

Introduction: Women in the Workforce

Women's role in the workforce today has overcome many challenges. From working in the home to taking on the roles of men in times of war to now juggling work and the home. The ultimate power woman, who now raises kids, cleans the house and works outside the home is a constant reality for women. Not only is this a reality for women today but an accepted role, where maybe sixty years ago the women took on more inferior positions. But how did this current status for women begin? A major transition point for women in the workforce was World War II. Women took on the roles of the males who left for war, as their household chores were put on the back burner, and five million women entered the workforce (Hunt 555). There is no question that women's efforts during the war were nothing short of admirable but after the war the majority of women did not remain in the workforce. I argue that the ideals for women presented during World War II changed from women being workers outside the home, back to domesticity at the war's end. By studying images of popular culture, I suggest that visual advertisements; media, and visual images of women during the war sought to keep gendered differences alive and images after the war initiated a "return to normalcy" ideology.

Visual Rhetoric in Shaping Public Opinion

Before divulging into how advertisements and visual images of women shaped public culture during and after World War II an explanation of why people study popular culture and how it relates to this paper is imperative. Studying visual images is significant because a public work of art is part of popular culture and shapes people's ideologies. By examining popular culture, one can look at a specific artifact and see how it affected people's lives, why it was so important, what it symbolizes, and what the image was trying to relate to people. "By focusing

on the public, a democratic understanding is featured of the political aspects that goes to the center of modern norms of legitimacy; by emphasizing culture, it features the media, arts, and other communicative practices that shape identity and agency throughout modern societies” (Hariman and Lucaites¹). Robert Hariman and John Lucaites, maintain that public culture shapes identity. Thus it is important to look at public art as a representation of what is going on in the world.

People form, maintain, and continually revise their conception of themselves as a people by looking at images in the public media. They look at presidents, big league hitters, hurricane victims, and voters; terrorists, soldiers, talking heads, pro- testers; firemen rescuing cats, kids sliding down water slides, immigrants waving flags on the Fourth of July, the homeless sleeping under bridges; the list goes on and on, changing every day and every day the same. These are the images of U.S. public culture (2).

As supported by Hariman and Lucaites, visual imagery has a tremendous impact on the way people act. Visuals of popular culture not only give people a glimpse of what it was like during that time but how visuals such as advertisements and propaganda persuade people. Examples of how visuals persuade and enforce certain ideologies are to follow later in the paper but it is important to relay the fact that images have a vast influence on how individuals act.

Visual rhetoric has become a new but increasingly important method for communication scholars. This type of analysis being executed compares visual to written rhetoric and the effect those have on emotional appeal. In a 1996 issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy*, communication scholars Birdsell and Groake established that images could argue. Among the theoretical foundations put in place was the following: “So far, we have suggested three prerequisites for a satisfactory account of visual argument: we must accept the possibility of

visual meaning, we must make more of an effort to consider images in context, and we must recognize the argumentative aspects of representation and resemblance” (8). The requirements established represent one way of looking at visual argumentation in rhetoric. For the argument to be acceptable, the context must be taken into account, visual meaning must be acknowledged, and there must be recognition of argumentative features of representation. The debate between words and actions follows in visual rhetoric, as scholar Sol Worth makes the argument: “language is propositional, images are presentational; language has a syntax for making claims about reality; images have no such syntax and are merely uninflected representations. Hence, a picture can be a false representation, but it has no means of asserting its falseness” (Worth 210). Worth suggests that pictures are a representation of an account and can be interpreted in any way. The picture may be a false depiction but because it has no grammar, syntax stating what it argues, there are no grounds for asserting a false argument. The use of words in an argument makes it easy to convey what is trying to be expressed, compared to a picture which can have a number of interpretations.

In addition to pictures being representational images, they elicit a certain level of emotion and attitude that words do not necessarily express. According to Freeberg and Galese “while it remains true that any form of artistic communication can excite the emotions if used skillfully, it also seems true that representational images possess certain means of eliciting emotion that are not available to verbal language” (197). This supports the argument that pictures are sometimes a more powerful representation than words can even explain. According to *Defining Visual Rhetoric*, “the advantage of visual arguments over print or spoken arguments lies in their evocative power” (Hill and Helmers 51). An example of this relating to World War II and women in the workforce is that people can read statistics about women in the workforce but

it is much more powerful to see the images of women working. One gains a sense of reality and makes a better connection of working conditions, what women looked like, what sort of work they were doing and so on.

Overall, by studying visual images one make inferences about life in a certain time period. Utilizing visual rhetoric as a tool to analyze images of popular culture further elucidates certain ideologies of the time. By analyzing images of women during World War II and after it will become evident the different ideals expressed by the visual images.

Visual Propaganda in World War II: Rosie the Riveter

I will look at the visual propaganda during the time of war to uncover how ideologies of women during and after World War II changed. James Foust and Katherine Bradshaw see the 1950s as a particularly important time in defining the role of women in American society. “During the Depression and early New Deal years of the 1930s, women were encouraged to stay out of the workplace. As America entered World War II, however, they were told it was their patriotic duty to take over the jobs of men who had gone to war. Thus, many women entered the professional workforce in both the public and private sectors (Collins, qtd. in Foust 371). Many types of propaganda were issued to get women to enter the workforce. A famous poster we know today as “Rosie the Riveter” embodied the patriotic duty that women should tie up their hair and get to work, as household chores were put on the backburner. An analysis of the picture will get a clear understanding of just how it encouraged women to go to war.



Figure 1. J. Howard Miller. Advertisement for Midwest Westinghouse, 1942.

J. Howard Miller is the artist for the poster and was hired by Westinghouse to create a series of posters sponsored by the company's War Production Co-Ordinating Committee. Interesting background information is that Miller based his “We Can Do It!” poster on a United States Press photograph taken of Geraldine Doyle at age 17 who was a factory worker in Lansing, Michigan (Doyle 2). “At the time of the poster’s release the name ‘Rosie’ was not associated with the image. The poster was not initially seen beyond one Midwest Westinghouse

factory where it was displayed for two weeks in February 1942. Around the 1970s and 1980s, the Miller poster was rediscovered and became famous as ‘Rosie The Riveter’” (Doyle 2). That being said, “Rosie” is much more popular today than she was during the era of World War II. The image was only shown in a specific location for only a short two-week span. The effect that the poster had on women during the time is questionable due to its short-lived appearance. Nonetheless Rosie’s confident demeanor positively promotes women to enter the workforce. Primarily the caption “We Can Do It” creates a sense of unity among women that they are in this together. “Rosie the Riveter” does not embody one specific person, but the idea that anybody in the workforce can be a Rosie is affirmed. The way her hair is tied up in a red bandana, and her blue factory clothes initiates a change in fashion from the previous home-making dresses. The action of flexing her muscles parallels a typical action of a man, and portrays that women are just as strong as men. Her muscles are clearly an exaggeration from that of real women. The poster illustrates for women to carry more masculine qualities. Her facial expression exerts confidence and independence as she arches her left eyebrow and her lips are pursed together.

With wartime propaganda like “Rosie the Riveter” poster inspiring women to work outside the home, statistical evidence shows that “employment rose steeply from 12 million to 19 million (Hartmann 1). Some critics downplay women’s role in wartime and Margaret Mead contends that “women experienced the war not in a collective sense but rather as individuals, through the absence or loss of the men they loved...The have been asked to go on living pretty much as they did before...[facing] a thousand little irritations and no big ones” (Mead, qtd. in Delano 4). Even if one argues that women’s roles in war were primarily still feminine, one cannot not ignore the fact that for the majority of women, their lives changed as they took on the roles of the men who left for war even if it was only for a short period of time. “Rosie the

Riveter” embodies the ideologies of women taking on the roles of men and becoming independent. Even though the poster is a prevalent image today and an icon of popular culture, how it portrayed women was not necessarily in accord to other types of advertising, which sought women for work during that time period. Looking at additional propaganda, supports women in more feminine manner, compared to the independent working girl. Analyzing advertisements that target women to stay feminine with their fashion and make-up sustains the argument that images of women promoted a return to normalcy after the war.

Advertising For Containing Femininity

The

marketed appeal towards women advertising during World War II was that they could still be feminine and work during World War II. Advertisements saying “You’ll like this girl She does a man’s work ...servicing airplanes, but she hasn’t lost any of her feminine sweetness and charm” in addition to calling welders, welderettes, it was clear that women gendered differences were still present in the workforce (Hartmann 4). While advertisements might have been subtle towards the marketing of women into the workforce, the government was quite direct about the propaganda campaign. According to the Basic Program Plan for Womanpower in the Office of War Information, “These jobs will have to be glorified as a patriotic war service if American women are to be persuaded to take them and stick to them. Their importance to a nation engaged in total war must be convincingly presented” (Doyle 1). To persuade women to enter into the workforce, the government considered it a patriotic duty, a necessity for America. Coupled with the advantage for women to stay feminine advertising made work outside the home sound alluring and also created a sense of urgency. Women needed to support their men, by working.



Figure 2 “Victory Waits,” Advertisement for Stenographers. U.S. Civil Service.

“Victory Waits -- On Your Fingertips -Keep ‘Em Flying Miss USA” reads an advertisement for the U.S. Civil Service Commission. This slogan in itself has a very patriotic and womanly appeal. The poster refers to women as Miss USA, reflecting women of poise and charm. The woman in the advertisement is portrayed very attractive with blonde hair and wearing make-up and bright red lipstick. She looks happy to be entering the workforce with her big smile and white teeth showing. The advertisement is not of a real woman but a character. She wears a white blouse and has red and blue hair ribbon. The colors of red, white and blue are

in the background shown almost in a flag display, emphasizing a patriotic duty in addition to the gesture of the woman saluting. The bottom reads, “ Uncle Sam need Stenographers”. Referring to Uncle Sam illustrates another patriotic request. The woman is portrayed in a stereotypical gendered role of typing. She is not wearing the blue work clothes as seen in the “Rosie the Riveter” poster. When you compare images of this advertisement to the previous poster, this one seems more feminized. The woman does not portray “manly” qualities or give the feeling of independence and confidence. She is dressed somewhat normally, the theme of patriotism is still apparent yet in a more submissive manner compared to the independent working Rosie. This representation of women being advertised in a feminine manner during the war brings up an intriguing issue covered by Paige Delano’s article “Making up for War: Sexuality and Citizenship in Wartime Culture” where make-up is analyzed as perceiving women as still feminine with their “non-feminine work”.

Photos and propaganda which tried to persuade women to enter the workforce showed beautiful women with make-up applied and a smile on their face. Slogans such as “Women War and Lipstick” encouraged women to “be feminine and lovely” while working (Delano 8). Even Rosie is wearing bright red lipstick and make-up in the poster. From a rhetorical standpoint one can see that advertisements persuaded women who worked to remain womanly to a certain extent because when soldiers returned home from war, they wanted “feminine women who would display tenderness, admiration or at least submissiveness” (Hartmann 5). Delano also suggests in her article the need to wear lipstick and retain feminine qualities at work was examples of independence. Compared to Germany where women were not allowed to dress up and wear make-up it can show that the United States allowed for a more independent woman while wearing make-up (Delano 10). However, from a visual rhetorical standpoint if one looks at

two images and sees a woman with make-up compared to a woman wearing no make-up at work, then it can be assumed that the one wearing make-up is more feminine. So even if wearing bright red lipstick can be portrayed as a concept of individuality, nonetheless visually it speaks feminine and womanly. Advertisements furthermore promoted women to display make-up during war, when *New York Times* fashion writer Kiley Taylor urged women to respond to Pearl Harbor by choosing “the right lipstick”; in addition “advertisers such as Hold-Pin Bobs assured the public ‘beauty is her badge of courage...it’s a tonic to war-torn nerves of those around her’ ” (Delano 7). From these advertising slogans one can see that the power for women to remain beautiful and continue to wear make-up was a principal topic. One of the marketing goals of emphasizing beauty and a need to wear make-up was to create parallels between a woman’s life before war and during in terms of appearance. The next advertisement is an example of trying to keep women attractive and hygienic during their service work.

Ivory Soap Advertisement

Keep your BEAUTY on duty!



Give your skin Ivory care, Doctors advise!



Defensive care for DRY SKIN!
Keep your skin looking its best even when you're busiest. Give it this careful care approved by skin specialists.

1. Use a mild soap. Dry skins tend to be sensitive, to irritate easily. What gentler care could your beauty have than that advised by doctors for baby's sensitive skin...New Ivory Soap!
2. Use lukewarm water, never hot. And a soft washcloth. Then Ivory's witch-hazelnut lotion; it's so mild. This lotion soaks in.
3. Apply lightly a little cold cream. For women's probably left-over skin flake-dry. And remember that Ivory contains no-dyes, no-oil, no strong perfume that might be irritating. Get Great New Ivory. Most convenient for toilet use.



ONLY SKIN? Take the offensive!
You can't imagine that cool, lovely look for your complexion. But your skin needs special care, persistent care. Skin specialists approve this cleansing method!

1. Cleanse thoroughly. Wash Ivory's thick, lovely lather well into your face and neck, using a rough washcloth and lukewarm water.
2. Rinse well. Warm water, then cold. Repeat your Ivory lathering for about three other areas: your halolines, forehead, nose, chin. Then another rinse.
3. Do this cleansing as often as 3 times daily. See how delightfully smooth and fresh Ivory's mildness leaves your skin. Compare the beauty of Great New Ivory with that of your present beauty soap.



Most doctors advise New Ivory Soap for your skin, not baby's, that of other brands of soap together.

99% PURE IF FLOATS
(MADE IN U.S.A.)

"Baby-care" is Beauty-care, use New Velvet-suds IVORY

W. H. Company
Sept 62

Figure 3. Advertisement for Ivory Soap, *Woman's Home Companion*, 1942.

The ad was featured in a *Woman's Home Companion* magazine in 1942. It is a Ivory soap advertisement aimed specifically at women in the workforce. The girl's short curled hair and hat are typical military-like appearances in addition to the uniform. She is well groomed with make-up, shiny white teeth and red lipstick. She is also talking on the phone, which is an interesting take and could suggest a gendered stereotype for women. Women are often known for talking on

the phone and the fact that the service woman is on the phone could be an attempt to create a similarity between women's habits inside the home now working outside. The blatant title "Keep your Beauty on Duty" obviously caters women to remain beautiful while working. Note that "Beauty" is in all caps and in the color red, as well as "Ivory" on the bottom. The article gives a doctors advise on keeping skin beautiful while women are busy at work and has certain techniques for dry and oily skin. The article also suggests that the soap be used on babies. Similarities are drawn between a baby's skins a woman's as words such as "gentle" "lukewarm" and "soft" are italicized in the article. These accentuated words, give a feeling of delicate features advancing the argument for women to be portrayed as feminine in advertising. The picture in the background of the soldier and the woman is also up for interpretation. If looking closely the soldier is admiring the woman on duty, most likely due to her new "ivory" soap she has been using. This appeal towards woman suggests that men will like women more or pay more attention to them with this new soap. This type of advertising along with others upholds beliefs that women were to take careful notice of their appearance even if a war was going on.

Although propaganda urged women to keep their feminine traits, whether or not it was realistic should be discussed. Paige Delano's article concludes from the results of surveys, "that women would practically collapse if deprived of face powder; that they could be brave only if allowed in addition, their lipstick, rouge, face creams, and deodorants" (Rosbery, qtd. in Delano 7). Parallel with this idea is that underneath the hard-working woman; a feminine submissive woman is still intact. A photograph of thirty widows of American sailors killed at Pearl Harbor piling on to a bus to report for work at a West coast Aircraft Factory. "The news coupled bereaved women to a great collective sacrifice. Other images suggested that underneath the rough welding mask lay a carefully coiffed woman whose femininity remained intact despite the

national upheaval” (Delano 9). From photos and surveys it is proven that women did in fact care about such feminine products and that advertisers used this evidence to encourage women to keep their attractiveness intact during the war. Now that advertisements and wartime propaganda have been analyzed, a real life picture of another turning point in the war is uncovered.

WWII Photography Embraces Femininity: Time Square Kiss

“Japan Surrenders” hit the streets of the United States. A deluge of over a million people crowded the streets of Time Square in New York City in celebration of the termination of WWII. People everywhere celebrated in the streets and *Life* magazine described the merriment of the day: “On Tuesday, August 14, at 7 pm, the President announced that the Japanese had accepted the Allied terms of surrender. From New York’s Time Square to San Francisco’s Market Street, people were bent on having a glorious holiday and they did...it was as if joy had been rationed and saved up for three years, eight months and seven days since Sunday, Dec 7, 1941” (Victory Celebration 21). It was this famous day where a very renowned photograph was taken. Known by many names such as *V.J. Day in Time Square*, *Time Square Kiss*, and *Sailor Kissing Nurse in Time Square*, a historical photograph was taken in the midst of merriment ending WWII. Communication scholars Robert Hariman and John Lucaites urge the idea that “Unlike other photographs at this time, *Time Square Kiss* forefronts the tension between the war effort and normal practices of everyday life. The war becomes enforced separation of the sexes, and uniformed inhibition of the yearnings of private life”(4). Even though *Time Square Kiss* presents beliefs such as love, triumph, and euphoria, there are other ideologies also encompassed in the photograph. I am going to argue that male dominance is supported and “return to normalcy” are

ideologies embraced in *Time Square Kiss*, which are the same principles that lead the U.S. into post World War II life.

Time Square Kiss is a photograph taken on August 14, 1945, by Alfred Eisenstaedt. Known as the father of photojournalism, primarily for his work for *Life* magazine, Alfred Eisenstaedt has covered many of this century's most significant events as well as people. Eisenstaedt describes It was an impromptu photograph and only took four shots to get the photograph. "I took exactly four pictures. It was done within a few seconds" (Eisenstaedt). He even recalls that he used "1/125 second exposure, aperture between 5.6 and 8 on Kodak Super Double X film" (Eisenstaedt). Millions observed this renowned photograph when it was published in *Life* magazine on August 27, 1945, thirteen days after the photo had been taken. The photograph took up all of page 27 and was featured in the section "Victory Celebrations" in *Life*.

It is a black and white photograph, in the forefront are two people, a man with a sailor's uniform indicated by his hat on and a woman dressed in all white from head to toe, identified as a nurse. There is a sharp contrast between the two colors, which is a key stylistic feature of the photograph. Eisenstaedt stated, "If she had been dressed in a dark dress I would never have taken the picture. If the sailor had worn a white uniform, the same" (Eisenstaedt). The sailor's uniform is most likely blue and the nurse's uniform is visibly white. The sailor is kissing the nurse on the lips as he dips her slightly and grasps her head, while his other arm is wrapped around her waist. Her head and body is tilted back and her arm falls along her side. People stare in the background but the faces of the people are hidden because of the kiss and the position that they are in.



Figure 4. Alfred Eisenstaedt. "Time Square Kiss," *Life*, Aug. 27, 1945, p. 21. Courtesy of Getty Images.

Suggestive elements are that the sailor and nurse represent a common middle class. The trash and crowds suggest a parade, party, or celebration in the middle of the street. Those watching the kiss serve as the audience. The position of the kissers suggests the man picked the woman, it shows heterosexuality being the norm. The force of the hand and grabbing of the women can propose male dominance, and a patriarchal society. *Time Square Kiss* divulges

the ideology of male dominance a belief leading Americans into the post WWII life. The position of the sailor and the nurse reflect this philosophy.

The sailor grabs the nurse's head with his arm tucked underneath her neck. The sailor's other arm is grasped tightly and firm around her waist. It seems as if the nurse has nowhere to turn to maneuver out of the death-grip of the sailor. The nurse's arm also suggests that she is not acting upon the kiss nor interacting with the sailor. Her arm is placed awkwardly at the side as if she does not know where to put it. For the photograph it helps see the sailor's face more clearly. However, for interpretive reasons the nurse should have grasped the sailor's head or side if she wanted to return the kiss. In other real life re-enactments of the photograph, the women have grabbed hold of the man with the other arm so there is more support of balance. In *Time Square Kiss* the sailor's abrupt movement to kiss the nurse puts her in a position that is unfavorable, as she looks like she could have fallen to the ground if the sailor did not have his hands so fixed on her waist and head. This position makes her an object of the kiss instead of interacting with the kiss. Thus the kiss was not a mutual act but one of force.

The location of the sailor's head also supports this statement of women being acted upon. The sailor's head is bent all the way over the nurse's so that her face cannot be seen and his arm covers up the rest of her face. Therefore, you have a better view of the sailor than of the nurse. Although this may not be intentional, covering up the nurse's face makes the male the dominant feature. His kiss and placement of his mouth over the nurse's is very forceful as his arm pushes her mouth up against his. When you first look at this photograph it draws your attention to the sailor because he is really the only one you can see, and there is a clear view that the sailor is acting upon the nurse, thus corresponding with the ideology of male dominance. I realize that Eisenstadt did not intend for his photo to be one that reflected such ideologies, however by using

visual rhetoric, one can suggest that any interpretation can be made from a photograph. The picture is evidence of what was going on in the time period and is an example of gendered stereotypes.

Time Square Kiss shows women being acted upon rather than acting, which contrasts prior WWII mentality for women to tie up their hair and start working. “Contrary to trends that had been developing prior to World War II, traditional gender roles again took hold in the postwar years as part of a mythical ideal American family” (Foust and Bradshaw 93). The patriarchy suggested by this photograph is carried on into the post WWII life as women returned back to the household and the men returned to their careers. An article by Susan Hartmann explores the motivation for women’s transition back to the home. “Policy statements, propaganda, and advertising accentuated gender differences and appeals to women to assume new responsibilities carried two conditions: they were to do so only for the duration and they were to retain their primary identities and duties as homemakers and mothers” (4) This point of view was evident with articles entitled “The Kitchen-Women’s Big Post War Goal”. The entry of women into the wartime workforce “was more an aberration than a trend. The 1950s were an era when the United States attempted to contain Soviet power on the world scene while American women experienced ‘domestic containment’ at home. Women, now ensconced in their suburban homes, returned to their pre-war roles, sublimating their personal needs and ambitions to their husbands and children” (Foust and Bradshaw 95). *Time Square Kiss* represents the post WWII lifestyle where women were once again put on the backburner and men controlled society. Further support of a “return to normalcy” ideology comes from an article titled “Women, War, and the Limits of Change” by Susan Hartmann. Although women’s contribution to the war effort is nothing short of admirable women did not gain enough advantages post World War II.

Americans “cherished conventional gender roles and worried about how women’s new activities outside the home would affect male-female relations about family life” (Hartmann 1). There was an enlarged employment of women after the war, however marriage and birthrates increased as well, and contradicting evidence of a more equal workforce society. Even though women did enter the workforce during WWII, many did not continue to work outside the home with the termination of the war. Once again women were seen as subordinate, as men quickly replaced the women in the workforce and women essentially did not have much choice than to go back to the home.

The Kitchen: Advertising’s New Appeal to Women



Figure 5. Advertisement for Westinghouse Appliances, 1947. Courtesy of Getty Images.

In addition, advertising specifically aimed at making the home the new work front. In the 1950's the home of the future was represented in the kitchen. "Appliance manufacturers and women's magazines teamed up to pummel women with images of technology of tomorrow that would automate her life" (Hamilton 4). Women were now targeted as consumers of ways to make their work less domestic by having technological machines "improve" their life. "Interestingly, while the science and technology of the future are presented as revolutionizing the home, the revolution does not extend to who is doing the labor--the representation of the housewife in dress, apron, and pumps is unchanged even fifty years in the future" (Hamilton 4). The media played vital role in advocating women to return to domesticity. An advertisement that emulated the feeling of bringing women back to the home and played on the appeal of women being consumers is shown in advertisement for Westinghouse Appliances in 1947. The advert is black and white and shows three women looking at kitchen appliances including waffle irons, eggbeaters, and irons. A sign displaying "Dividend Sale" is in the background and two women have entered the store gaping at the kitchen appliances on sale. There is one sales woman present as well. As evidenced by the look on the women's faces, appliances and kitchen supplies certainly entice the women in the advertisement. One woman looks as if she is saying "ohhhh", while gaping at the lovely new possible kitchen features from her home. She is clasping her hand in excitement as the other lady rests her hand on her arm. The blonde woman leans forward eager to hear what the saleswoman has to offer about these wonderful appliances that happen to be on sale. The sales woman has a welcoming demeanor with her hand gesture showcasing the new domestic evidence. Advertisements like this an emphasis on gendered stereotypes that women belong inside the home and use the consumer appeal and new home products for women to return to normal.

Continued research has been done on women in advertising specifically during the post war era to prove that advertising probed women back to the home. In the article “Something for the Boys”, an analysis of women in *Broadcasting Magazine* in the 1950’s was studied. Reports show that “Fictional women, such as Betty Crocker and June Cleaver, also presented models for women during the 1950s. Women seemed to have been catapulted back in time to the nineteenth century. Contrary to trends that had been developing prior to World War II, traditional gender roles again took hold in the postwar years as part of a mythical ideal American family. The age of marriage dipped, the birth rate soared, and compulsory family togetherness took hold” (Foust and Bradshaw 29). Generally, studies have revealed that women are portrayed stereotypically across media types, more likely to appear as sex objects and less likely to be shown as professionals or in positions of power. For example, Alison Poe's 1976 examination of magazine advertisements showing women in sports noted that the portrayal of women was based on the following beliefs: the woman's place is in the home; women do not make important decisions or do important things; women are dependent on men and are isolated from their own sex; and men regard women as sex objects; they are not interested in women as people (Poe, qtd. in Foust and Bradshaw 33). Continued support for this ideology come with Joseph Dominick's and Gail Rauch's 1972 study of network television commercials found that women were nearly three times as likely as men to be shown in home-based settings. According to these ads, they concluded, a woman's place is in the home. When women were shown in occupational roles, those roles were nearly always subservient, such as flight attendants or models. The media's effort to stereotype women in traditional roles is not a new concept but it is interesting to see how a woman is portrayed in the media, specifically in advertising, during World War II and after as a means of seeing what women symbolize in America.

New Frigidaire “Dishmobile”

*Holiday from Apron Strings
—on wheels!*

New Frigidaire “Dishmobile”

The full-size dishwasher with Swirling Water Action scrubs and sanitizes every dish surface. Here's a dishwasher—full-size and front loading—that goes and grows with your kitchen! Roll it to your sink, scrape off larger food scraps, load, connect and push a button, Frigidaire Swirling Water Action takes over from there. Holds a full day's dishes for average family of 4. And listen to this: you can build-in the Dishmobile any time (it's standard cabinet size) or take it with you if you move! Beautiful Maplewood chopping-block top... with choice of 5 Kitchen Rainbow colors and white. Built-In, Free-Standing and Sink-Combination models, too!

EXCLUSIVE SWIRLING WATER ACTION
forces water—too hot to touch—over every soiled surface. No dish can hide.

Frost-loads so easily a child can do it!

Big Roll-to-you Backs slide all the way out. Load easily—even way in the back. Add dishes any time during cycle.

You'll feel like a Queen!

FRIGIDAIRE *Advanced Appliances designed with you in mind*
A Division of General Motors Corporation, Dayton 2, Ohio

Figure 6 Advertisement for Frigidaire Dishmobile, 1956

Another advertisement playing on the roles of women in the home is for Frigidaire. A new Frigidaire “dishmobile” is a dishwasher with wheels. In the picture, there is a mother who is shown tossing her apron off to the side. She is well dressed in a skirt, blouse and high-heels, similar to the way most women were portrayed in advertising at this time. The appliance is marketed to make the mother’s life easier. Important to note are the woman’s two children in the advertisement. One is a boy and the other a girl. The women being surrounded by her children

show aspects of family and home-life. It shows the woman as a “mother” not just a wife. On the bottom of the advertisement shows the daughter unloading the dishwasher. The caption reads, “its so easy even children can do it”. But I cannot help but notice what I think the advertisement wanted to say. The daughter is in the stereotypical role of helping out with the dishes not the son. I think that this was on purpose because it was still primarily acceptable for the daughter to more feminine housework while maybe her brother took out the trash, more of a “mans” job. This advertisement is from the company Frigidaire, a company prospering since the early 1900’s. The history of Frigidaire concludes that during WWII production was relatively low in the area of home appliances. According to the Frigidaire Historical Collection, “During World War II, all civilian production was halted as Frigidaire manufactured .50 caliber Browning machine guns, aircraft propellers and parts, hydraulic controls for airplanes and other military items” (4). Frigidaire is an example of the many companies that restructured production due to the war. After the war however, Frigidaire resumed in making appliances and not only excelled but expanded their line. “The early post-war period, Frigidaire expanded its appliance line to include household laundry equipment, automatic dishwashers, food waste disposers, ice makers, and automobile air conditioning. In 1956, Frigidaire produced its 20 millionth refrigerating unit, a feat unparalleled in the industry” (Frigidaire 4). The expansion of the accessories linked to kitchen is evidenced by the advertisement of the dishwasher. This new appliance entices the whole family but primarily the woman, who is the most likely to utilize the new domestic devices.

Women's Fashion: New Look



Figure 7. “New Look”. *Life*, New York: 1950. Courtesy of Getty Images

In addition to women being depicted as homemakers and consumers of the new America, fashion is another way the media tried to construct a gendered stereotype for women to remain feminine. “In contrast, Westerner society promoted a postwar model for women that differed from their wartime experience. Instead of being essential workers and heads of the families in the absence of their men, postwar women were made to symbolize a return to normalcy—a prewar domestic norm” (Hunt 978). Fashion in the western world embodied this continued ideology. With tight waist dresses, high-heeled pumps and gloves, women were more encouraged to look

more feminine than ever, and appearance continued to prevail a great importance. In the late 1940's Christian Dior "launched a clothing style called 'new look' ...featuring a pinched waist, tightly fitting bodices, and voluminous skirts, symbolizing a renewal of gender roles" (Hunt 1987). This "new look" brought an elegant lifestyle to the western culture featuring women as graceful, polished and poised. Women's magazines at the time certainly exposed this new look as well. "Women's magazines publicized the new look and urged a return to domesticity" (Hunt 1978). Evidenced by new look photos, the "new look" does embody girlish fashion with the tight waist, long dress. The photo analyzed is in black and white, the woman wearing the outfit is tall, fair complexion and her hair is tied up neatly in a bun. The skirt is black and she is wearing a black blouse as well fitted at her waist to illustrate her tiny figure. The skirt sways from side to side giving a very graceful demeanor to the woman. She is also wearing pearls around her neck and arm signifying a very girlish accessory. Note that in the photo the woman is not out and about in this fashion she is in her home, emphasized by the chair and chandelier. Her presence and furniture is also a symbol of class, it can be assumed that this woman is well off due to the fashion look and surrounding of her home. Along with other advertisements, the media was able to shape what women should look like. This is not a new concept but certainly one, which dates back to early 1900's. The media's use of visual imagery certainly shaped the way women dressed and also acted, as we have discussed post war employment declined and marriage and birth rates soared. The continued emergence of the media influencing people, specifically women in this case, how to dress, look and act.

This style is very different from what women wore during World War II and even what was advertised. The hat is an additional accessory compared to the bandana or hat one would wear while working in a factory. The pinched waist not only emphasizes women's small body

frame but also paints the picture for women to be very thin. This could even be the start for a which the modern day, very thin, ideal woman takes place but that interpretation can be one of future investigation. The emergence of fashion in this point in time parallels ideas for women to carry feminine qualities that suit her occupation at home, not in the working world.

Conclusion

Ideologies of women being objects, and are acted upon rather than acting are, as well as advertisements that portrayed woman as feminine are encompassed in *Time Square Kiss* as well as other circulating photos and advertisements of women in World War II. With pictures representing women in the workforce, woman still manage to be portrayed as mainly fragile, domestic, and dependent. An exception to the ideology is “Rosie the Riveter” however we learned that the propaganda poster was not received the same way today. An almost manly woman, was not the typically circulated propaganda during war, “Rosie” only became a sign of popular culture in the 1970’s yet people mistake this image of women and believe this type of domineering propaganda was the main image of advertising women in war. More common types of propaganda and advertising illustrate women wearing make-up. Taking on roles such as nurses or sewers enforce a domestic quality even though they are working for the war. *Time Square Kiss* makes a stronger argument for male dominance as the soldier and nurse are photographed together. *Time Square Kiss* reflects the ideologies of male dominance and a patriarchal society through the body language of the sailor and nurse. In addition to analyzing other advertisements and war propaganda, images of women include portray them as feminine even during time of war as evidenced by wearing make-up and making a vile contribution to staying intact with their feminism. After the war, fashion and the new domestic home were marketed toward women to ensure their return to the house. Looking at various types of

advertising messages towards women as well as photographs during and after the war, one understands that the independent, ruthless woman was not the sole message of getting women to the workforce. Women were constantly represented as gentle, attractive, containing feminine qualities and after the war, concerned with domestic work and fashion.

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