like her namesake of Greek myth, Daphne gave her heart to no man: late in the story she recalls a time when, “I began to think I was queer or something; men told me I was.”¹⁰⁹ But after suffering her own tears and finally submitting to Martin she will discover by story’s end that her *personality* had prevented her from being herself and from loving.

¹⁰⁹In “Full Personality” Foote allows the word “queer” an ambiguous polyvalence. Typically, it simply means “not quite normal,” but in this instance he clearly -- but not overtly -- signals the receptive reader that Daphne had questioned the orientation of her sexual desire. Indeed, there is a coldness between Daphne and her friend Marjorie, attributed to a past betrayal in which Daphne *accidentally* stole Marjorie’s escort in scenes that read as a lovers’ estrangement.

As for Martin, it is only when he begins his journey back into the heterosexual fold that he can dispose of the “exasperating Oriental”-- that body occupying the stage in the second act of his play.¹¹⁰ The first appearance of this figure occurs as Martin muses about romance: how he had years before fled from it, and how he had developed a reserve that protected his affairs from developing into full blown romantic entanglements. Rousing himself, he bethinks, “Well, this wasn’t getting rid of that dead Chinaman.” And throughout the next days he returns to “the dead Chink,” reports to his friends “I’ve done a stupid thing. Killed a Chinaman--had to...” and explains “the reason why the Chinaman must die . . . and, ergo, must shortly thereafter be removed.”¹¹¹ In exasperation he thinks to himself “Damn the Chinaman.” that “vexing Chinaman”¹¹² In finally discovering the solution he is thunderstruck, unable to say how he reached it he speculates that perhaps it came from his “subconscious self.” For the reader of the story, resolution of his Asian problem coincides with his first step towards rectifying his homosexual problem, it comes just moments after he discovers that the strange feelings he experienced while watching Hugo -- “a vague warmth, a sort of tender glow, a nostalgia for something -- someone deep in his past” -- were but recollections of the woman who turns out to be Hugo’s mother, Martin’s first love. Having made these connections, he spontaneously works out the

¹¹⁰The body of this Chinese figure is never explained in the story although at one point Martin describes his play’s theme as concerning how “the great, crawling Python called China will eventually swallow the little, imitative monkeys of Nippon...” (69).

¹¹¹Readers of the story are not made privy to these reasons.

¹¹²For an extended discussion of artistic engagements with San Francisco’s Chinatown from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries see Anthony W. Lee, *Picturing Chinatown: Art and Orientalism in San Francisco* (Univ. of California Press, 2001).

problem of the *Chinaman*. Martin's "subconscious", as he would have it, simultaneously refigures the foreign, the racial other and the queer within the framework of difference that defines his normative identity. These resolutions lead him along the path to his great American play that he had all but forsaken.

As the story suggests, the straight, white realism of *Saturday Evening Post* fiction (and illustration) does not evade themes of homosexuality or race, but engages them as key to the ideology of its normative American imagery. The *Post's* editorial injunctions against homosexuality and certain race themes organize the significance of *Post* identity by producing meaningful and manageable oppositions. The hegemonic ideals of whiteness and heterosexuality orient the randomness of experience in meaningful ways, giving sense to social order. As Gilbert Seldes wrote in the *Saturday Evening Post*, American illustrative realism was an art that would "see life steadily and see it whole, to illuminate the dark spots, and to give order to the chaos of everyday life."¹¹³

¹¹³Gilbert Seldes, "The Art Bogy," *Saturday Evening Post* (January 12, 1929): 130.

Chapter Four: Selling Whiteness

I. The Psychology of Advertising

“You don’t read the *stories*. That’s an American magazine -- you read the *advertisements!*”
--Henry O’Neill (1924)

In a sardonic essay on American magazine advertising, an Irish observer recalled being admonished to ignore the literature and devote attention exclusively to the advertisements in magazines he encountered in the United States. His satiric paean to these publications reveals advertising as playing on human weaknesses and instilling arbitrary -- if profit oriented -- social ideals. After initial resistance, the sojourner, Henry O’Neill, gives himself over to this, “the most thrilling of all literary pastimes,” as outstripping the best of the magazine stories howsoever “lurid their illustrations.”¹ O’Neill’s plaint against the encroachment of commercial culture into the realm of properly literary expression correctly diagnosed developments in periodical publishing and in advertising.

¹Henry O’Neil, “On Reading American Magazines,” *Living Age* [Boston] 324 (February 7, 1925): 301 [reprinted from the *Dublin Magazine*, December 1924, an Irish literary monthly.]

It was around 1911 that the “truly scientific stage” of commercial marketing emerged to provide stimulus for the tremendous growth in the output of advertising.² Since the turn of the century, advertising had begun to play an increasingly central role not only in American economic life in general, but in magazine publishing in particular.³ And the *Saturday Evening Post* led the way. Although less than thirteen per cent of the *Post*'s pages were given over to advertisements in 1900, by 1920 close to sixty per cent of each issue was devoted to the enterprise of promoting and selling products and services.⁴ At the same time that advertisements filled a larger proportion of the magazine, the number of total pages was increasing from well under 100 pages in 1900 to as many as 250 pages in 1925. Of the various ways in which the *Post* might have been conceived, it was fundamentally a vehicle for delivering advertisements and engendering consumer desire. By the mid-nineteen-teens onward, research designed to analyze and improve advertising -- that is, research not commissioned by a particular publisher -- increasingly turned to the *Saturday Evening Post* as the standard by which to study a very large, presumed-typical American audience. By 1918, the *Saturday Evening Post* could be taken to functionally

²Daniel Starch, *Principles of Advertising* (Chicago & New York: A. W. Shaw Co., 1923) cited in C. E. Benson and D. B. Lucas, “The Historical Trend of Negative Appeals in Advertising,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 13 (1929): 348.

³See Roland Marchand's important study of the cultural impact of advertising, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1985).

⁴C. J. Warden, Earl Yahn, Gordon Lewis, and Thora Eigenmann. “A Study of Certain Aspects of Advertising in the *Saturday Evening Post*,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 10, n.1 (March 1926): 64. It should be noted that even as the “advertising space ratio” rose, the size of the *Post* continued to increase so that in the aggregate it carried more rather than fewer stories, articles and illustrations.

represent for such researchers “the average non-trade, non-professional magazine.”⁵

⁵Herbert R. Laslett, “The Value of Relevancy in Advertisement Illustrations,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 2, no. 3 (September 1918): 270.

For these researchers, the question was never to discover who was reading popular magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post* and other popular magazines; this was a concern left to “house organs” and professional organizations that served the popular press industry. Instead, researchers looking into the psychology of advertising seemed to trust their intuited knowledge of the complexion of the great body of *Post* readers. Thus, they frequently drew their subjects from whatever populations seemed familiar within their particular worlds as academic researchers.

The following discussion educes the various institutional imaginations of the audience for the *Post*. Rather than affirming or discrediting the unexamined or highly motivated assumptions that interested parties made about who was reading the magazine, I analyze the attitudes and expectations that researchers and professionals brought to their work of making sense of the *Saturday Evening Post* and its readers. It may be useful here to offer a brief gloss in terms relevant to the abstract subject of reception and concerning the *Post*'s audience, readership, and readers. The actual *readers* of the *Post* were many and diverse and, beyond this, cannot readily be discussed as a public body. Some readers, no doubt, identified closely with the *Post*; others may have despised it, while making use of it to track prevailing cultural trends. The reader, therefore, may be taken as the actual -- and sometimes wholly idiosyncratic -- individual peruser, skimmer, or savorer of the weekly magazine about whom little can be said in the absence of extant testimony. Occasionally, I will have recourse to the responses of readers who have left records -- whether in letters, essays, or quoted commentary, but they are not of primary concern. This is not a history of *Post* readers, but of the cultural use of the *Post*.

Distinct from *readers*, the *readership* of the *Post*, may be taken to represent the

diverse but abstract groups by which we can take some measure of generalized response to the magazine and its illustration. If some readerships whole heartedly embraced the *Post* as representing their voice and interests in the public realm others, say “class” readerships, would have maintained an aloof distance, taking their pleasures guiltily, knowing that middle-brow slumming lacked all the caché of a night out in Harlem⁶ [Figure 80].

Finally, *audience* suggests *Post* readers as conceived at various moments and from particular perspectives. The audience of the *Post* might have appeared at one moment to a *Post* essayist as a homogenous middle-class from middle-America, while a *Post* advertising agent might have urged a client to remember the “reach” of the magazine into the “best” homes whose influence in matters of taste is felt at every socio-economic level. Audience, then, is both the most abstracted approach to the question of who was reading the *Post*, and the most suggestive of how the magazine was actually perceived and used in-house and in the wider social world.

⁶Leon Whipple counted among *Post* readers “the intelligenzia, often as a secret vice,” see “SatEvePost: Mirror on these States,” *Survey* 59 (March 1, 1928): 699. Of course certain of the intelligencia relished their disdain for all Curtis Publications: “So I’m finally becoming educated — all I still need to have come my way is the Sat. Evening Post + Ladies Home J. + then I will have become a true American truly trooly edgerkated. — Me for Edgerkation. [. . .] I’m believar in Evergrowth. A setter of good Eggsample for the young + still unborn -- perhaps also the still-born.” [sic all]. Alfred Stieglitz, letter to P. Strand, July 6, 1923, YCAL MSS 85, Box 25, Folder 608, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Rachael Arauz kindly shared this archival find of hers from her research for a dissertation, “Articulating ‘American’: Text and Image among the Early American Modernists.”

Readers, readerships, and audiences were fundamental concerns in the psychology of magazine advertising and the business of selling space in the *Post*, both of which were born of the rise of advertising in the United States. Psychologist and advertising agents (along with their clients) needed, in the stock phrase of copywriters, to know their audience. The problem for them was that not only could an audience not easily be known on such a vast scale, but that it literally did not exist. Only within the language and imagination of these discourses could the fictive audience have even a conceptual existence. Despite the research and empirical data, audiences were ultimately constructed to span a structural gap in the organization of knowledge about consumers, even as this organization was a discourse intended to explain the desires, perceptions, and habits of that very audience.

A. On Advertising's History

The history of advertising as it was written during this period suggested the field was both foundational to the history of Western civilization and fundamental to the modern capitalist society. Students of advertising desperately sought to legitimate their maligned field within the landscape of American culture. As such, one of the rhetorical devices frequently posited by these writers a parallel between advertising and other great developments of Western civilization, notably the fine arts. This lineage was intended not only to give roots to the shallow art, but to reveal that it had always been an essential cultural form. Advertising could be both a modern correlative to high capitalism, and a traditional pillar of Western culture.

These speculative histories, woven together by skilled clinical researchers and

expert practitioners of advertising, managed to locate its infancy in the very cradle of civilization, and to discover its various forms at each stage in a trite story of the development of Western civilization. With this genealogy, advertising gave itself a vital origin and history to legitimate what was in fact its dramatic emergence in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dismissed by some as merely vapid, partisans of advertising endeavored to show that it had evolved in reach, reliability, and aesthetic quality until “a new profession has come into being in our modern world -- Advertising Art.”⁷ Not unique to advertising, but nonetheless significant, the originary tales it fabricated for itself -- tales that would affirm its final emergence into the modern -- ineluctably evoked, at weird and unmotivated moments, race.

⁷Charles W. Alexander, “The Story of Advertising,” in *The Art of Advertising*, ed. Manuel Rosenberg and E. Walker Hartley (New York & London: Harper & Bros. 1930), 1.

The history of advertising, as it was written in the early decades of the twentieth century, occasionally began in the very caves of Lascaux or, more typically, in the shadow of the pyramids of Egypt, whence it moved on to Greece and Rome, found expression in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and then quickly proceeded to modern developments of what is finally recognizable as advertising. Some histories forgo the improbable conceit that cave painting were actually advertisements (for the power of the individual hunter⁸) or the imaginative suggestion that particularly skilled cave dwellers might leave a “sample” of their specialized wares -- say, an ax -- outside their domicile by way of proclaiming their craft to the “passer-by.”⁹ However, most attend reverently to Egypt and the authentic historical Ur-object of advertising that now resides in the British Museum: the 3,000 year old papyrus advertisement by “an Egyptian land-owner for the return of a runaway slave -- the oldest advertisement extant.”¹⁰ Where bondage and servitude in the Nile Valley open this story, the eventual arrival of advertising in the New World is given a sort of symmetry when it is connected to the enslavement of African

⁸J. George Frederick, “Introduction: The Story of Advertising Writing,” in *Masters of Advertising Copy*, ed. J. George Frederick (New York: Business Bourse, MCMXXXVI [or 1925, conflicting information given in book]), 13.

⁹Carl Richard Greer, *Advertising and its Mechanical Production* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1931), 3. Greer writes of historical “evidence” which “affords that advertising is almost as instinctive as trade itself, and that primitive man unconsciously adopted its cruder forms as an aid to barter. It is properly assumed that prehistoric man, emerging from the purely family relation into the tribal state, very early adopted some form of exchange” (3-4). The “dull, prehistoric mind” of the caveman, realizing that his wares were superior, placed samples out for the “passer-by” to see. “Here we have the germ of the present arts of sampling and window display.”

¹⁰*Selling Forces*, 26. Advertising history beginning with Egypt is given by Starch, *Principles of Advertising* (1923) who in turn cites Sampson, *History of Advertising* (1874).

peoples: the first advertisements in America, it is explained, also sought a fugitive slave.

It is a strange history indeed, for surely, the kind of advertising of concern to business historians in general and to the *Saturday Evening Post* in particular had much more to do with moving products and selling images, then with the pernicious sort of want-ad represented by a runaway slave handbill. Yet, even in the imaginary of *Post* advertising officials, the more powerful formulation held that, “In America the earliest advertising -- like the ancient Egyptian relic -- was for the return of runaway slaves, and the trading companies also advertised indentured labor.”¹¹ In the competing logics of history and of racialized difference, it is race that has won out in the telling of this tale.

Historians have since dispensed with these imaginative flourishes and correctly perceive that the history of the modern promotion of consumer goods, services, and manufacture begins in the nineteenth-century, rightly identified as the moment of advertising’s “prehistory.”¹² But I am less concerned with writing a correct history of advertising here than I am in bringing to light those seemingly inconsequential characterizations and contextualizations which -- whether lighthearted or of serious mien -- were deemed reasonable ways to frame the origins of the field in the interwar years.

This discourse of advertising as both timeless expression of Western civilization and key to modern capital society underwrites the imagination of a field that is structured so as to express the economic and social life of America as an implicitly white one.

Advertising is easily made to shore up white power, to control and repress rebellious

¹¹*Selling Forces*, 1913, 28.

¹²Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and its Creators* (New York: William Morrow, 1984).

activity, to legitimate racial *disequality*. This is the conception that stands behind the *Post*'s attempts to understand and communicate the make-up of its audience.

B. Measuring the Audience

“There is no way of telling.”
--Concluding assessment of H. F. Adams “The Adequacy of the Laboratory Test in Advertising” (1915)¹³

In 1915 advertisers and psychologists were giddy with the “revolutionary idea” that laboratory tests on representative subjects might be predictive of the practical effect of advertisements on actual sales.¹⁴ If a correlation were successfully developed between how subjects responded to a particular advertisement and the expected relative impact on resulting sales (more, less, the same), advertisers would be able to offer their clients a virtual crystal ball -- what one study would term a “psychological sales barometer”¹⁵ -- to guide their campaigns in the field of competition for consumer dollars. The goal was to predict the actual “pulling power” -- the degree to which an advertisement produces the desired response -- of any given insertion or campaign.

¹³H. F. Adams, “The Adequacy of the Laboratory Test in Advertising,” *Psychological Review* 22, no. 5 (September 1915): 421. The studies were and continued to be published in such periodicals as *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Archives of Psychology*, *Journal of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology*, and *American Journal of Psychology*.

¹⁴Adams, 1915, 402. With increasing professionalization of advertising, the research of psychologists later would be augmented by surveys out of departments such as Northwestern University’s program in Journalism and Advertising where George Gallup taught.

¹⁵H. C. Link, “A New Method of Testing Advertising and a Psychological Sales Barometer,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 18 (1934): 1-26.

The reasonably skeptical assessment of this project by some researchers -- the psychologist H. F. Adams for one, as indicated in the above epigraph, concluded early on that there could be no such correspondence -- failed to dampen enthusiasm of the many psychologists who continually devised new and sometimes elaborate tests for any number of variables. These studies, undertaken by academic researchers in psychology departments, variously considered the effectiveness of advertisements according to a panoply of criteria including emotional appeal, theme, size and ratio, use of color, position in the magazine, position on the page, left versus right page, repetition, color and word association, positive and negative appeals, borders and line quality, copy length, the day of the week in which the magazine appeared, gender of reader, type of product advertised, and geographic locality. Most such studies undertook to extrapolate results from work with small populations supposed "representative" and typically composed of anywhere from a dozen to five hundred undergraduate students, often in psychology programs. Still, researchers were not infrequently compelled to worry that their samples and methods might "not be entirely adequate."¹⁶

¹⁶This was one researcher's concern about his own research after having carefully structured his study to address shortcomings he discovered in previous attempts to analyze the same question. D.B. Lucas, "The Impression Values of Fixed Advertising Locations in the *Saturday Evening Post*," *Journal of Applied Psychology* XXI, n.6 (December 1937): 626.

In the face of their own critical assessments of the psychology of advertising, some researchers undertook increasingly large and complex investigations into the effectiveness of magazine advertising involving tens of thousands of consumers and dozens of psychologists collecting data throughout the United States over the course of years (e. g. Link, 1934). The majestic scale of such studies seems at times to reflect an absurd, if inevitable ambition to reproduce the very population under study -- the magazine reader in the United States -- person for person. As expensive and time consuming as these studies were, they remained exceptions to the preponderance of modestly-scaled tests. Nonetheless, they reflect the tension symptomatic of the very structure of the science of sampling which assumes, but can not prove, a conceptual relationship between a particular set of observed subjects and the extrapolated totality -- the general population -- to which they belong.

This tension in the movement between a limited set of observations of psychological subjects and a generalized, predictive knowledge of people as social actors is not merely the byproduct of clinical research. Rather it is what animates such work in the first place. The science of sampling has no theory *per se* of how the objects it studies (interviewees, test groups, etc.) correlate to the subject of investigation (actual populations). Ironically, the objects that *are* accessible are not of ultimate interest, while the aimed for populations are not only beyond reach, but are only ever conceptual categories -- “consumers,” “the American people” -- that organize ideas about dispersed individuals with little regard for specificities of lived experience.

Moreover, these conceptual categories occupy dual roles in marketing studies. In the very conception of a research program, the psychologist unselfconsciously posits

“magazine readers” who might, for instance, be more or less disposed towards advertisements adjacent to interesting editorial matter. These “magazine readers,” or their responses, are thus the subject of study. But since they cannot be actually constituted as a whole, it is necessary to observe them indirectly or by proxy, thus warranting the otherwise purposeless activity of, for instance, testing undergraduates on which advertisements they recall after having read an unrelated article.¹⁷ The results of this activity are quantified, analyzed, and interpreted to explain the group behavior of the students, and finally, in a conclusion, extrapolated as meaningfully predicting the behavior of “magazine readers.” It is the concept of the “magazine reader” then that actually drives and explains the researcher’s activity, giving it shape and definition. And the corporate body’s curiously conceived nature is that it not be available as itself but only as its synecdochal alternate. The category is so constituted that it lacks presence at both the beginning and conclusion of research, is always held at bay, viewed obliquely. Ultimately it is known via mechanisms structured around its absolute unknowability.

¹⁷W. N. Kellogg, “The Influence of Reading Matter upon the Effectiveness of Adjacent Advertisements,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 16 (1932): 49-58. Kellogg concludes from his study of eighty-five students that there is an advantage to placing advertisements next to reading matter proper.

Sampling then was a poetic practice; its favored trope being the expression of the whole by means of the part. As a science, however, the causal or substantive relation between part and whole is left unexamined, papered-over with margins of error. In such a relation of part to whole, there remains an irreducibility between its material appearance (the metaphoric language; the sample population) and its signified (the referent; the audience). Where poets thrive on this interpretive play, the social scientist seeks certainty in her conclusions. Larger and larger sample groups might seem to reduce the breach between sample and people, but the two are nonetheless qualitatively different. More than likely, researchers were generally aware of this inherent problem of sampling, even if they typically ignored it in their publications. As a result, and despite any self-doubts they may have held about the knowledge they were generating, they continually, even involuntarily, reproduced unattained categories as byproducts of their technical procedures. Their research was designed to produce *the people* (their habits, desires, etc) as a subject of study.

Whatever divagations they took in the course of research, in the end their work only affirmed the discursive actuality of whatever portion of *the American public* they sought to explain. What mattered in large part was the common sense -- that is, the assumptions -- that these researchers brought to the concept of the American public and of the typical magazine reader. They could simply reach out to their own near-at-hand communities and grasp the *Post*.

II. Curtis Publishing and the Advertising Department

A. Pitching the *Post*: *Post* Boys and District Agents

Among the materials produced by the Circulation and the Sales departments at Curtis Publishing were manuals intended to aid the Curtis sales forces in selling its magazine. These handbooks included pamphlets and paper-bound booklets -- sometimes profusely illustrated -- designed to educate and encourage boy sellers, managers, and other salesmen vending to *Post* readers. These publications, tending as they do to advise, exhort, and enumerate in the service of sales, lack engaging literary qualities, but do offer insight into how the *Post* sought to promote a conception of its enterprise that would appeal to its sellers.¹⁸

I. “no can read dat pap”

¹⁸In 1913 -- a year for which I have Curtis-supplied figures, Curtis Publishing employed about 1,400 people in its Home Office to centrally administer and fulfill subscriptions and one-off sales through “an elaborate follow up system” that tracked the 40,000 subscription solicitors on the street throughout the United States. Advertising Department, Curtis Publishing Company, *Obiter Dicta* 1, no. 1 (May 1913): 8. Jan Cohn in “The Business Ethic for Boys: *The Saturday Evening Post* and the Post Boys,” *Business History Review* 61, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 214-15, cites an in-house memo, “Curtis Circulations Stand Firm,” Curtis Publishing, 1933, which gives Curtis figures of 31,421 “Boy Retailers” in the seventy largest U.S. cities and 16,028 more working cities with populations of 35,000 to 100,000. And for a larger picture, consider a 1936 estimate suggesting that 100,000 boys were selling for all U.S. magazines combined, and that they accounted for 2,456,000 copies sold of each issue of the top three weeklies (see Phillips Wyman, *Magazine Circulation: An Outline of Methods and Meanings*, The McCall Co. [New York: William E. Rudge’s Sons, 1936], 152).

In addition to circulation through individual subscription orders and those solicited by Curtis subscription agents, a substantial number of the weekly issues were distributed *ad hoc* by newsdealers and sales agents, including the famous “*Post* boys”¹⁹ [Figure 81].

Although some in the magazine industry dismissed the circulation gained by such boosting as representing false interest²⁰ -- an interest that spoke more to empathetic housewives and harried businessmen who might part with a nickel, but were unlikely to actually read the contents let alone the advertisements -- the *Post* continued unabashedly to develop and refine this aspect of its sales program.²¹ Nonetheless, the Circulation Department

¹⁹The “three channels” of circulation are commented upon in *Obiter Dicta*, 1913, 7. Boys might also or exclusively sell the other major Curtis magazines *The Ladies Home Journal* and the *Country Gentleman*, but their most common eponym remained “*Post* boys.”

²⁰Because advertising sales were tied to circulation, there was great competition among magazines to demonstrate the highest possible circulation, sometimes through inaccurate claims or by pushing the periodical into unreceptive hands. Circulation boosting practices at any number of magazines resulting in suspect numbers and quality included “clubbing” (group subscription discounts), give-away incentives to subscribers, premiums to sellers, multi-year reductions, installment plans, etc. The *Post* disparaged such practices arguing, “It is obvious that all families are not equally valuable to an advertiser. Some lack money, others lack ability to read understandingly, still others do not appreciate quality merchandise.” Curtis Publishing Company, *Curtis Circulation - 1922. The Saturday Evening Post, the Ladies’ Home Journal, the Country Gentlemen, by Cities and Towns of over 1,000 Population and by Counties in the United States* (Philadelphia: The Curtis Pub. Co., 1922), 6.

²¹The idea of distributing the *Post* through boy salesmen was instituted in 1899 and expanded rapidly thereafter. For an excellent study focussing on the years 1902-1905 of the *Post*’s intensive pressure on its boys as it sought to instill in them business values and, above all, to increase sales, see Cohn, “The Business Ethic for Boys,” 1987. Cohn also offers insightful calculations about how difficult it really was to make much money selling these magazines. Similar arguments are made, in brief, in Jan Cohn, *Creating America: George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1989), 39-43. For a fond remembrance of a former *Post* boy who enjoyed a lucrative career in the early 1920s, see Earl Clark, “Training School for Boys,” *Saturday Evening Post* (July-August, 1996): 54ff. For many years, the *Post* kept up with its boys via its house magazine, *Our Boys*, which continued to explain to successive generation how to pitch the

acknowledged a weakness in relying on “chance customers” and advised its *Post* boys to develop “steadies,”²² that is regular, “eager, interested readers.”²³

magazine to customers. but The *Post* boy program finally came to an end during the second World War according to Clark.

²²Circulation Department, Curtis Publishing Co., *How to Sell 100 Copies Weekly* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Co., 1912), 2. Hereafter cited as *100 Copies*.

²³[Richard J. Walsh], Curtis Publishing Company, *Selling Forces* (Philadelphia: Curtis Pub. Co., 1913), 244.

If circulation generated by boy salesmen had to be justified, the *Post* boy himself, as a type, stepped right off the pages of the magazine. He -- girls do not appear to have been prohibited from selling Curtis magazines, but the literature does not address, encourage or represent them -- was rarely as threadbare as Horatio Alger's Ragged Dick who rose from the depths of urban poverty in the 1868 novel, but he shared the bootblack's pluck and determination. By dint of hard work and good (middle-class) character,²⁴ a *Post* boy could make of himself a business success in the Curtis mold.²⁵ Curtis Publishing offered such a lad the opportunity to build character, make money, and win prizes through sales. If the boy was a little troubled -- be he beggar, spendthrift, idler, wayward, shy, bookworm, unmannered or thoughtless, Curtis could help there too with a plan that could straighten out a kid like one Tommy Meek who "didn't need money; he had all he required, for his father is in comfortable circumstances and generous."²⁶ The Sales Division's primary interest lay with boys coming from middle-class homes, and when it did hold up an example like Virgil Pratt from Edina, Missouri who intended to earn enough money to attend school, it was to shame more fortunate boys (42-43). Nonetheless, a series of photographs taken of Curtis

²⁴A 1925 Curtis pamphlet reassuringly placed its college-bound *Post* boys, at least, in a middle-class milieu: "These boys, living for the most part in the better residential districts, were encouraged to build up routes of regular customers among their friends and neighbors." *Building a College Career on Character* (Philadelphia, PA, 1925) as quoted in Cohn, "The Business Ethic for Boys," 1987, 189.

²⁵Curtis himself -- like his biographer, son-in-law, and *Ladies Home Journal* editor Bok -- was a one-time newsboy who pulled himself up by his bootstraps. For a recollection of selling a "soul-crushing bundle of *Saturday Evening Posts*" each week in Belleville, New Jersey during the depression, see Russell Baker, *Growing Up* (New York: Gordon & Weed, 1982), 19.

²⁶ *What shall I do with my boy? A suggestion to parents with a boy problem* (Philadelphia, PA: Sales Division, Curtis Publishing Company, 1915), 34.

boys flanking their State Governors on the steps of their respective Capitols included a boy or two bereft of shoes [Figure 82].

Post literature on its boys faced several tasks including recruiting and encouraging boys, gaining approval of parents, addressing concerns of advertisers, and distinguishing paper carrying from the more desultory and disreputable practice of street selling. During the depression concerns about the effects of exposing children to the unregulated market of the street resulted in “controversy arising between newspaper publishers and certain civic groups,” as well as a government report on newspaper carriers.²⁷ The report suggested a minimum age of twelve years for carriers (a lower minimum than for street sellers), but also pointedly emphasized that newspaper boys did *not* constitute delinquents and *did* benefit from the employment. Still, Curtis would thereafter no longer tout such working youngsters as Frederick who was from Kentucky and “going on seven.”²⁸

In guiding *Post* boys towards increased sales as they called on neighbors and hawked the copies on the street, the Circulation Department advised in one manual, “Show the Covers.” The attractive illustrations, it was suggested, would themselves lead many people to buy the issue at hand, “[b]ut,” experts cautioned, “don’t expect the covers to do all the selling for you. After you have his [a potential customer’s] attention, then point out some article you think will interest him” (*100 Copies*, 3).

²⁷“Newspaper Carriers and Street Sellers,” Supplementary Report A [supplement to May 7, 1934 report on “Newspaper and Periodical Carriers and Street Sellers], by National Recovery Administration, Division of Research and Planning (June 21, 1934): 3, 6, 13.

²⁸*What shall I do with my boy?* 18-19.

To facilitate this commercial persiflage, boys were offered examples of how to tailor their knowledge of the *Post's* weekly contents to potential buyers they encountered on the street. Thus, in one fast-paced scenario a sales boy, upon spying a fireman, barks out the magazine's coverage of a "Million-dollar fire!" and to a politician, "Taft has a bad cold!" Sales made, he continues his peripatetic retailing through the urban market finding a quick-witted response for every situation:

"All about the suicide!" was his next cry, aimed at a glum-looking man, who pulled a penny from his pocket.

"Fresha da news from olda It'tally!" he called to a passing Italian peddler.

Here, however, he hit a snag.

"Sorra," replied the peddler, "buta no can read dat pap; noa da Anglese."

"Stung!" murmured the boy to himself . . .²⁹

The sales guide envisions a boy whose efforts to make good as a budding pitchman enable him to entice any type he may meet on the street, whether a theater-going girl, a public servant, a politician, or even a weather man. His artful suasion is thwarted only in his encounter with the foreigner whose business -- something like the boy's, though lacking the institutional backing -- operates at the margin of retail exchange.

²⁹*100 Copies*, 10.

Among the vignettes and instructions picked-out for illustration in the entertainingly decorated guide, F. G. Cooper³⁰ applied his characteristic bold, black-and-white cartoon-style to this peddler episode [Figure 83]. Cooper's broad-brush images play throughout with types -- the *Post* boy appears with deferentially doffed hat pitching to a plump, self-satisfied deskworker, or again thrusting an open-paged magazine towards a bowlered politician who eyes him coolly over a cigar [Figure 84] -- but mostly avoids difference. Where racial difference does enter, in the figure of the Italian peddler,³¹ the image, though not the text, becomes agonistic and dark. The agitation of the *Post* boy, registered in the deep vertical furrow of his brow, arched eyebrows and rudely agape maw,

³⁰Oregon born Fred(erick) G. Cooper (1883-1962) drew illustrations for books, magazines and advertisements, was associate editor at *Life* (New York), and, notably, developed the bold, playful Cooper Letter lowercase-alphabet type. See Matlack Price, "'f.g.c.' or Fred Cooper," in Ernest W. Watson, *Forty Illustrators and How They Work* (New York: Watson-Guption, 1946), 61-65; also W I M [William Inglis Morse], *Letters and cartoons from f g c to w I m, 1916-1926, and brief reference to caricature in relation to golf, travel, the bible and parochial life* (Boston: Nathan Sawyer & Son, Inc., 1927, edition of 300 copies).

³¹In the contemporary language of the press (whether of news, science, popular, reform or literature), such groups as Jews, Italians, and Eastern Europeans were referred to as races. Just as, for instance, Jacob Riis had discussed Russian and Polish Jews and Italians as "two races [that] carry their slums with them wherever they go" (*How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1890), 26), the subordination of what we now call ethnic groups to racial groupings remained viable into the twentieth century. The science of eugenics provided a number of competing schema by which such peoples might be grouped into classes of race, and inevitably discovered the superior class in Nordic racial stock, followed by Northern Europeans more generally. By contrast, "the more recent immigrants from southern and eastern Europe average decidedly inferior to the north European elements" (Lothrop Stoddard, *The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922], 62), but still "ranking in genetic worth well above the various colored races." (Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* [New York, 1922], Chapter VII: The Beginning of the Ebb). For two excellent studies of the absorption of ethno-racial minorities into the white racial category, see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York & London: Routledge, 1995) and Karen Brodtkin, *How the Jews Became White Folks & What that Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1999).

is reserved for this foreigner who in his turn strides brazenly across the panel with his pushcart. The peddler's features and habiliment -- his flat nose, heavy eyebrows and rough beard, irregular teeth, elephantine earlobes, soft cap and close-fitting clothes -- set him apart among Cooper's figures. Visually, the density of lines about his face makes him difficult to read in contrast to the bold forms that delineate, say, the Germanically plump (in the language of humorous stereotype) desk manager. Similarly, the scramble of items cluttering the peddler's cart lack the precise order of the businessman's desk. The Italian's gross and obscure features, his general disarray approximate the opacity of his arrested verbal acumen, as it is rendered in the text.

Whatever one's politics, the text and image both -- laughingly, playfully -- invite the reader to collude in this lighthearted bigotry. In getting the joke here, one must engage in and be engaged by a racist discourse that gives it sense. For instance, English-speaking reader of the transcribed "dialect" is compelled to pronounce the words aloud in a mock-Italian accent implied by the text, in order to resolve the obtuse sounds into meaningful, if corrupt, language.³² That is, a reader has to know the codes of bigotry and to use and reproduce them. Similarly, the illustration recirculates cultural biases registered in visual codes and available to individual viewers. A contemporary reader of this sales

³²The appeal of dialect for white audiences was continually compelling. For instance when adman Charles LeRoy Whittier joined the newly formed Young and Rubicam agency (1924), one of his first advertisements, run in the *Saturday Evening Post*, featured an Italian greens keeper punning on the languages of golf and of lawn trimming -- of white leisure and immigrant labor -- testifying in dialect, "Meesta munn, you no can cutta deesa Kro Flight ball." Apparently, this advertisement helped increase sales for Spalding, extend Young and Rubicam's territory to cover golf, and precipitated Whittier's promotion to Copy Supervisor. See Edd Applegate, "Charles LeRoy Whittier," in *The Ad Men and Women: A Biographical Dictionary of Advertising*, ed. Edd Applegate (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 340.

manual might refuse the idea that all Italians are peddlers, that all Italian peddlers are poorly dressed, that all indigent Italian peddlers are criminal in their aspect and so forth, but this image, as a stereotype, cannily plays on even this disavowed knowledge to mobilize the viewer's familiarity with this type.

But this one dimension of malignant stereotypes provides only a partial accounting of the object of the parable of the peddler, for stereotype is never autonomous; it is relational. The *Post* boy addressed throughout this guide, whose character is to be shaped and fortunes to be augmented, is offered in the Italian peddler not just an urban type to outwit, but a cautionary figure. The youthful salesman should understand himself and be understood in opposition to the near cousin who also plies a trade in the liminal space of the street. Both operate just beyond the realm of private property, of stores and homes where formalized trade -- retail and even mail order -- take place. Yet the one is old-world -- with spoke-wheeled cart and grubby wares, the sort Jacob Riis might have stumbled across thirty-four years earlier in the slums of Mulberry Bend [Figure 85] -- and un-schooled in the ways of business, decidedly lacking, for instance, the self-presentation in dress and grooming essential for a middle class white man's success.³³ By contrast, the other, the *Post* boy who speaks *American* is in the very process of acquiring the business acumen with which he will conquer the modern world of sales. Thus the thick-tongued accents of the peddler -- "noa da Anglese" -- are juxtaposed to the sharp wit and pithy expression of

³³For instance, see "Do You Dress Well Enough in Business?" *American Magazine* LXXXI (June 1916): 55, typical of the self-improvement articles in which the *American Magazine* specialized [on which see John E. Drewry, *Some Magazines and Magazine Makers* (Boston: Stratford Co., 1924), 94-101, 148-157].

the boy salesman who is able, not incidentally, to engage his interlocutor with palaver in Italian accents. The peddler, for all his hours pushing a cart along the boulevard, is inassimilable to that modern commerce for which the boy trains, unable even to read its great mouthpiece, “dat pap” the *Post*. Where the *Post* boy belongs to an efficient and highly-centralized American business purveying brand-name commodities, the peddler merely sells goods in a pre-modern, unrationalized manner.³⁴ And his resistance, his fundamental incongruity, is a racial one. Issuing from southern European racial stock, his essential character runs deeper than its surface expression and marks the distance from the *Post* boy whose valorized whiteness becomes evident by contrast.

The *Post* boy’s ability to play one side against the other -- to acquire the habits, manners and accents of the white middle class male while retaining the option of, for fun and profit, taking-on the attributes of a racialized other -- precisely marks the power and instability of whiteness. Beyond social and economic privileges, the power included the fantasy of a kind of identificatory mobility that gave the Individual his unique personhood in opposition to the reduction of Others to their otherness. It would be wrong to understand whiteness as a purely liberating and empowering identity, although this was its unfulfilled promise. Still, by contrast to the cultural definition of the Italian peddler as essentially an Italian peddler (by manner, by language, by trade, by grooming, and ultimately by nature), the seemingly unmarked whiteness of the *Post* boy offered him a freedom to move through

³⁴Along these lines, one thinks of Riis’ description of the Italian district at the broad curve in Mulberry Street, where just across the invisible border from Jewtown, “lies spread out what might better be the market-place in some town in Southern Italy than a street in New York. . . . Hucksters and peddlers’ carts make two rows of booths in the street itself, and along the houses is still another -- a perpetual market doing a very lively trade in its own queer staples, found nowhere on American ground save in ‘the Bend.’” Riis, 1890, 57.

the city and to play with shows of identity transgression, especially for economic empowerment, and in controlled, transitory ways. In other words, there was a payoff for working white.³⁵

³⁵For stimulating discussions of whiteness and labor, see David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London & New York: Verso, 1991) and George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

ii. Blacking-up for fun and profit.

Indeed the pleasures of such transgressions were offered as incentive to work harder and sell more copies of Curtis Publications. In a 1911³⁶ sales manual, District Agents (adults who managed the boy sales agents in a particular area) were offered suggestions -- picnics, club libraries, etc. -- by which they could motivate boys to fully participate in the idea of the Curtis organization and to sell more magazines.³⁷ “Don’t try to make mere canvassers,” circulation managers exhorted them, “work to develop subscription salesmen.”³⁸ Some District Agents were successfully building sales enthusiasm and club loyalty among their “*P-J Boys*” (*Post* and *Journal* boys) by helping them organize annual

³⁶Sales Division, Circulation Department, Curtis Publishing Co., *The District Agent as a Sales Promoter* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Co., 1911). Ideally, the present section would discuss more and later such Curtis publications, however, I have so far been unable to locate this ephemeral material. In any case, these materials are representative of the general attitudes of the *Post* throughout the Lorimer years and may be used with due chronological caution and in conjunction with other materials (see subsequent section).

³⁷In part, District Agents were working to counter the fact that “the average ‘life’ of a solicitor is not long” (*Obiter Dicta*, 1913, 8). One 1936 estimate held that boys stayed at the job for less than four months on average (Wyman, *Magazine Circulation*, 152). District Agents were not originally part of the plan for boy sellers who initially were to manage their own affairs, to correspond directly with the *Post*, and even contract other boy sellers in their area as subagents. Apparently, sometime between 1905 (the latest date of documents in the Victor H. Pelz collection at University of Oregon Library) and 1911 (the publication date of *The District Agent as a Sales Promoter*), Curtis began to enlist adults as District Agents. Still, as late as the 1920s, boys in short-pants might hold this position as did Earl Clark who recalled, “by the end of my fourth year as a Curtis salesman, I had been promoted to District Agent. This meant that the truck now dropped off the *Posts* at my home each Thursday, and I dealt them out to eight or ten boys who were under my tutelage as fledgling members of the League [of Curtis Salesmen].” Clark, “Training School for Boys,” 1996.

³⁸ *Obiter Dicta*, 1913, 8.

minstrel shows in which “only P-J boys that sell steadily may take part”³⁹ [Figure 86].
Proceeds from the shows were plowed back into the promotion of sales district wide.

³⁹*District Agent*, 1911, 10-11. Curtis sales boys were also sometimes known as “P-J-G (*Post-Ladies Home Journal-Country Gentleman*) boys.” Of the several motivational suggestions offered, the minstrel show that was selected for decoration -- again by Cooper -- with two dancing blackface figures in checked suits and sprung collars. See *District Agent*, 161.

That the Sales Division imagined its boys would find inspiration for their corporate undertakings in the theatrical assumption of black racial stereotype, suggests an underlying imbrication of identities of race and class. That is, the *Post* boy's blossoming identity as a proto middle-class businessman is conjoined to the affirmation of his whiteness by testing it against the logical opposition of ludic blackness. The text offers the opportunity of *playing as not passing for black*. Such passing "down" in U.S. culture, could be sustained where the payoff was sufficient, as for the journalist played by Gregory Peck whose experiment in passing as a Jew in the Hollywood film *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) secures him a good story and liberal-minded self-respect. Both playing and passing (I speak to the literary trope, not the social act), share the characteristic resistance of substance to surface. In the present case, the *Post* boy's essence resists the superficial signs of the blackface he puts on.⁴⁰ And yet whiteness only become recognizable and practicable through the difference that shapes its contours. The contradiction is insoluble: on the one hand the natural identity of the boy as white is affirmed as a fact abiding beneath burnt cork makeup; but the identity lacks any coherence or concept (any *identity* properly speaking) without the difference. The Escher-like structure of this identity is that the difference is within and at the core of sameness, not outside or beyond it. No longer is it the same and same -- the *idem et idem* of "identity" as some dictionaries give it,⁴¹ but a difference within the same, a *heteridentity* to coin a term.

⁴⁰See Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993).

⁴¹For instance, *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* 10th edition (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.). The etymology is questioned in the *OED*.

Such a heteridentity -- that identity founded on self-difference rather than self-presence -- might permit a boy to crossover racially for fun. However, when social or economic stakes were raised, heteridentity could also affirm as unassailable the line separating relational racial identities. In the truly fierce competition the *Post* promoted among its top boy salesmen -- in which weekly letters sent from the home office tracked each boy's movement up and down the ranks in pursuit of cash and prize awards for increased sales -- racial difference could be employed to incite renewed efforts by the boys. Thus, in one letter urging Victor Pelz, a successful Seattle *Post* boy, to overtake Ames, the boy holding first place in a competition for a trip to the World's Fair, the *Post* encouraged Pelz with the thought that Ames was handicapped because he "lives in Texas where half of the population are illiterates and colored people."⁴²

⁴²Letter from the Curtis Co. to Victor Pelz, 1903, the Victor H. Pelz Collection, Univ. of Oregon Library, quoted in Cohn, "The Business Ethic for Boys," 1987, 207.

Absent the evocation of Otherness in the body of the peddler or the practice of minstrelsy, the *Post* boy is seemingly just a boy. In their presence, however, he is become a manifestly white boy. This constitutes what might be thought a primary or immediate encoding of difference, whereas the deployment of already formed common codes of whiteness (*manliness* for instance) without explicit reference to Others, operates at a remove and is more difficult to specify. This indeterminacy perhaps accounts for why these texts so often eccentrically supplement implicit whiteness with superfluous appeals to explicit difference.⁴³ *Post* boys with names such as Cumstalk, Hunter, Jaccard, Carter, Collins, Naylor, Miller, Mann, Larsen, Ewing, and Williams,⁴⁴ were white, not necessarily and solely in fact [Figure 87],⁴⁵ but by a discursive process organizing inter-racial properties.

⁴³I should clarify that these moments of overt difference are typically fleeting: in the present case, episodes I discuss take up only a few lines of the several chapters.

⁴⁴The literature never christens *Post* boys with names suggestive of eastern or southern Europe, Asia, Russia, the Middle East, etc. *What shall I do with my boy?*, 1915.

⁴⁵To date, I have found no evidence, anecdotal or otherwise, that non-whites served as sales agents or *Post* boys, neither have I found any indication that they were prohibited from so doing. It is reasonable to postulate that Curtis would have permitted non-white boys to sell magazines in non-white neighborhoods, perhaps even wishing to avoid sending white youths into *unknown* territories such as San Francisco's Chinatown, Los Angeles's Watts, and New York's Harlem (see below for discussion of sales figures in these areas). Presumably, non-whites did sell the *Saturday Evening Post* at newsstands, drugstores and other retail outlets. As a single and unique instance, Japanese-American internees during WW II read about the "Japs" and other items in copies of the *Post* and other publications purchased at the Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado camp-store staffed by internees. The issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* (December 10, 1942) visible in this photograph carries a cover by John Atherton depicting a hunting dog gazing wistfully at the guns of his absent owner who appears in the uniform of a military officer in a picture on the table.

B. Selling the American Market

Curtis Circulation: race around town

If the early material directed at boosting street-level sales of the magazine was anecdotal, a later body of back-office publications put out by Curtis reflected the increasing rationalization of magazine sales, distribution and advertising in the service of developing consumer markets for goods. Beginning in 1911, Curtis Publishing made a leap forward in the study of sales, populations and advertising, even if at first in a somewhat desultory fashion. Although marketing research had been undertaken in some forms as early as the 1840s when Volney Palmer opened the first advertising agency, “Commercial Research” at Curtis was to develop the field into a large-scale, consistent enterprise to interpret data (from both the U.S. Census and from original research) as meaningful representations of consumers. Initial efforts at Curtis under Charles Coolidge Parlin -- later revered as “the father of marketing research” -- were narrow, but ambitious, focussing first on farm supplies, then department stores and next automobiles, in each instance using data to develop perspicacious analyses about future directions of each market (generally towards fewer, larger corporations, a trend that served the *Post*'s own economic model).⁴⁶

⁴⁶Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 14. James Playsted Wood, *The Curtis Magazines* (New York: Ronald Press, 1971), 73, 74, 77. For a more extensive discussion of the development of commercial research at Curtis under Parlin in David Clayton Phillips, “Chapter 2: The Ten-Cent Magazine Revolution,” in *Art for Industry's Sake: Halftone Technology, Mass Photography and the Social Transformation of American Print Culture, 1880-1920* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1996), <http://pantheon.cis.yale.edu/~davidp/halftone/>, since moved to <http://dphillips.web.wesleyan.edu/halftone/>, no pagination. On advertising developments in the late nineteenth century, see both Fox and Phillips. The *Post* could better serve those large-scale manufacturers needing to reach a national market, leaving smaller advertisers to local outlets such as newspapers.

Later studies of the 1920s and 30s would attempt to describe and analyze not *markets for goods*, but *Post readers* according to what were presented as their relevant characteristics. Among the resulting forms that these studies took were explanations of the character and extent of Curtis circulation for potential advertisers seeking the most efficient advertising venues, and for the use of the individual salesman in making his pitch to retailers he hoped would stock products *as seen in the Post*.

Although the materials are presented in objective language and with authoritative tables, they were -- whatever actual value they possessed as marketing tools -- in fact, advertisements for the *Post* itself. They can not in general be taken at face value.⁴⁷ The characteristics they identify and elaborate are selective and imaginative approaches to describing who the *Post* and its sister magazines reached in different kinds of markets. As representations of ideals, or of wished for ideals, or of ideals that Curtis researchers imagined their clients wished for, these materials, for all their scientific trappings of charts, graphs, and statistics, can only be trusted so far as objective information about who read Curtis publications. However, they are extremely useful for a consideration of what kind of fantasies about *Post* readers were feasibly propagated to interested parties. They speak to

⁴⁷Circulation figures, however, are fairly reliable as relative measurements of readership since the *Post* along with all other major magazines regularly submitted data for verification by the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), a cooperative organization of advertisers, advertising agencies, and magazine publishers formed in 1914 "solely for the purpose of establishing a service of authenticated figures and data, which shall put advertising on a commodity basis -- thus eliminating wastefulness in advertising and bringing about its more certain, widespread use." Charles O. Bennett, *Facts without Opinion: First Fifty Years of the Audit Bureau of Circulations* (Chicago: Audit Bureau of Circulations, 1965), 36, quoted in Phillips, *Art for Industry's Sake*, 1996), chapter 2, no pagination. Nonetheless, the raw data could be manipulated in a variety of ways in its promotional presentations.

the discursive composition of the *Post* audience as it was imagined from the perspective of production.

It was not enough to simply present aggregate circulation numbers -- the *Post* and the *Ladies Home Journal* and *The Country Gentleman* generally dominated their respective markets in sheer numbers. What mattered was demonstrating a reach into markets that could and would buy (or influence others to buy). Manufacturers that could afford to advertise in the *Post* were not necessarily offering the cheapest products available (the *Post* would have argued that ambitious manufacturers could not afford not to advertise there), since most often their best audience was found in the burgeoning middle-class and above. This was the so-called quality market.

The instrumental interpretations of data offered in these studies typically sought to match class status, native birth, and white racial heritage with the reading of Curtis published magazines. In the earliest of these studies there was no question of crossing color-lines. Instead, only appeals to native whites -- across lines of economic prosperity-- were promoted. Thus, a 1922 publication from the ongoing series under the title *Curtis Circulation* sought to marry U.S. Census statistics covering income and native birth to Curtis figures on circulation. The authors proposed that consumer products of wide use, "if acclaimed by the thought-forming portion of the American public, will be bought by multitudes," while an article of restricted appeal, "if applauded by those who cannot buy, will give greater pride of ownership to those who can possess."⁴⁸ The tantalizing suggestion was that a product might penetrate two significant markets, or at least take

⁴⁸*Curtis Circulation - 1922*, op cit, 5 [n.b. Phillips, *Art for Industry's Sake* identifies the 1923 edition as the first of these annual reports.].

advantage of those two classes of readers to build exclusive cachet. The 1920 census offered new possibilities for drawing out this argument, for it covered the decade after the adoption of the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1913) permitted the introduction of the Federal income tax. Thus, Curtis statistics separated 18,745,826 native white families (a census figure) from the 24,351,676 families residing in the United States, extracted those who filed Federal income tax returns (e.g. those who earned over \$1,000⁴⁹), and finally compared these, favorably, to the numbers of subscribers to each of the major Curtis magazines. In this way, the research was made to suggest the class influence of Curtis readers.

Two years later, the research department not only provided further analysis of the data, but more elaborate explanations of how Curtis magazines spread their influence and resolved uncertainties of national marketing. As the opening lines of *Curtis Circulation -- 1924* put it:

Selling the Entire Market
A Vast and Varied Market
The American market comprises approximately twenty-five million families, differing widely in education, in buying power and in racial characteristics. How can this vast market be reached?

⁴⁹Adjusting for inflation, \$1,000 in 1920 correlates to \$8,826 in 2001, while \$1000 in 1922 (the year of the publication) was worth \$10,504 in 2001. Figures are from Columbia Journalism Review Dollar Conversion Calculator, www.cjr.org/resources/inflater.asp.

Instead of focussing on income, this study proposed an analysis that centered around cultural literacy. It distinguished between those “trained to get lasting impressions from a printed page. . . . [and a]nother portion of the American market [that] learns primarily through the spoken word.”⁵⁰ Both groups could be reached, directly and indirectly, respectively.

On the one hand, then, Curtis held out to manufacturers the promise of effective communication with a literate class of readers who were accustomed from their daily work and leisure to respond to print media. The manual discussed this reader with the same confidence and familiarity with which it addressed the advertisers for whom it was written, suggesting a shared set of habits, expectations, and values. Here, the Curtis reader was a gainfully employed mind-worker, not a weak-minded target, a point driven home with an analogy holding that “In a trip to Europe, one who takes with him a knowledge of history and art returns with a greater knowledge of history and art” (*Curtis Circulation -- 1924*, 3). This simpatico *Post* reader was well-educated, well-heeled and, well, white, a characteristic that emerges when the handbook formulates a theory of indirect influence.

⁵⁰*Curtis Circulation -- 1924: The Saturday Evening Post, The Ladies' Home Journal, The Country Gentleman by cities and towns of over 1,000 population and by counties in the United States, net paid in advance, no arrears--no installments--no premiums--no cut prices or clubbing offers* (Philadelphia, Curtis Publishing, 1924), 3.

Curtis magazines, on the other hand, it was explained, reached by word of mouth “those who do not read effectively” (*Curtis Circulation -- 1924*, 4), and it offered a particular account of how color lines might be verbally transgressed to carry the advertiser’s message, without undermining the social utility of informal segregation as racial prophylaxis.⁵¹ *Curtis Circulation*, thus noted the difficulty of reaching the non-reading public:

In major cities large groups of those who are less influenced by reading live in segregated communities with their own stores and their own civic activities. Here it seems [un]clear how the thoughts of those who live in sections where many are influenced by reading can penetrate with sufficient force to shape the buying habits of those who live in sections where few read effectively. (*Curtis Circulation -- 1924*, 5).

The answer lay in a specific group of mobile individuals who could assist major brands to penetrate these non-reading urban sections. These were “[t]he younger generation in the foreign community [who] seek employment in offices outside the district and as servants in American homes, and bring back ideas of what Americans use.”⁵² Functioning like viral carriers spreading American culture to immigrant communities (not a Curtis analogy), these young people educated in “American ways” by public schools and in the workplace could “become interpreters for their parents, interpreters not only of words but also of American ideas.” (*Curtis Circulation -- 1924*, 5-6) Through the medium of Americanized

⁵¹Curtis does not quantify the literacy rates which would indicate how it perceived receptivity of specific populations to its message. However, the 1920 census concluded that among those 10 years of age or over, the rate of illiteracy ran to 2% among the “native white population,” 13.1% for the “foreign-born white” population, and 22.9% for the “negro population.” Figures summarized by Daniel Starch, *Principles of Advertising* (Chicago & New York: A. W. Shaw Co., 1923), 129-30.

⁵²Presumably, the reference is to menial office labor.

immigrants, “Each idea and conviction is repeatedly broadcasted by the spoken word until the message permeates every district of the city, and persons of every rank and every race know and buy the nationally advertised brands” (*Curtis Circulation -- 1924*, 6).

This imaginative flow of advertising messages carried from the pages of the *Post* read on the right side of the tracks to the ears of immigrants on the wrong side was hypothesized without reference to strong statistical research. Nor was there any specific discussion of particular ethnic or racial communities -- indeed there was virtually no distinction made between these categories, and it remains unclear whether blacks were to be understood as included in references to “race.” What mattered in *Curtis Circulation* was constructing an argument that would make this market conceptually accessible within the terms of the American national market without having to go so far as to concede the need for relevance to such communities whether through language or by speaking to distinct cultural practices and beliefs.

Curtis Circulation offered a means to make these Others hear American advertising messages and adapt to “American” culture, without in any way admitting to a reverse flow of either culture or genetic material. Curtis staffers seem to have worked with a model of cultural development and propagation that operated unidirectionally and top-down. Thus, they posited a theory of the “dominant buyer,” a subset of the population of “native white families” likely to take the *Ladies Home Journal*, who shaped the purchasing habits of all classes.⁵³ Curtis provided an answer to the problem of reaching across the color line

⁵³Curtis Publishing, *Where Opportunity is Great*, 1916. Summarized and quoted in *Digests of Principal Research Department Studies*, vol. 1: 1911-1925 (Philadelphia: Research Department, Curtis Publishing Company, 1946), 59.

without sullyng the white hands of the American manufacturers it addressed.⁵⁴ By imagining that, despite acknowledged racial heterogeneity, it could propagate a totalized homogenous culture purely through consumer marketing, Curtis proposed to make immigrants and others into Americans without making America into an immigrant culture. Clearly there was no question of cultural hybridity.

C. Sales Opportunities: Knowing the Market

The abstractions of *Curtis Circulation* were provided with concrete statistics in the annual publication of *Sales Opportunities* which put forward a slightly different interpretive strategy for marketing across ethnic and racial lines. Whereas the *Curtis Circulation* series -- with its hardbound, ten-inch format running to 125 pages -- made a staid desk companion for the business manager, *Sales Opportunities* had wheels. Intended for use by salesmen of any type of nationally advertised product that might appear in the Curtis publications, these soft-cover pocketbooks of as many as 400 pages, printed on ultra light-weight paper, slipped handily into a coat pocket. Written in direct prose with clear explanations and voluminous illustrations of statistical concepts, these annual volumes were intended to motivate salesmen with the promise of maximized income.

⁵⁴This schema provided fictional resolution to concerns by eugenicists and anti-immigrants advocates about inter-racial breeding and encroaching hordes of foreigners, discussed in Chapter Two.

Sales Opportunities 1929-1930; Handbook for Salesmen compiled data to assist salesmen in navigating complex urban markets so as to place their products in the most effective retail environments. In explaining “How to Sell the Large-City Dealer,” the handbook included maps of hundreds of U.S. cities tracking the ratio of copies of Curtis Publications to households. The maps organize the urban geography according to quality of circulation, anticipating profitable sales in those areas with high rates of circulation. Salesman were advised to begin with the “best” sections, represented on the maps in red and yellow.⁵⁵ This edition of the manual provided little encouragement to sell “foreign and colored districts” -- as in *Curtis Circulation*, advertising was understood to penetrate mainly through imitation (27). In fact, it left such differences unspoken neglecting to identify them explicitly.

For example, the maps of major cities coded, in descending order of quality as red, yellow, green, and blue include the following data: in Los Angeles, Beverly Hills is red (with 1 copy of a Curtis Publication circulating to every 1.4 families), Culver City is yellow (1 to 4), and Watts is blue (1 to 22.1) [Figure 88]. In New York, Central Park east and west are red groups, while Harlem (1 to 34.3) is blue. In San Francisco Sunset and Richmond are red, Chinatown is blue (only 1 to 162.5). Nowhere is the racial or ethnic make-up of the neighborhoods specified in these earlier editions, although any salesman familiar with his district would be able to read these figures against his own local knowledge and assumptions.

⁵⁵*Sales Opportunities 1929-1930; Handbook for Salesmen; the Saturday Evening Post, Ladies' Home Journal, the Country Gentleman* (Philadelphia, Advertising Department of the Curtis Publishing Company, 1929), 26.

Whereas *Curtis Circulation* did not take the business manager into foreign territories, *Sales Opportunities* suggested that it might be a simple and profitable undertaking for salesmen to explore these markets after having exhausted the better red and yellow areas. Thus, *Sales Opportunities* noted, “People living in foreign sections *wish to use products which the best families prefer. Hence products which win leadership in the better residential sections can readily be sold in foreign and colored sections. You can check this easily for yourself by calling upon stores in foreign and colored sections of an American city”⁵⁶

The 1932 edition of *Sales Opportunities* drew attention to its updated statistics on white readers. Asking, “What is New in this Edition?” it noted “Native White Family figures are new. The figures are just released by the United States Census Bureau.”⁵⁷ Also new was the inclusion of statistics on foreign and colored populations in select large cities, for example

	“% Foreign”	“% Colored”.
Chinatown, SF	25%	58%
Harlem	93%	
Lower East Side	84%	2%
Westwood-Brentwood	13%	1%
Watts	2%	94%

⁵⁶The manual went on to provide the salesman with specific language he might use: “Your best approach to merchants in foreign or colored sections will probably be something like this: ‘Our Product is preferred by the best families in town; the evidence of it is our advertisement in this magazine, which the best families read. Your trade, Mr. Merchant, wants to use the same kind of products that the best families use. Put in the stock and tell your trade that is what the best families use.’” *Sales Opportunities 1929-1930*, 1929, 27.

⁵⁷*Sales Opportunities 1932-1933; Handbook for Salesmen; the Saturday Evening Post, Ladies’ Home Journal, the Country Gentleman* (Philadelphia, Advertising Department of the Curtis Publishing Company, 1932), 3. Also noted were maps, Curtis figures, numbers on tax payers, and population figures.

Such tables were meant to discourage salesmen from pursuing leads here unless correlated figures on home ownership -- indicating a burgeoning middle-class -- happened to be substantial. A note appended at the back of the volume to explain various aspects of the collected statistics -- sources and so forth -- indifferently asserted that in the city data “Colored includes ‘Negro and other races.’” (1932, n.p.)

Although Curtis Publishing was developing a sense of the potential profits to be had from broader markets than the native white populace, it mustered little enthusiasm for those areas. Nor could these marketers bring any subtlety to organizing concepts about Others beyond the blunt categories of foreign and colored. What most defined such districts was that they somehow failed to participate fully in American culture as it was understood in Curtis publications. Curtis was stymied here by its deep investment in an Americanism that linked national identity to whiteness. Its American products needed to be marketed as appealing to Americans, a requirement that made appeals actually directed beyond the native white demographic unpalatable. Moreover, researchers conceived of the readers of Curtis magazine as deriving a shared identity in opposition to racial others.

This emerged in a 1931 address that C.C. Parlin, founder and head of Curtis Commercial Research, made to students of advertising at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School. Parlin ranged wide over issues related to magazine advertising, summarizing arguments made in his various Commercial Research publications about the strategic influence of Curtis circulation, its indirect reach even into the slums of Philadelphia, where he said it was not read, and its ability to address a national market. Parlin argued that in the twentieth century influences had been at work “preparing the way

for national magazine advertising.” Among the “influences tending to produce national thought” he counted railroads, automobiles, roads, and air travel, as well as increased distribution of factories to new areas including the South.⁵⁸ As a final feature, he noted “Negroes have been moving from the South into Northern cities in large numbers, so that every section has come to have the same social problems” (82).

For Parlin, the mobility of the Negro primarily represented not an influx of a rich and diverse culture nor even an incursion by an alien population, but an opportunity. Although his phrasing allows that black Americans are culpable for the “social problems” that attend their northward migration, for him it is more important that this distribution process contributes to the unification of American experience (in which national magazines partake). Parlin refrains from identifying exactly what about the experience of racial problems might lead towards a shared *national thought*, but the discussion leading up to this indicates that his concern is with the experience of native born whites forming a common identity in opposition to black Americans.

⁵⁸Charles Coolidge Parlin, *National Magazines as Advertising Media: Address to Class in Advertising at the University of Pennsylvania, February 9, 1931* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Company, 1931), 78-82. I was directed to this work by a citation in Phillips, *Art for Industry's Sake*, 1996).

In addressing literacy a few pages prior, he referred “the Army survey of 2,000,000 soldiers” that revealed low intelligence in about two-thirds of the subjects. The survey to which he alluded here was the Army intelligence testing program carried out during the first World War. One and three-quarters million soldiers were tested before war’s end. Among other conclusions, white psychologists determined that southern and eastern European immigrants and blacks scored lower on average than others, attributing the result to genetic predisposition.⁵⁹ These tests were to have a significant impact on American education and politics, and contributed to restrictive immigration measures of the 1920s. In his talk, Parlin made use of the tests to modify (downwards) figures of high school attendance in a predominantly white community which “had few Negroes and not many foreign-born who did not speak the English language” in order to estimate the intelligence in a mixed-race community (70).

In this context, it is clear that Parlin took his bearing from a normatively white community. But he seems to argue that such communities gather their unity within the national context in part by experiencing firsthand the “social problems” of racial difference. Indeed, the *form* of Parlin’s argument echos an earlier public statement made by Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History (1908-1933) and ardent advocate of eugenics, in which he declared “I believe those [Army intelligence] tests were worth what the [first world] war cost, even in human life, if they

⁵⁹For a discussion of black scholars’ concerted critique of racist conclusions drawn from early mental testing, especially that of the U.S. army conducted during World War I and analyzed under Robert Yerkes shortly after the War, see William B. Thomas, “Black Intellectuals’ Critique of Early Mental Testing: A Little-Known Saga of the 1920s,” *American Journal of Education* 90, no. 3 (May 1982): 258-292.

served to show clearly to our people the lack of intelligence in our country, and the degrees of intelligence in different races who are coming to us, in a way which no one can say is the result of prejudice. We have learned once and for all that the negro is not like us.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰Quoted in Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1981), 231, source not given, dates to about 1923.

III. Realizing Whiteness -- Rockwell and the *Post*

During the period of its ascendancy between the World Wars, the *Saturday Evening Post* employed hundreds of illustrators, including, from 1916 on, Norman Rockwell. According to the *New York Times* in 1937, the *Post* “probably had more influence on the cultural life of America” than any other periodical.⁶¹ With the largest circulation of any magazine in the world,⁶² it seemed to a young Rockwell setting out to conquer the Olympus of professional commercial art in 1916 “the greatest show window in America for an illustrator,” a phrase joining the ambitions of an illustrator to the language of commerce and advertising.⁶³ Forty-seven years later, Rockwell would make the difficult decision to leave the *Post*, soon thereafter attempting to apply his particularizing realist style to previously unexplored subject matter of contemporary and controversial social issues.

⁶¹*New York Times* (October 23, 1937): 1.

⁶²Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1957), 694.

⁶³Rockwell, *My Adventures as an Illustrator as Told to Thomas Rockwell* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1960), 135.

Having settled on a favorable arrangement with *Look* magazine that allowed him flexibility and left him free of entangling commitments, he produced an inside-the-book illustration which appeared under the title *The Problem We All Live With* (January 14, 1964; Figure 2, Chapter one). Several illustrations exploring race relations in the U.S. would follow, including *New Kids in the Neighborhood* (May 16, 1967) and *Southern Justice (Murder in Mississippi* (June 29, 1965), as well as images celebrating the Peace Corps, presenting Presidential candidates, giving behind-the-scene views of NASA, monumentalizing Americans like the football star, and encouraging peace in the Middle East. In 1971, he would look back on the brief florescence of his civil rights oriented illustration in particular and observe, “[I] was doing the racial thing for a while. But that’s deadly now -- nobody wants it.”⁶⁴ The freedom promised by *Look*’s editorial policies (and by the fact that he was illustrating articles, not covers) allowed Rockwell to explore his relatively liberal social and political convictions on issues of racial justice, democratic freedoms and world poverty, but he was ultimately disappointed to find that realist illustration suited to this endeavor was simply “deadly.”

⁶⁴Richard Reeves, “Norman Rockwell Is Exactly Like A Norman Rockwell,” *New York Times Magazine* (February 28, 1971): 42.

Less than two years earlier, in 1969, he had been rather more optimistic, when he declared his ambition, “to do a painting that would bring America back together again.” For Rockwell, this urge to bring America back together primarily seems to have been a desire to return to some imaginary moment in the past when race did not yet tragically permeate the fabric of the nation; a past, that is, when his homespun images of American life seemed pregnant with truth value. If in 1971, “the racial thing” would seem deadly to Rockwell, it was, in 1969, still viable. He observed at this earlier moment of confidence: “Today, paintings about the racial question are in demand. Years ago, a magazine editor [Lorimer] told me to never paint a Negro in any position except that of a servant.”⁶⁵ There was a paradox in his desire to unify America *again*. Even while acknowledging the imperfect representation of minorities in his *Post* covers where they could only appear, as he understood it, in menial positions, and even while decrying racial inequities of the present, Rockwell was convinced that there *was* -- that there *had been* -- a place free of racial and political strife to which to return, a place he himself had painted.

In forgetting the limiting factors that shaped his imagery, he enacted the defining characteristic of nostalgia that had already informed his work for the *Post*. Thus it was possible to imagine a time before America was torn asunder without recalling the race riots, lynchings, and other grievous, if less ghastly injustices recurrent throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The point I wish to make is not just that the *Post* failed to depict minorities or that it did so through stereotypes, but that these images effectively expressed ideals of America through an imagery of whiteness which seemed self-evidently

⁶⁵“Speaking of People,” *The National Observer* (June 9, 1969): 9. I’m grateful to Anne Collins Goodyear for bringing this article to my attention.

factual, while it was in fact fabricated through specific acts of discursive segregation, of difference. In this context, the “whole” America was necessarily a white one, but a white one of specific make-up *not* readily visible (or articulable) in, say, an image of domestic life such as Rockwell’s *Post* cover depicting a childless couple -- and no wonder!, we are supposed to harrumph at the neglectful husband -- breakfasting in their pleasant middle-class home [Figure 89, *The Breakfast Table* (August 23, 1930)], rather than to think about race..

If this is the typical domestic situation one can expect of the *Post* imagination, one in which a little discord momentarily ruptures an ideal moment in exchange for the pleasure of a satisfying narrative, how does it square with other kinds of images of homes not contained by the logic of the mass culture magazine, but perhaps containing it? In other words, what *can* this American home look like if we free ourselves of the limited inventiveness of the magazine, and what does that in turn reveal about the *Post*? Jack Delano’s Farm Security Administration photograph titled, “In a Negro home. Heard County, Georgia” (1941) [Figure 90], provides one source for such contemplation. And although it may achieve no greater actuality as a document, the photograph counters the hegemony of the domestic visions offered in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Delano’s “In a Negro home” insists on the fact of hard poverty in an African-American home in the rural southern United States, but the central juxtaposition of *Collier’s* tear sheets and family photographs undermines the *typicality* of mass-market magazines imagery.

In the Delano photography, weather, sunlight, and, perhaps, contemplative fingering have aged the slick, four-color magazine pictures so that they are assimilated to the collection of objects and snapshots displayed against the splintered slats of the wall.

The ornamentally framed double portrait at the right resists these entropic forces -- demands a dignity that the harshly lit, fatigued interior lacks -- although it too, nonetheless hangs askew. It may be impossible to discover what these residents found to treasure (and appropriate) in those magazine covers, perhaps nothing more than the snow, bright scarves, and dog's sweater of northern climes.⁶⁶ That they were able to make use of material which so resolutely refused to address their circumstance as poor, black southerners, is not the point. These images of home life (Rockwell's and Delano's) issued from two distinct institutional apparatuses (the *Post* and the FSA), each endorsing different conventions of realism, but neither one of which allowed for individuals like the black residents of Heard County, to intervene in the signifying process.⁶⁷

⁶⁶There is also the practice of applying newspaper to walls to seal cracks and splits in the boards, but this is usually done in a haphazard fashion without regard to the printed image or text. Other Delano photographs taken in Heard County show this wall treatment.

⁶⁷The title of Delano's picture as given in FSA records implies the foreign presence of the photographer who is "In a Negro home." The title of the photograph reproduced elsewhere is given as "The interior of a negro home, Heard County, Georgia" (as in Charles Hagen, *American Photographers of the Depression: Farm Security Administration Photographs, 1935-1942* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), more strongly emphasizing an objective mode of picturing. An even better title, taken from the negative, would be "43874-D." On the ideology of realisms see my introduction as well as John Tagg, "The Currency of the Photograph: New Deal Reformism and Documentary Rhetoric," *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1993 [1988]): 153-83.

If Delano's photograph does not permit either him or me to give voice to the unacknowledged, but actual readers of the *Post* -- minorities, impoverished families, and other marginalized individuals little anticipated by Curtis circulation statistics -- it does begin to suggest that Rockwell's breakfast scene owes its integrity to a prevailing ideology of whiteness that orchestrates the interplay of codes of class, gender, and race. Next to Delano's image, Rockwell's exploration of the fragility of conventional domestic harmony and, by implication, his reference to established ideals of gender relations, can be seen to obscure the normative construction of race and class played out at the breakfast table. The symmetry and order suggested by the modestly framed landscape image on the wall and carefully balanced furnishings -- figured here as signs of white-middle class domesticity -- are interrupted by the newspaper, attaché case, rumpled napkin, and precariously placed knife that accrued to his side of the table. Distracted by worldly business concerns, the husband remains oblivious to his wife's forlorn expression. The force of Rockwell's realism -- as fictional as it is -- was such that it readily subsumed the perceptibility of its cultural work to its engaging narratives. Indeed, even one of Mary Rockwell's old friends, recognizing her as the model for the despondent helpmate, wrote a letter of sympathy, thinking that the Rockwell's new marriage was already failing.⁶⁸

⁶⁸Rockwell, *My Adventures*, 309. Rockwell was first married in 1916 to Irene O'Connor who divorced him early in 1930. That same year, he met and married Mary Barstow with whom he had three sons. Following Mary's 1959 death from a possible overdose in 1959 he married Molly Punderson in 1961.

For viewers absorbed in the pleasure of reading the details of this discomposure of ideal marital relations, the maintenance of class and race norms are occluded. Yet these are writ large in the very details that support the narrative. Class for instance, is emblemized in the businessman's hat, suit and morning paper, as well as the tenuously hung gold watch that keeps the man's professional appointments. The wife displays good manners in her posture and delicate tea-drinking and taste in her modest diamond wedding ring. This last is a mismatch for the college ring her husband wears (his wedding band being hidden behind the paper) in remembrance of the homosocial -- and unintegrated -- diversions of privileged undergraduate days.⁶⁹ Race is realized not only in the phenotypical evidence of the high color of her peaches and cream complexion, but also in the insensible significance of the prevailing civility and restraint of the scene. For despite the intrusive disharmony, the domestic relations do not give way to the ramshackle and riot that characterize contemporary popular representations of heterosexual relations among African-Americans.⁷⁰

Images of the latter appeared occasionally in the *Post* (and I will turn to these momentarily), but were a staple in humor magazines like *Life*.⁷¹ Cartoonists including G.

⁶⁹The dominance of coeducation in the U.S. was still twenty years off in 1930. The original painting is lost (entry C317 in Laurie Norton Moffatt, *Norman Rockwell: A Definitive Catalogue*, vol. I (Stockbridge, Mass.: The Norman Rockwell Museum, 1986), 119.

⁷⁰For a ground breaking exploration of the imaging African-Americans in art of an earlier period, see Albert Boime, *The Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington and London: Smithsonian, 1990). On the same period, see Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, And Monument In Nineteenth-century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁷¹*Life* was an illustrated humor magazine published in New York until Henry Luce purchased the name and moved it to Chicago in 1936. For a discussion of images of (white)

B. Inwood and Ralph B. Fuller (whose work also frequently appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*) devoted much of their oeuvre to humorous images of the peculiarities of African-American love and conjugality. In these, connubial interactions provided an occasion to catalog familiar stereotypes about African-Americans including indifference to employment (supposedly funny even in the midst of the Depression) lassitude, a tendency to domestic dilapidation, lack of decorum and excessive physicality, inverted gender roles, and inordinate libido [Figure 91 - 94]. These stand in stark contrast to how middle-class African-Americans typically choose to have themselves represented, say by photographers like James Van Der Zee who framed moments of domestic intimacy and staid dignity [Figure 95 & 96].

gender relations in *Life* and other magazines, see Carolyn Kitch, "Destructive Women and Little Men: Masculinity, the New Woman, and Power in 1910s Popular Media," *Journal of Magazine & News Media Research* (carried on-line at Loyola Marymount College, <http://nmc.loyola.edu/newmediajournal/current/article1.html>). See also her *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina), 2001.

In mass-market magazines like the *Post*, *Collier's* and early *Life*, depictions of African-Americans generally drew on conventions of blackface minstrelsy. When Al Jolson's 1927 *Jazz Singer* introduced sound to feature films and brought blackface performance to the screen, the movie broke box office records. During the 1930s blackface musicals continued to enjoy tremendous success; *Amos n' Andy* became the most popular radio show on the air. For a 1930 *Post* cover featuring blackface performers, illustrator Lawrence Toney put aside his usual vividly detailed Rockwellesque images of childhood in favor of an abstracted pictorial style that flattens and suspends the figures between the black footlights and the looming sky of the backdrop [Figure 97, Toney, *Saturday Evening Post* (March 1, 1930)]. Although a phantasmatic blackness is performed, the concerns of the image address the whiteness of the pink skin visible at the figures' cuffs and collars rather than in their grease painted faces and hands. The loose limbed dance, the bug-eyes, and the senseless grin mark a knowing estrangement from the visual idiom of whiteness maintained in the Rockwell breakfast table scene.

This performed blackness also was a feature of a lavishly expensive two-page, three-color advertisement inside the same issue bearing the Rockwell cover of the Breakfast Table [Figure 98, Westinghouse advertisement, 1930]. Here a black Westinghouse packer intones in ersatz dialect the joys to be brought to some happy (presumably white) folk when the new radio arrives ["dere's sho goin' to be sum happy folks when dis gits w'ere it's goin'"]. Although, the figure is ostensibly African-American, he bears the traits of blackface performers and his burlesqued patois suggests that the delivery he prepares ultimately includes the *Amos n' Andy* show itself. Contemporary Philco radio advertisements, in fact, featured endorsements by blackface performers in

makeup. Gangly, dressed in patchwork trousers and grinning broadly this specious statement of blackness conveys nothing of lived experiences of African–Americans, nor is it meant to. Like blackface, black figures in the *Post* express the antithesis of whiteness and white decorum. While African–Americans were pictured in a limited range of occupations facilitating white social life, such as maids, cooks, waiters, servants and Redcaps, this representation of cheerful black labor occludes class and racial realities during the Depression when African-Americans were more than ever, the last-hired and first-fired. Instead, as in the Westinghouse image, blackness is foregrounded, *as such*, as a sort of performance. In Toney’s minstrelsy cover, the “true” white identity beneath the performance is, by contrast, made to appear actual and stable. Like blackface, black figures in the *Post* express the antithesis of whiteness and white decorum, and naturalize its ubiquitous image.

The racialization of gesture and comportment in such magazine cartoons and illustrations is not merely a device of caricature or an innocent humorous trope. Among the qualities and characteristics examined by eugenicists in categorizing racial types, even gesture was considered a clue to determining racial hierarchy. In Germany, Hans Günther (a political anthropologist sanctioned by the Third Reich) analyzed physiological and psychosomatic traits (the latter concerning, for instance, Nordic *reserve* contrasted to Western *restlessness*) and determined that these informed comportment itself in gesture and gait, producing a Nordic controlled movement or the Western rocking type of motion. Günther attended separately to Jewish gesture (distinct from his schema of four racial groups, Nordic, Western, Eastern and Dinaric), discovering unique features that permitted him even to determine the Jewishness of an otherwise unrecognizable “half-Jew.” Jewish

bodily movements, it turned out, were a modified version of Mediterranean gesture.⁷²

Among the leading German eugenicists arguing the racial basis of gesture, movement and posture from the 1920s to the War, was Fritz Lenz. His claims that the Negro was unrestrained and lively in his comportment were widely circulated in *Human Heredity* published in the United States.⁷³ These discourses, then, made truth claims about the racial content of gestures.

⁷²Hans Günther, *Rassenkunde des jüdischen Volkes* (München, Lehmanns Verlag, 1930) and *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (München, Lehmanns Verlag, 1935) as discussed in David Efron, *Gesture, Race and Culture: A Tentative Study of Some of the Spatio-temporal and 'Linguistic' Aspects of the Gestural Behavior of Eastern Jews and Southern Italians in New York City, Living under Similar as Well as Different Environmental Conditions* (Mouton The Hague, 1972. Series: Approaches to Semiotics. Repr. of 1941 pub. with new preface by Paul Ekman. Including sketches by Stuyvesant Van Veen), 21-22.

⁷³Fritz Lenz, Erwin Baur and Eugen Fisher, *Human Heredity*, trans. Eden and Paul Cedar, 3d edition (*Menschliche Erblchkeitslehre und Rasenhygiene*, Bd. 1, 3 Aufl. [München, 1927], New York, Macmillan Co., 1931), chapter XV, especially 628-634.

Although such studies are now universally dismissed as pseudo-science, they formed significant and influential bodies of knowledge during the time.⁷⁴ Because gesture is still so readily associated with ethnicity if not race, it is worth underlining the historical contingency of such knowledge by pointing to, for instance, John Bulwer's major seventeenth-century volume *Chirologia, The Natural Language of Hand and Chironomia: Or the Art of Manual Rhetoric* (1644) in which gesture is treated, as Laurinda Dixon has pointed out, as a universal language untouched by the chaos wrought upon spoken language at Babel.⁷⁵

⁷⁴See Gould for an excellent overview and analysis of scientific, though not popular, eugenics, and Efron, op cit, for a contemporary discussion and rebuttal of theories of race based gesture. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (Norton, 1981) Eugenics material from the first half of the twentieth century continues to be of great interest to white-supremacists who republish and quote long-discredited eugenics texts and authors as objective authorities. See for instance George McDaniel, "Madison Grant and the Racialist Movement" *American Renaissance* (December, 1997): <http://www.amren.com/grant.htm>; or the online version of *The Passing of the Great Race* at G.O.A.L. ("God's Order Affirmed in Love"): <http://www.melvig.org/pgr-toc.html>.

⁷⁵Laurinda S. Dixon, *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Ithaca & London: Cornell, 1995), 61.

Another productive approach to the study of gesture is that exemplified in the work of Jean-Claude Schmitt, who follows Marcel Mauss in emphasizing gesture as a socially acquired form. Schmitt's argument historicizes what he calls the "ethics" of gesture (that is, good and bad gesture in relation to religious and humanist values) in the West during the Middle Ages. Such an ethics not only relates the internal life of the soul to the external expression of the body, but -- in a reverse movement -- may "also imply a manner of acting upon the body, a discipline of gesture."⁷⁶ In other words, gesture need not be limited to an expression of an idea or of an inner truth, but may be a technique that subjects the body to limitations imposed by social discourse. It is these limitations that are imagined to be exceeded -- even violated -- by the jovial language of racist cartoons. As such, these images perform a double duty: they circulate hateful ideas as if they were *just fun*, but they also discipline normative subjects to conform to sanctioned bodily comportment and to the social meanings signified by such decorum. Race, in this light, is performed in accordance with behavior, and is not reducible to appearance or blood.

The simultaneous performance of race and gender in *Saturday Evening Post* illustration may be best examined by comparing two cover illustrations by J.C. Leyendecker, who, although best remembered today for his advertising illustrations, especially for the Arrow Collar Man, painted as many *Post* covers as Rockwell.⁷⁷ The

⁷⁶Jean-Claude Schmitt, "The Ethics of Gesture" in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, ed. Michel Feher, Part Two (New York: Zone Books 1989), 130. See also Schmitt's useful general discussion, "Introduction and General Bibliography [Gesture]," *History and Anthropology* 1 (1984): 1-28.

⁷⁷Leyendecker painted 322 covers, Rockwell executed 321, but his 1960 portrait of Senator John F. Kennedy (*SEP* October 29) was reprinted (December 14, 1963), with an added black border, upon the President's assassination. Rockwell is credited with 322 covers,

magazine itself claimed that Leyendecker was, “the first to draw ... covers that singled out the *Post* at a glance on the [news]stands and roused an interest comparable to that given the inside of the book.” In these covers, the vigorous performance of a female domesticity heedless of conventional limits, upsets masculine propriety [Figure 99--JCL, fitting (March 5, 1932) & 100-- JCL, spring cleaning (April 1, 1939)]. In both, the daily paper figures conspicuously to betoken roles in the public sphere customarily reserved for men.

although other numbers are frequently given incorrectly. Thus, Karal Ann Marling counts 324 covers (Marling, *Norman Rockwell* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. in association with the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1997], 6) as did the (new) *Saturday Evening Post* in 1994 (Maynard Good Stoddard, “Norman Rockwell’s Double Life,” *Saturday Evening Post* 266, no. 6 (Nov-Dec, 1994): 56. However Moffatt, in the *Definitive Catalogue* asserts the 322 total (page 72), and gives that number in *Pictures for the American People* (page 15 and page 187 note 16), a number my research confirms. Leyendecker may be subject to dispute, but the figure is given by Schau, his only biographer to date, in *J.C. Leyendecker* (New York: Watson-Guption, 1974).

In the homey dress-fitting image, a bookkeeper's end-of-the-day smoke and perusal of the *Herald Star* have been interrupted by his wife, eager to adjust the length of her Easter dress. His workaday sleeve guards conspire in this indignity, turning the put-upon husband's own shirt into a lady's blouse. Still, the loosened tie and shined shoes insist on a middle-class occupational identity beyond the reach of his wife's measuring tape. Indeed, the logic of this joke is premised upon a disturbance of habitual codes in the display of this rare bird, the exceptional case of the feminized male. The double movement of the image undercuts conventional gender codes in the particular humorous instance only to reassert them as general truths.

In the later cover -- representing African-American domesticity in which female chores again exert a disruptive presence -- the double movement of *The Fitting* turns in on itself to assert the verity of the joke, not its aberrance. To be sure, certain homologies exist between the two images. The sloshing of filthy water, like the seamstress with her efficient kit, disrupts the relaxation of a man with his pipe and paper. In this instance, the uncharitable detail of absent wedding rings further troubles the propriety of this couple, but by and large, the scene is structured very much like *The Fitting* and the newspaper in the man's hand *appears* to function analogously to that gripped by the white husband.

And yet, whereas the stage-prop paper in the *Fitting* image is a mere cipher with no legible text to speak of, in the latter image Leyendecker quite clearly gives us the sports section, a boxer with two raised and gloved fists as well as the headlines "Fistic Battle" and "Champ To Seek KO!" In this context, the paper referred to, or at least evoked, the contemporary World Heavy Weight champion Joe Louis [Figure 101]. In June of 1936 Louis had suffered an unexpected defeat at the hands of German national Max Schmeling,

a defeat which Nazi propaganda hailed as a victory of the Aryan race. In August of the same year, the *Post's* cover-story (though *not* its illustration) was an interview with Schmeling titled "This way I Beat Joe Louis"⁷⁸ [Figure 102]. In a rematch two years later, when the American easily dropped the German, the triumph was widely claimed in the United States as a refutation of Nazi race theory.

⁷⁸*Saturday Evening Post*, cover story (August 29, 1936), part two continued in *SEP* (September 8, 1936). Schmeling's article does not indulge in race baiting. He credits Louis as a fine boxer but claims that in late rounds Louis acted on desperate orders from his trainer to throw low punches. Schmeling attributes his own victory not only to training, skill and talent, but, with great emphasis, to his careful observation and clever strategy. Schmeling was not a Nazi although he accepted Hitler's attentions and allowed himself to serve Nazi propaganda trumpeting the superiority of the Aryan race. Whatever his personal feelings or dreadful lapses of judgment, his success in the ring was admired and exploited by the Nazi party: in New York he received from Hitler a telegram offering "Most cordial congratulations on your victory," while Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels' communique read "I know you fought for Germany; that it was a German victory. We are proud of you. Heil Hitler! Regards."

Although Louis was hailed for his 1938 victory over Schmeling and the American press began to shrink in general from popularizing race theories in their more outrageous forms, the figure of Louis in particular and sport of boxing in general were still associated with anxieties about white masculinity. Ever since the brash and irreverent Jack Johnson (1908-1915) took the heavy weight championship away from white Tommy Burns in 1908, the sport's fans and press had sought a racial avenger who might restore the boxing title to the white race. The twenty-two years of white champions between Jackson and Louis was not enough to bury the rhetoric of the White Hope, a figure still sought three years into Louis' reign. In 1940, for instance, Gene Tunney (himself the heavy weight boxing champion from 1926 to 1928) penned an article for *Look* in which he imagined a bout between Dempsey in his prime, "the young White Hope" who held the title from 1919 to 1926, and the then-current champion Louis (title holder, 1937-1949) who was introduced as "the great colored fighter." Tunney had the White Hope lay out Louis in a stunning two-and-one-half minutes. Years earlier, Tunney himself had twice defeated Dempsey and it is possible to read the piece as a none-too-subtle personal fantasy in which Tunney himself is the Greater White Hope. The week following Tunney's piece, Louis's trainer had a chance to publish his version of such a fight with Louis triumphant.⁷⁹

⁷⁹See Gene Tunney, "Ring Battle" *Look* (February 13, 1940): 8-15 and Jack Blackburn, "Dempsey Would Have Been a Set-up for Louis" *Look* (February 20, 1940): 38-43.

Tunney, I think, had something to prove with his article. For many years in the 1920s, fight promoter Tex Rickard had refused to allow a match between Dempsey and black fighter Harry Wills claiming in 1926 that although he was free of prejudice, he feared the potential for race riots like those that followed Johnson's 1910 defeat of Jim Jeffries in Reno. A high-profile interracial heavy-weight championship fight and its consequent press, Tex argued, might make for trouble if a black man took the title again, and this would be bad for boxing and for profits. Thus, Tex promoted white Tunney over Wills to fight white Dempsey knowing "there will be great popular interest without any chance of racial prejudice or racial feeling or interference." Tunney, therefore, suffered from appearing to be promoted for the opportunity to meet Dempsey in the ring over a better boxer who happened to be black.⁸⁰ In 1923, W.E.B. Du Bois himself, while declaring his disinclination towards pugilism in general, had written that "there is only one reason in the world for stealing Siki's title [in France], banning Johnson and refusing Wills a chance and that is that white folk are afraid to meet black folk in competition whenever equality and fairness in the contest are necessary."⁸¹

Although some wished to cast Louis' defeat of Schmeling in national terms and as a refutation of Nazi claims for Aryan superiority, race relations in the United States were, of course, not substantially transformed by this single event. By the time Leyendecker turned to the figure of the Champ on his 1939 cover, Louis could stand for Negro pride in an

⁸⁰Grantland Rice, [Interview with Tex Rickard] "Tunney Deserves a Chance at Dempsey" *Collier's*, *The National Weekly* (July 3, 1926): 26.

⁸¹ "Opinion of W.E.B. DuBois" *Crisis* 25, n. 6 (April 1923): 247. On Joe Louis, Jack Johnson and the racial politics of boxing see Gerald Early, *Tuxedo Junction: Essays on American Culture* (New York: Ecco Press, 1989), esp. 172-3.

exceptional accomplishment, the promise of democracy, anti-racism, or even the abiding need for a non-Aryan White Hope.

In a familiar fashion, Leyendecker's illustration acknowledges this specific achievement by an African-American but also checks the extent of its implications. Whereas the front page in *The Fitting* suggests a broad range of productive activities including business and politics in which white, middle-class men might participate outside the home, the sports section admits only a limited sphere of engagement with national culture -- that is, stereotypically, sports and entertainment. Although the white clerk does bear, as has been observed, the vestiges of his otherwise masculine activities, characterization of *this* figure, startled and slouching as he is, disallows any share in the successes of the Champ. Instead of pressed trousers and starched collar, his are rumpled and soiled clothes, punctuated by the wilting socks he barely saves from a dowsing. The signifying value of men's stockings is suggested by a host of advertisements, including one of Leyendecker's illustrations for Interwoven socks in which unblemished (white) masculinity, literally stands upon a bedrock of good hosiery. Or more obliquely, but insistently, there is a contemporary shoe advertisement in which socks are a necessary aspect of dressing "the only part of [the male] body that must be fitted perfectly" [Figure 103-JCL, Interwoven, 1927 & 104-ad in SEP 1930]. Comparing the final version of Leyendecker's cover to detailed studies indicates that as the image developed -- the newspaper text, for instance, is illegible in the sketch -- this figure's status eroded substantially [Figure 105-JCL, study for spring cleaning, 1939]. Note, for instance, that in the final version the wool trousers are become laborer's dungarees and the threat to the stockinged feet is heightened absent the brown slippers.

The logic of the *Post* fuses gender roles, race and class, compelling dark-skinned figures to bear compound signs marking their distance from those norms where social, political and economic privileges reside. In contrast to these racialized attributes, Leyendecker's "spring cleaning" image frames the achievements of African-American athletes as uniquely individual. But it does not do so by seeing beyond race. Joe Louis may be a credit to his people, but he is not offered here as representative of his race. The exceptionalism of such heroic feats as Louis's, underscores the image's reproduction of racial stereotypes as incontrovertible, quotidian truths. Thus, even Pvt. Joe Louis would find himself posing in uniform in publicity shots for a Jim Crow army [Figure 106, Pvt. JL]. By contrast, the racialization of *The Fitting* was only ever implicit, its codes hidden in the trade between putatively humorous plays on class and gender. Leaving race to one side, that image could ensure the invisibility of a whiteness that coordinates the multiple terms of identity.

By way of conclusion, I want to return to Rockwell's musings about "doing the racial thing" and to the nostalgia permitting him to imagine his making an image that would reunite United States in the 1970s. The paradox I pointed to there -- that he saw unity in his early work where in fact there was exclusion and distortion -- is not really about his own conflicts. What had changed was the contextual definition of America and the cultural function of illustration. For the *Saturday Evening Post*, he was on secure ground in rendering his "mirror on the nation." In the era of *Look*, illustration had lost the discursive significance it had obtained under the *Post*. No longer would the particular codes that had cohered most perfectly in *Saturday Evening Post* illustration carry the same authoritative weight to bespeak American subjectivity. As cracks in the *Post's* mirror fractured the

totality of its image, whiteness and illustration lost their mutual recognition. Illustration no longer possessed the capability to define Americanism through whiteness.

Conclusion: Whiteness Realized

In the present study, the emphasis upon the role of mass-market magazine illustration in the cultural production of whiteness goes against the trend towards “a new understanding of Rockwell [that] has begun to emerge, innocent of ideology and futile regret.”¹ Where commentators have declared Rockwell “nonideological,” I can only imagine that they are indifferent to the capacity of representations to participate in experience and to shape a viewer’s understanding and beliefs.² If, as is claimed, these images form putatively composite pictures of the nation that are not ideological, then it would seem they comprise a true -- timeless and apolitical -- portrait of America.³

¹Karal Ann Marling, *Norman Rockwell* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. in association with the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1997), 8.

Recent work attentive to the presence of the ideological in the *Post* (if not Rockwell per se) includes Jan Cohn, *Creating America: George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1989) which observes that the representation of humorous black figures “might have elicited a kind of comic affection from *Post* readers, but essentially they reinforced an ideology of white American supremacy. That ideology lay at the foundation of the *Post*’s dedication to the business man and especially the young man making his way in America. . .” (86). Among the more thoughtful articles on Rockwell, see Daniel Belgrad, “The Rockwell Syndrome,” *Art in America* 88 (April 2000) which discusses Rockwell’s work in terms of the social theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Antonio Gramsci, calling Rockwell an “organic intellectual representing a cultural formation that in mid-20th-century America was known as the ‘middlebrow’” (3).

²Clinton biographer David Maraniss explained that we are beginning to see that although Rockwell (meaning his work, presumably) is “undeniably political” he is “nonideological” in “American Beauty,” *Washington Post Magazine* (May 21, 2000): 7-8.

³On ideology and mass culture see Stuart Hall, “Culture, the Media and the ‘Ideological Effect’,” in *Mass Communications and Society*, eds. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woolcott (Beverly Hills and London: Sage, 1979), 315-348.

But even Rockwell shied away from such claims. Regarding an observation that his kind of illustrative work was no longer in demand, Rockwell said, “I don’t really mind because red-cheeked little boys and mongrel dogs no longer typify America.”⁴ This was in 1969, when he perhaps meant to put “America” in scare quotes, as if to underline that even his own celebrated images of the country had only ever comprised an *idea* of America, one which he now (sporadically) recognized as inadequate. In the same breath, he recalled that *Post* editor George Lorimer advised him not to break expected stereotypes in representing African-Americans. That is, Rockwell acknowledged the limit of the truth value of his own images; they could not and never did *really* represent the nation.

⁴“Speaking of People,” *The National Observer* (June 9, 1969): 9.

Rockwell, of course, is only the most prominent of hundreds of illustrators, including Leyendecker, who worked for the *Saturday Evening Post* at one time or another. My particular interest has been in the *Post*'s advocacy of an illustrative realism which functioned to make an effective space for the reproduction of white American identity from generation to generation. The problem has been to show how the *Post*'s advancement of a particular realist style of illustration contributed to *realizing* whiteness in the first half of the twentieth century. The *Post*'s project was accomplished by joining an anti-modernist pictorial style with ideas of Americanism. The association was undergirded by the concept of a common sense aesthetic -- expounded by the *Post* as legible, sensible, anti-radical and uniquely American -- available to anyone who eschewed the sophistries of art critics. This style in turn supported the representation of a seemingly transhistorical normative whiteness readily registered in the graphic language of popular illustration. That is to say, illustrative realism provided an apt medium for picturing familiar looking people in recognizable situations communicated in legible narratives.

Whiteness was effective when presented through such pictorial constructions because it lay just beyond perception, disguised by its obviousness. While white bodies were always greatly in evidence throughout the *Post*, the subject matter itself rarely emerged as self-consciously concerning "white" people as such. Rather, the evident themes typically concerned various component guises of whiteness: gender relations, normative sexuality, class typology, and so forth. Whiteness draws on the obviousnesses of such basic social categories in supporting the production of white bodies as a natural category, one which for this reason makes a particularly powerful medium for orienting national identity.

Ultimately whiteness functions as a universal category, as an identity that is always the same wherever and whenever it appears, globally and historically.⁵ As such a transhistorical category, it is necessarily too pure, too exacting, and too abstract to touch. It stands beyond the reach of real individuals who can only aspire to inhabit its spheres, and who are constantly subject to the censure of failing its ideals. There are two sides to whiteness: one, the social realm, empowers white identified subjects imparting to them the inheritance of ancestral privilege in a society hierarchically organized around race; the other, the discursive realm, subjects even “white” individuals to the quotidian re-production of relationships of power.

Racialization is both a material and a discursive event, one that is representational. As a material process, it depends upon differential privileges encoded in the material impurity of, for instance, access to education. But such processes operate on objects (racialized groups and individuals) which do not simply exist in society. Rather, racialized bodies are produced in cultural life. As such, the “fact” of race must be reproduced for each succeeding generation or risk becoming one of those incomprehensibly naive misconceptions of times past. It has been my argument that illustration in the *Saturday Evening Post* was a key cultural formation for giving form and content to the meaning of whiteness during the interwar years.

⁵For a thoughtful discussion of the Enlightenment era emergence of whiteness as a universal category, see Warren Montag, “The Universalization of Whiteness: Racism and Enlightenment,” in *Whiteness: A Critical Reader*, ed. Mike Hill (New York: New York University, 1997), 281- 293.

Perhaps some of these comments can be exemplified concretely by turning one last time to Rockwell's autobiography. When Rockwell, narrating his *Adventures*, turned to the years when his family lived in Mrs. Frothingham's boardinghouse, he felt compelled to report, however briefly, one dark anecdote concerning a Greek boarder. In the middle of the night, this enigmatic figure had entered the bedroom of a female guest, standing there motionless for some time until he was discovered and the house awakened. Asked why he had so intruded, his only explanation was, "She has such *white, white* skin."⁶

Although similar "white, white skin" is present on virtually every page of the autobiography, it is only in a scene of ethnic otherness that whiteness can come into focus as a compelling feature. White skin marks the Greek's otherness and the white woman's desirability, and inscribes the naturalness of whiteness in the flesh and body. The appearance of whiteness also reinscribes the power relations that subject the "white" woman to particular discursive norms, naturalizing her as sexual object. White (green-tinted-pink, no doubt) skin, sexualized femininity, whiteness: all cohere in opposition to the Greek's inassimilable otherness.

But this is just a minor episode in the engaging story of Norman Rockwell which only exposes such representations interstitially. Elsewhere the narrative goes about doing its work with apparent indifference to the production of whiteness.

⁶Emphasis in original, Rockwell, *My Adventures as an Illustrator as Told to Thomas Rockwell* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1960), 107.

Underwood & Underwood, New York

"Who reads The Saturday Evening Post? Everybody—high-brow, low-brow and mezzanine!"

SatEvePost

— Mirror of These States

By LEON WHIPPLE

D

 OR five cents you can buy a mirror of These States. Each week about 2,840,000 people in every corner from Astor Park, Chicago to
 The White House must take in a copy or two if it has a sense of gratitude. You read it—and I. I read two periodicals with attention: The Post to find out about this

Fig. 1 "Mirror on These States: SatEvePost." *Survey*, March 1, 1928, 699.



Fig. 2 Norman Rockwell. *The Problem We All Live With*. *Look*, January 14, 1964, cover.



Fig. 3 Norman Rockwell. *Saying Grace*. *Saturday Evening Post* November 24, 1951, cover.



Fig. 4 Barbara Kruger. "We don't need another hero."



Fig. 5 Henry Raleigh. "It would wobble just then. . . ." Illustration for John Taintor Foote, "Full Personality," pt. 2. *Saturday Evening Post*, Jan 21, 1933, 19.



Fig. 6 White crowds at Frantz School, New Orleans, 1960. Source: Ruby Bridges, *Through My Eyes*, ed. Margo Lundell (Scholastic Trade, 1999).



Fig. 7 Ruby Bridges escorted to Frantz School, New Orleans, 1960. Source: Ruby Bridges, *Through My Eyes*, ed. Margo Lundell (Scholastic Trade, 1999).



Fig. 8 Norman Rockwell. *Philadelphia, Miss., June 31, 1964 or Southern Justice (Murder in Mississippi)*. Unpublished version.



Fig. 9 Norman Rockwell. *Horseshoe Forging Contest*. For Edward W. O'Brien, "Blacksmith's Boy—Heel and Toe." *Saturday Evening Post*, November 2, 1940.

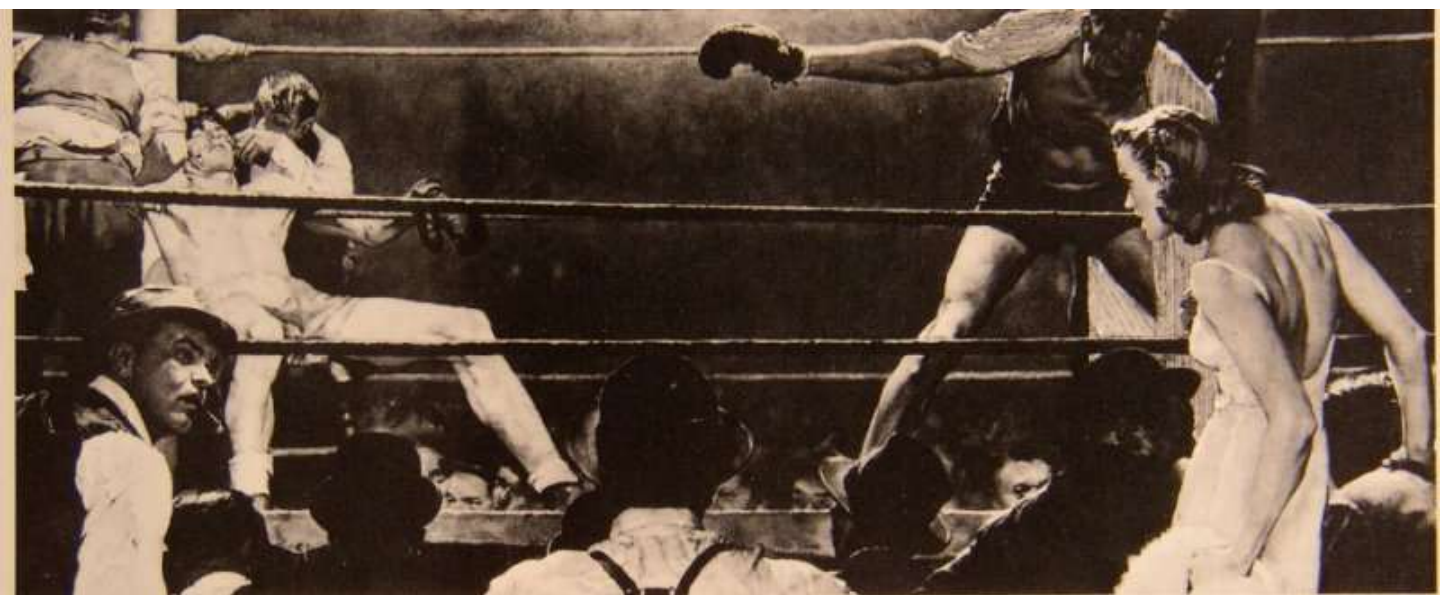


Fig. 10__Norman Rockwell. illustration for D. D. Beauchamp, "Strictly a Sharp Shooter in *American Magazine*, June 1941.

PUPILS INTEGRATE IN NEW ORLEANS

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

then nullified it.

The board had opposed desegregation from the time of the filing of suit Sept. 4, 1952, by lawyers for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People until last May 18, Judge Wright handed down his own grade-by-grade desegregation plan on that day, following the board's failure to submit one.

Today, hundreds of city policemen began to assemble in the mixed white and Negro residential districts of the two schools as the sun hurried away the haze from the Mississippi River.

Squad Cars on Patrol

Black squad cars cruised slowly through the narrow streets between modest white frame dwellings set among palms, cissades and acacia myrtle. Patrolmen in gold-striped blue uniforms, black boots and white crash helmets dismounted from motorcycles to direct traffic.

Police officials and detectives stationed themselves around the school buildings and inside the halls. Deputy Federal marshals wearing yellow arm bands made a final check and drove to the homes of the four pupils.

There were no crowds at first school on busy St. Claude Street or at the William Frantz school in a quieter neighborhood on North Galvez Street, several miles away. The identities of the pupils and those of the pupils had been withheld by the board. But the silent guard soon drew several hundred spectators in both schools.

Five girls originally had been accepted for transfer by education officials under a pupil placement plan. But the parents of one decided against the transfer, reportedly out of concern for her safety.

3 Pupils Arrive



ESCORTED TO NEW ORLEANS SCHOOL: Negro first-grader peers from car as she arrives at previously all-white school with Wallace E. Dows, U. S. Deputy Marshal.

terday, assumed jurisdiction over the schools, authorized the special legislative committee and the state police to maintain its authority and forbid transfers from any school without its permission.

President Given Reports

AUGUSTA, Ga., Nov. 14 (UPI)—The White House said today President Eisenhower had discussed with Attorney General William F. Rogers attempts by Louisiana officials to block school integration in New Orleans.

The President was informed of—and apparently approved—Mr. Rogers' warning to Gov. Jimmie H. Davis not to interfere with the integration process.

The President is receiving reports on the situation from the Justice Department, James C. Hagerity, White House news secretary, said.

BAN ON RADIO MAN WINS

High Court Lets Stay Denial of License by the F. C. C.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 14 (AP)—The Supreme Court let stand unchanged today a decision that the Federal Communications Commission may deny a license to a radio operator who refuses to say whether he is a member of the Communist party.

The ruling was asked by Morton Borow, who was employed by the operator of two radio stations in Philadelphia. The commission refused to re-new his license because he had declined to answer two questions concerning possible Communist affiliation.

Mr. Borow refused to answer on the ground that the commission had no legal authority to ask such questions. He also said that if the F. C. C. had

U.S. SEEKS TO BAR AID FOR LOUISIANA

State Action Cutting 23,000 Children Off Welfare List Scored at Hearing

By IRVING FURMAN

WASHINGTON, Nov. 14—Hearings were opened today to determine whether Louisiana should be denied further Federal aid to dependent children. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare argued that funds should be cut off.

The department said the Louisiana action in cutting 23,000 children off its rolls "required withholding further Federal grants."

The Louisiana action "was taken under a new law setting 'suitable homes' as an aid requirement. The law rules the payments cannot go to children in homes headed by unmarried parents. It further rules that a no instance will assistance be given to a child if the mother has had an illegitimate child after getting aid from the Welfare Board. Federal grant total more than \$2,850,000 a year toward the support of 78,000 needy Louisiana children.

Social Security Commissioner William L. Mitchell, chairman of the hearing held at the department, said that the act which allowed the Federal Government that of cutting off funds, was so serious he would not take it lightly, and must make clear that the choice lie with the state.

Calls Results 'Capricious'

Erwin H. Younman, assistant general counsel of the department, said that the results of the "suitable home" act, passed last summer by the Louisiana Legislature, had been "wholly unreasonable and capricious" and had operated as a "denial of hearing." He added that in law was a breach of the state plan approved in Washington under the Social Security Act.

Mr. Younman said Louisiana could not evade responsibility for having its Legislature pass that law. He said he would prove the funds must be cut off. Former Gov. Robert F. Ke-

Fig. 11 "Escorted to New Orleans School." Associated Press Wirephoto. *New York Times*, November 15, 1960, 42.



Fig. 12 Charles Moore. Birmingham police using dogs against demonstrators. "They Fight a Fire That Won't Go Out." *Life*, May 17, 1963. Source: Wagner, 1996.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 1963.



BOUND FOR POLICE VAN: Chicago policemen carry yelling demonstrator away from school construction site on South Side. Pickets were protesting school segregation.

50 RACE SEIZED

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BARNETT PRESSES **U.S. Court Defers Ruling to Open**

Fig. 13 Associated Press. *New York Times*, August 13, 1963. Source: Wagner, 1996.



Fig. 14 Norman Rockwell. *New Kids in the Neighborhood*. *Look*, May 16, 1967.



Fig. 15 Robert Robinson. *Gallerie Cubiste*. *Saturday Evening Post*, June 27, 1914, cover.

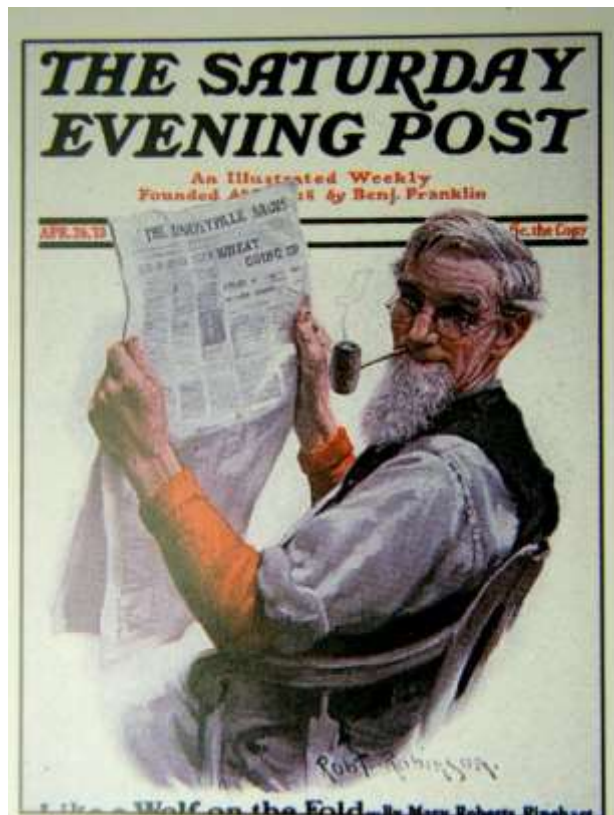


Fig. 16 Robert Robinson. Wheat going up. *Saturday Evening Post*, April 26, 1913, cover.



Fig. 17 Harrison Fisher. Girl with Rose. *Saturday Evening Post*, Dec. 24, 1910, cover.



Fig. 18 Norman Rockwell. Pioneer. *Saturday Evening Post*, July 23, 1927, cover.



Fig. 19 "Changes in the Human Countenance." Albert E. Wiggam, *Fruit of the Family Tree*, faces page 278.

HOW EYE COLOR IS INHERITED

Why have all these children brown eyes? Why do blue-eyed people *never* have brown-eyed children, while brown-eyed people often have blue-eyed children? What if the blue eyes in this pedigree had been epilepsy, imbecility or insanity? Would the great-grandchildren show it?

Would you like to know what the color of your future children's eyes will likely be? Or the color of their hair? Or mental talent? Or their temper? Or their tendency to catch cold? Or their likelihood to imbecility, epilepsy, rheumatism, tuberculosis, insanity?

A HEALTH CERTIFICATE IS IMPORTANT

A Heredity Certificate Is a Thousand Times More Important

AMERICA IS SACRIFICING ITS UNBORN
BABES ON THE ALTAR OF LUXURY.

Would you ever guess by looking at these black chickens that some of their children would be black or white? No. What then can you tell by looking at an IMMIGRANT at Ellis Island as to his children or grand-children? We must know our IMMIGRANT'S pedigrees. They are shocking our shores with actual and potential insanity, imbecility, Pauperism, Prostitution, Alcoholism and Crime.

ANDALUSIANS
The Old World is of newer equipment

Fig. 20 Chickens. Albert Edward Wiggam, "The Apostle of Efficiency," [19--?], 8 page flyer, Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries.

nence of inherited traits, although it must be qualified by the statement that it does not apply equally to all features of the body, the face, hands and feet having been found less variable, for instance, than stature and form of head.



THE "MEAN MAN" OF THE OLD WHITE AMERICAN STOCK

FIG. 23.—Anthropologists have an ideal "mean man," whose every feature denotes the arithmetic mean or average of that feature in all the individuals of his race. The above diagram drawn to scale from Dr. Hrdlicka's measurements represents the mean man of Colonial ancestry. The outline of the face is almost oblong; the head is high and well-developed, particularly in the regions which are popularly supposed to denote superior intelligence. In general, it is a highly specialized type, denoting an advanced evolution.

The stature of both American men and women is high, higher than the average of any European nation except the Scotch. The individual variation is, however, enormous, amounting to 18.4% of the average in males and nearly 18% in females. For males, 174 cm. is

Fig. 21 "The 'Mean Man'" from Popenoe *Applied Eugenics*, fig 45.

**Who will be
the Mothers
of Coming
America?**

*The American Woman
is Rapidly Becoming Ugly*

Prof. Ross has proved it. When the low intelligence is giving us three babies while the Daughter of the Revolution is giving us one it means the Gibson and Harrison Flapper Girl is vanishing. Her place is being taken by the low browed, broad faced, flat-chested woman of lower Europe. If this continues it means a progressive loss of racial excellence, intelligence and power.

"THE NEW"
2000 year statue by Miss Della Walker
Chicago, Illinois, 1911

Imbecility and Genius are both Inherited.
Only opportunity will bring out inferior genius, but imbecility always shows.

FLEXIBLE - INNOVATIVENESS

IMMEDIATE DOWN GUTTER

GENIUS

Imbecility is increasing. Great men are decreasing

COIT BUREAU
Chicago

MUTUAL BUREAU
Chicago

WHITE BUREAU
Boston

Fig. 22 "Who Will be the Mothers . . ?" Albert Edward Wiggam, "The Apostle of Efficiency," [19--?], 8 page flyer, Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries.



Fig. 23 Charles Dana Gibson. *The Weaker Sex-I*. *Collier's* June 27, 1903.



Fig. 24 Harrison Fisher. *Pretty Girl*. *Cosmopolitan*, October 1924, cover.



Fig. 25 Howard Chandler Christy. "Americans All."



Fig. 26 Norman Rockwell. Fallen Rider. *Saturday Evening Post*, March 17, 1934, cover.

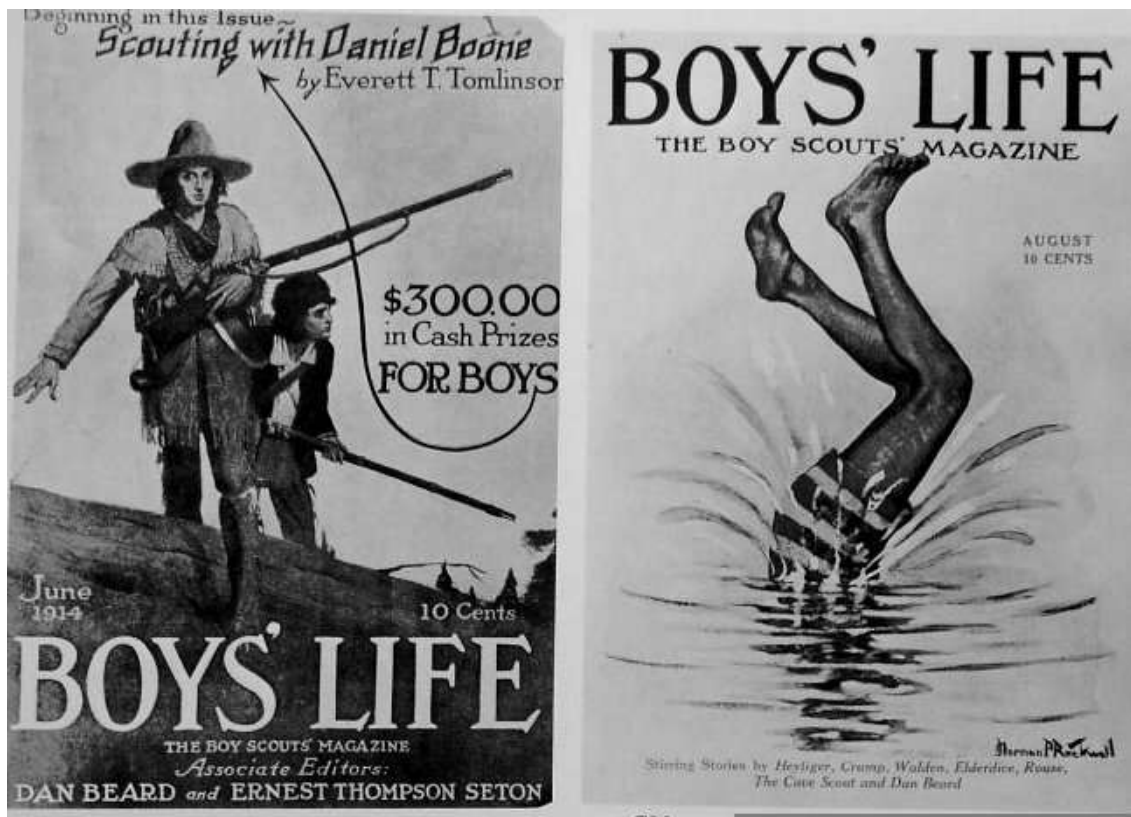


Fig. 27 Norman Rockwell. *Boy's Life*. Covers.



Fig. 28 Norman Rockwell. Easter Morning. *Saturday Evening Post*, May 16, 1959, cover.



Fig. 29 Norman Rockwell. *Boy with Baby Carriage*. *Saturday Evening Post*, May 20, 1916, cover.



Fig. 30 Norman Rockwell. Boy at Barber. *Saturday Evening Post*, August 10, 1918, cover, cover.



Fig. 31 Norman Rockwell. *Shall We Dance?* *Saturday Evening Post*, January 13, 1917, cover.



Fig. 32 Norman Rockwell. illustration to "Making Good in Boy's Camp." *St. Nicholas*, July 1917, 840.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST August 25, 1917



Real Boys!

—Not the toothy child actors of the movie screen.
 —Not the Little Lord Fauntleroy you read about in storybooks.
 —Not "Bert". The gawky-eyes—flinking—mouthy—plucking—
 tongue-bared—contaminating—kissing "BOY!"
 He's his dad's steady—ready for fight, built as for war. He's
 his mother's sturdy little man—gentle, self-satisfied, cheerful,
 quick to help.
 He's the Emblem of Energy. He's the Personification of Progress.
 He's the biggest part of the richest race on earth. And—he's the
 problem that persists.

Black Cat
 REINFORCED HOSIERY

From through, knit hair, heel and toe and toes give many practical wear
 which makes it so safe.

Black Cat wears reinforced inner seam made of elastic gauze. Black
 Cat lasts for long use and long. Black Cat was the combination of
 strength. Black Cat was for strengthening and health.

Black Cat is made for bare feet and gives them the
 most a weight and to feet them. Stronger on feet, stronger
 and on the strongest feet, they suffer of our feet. And
 there are lots more like them all in sight.

Black Cat's Black Cat's make over and over and
 over. They make the best.

Black Cat's Black Cat's make over and over and
 over. They make the best.

BLACK CAT Hosiery COMPANY, Knicker, 45 Street



Fig. 33 Norman Rockwell. *Real Boys!*, Black Cat advertisement. *Saturday Evening Post*, August 25, 1917, 60.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Now he's a man !

Whether thick or thin, or tall or short, or in need — he has an answer — a man's wardrobe.

— He the clothes expert, he has accepted the long quest of his child brother — for some Styleplus.

— He wants the Styleplus made style.

— He wants the Styleplus wardrobe of men.

— He wants to know — in getting 1918 values for his money — why Justice for Every Man's Justice is the superior plan to spend wisely.

Styleplus are America's unexcelled clothing value — in quality and price combined.

The educational value you really receive by our superlative production in each grade. The values in understanding come and pass with value from the clothes.

Wardrobe complete for men of every age and size.

Two grades in Styleplus suits — \$25 and \$30.

Three grades in Styleplus overcoats — \$25, \$30 and \$35.

Each grade your price for the superior one. Each grade an educational value in the price.

To see a real value in the local Styleplus Store. We would not dare say!

Styleplus Clothes
\$25 AND \$30

Each grade one price for the nation over.



AMERICA'S ONLY KNOWN-PRICED CLOTHES

Fig. 34 Styleplus Clothes advertisement (Now he's a man). *Saturday Evening Post*, September 14, 1918, 25.



Fig. 35 Norman Rockwell. *It's a "Best-Ever" Suit—Y'betcha!*, Best Clothing advertisement.



Fig. 36 Norman Rockwell. *Tain't You*, *Life*, May 10, 1917, cover.



Fig. 37 Brandegee-Kincaid Clothes advertisement. *Saturday Evening Post*, April 22, 1916, 34.



Fig. 38 "The Clerk: A Counter-Part," postcard, 1910. Source: Jonathan N. Katz, ed., *The Gay/Lesbian Almanac*, 1983, 315.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Men of INDEPENDENCE demand self-expression, even in their clothes-buying

AMERICA, and America has always stood for self-determination; for freedom of thought and action, not only for the nation but for the individual.

It is wrong for him to be made or bought; he must express himself, his own whims and volitive ability.

That is why male-to-male clothes-tailored to his special definition, with accessories that hold to the Yankee character and build.

It is just naturally his American temperament to want what he wants or he wants it.

—It is true that even the very best you buy back he made to the measure of his fancy.

But that isn't the only reason.

Why Royal Tailored-to-Order Clothes Service is the favored service with so many of America's successful and representative men.

There is a Yankee economic reason, too. Royal Service exemplifies the American ingenuity that produces the best at the least cost.

In Europe a custom-tailored suit costs three times the price of a ready-made; but not in America.

Here, Royal Tailored Service, through its great sales volume and its efficient local distribution (such as export money taken), is able to deliver the finest business clothes for as little as \$25 and for the rest as you want. There is no better time than now to get acquainted with the local Royal dealer.

THE ROYAL TAILORS
CHICAGO - NEW YORK

ROYAL TAILORED-TO-ORDER CLOTHES

THE CLOTHES THAT REAL MEN WEAR

THE ROYAL TAILORS
CHICAGO - NEW YORK

Fig. 39 F. Foster Lincoln, Royal Tailors, Chicago advertisement. *Saturday Evening Post*, July 10, 1920, 130-131.



Fig. 40 W.F. Barclay. *The Conservation of Energy and the Transmission of Power*, Goodyearite advertisement. *Saturday Evening Post*, July 28, 1917, 34.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

THEN — the thing that symbolized
 POWER was strength — still man's
 own strength that took its toll in
 human bodies and sweat in the way
 of human progress. If NOW — the
 world takes as a matter of course, the
 thing of iron and steel whose power is
 almost immeasurable, whose possibili-
 ties are almost incalculable, and whose
 efficiency is fast symbolized today
 by the device that is recognized every-
 where as the Continental Red Seal.

CONTINENTAL MOTORS CORPORATION
 Wholesale, Detroit, U. S. A. Exporting, London and Hongkong
Exporting, London and Hongkong

Continental Motors

Fig. 41 Power, Continental Motors advertisement. *Saturday Evening Post*, August 7, 1920, 106.

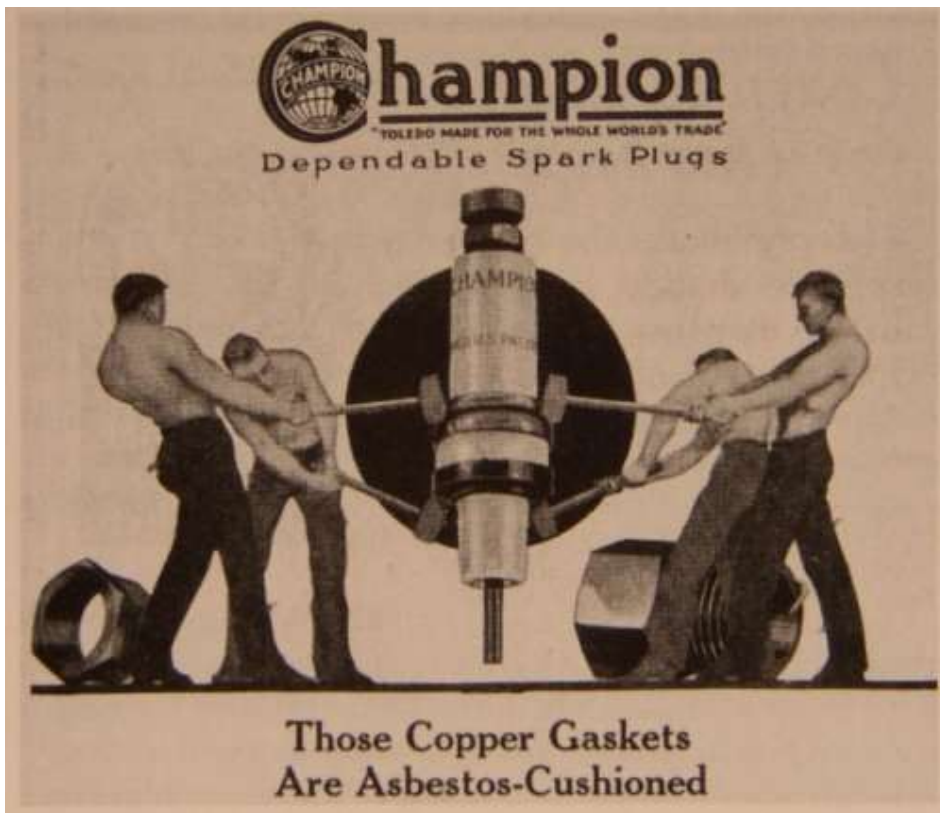


Fig. 42 Those Copper Gaskets are Asbestos-Cushioned, Champion Spark Plugs advertisement. *Saturday Evening Post*, June 10, 1916, 74.

GRANITE

 MEN'S
 COAT LININGS



(Continued)
 a white turban,
 ered basket. He
 and piped. Chr
 strange tongue.
 ruptly and the
 nean. There wa
 phrases.

"I know his
 "He is going to

A crowd gathe
 saw only the big
 his homesick he
 silver beads. H
 had a string of
 had brought her
 his daughter. F
 the beads on he
 first child had b

He put the thi
 upon it. The an
 drew them up an
 them through th
 he laid aside hi
 basket and spok

"He says thi
 while you wear
 told Anne.

The old man,
 face, spoke agai

"What you
 evil." Christoph
 know best."

They moved
 "Are you th

"We don't have

"I want to st
 and presently w

great parade be

They looked
 Roman chariots
 on horseback,
 painted ladies i
 sedan chairs—C
 tory reduced to

Fig. 43 It's the Lining for You, Granite Double End Men's Coat Linings. *Saturday Evening Post*, June 18, 1921, 30.



Fig. 44 John Henry Monument, Big Bend Mountain, Talcott, WV.

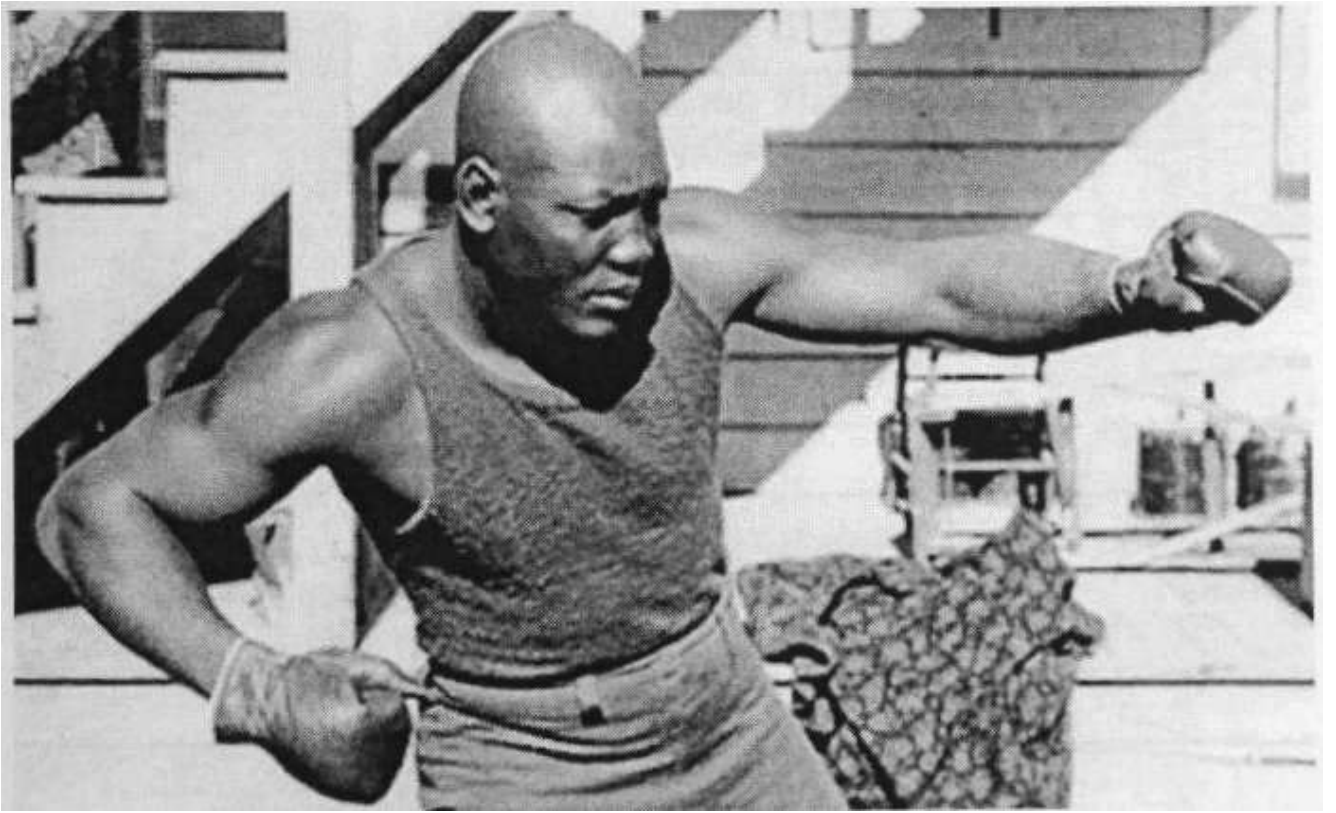


Fig. 45 Jack Johnson.

standard of the best tailors, and long ago distanced the work of many small tailors. Advertising has made this possible.

The wholesale clothing business has outgrown one of the most terrible aspects of modern manufacturing

—the sweatshop system. All ready-made clothing was once made under conditions which were both unsanitary and inhumane. The enlightened clothing manufacturers who were the first to realize the importance of popular approval for their business, began both to advertise and to improve manufacturing conditions at the same time. To-day the clothing of a dozen leading manufacturers, advertised in magazines that go into the best homes, is made under sanitary conditions, in factories that are models of convenience and cleanliness. As the conditions under which the clothing was made were bettered, the clothing itself was improved.



A CLOTHING CUT MADE ONLY TWELVE YEARS AGO.

As ready-made clothing became better, the advertising of it was increased. There is as much difference in the clothing advertisement of to-day and what did duty for an advertisement a decade ago as there is between the clothing itself now and then. The illustrations in those days were crude, stiff and wooden. The clothes had no style; the figure no life,

Fig. 46 Clothing cut, circa 1904. Calkins and Holden. *Modern Advertising*, 1916), 42.



Fig. 47 J. C. Leyendecker. seated man with cane, n.d. Calkins and Holden. *Modern Advertising*, 1916, 204.

ARROW
COLLARS

MEN who have learned to appreciate the value of their appearance wear ARROW COLLARS.

They do not because ARROW COLLARS grant the last word in style and in taste. ARROW COLLARS have, during a quarter of a century, built up a large and loyal following of satisfied wearers. These know the comfort of the assurance afforded by the high quality of finishing only equalled by the close set, good fitting, unexcelled collar.

There is no substitute in the wardrobe of the gentleman for an ARROW COLLAR.

20¢ each

*Follow the Arrow
and you follow
the Style*

Fig. 48 J. C. Leyendecker. six styles of Arrow collars. *Vanity Fair*, 1926.

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE—ADVERTISING SECTION.



Perfection is protection—no words better describe Kuppenheimer overcoats. They're quality coats with thoughtless style sticking out of every line. Coats that wrap a man about with a sense of right appearance—a good feeling to have.

You'll find them at the better clothiers.

The House of Kuppenheimer
CHICAGO NEW YORK BOSTON

It is because the advertisement is a service that you receive, KUPPENHEIMER'S THANKS.

Fig. 49 House of Kuppenheimer Advertisement, On Deck. *Munsey's*, 1909, 108.



Fig. 50 [J.C. Leyendecker]. House of Kuppenheimer Advertisement, Bench Warmer. *American Magazine*, 1911, 95.



KUPPENHEIMER & CO.

THE two young fellows in the picture illustrate two of the most vigorous styles in Kuppenheimer overcoats this season. The Theodore Jr., slightly body tracing at the waist, with full skirt, is bound to be a strong favorite with young men. The Kenmit also has lots of snap and vim. Note the way sweeping lines—the touch of novelty in the pocket effect.

Kuppenheimer garments are made—made by the one best method—in every town. Our bank, 25 to 30 for the line, mail, upon request.

THE HOUSE OF KUPPENHEIMER
CHICAGO NEW YORK BOSTON

1908 When you refer, please mention the Cosmopolitan 08

Fig. 51 House of Kuppenheimer Advertisement, At the Park. *Cosmopolitan*, 1908.

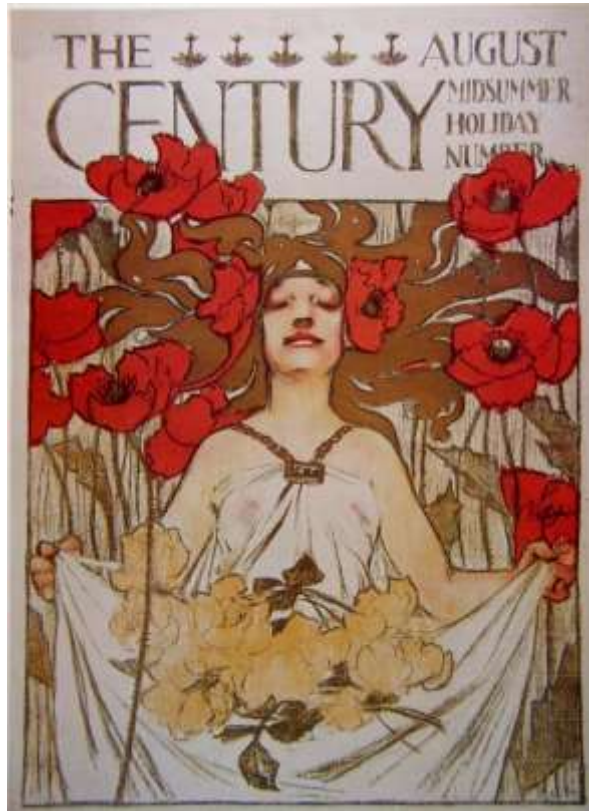


Fig. 52 J. C. Leyendecker. Summer. *The Century*, August 1896, cover.

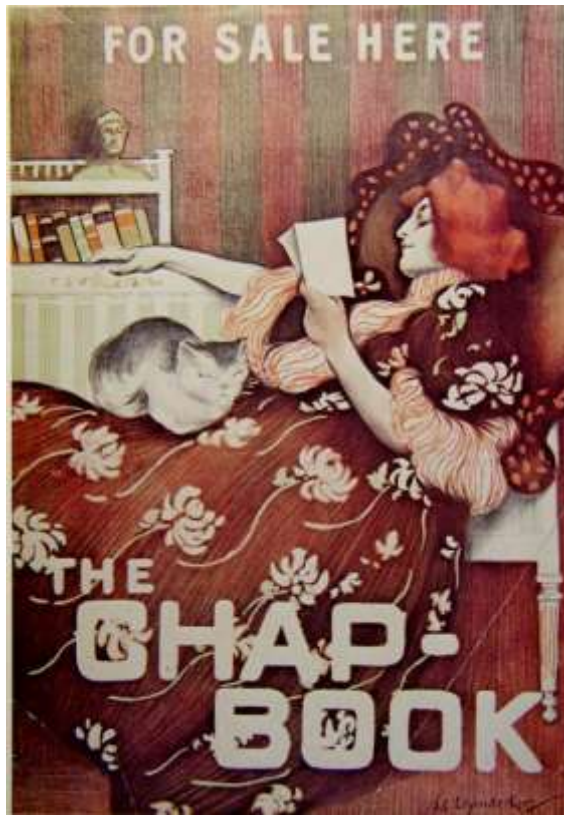


Fig. 53 J. C. Leyendecker. Woman Reading. *The Chap-Book* poster, 1897.



Fig. 54 J. C. Leyendecker. "The March Lion Passeth." *Up To Date*, 1899, cover.



Fig. 55 J. C. Leyendecker. Autumn. *Four O'Clock*, October, 1897, cover.



Fig. 56 J. C. Leyendecker. From “Love Songs from the Wagner Operas.” *The Century*, 1902?, date uncertain. Source: Schau 52-53.



Fig. 57 J. C. Leyendecker. Illustration for Charles B. Hudson. *The Crimson Conquest*, Chicago: A.C. McClurg, October 1907, cover and frontispiece. Source: Schau 57.



Fig. 58 Alfred Domett's "The Great Guest Comes." *The Century*, December 1902. Source: Schau, 55.



Fig. 59 J. C. Leyendecker. Seashore. *Saturday Evening Post*, September 3, 1932, cover.



Fig. 60 J. C. Leyendecker. Arrow Collar advertisement, Lighting a match, undated.



Fig. 61 J. C. Leyendecker. Portrait of Frank Leyendecker. Paris, 1897.



Fig. 62 J. C. Leyendecker. Arrow Collar advertisement, Madras Collars, Men on Floral Sofa. 1912.



Fig. 63 J. C. Leyendecker. Arrow Collar advertisement, Madras Collars, Men on Floral Sofa, detail. 1912.

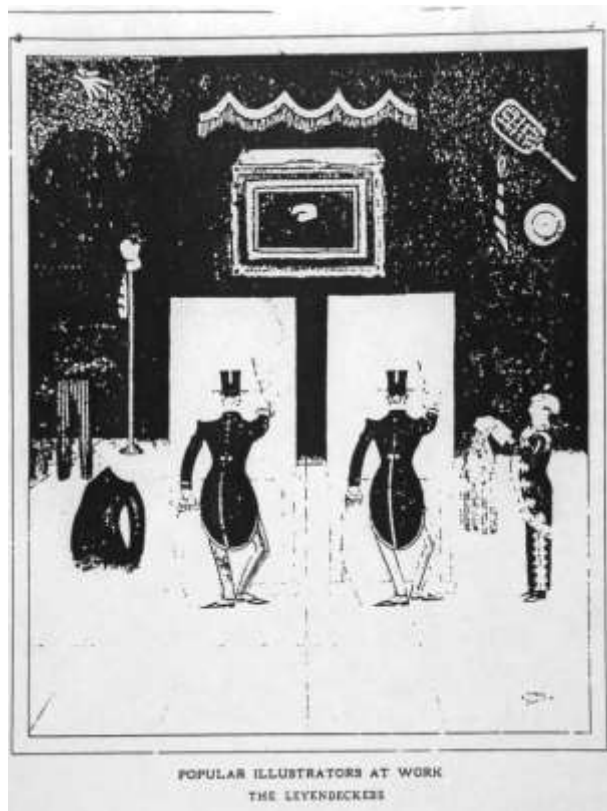


Fig. 64 "The Leyendeckers," cartoon, source unknown. Copy located in files of The Illustration House, New York.

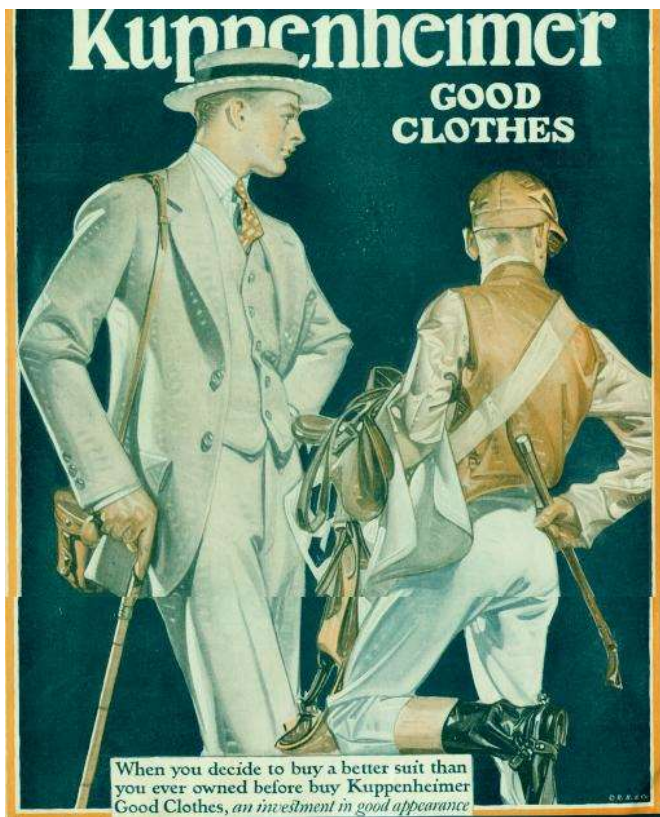


Fig. 65 J. C. Leyendecker. Kuppenheimer advertisement, Spectator and Jockey. 1924.



Fig. 66 J. C. Leyendecker. Arrow Collar advertisement, At Golf Club with collie. 1910.



Fig. 67 J. C. Leyendecker. Kuppenheimer advertisement, Gardening Couple. 1922.

"Next to myself
I like B.V.D. best"

**What's Back of This
"B.V.D." Label?**

A question which is constantly asked by many of our customers. The answer is simple. It is the fact that B.V.D. underwear is made of the finest quality materials and is made in the most modern and scientific manner. It is the fact that B.V.D. underwear is made in the most modern and scientific manner. It is the fact that B.V.D. underwear is made in the most modern and scientific manner.

"B.V.D."
B.V.D. Underwear
The B.V.D. Company, Inc.

His shirt stays on his "back."
His underwear stays on!
Matches symptoms—plus, better fit and cooler comfort—also gives "B.V.D." world leading popularity!

Be Sure to SEE it's "B.V.D."

© 1926 B.V.D. Company, Inc.

**MADE FOR THE
B.V.D.
BEST RETAIL TRADE**

The B.V.D. Company, Inc. New York

**By What Way
Prove It?**

The answer is simple. It is the fact that B.V.D. underwear is made of the finest quality materials and is made in the most modern and scientific manner. It is the fact that B.V.D. underwear is made in the most modern and scientific manner. It is the fact that B.V.D. underwear is made in the most modern and scientific manner.

"B.V.D."
B.V.D. Underwear
The B.V.D. Company, Inc.

Fig. 68 B.V.D. underwear advertisement, Fish Story. *Saturday Evening Post*, June 5, 1926.

Cosmopolitan—Advertising Section



YOU had best see the new Convertible Coat—with all the usual Kuppenheimer Overcoat superiority, really two coats in one. The illustration tells the story. One coat that can be worn two ways—a perfect fitting garment either way. Now being displayed by the better clothiers.

Read for our book, "Style for Men."

The House of Kuppenheimer
CHICAGO NEW YORK BOSTON

When you order, please mention the *Cosmopolitan*.

1910

Fig. 69 House of Kuppenheimer advertisement, At a Spectacle. *Cosmopolitan*, 1910, 57.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

October 18, 1919

**Be sure
of what
you buy**

There are never enough Kuppenheimer Clothes to go around. This season the demand is double, but the House will not rush its work or lower its standard of quality.

You will appreciate this when you come to buy your Fall Suit or Overcoat. Extraordinary conditions being strange goods on the market—there is no one else to buy.

Kuppenheimer Clothes are allowed. They are made right and priced right. They must uphold an established reputation.

THE HOUSE OF KUPPENHEIMER



A National Clothes Service

The HOUSE OF KUPPENHEIMER

Fig. 70 J.C. Leyendecker. House of Kuppenheimer advertisement, Leaving Gridiron. *Saturday Evening Post*, October 18, 1919.



Fig. 71 J.C. Leyendecker. Advertising brochure for Kuppenheimer suits. Leaving Gridiron. 1919-1920 season.



Fig. 72 J.C. Leyendecker. Arrow Collars and Shirts advertisement. Medora Collar. *Saturday Evening Post*, 1912.

The Review of Reviews Advertising Section

ARROW COLLARS and SHIRTS

MEDORA is a Jersey Belmont, and the Belmont is the most liked collar style ever introduced. There is now a Belmont for everyone.

GLASSBORO SHIRTS - MILITARY SHIRTS -
The best - the best - the best - the best

AN ordinary shirt may be right when you buy it, but an Arrow shirt will be right when you wear it.

By Mail -
Arrow Collar Co.
1111 Broadway, New York
By Mail -
Arrow Collar Co.
1111 Broadway, N. Y.



Printed in the Review of Reviews Advertising Section

Fig. 73 J.C. Leyendecker. Arrow Collars and Shirts advertisement. Medora Collar. *Review of Reviews*, 1912.



Fig. 74 Domenico Veneziano, Madonna and Child with Saints, St. Lucy Altarpiece, 1445.



Fig. 75 J. C. Leyendecker. Arrow Collar advertisement. Foot Race, n.d.



Fig. 76 J. C. Leyendecker. Arrow Collar Advertisement. In the Library, n.d.



- Fig. 78 Henry Raleigh. Diving Float. "Full Personality." *Saturday Evening Post*, January 14, 1933, 5.
Fig. 79 J.C. Leyendecker. Lifeguard. *Saturday Evening Post*, August 23, 1919, cover.



Fig. 78 Henry Raleigh. Diving Float. "Full Personality." *Saturday Evening Post*, January 14, 1933, 5.



Fig. 79 J.C. Leyendecker. Lifeguard. *Saturday Evening Post*, August 23, 1919, cover.



Fig. 80 L. J. Holton. "Secret Vices. *Saturday Evening Post*." *Life*, January 4, 1929, 24.

to Senior, to Expert, to Master. To reach Master Salesman you had to sell seventy copies of the "Post," fifty of the "Journal," and twenty of the "Country Gentleman"—regularly. I never made it.

During World War I, Curtis switched to military grades. Instead of Junior, Senior, Expert and Master Salesmen, boys were rated as Corporals, Sergeants, Captains and Colonels. In the P-J-G "Army," naturally.



PERHAPS the biggest incentive for boy agents was the prizes. In this area, as in all others of the system, the company was astute and imaginative. Its sales management staff understood boys and knew what ap-



the Voucher.

No P-J-G boy alive today can fail to remember that these Vouchers were of two kinds: Green and Brown. In addition to his cash profits, a boy received one Green Voucher for every eight copies of the "Post," or every two copies of the "Gentleman," or every single copy of the "Journal" he sold. Five Green Vouchers were equal



to one Brown Voucher, and the Browns had redemption value.

The Curtis catalog of prizes enticingly illustrated and described every item and listed the rate of exchange. For 25 Brown Vouchers you could get a pair of adjustable stilts, for 45 a

ding them on to greater goals—this is, greater sales. It was an ingenious method, backed up by persistent communications. It produced tremendous circulation for the Curtis magazines, and for this, it must be acknowledged, the company never failed to show its appreciation. Its premiums were of good quality; it was fair in its dealings and patient with youngsters who didn't do well; it gave extra rewards for extra effort. During a transportation strike when magazine deliveries



Shouting
the
'BIG NEWS'
(See Page 8)

were extremely difficult, Curtis presented handsome lapel pins to boys who were able to hold onto their customers.

There were other benefits, too. Curtis was willing to go all out with boys who showed special talent for selling. It made a host of special prizes

Fig. 81 "Our Boys." *The American Magazine 1890-1940*, ed. Dorey Schmidt (Delaware Art Museum, 1979).



At Lansing, Michigan: Governor W. M. Ferris and the Curtis Boys

Fig. 82 At Lansing, Michigan: Governor W. M. Ferris and the Curtis Boys. *What shall I do with my boy?* A suggestion to parents with a boy problem, 1915, 52.



"All about the Hains murder trial!" at which a girl waiting to get tickets at the Whitney Theater tossed him a penny.

"Million-dollar fire!" he cried at a passing fireman, who bought another paper.

"Taft has a bad cold!" called the boy, as he sold a copy to a would-be politician.

"All about the suicide!" was his next cry, aimed at a glum-looking man, who pulled a penny from his pocket.

"Fresha da news from olda It'tally!" he called to a passing Italian peddler.

"Sorra," replied the peddler, "buta no can read dat pap; noa da Anglese."

Fig. 83 Frederick G. Cooper. The Italian Peddler. *How to Sell 100 Copies Weekly*, 1912, 10.

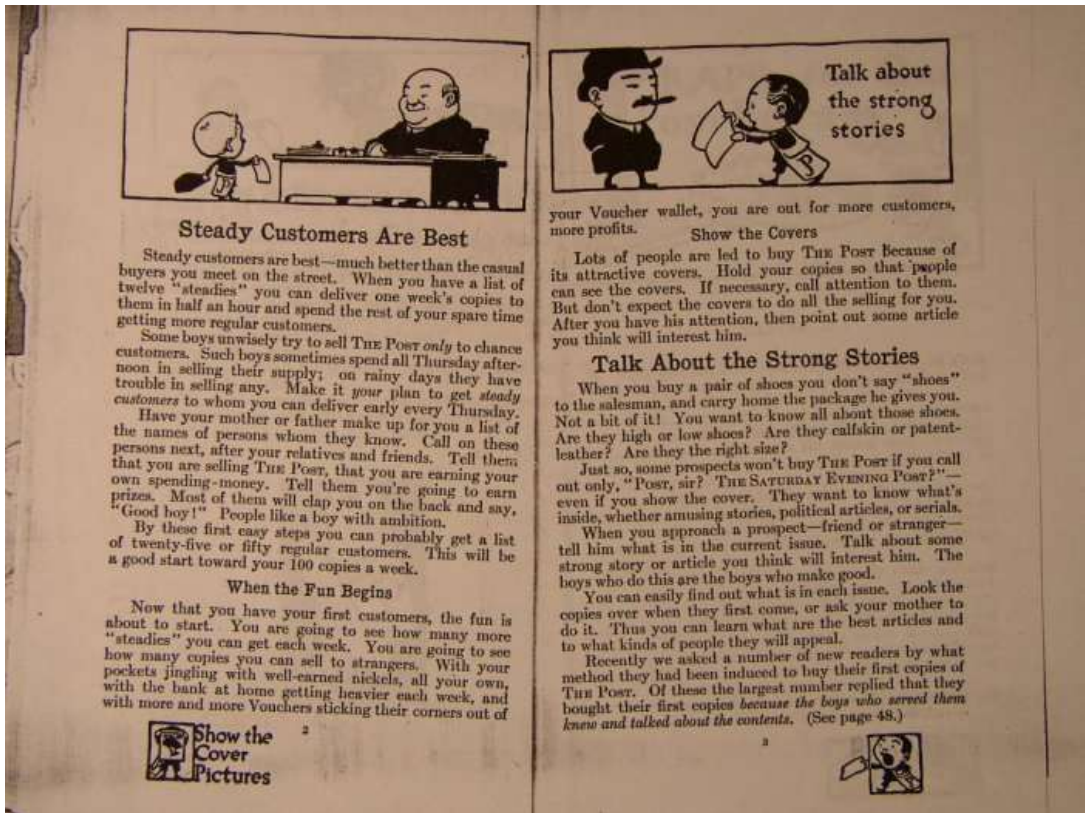
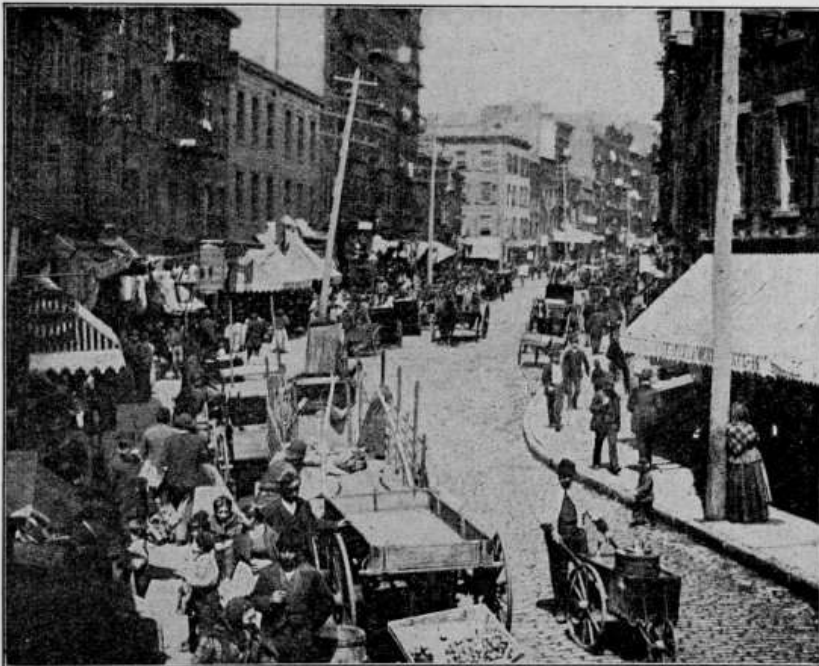


Fig. 84 Frederick G. Cooper. Selling a desk worker & selling a politician. *How to Sell 100 Copies Weekly*, 1912, 2-3.



The Mulberry Bend as it was.

Fig. 85 Jacob A. Riis. "Mulberry Bend as it was," c. 1863. *Making of an American*, 1901, 265.

shows every winter. Only P-J boys that sell steadily may take part in these entertainments. Whatever is made from the sale of tickets goes into an advertising fund for local publicity for the benefit of the team.



(2) PICNICS. Not a few District Agents give annual excursions, picnics and theatre parties to the boys. One of these District Agents writes:

"This year I took the boys ten miles north of the city on the Interurban Line along the St. Joe River. Here they played baseball, fished, rowed and had a big 'spread' or luncheon. Every P-J boy voted it the best time ever.

"To co-operating with my boys and giving them a square deal I attribute more of my success than to any one other cause—combined of course with a continuous effort to secure more boys and to hold those I already have."

(3) CLUB LIBRARIES. One Chicago District Agent writes:

"My P-J club meets every Saturday evening. The boys have elected their own president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and librarian. In

Fig. 86 Entertainments (minstrel shows). *The District Agent as a Sales Promoter*, 1911, 161.



Fig. 87 Tom Parker. "Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado. A magazine and newsstand in the cooperative canteen," 12/10/1942, Department of the Interior, War Relocation Authority (National Archives, Control Number: NWDNS-210-G-E440, Record Group: 210, Series: G, Item: E440).

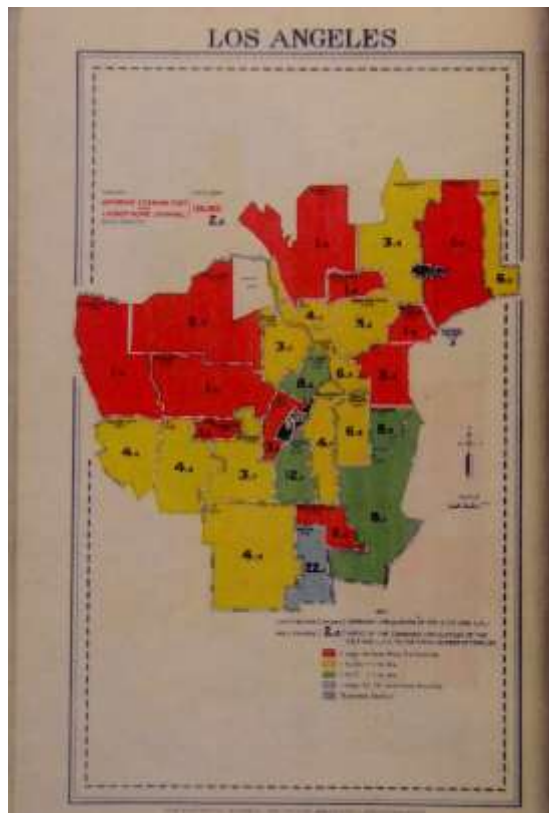


Fig. 88 Map of rates of circulation, Los Angeles. *Sales Opportunities 1929-1930; Handbook for Salesmen; the Saturday Evening Post, Ladies' Home Journal, the Country Gentleman, 1929.*



Fig. 89 Norman Rockwell. The Breakfast Table. *Saturday Evening Post*, August 23, 1930, cover.



Fig. 90 Jack Delano. *In a Negro home. Heard County, Georgia, 1941* (LC-USF34-43874-D, Farm Security Administration-Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress).



Fig. 91 G. B. Inwood. Bad News. *Life*, April 18, 1930, 22.



"Git up, Elmer, you is goin' to be late for your nap!"

Fig. 92 G. B. Inwood. Wake Up. *Life*, February 28, 1930, 12.

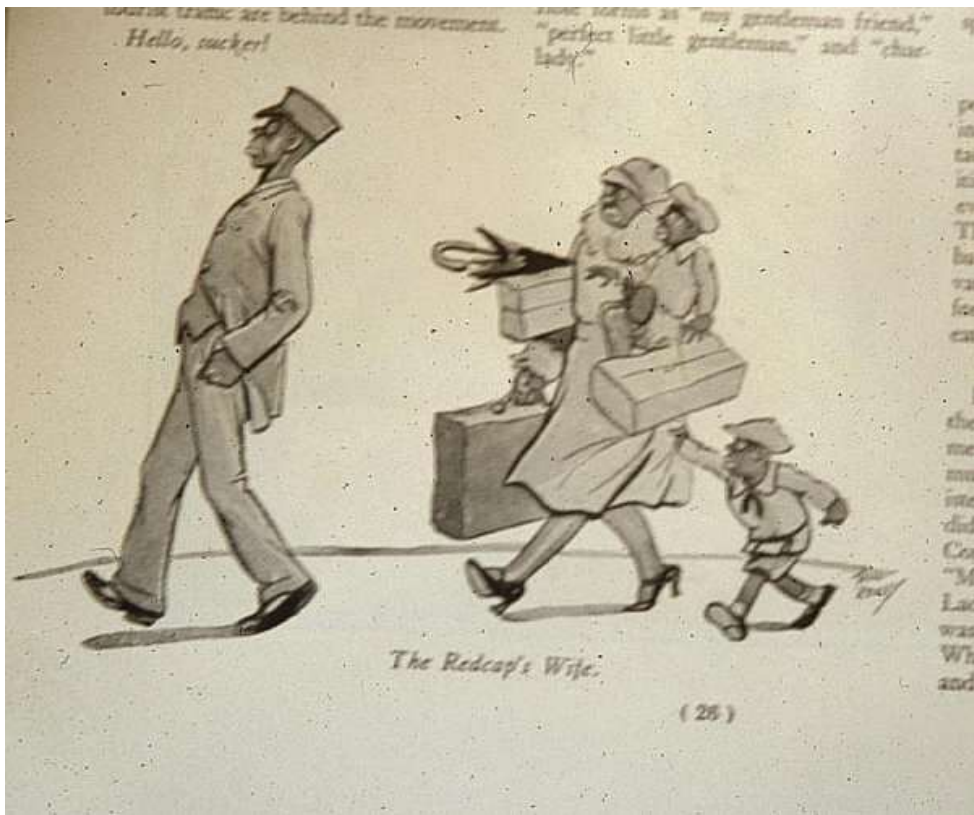
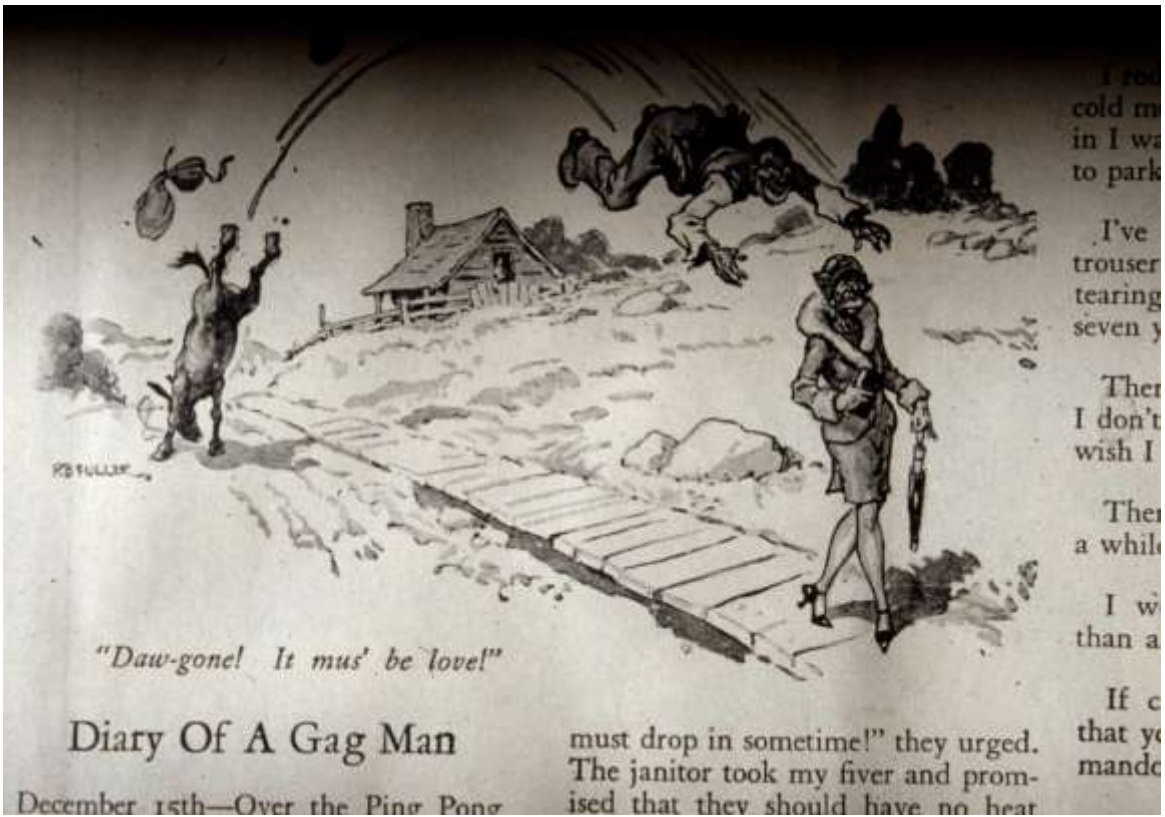


Fig. 93 Paul Rehry. The Redcap's Wife. *Life*, April 11, 1930, 26.



"Daw-gone! It mus' be love!"

Diary Of A Gag Man

December 15th—Over the Ping Pong

must drop in sometime!" they urged. The janitor took my fiver and promised that they should have no heat

I rou cold m in I wa to park

I've trouser tearing seven y

Ther I don't wish I

Ther a while

I w than a

If c that yo mande

Fig. 94 R.B. Fuller. Must be Love. *Life*, January 3, 1930, 11.



Fig. 95 James Van Der Zee. Music Teacher and Wife. Source: *James Van Der Zee*.



Fig. 96 James Van Der Zee. Untitled. Source: *James Van Der Zee*.



Fig. 97 Lawrence Toney. Minstrel Show. *Saturday Evening Post*, March 1, 1930, cover.



Fig. 98 Westinghouse advertisement. *Saturday Evening Post*, Aug 23, 1930, 98-99.



Fig. 99 J.C. Leyendecker. The Fitting. *Saturday Evening Post*, March 5, 1932, cover.



Fig. 100 J.C. Leyendecker. Spring Cleaning. *Saturday Evening Post*, April 1, 1939, cover.

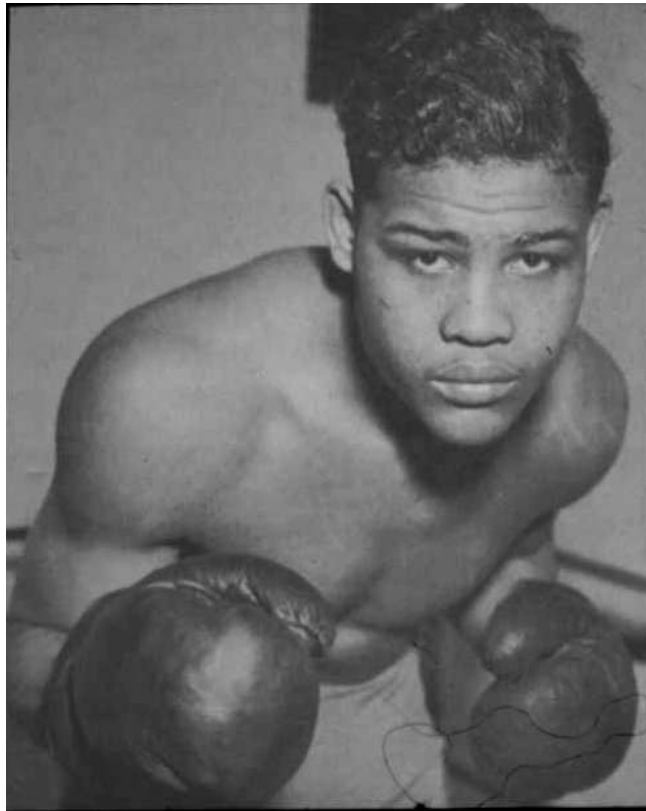


Fig. 101 Joe Louis, UPI photo, 1935. Source: Bromberg, *Boxing*.



Fig. 102 Cover [“This way I Beat Joe Louis”] with illustration by Albert W. Hampson. *Saturday Evening Post*, August 29, 1936.



Fig. 103 J.C. Leyendecker. Interwoven advertisement, 1927.

IS THE ONLY PART OF YOUR BODY THAT MUST BE FITTED PERFECTLY"

WHEREVER successful men gather you hear it discussed. Health, Health, Health! How do you keep yours? You can't unless you'll take the necessary steps. And one of the first steps is to make sure that your feet are fitted perfectly.

The first and only shoe with

Twin-soles of foot and soles of

You know your own feet are not perfectly flat, for you've seen their imprint in sand. They're down along the outer edge of the foot—and curve up along the inner.

Shouldn't lasts be made this

Placed beneath the long curving arch where your feet need exercise and support—the "Saving V" construction of Footsavers cushions every step like a shock absorber. All through the day it is lifting, supporting your weight, developing the

THE SAVING V
Introducing "The Saving V"

Fig. 104 Shoe advertisement. *Saturday Evening Post*, March 27, 1930, 97.



Fig. 105 J.C. Leyendecker. Spring Cleaning, **study**, 1939. Source: *The J. C. Leyendecker Collection: American Illustrators Poster Book*.



Fig. 105a J.C. Leyendecker. Spring Cleaning, **detail**, 1939. Source: *The J. C. Leyendecker Collection: American Illustrators Poster Book*.



Fig. 106 "Pvt. Joe Louis . . . on God's side." World War II era poster.