Unease and Nostalgia: The Marketing of "Pure Food" in the United States, 1890-1920

by

Alana Toulin

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Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between consumer culture and efforts to introduce legislation to regulate the production and labeling of American food products during the decades in the United States known as the Progressive Era. As food became increasingly mass-produced, consumer anxiety about contamination grew. Ultimately the federal government passed the Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Act in 1906 to ensure that American-made food items were produced in a hygienic manner and properly labeled. Using nostalgic modernism (characterized by scholars as a deeply-rooted impulse that causes Americans to simultaneously embrace and resist change) as a framework, my research demonstrates that the wide promotion of so-called "pure food" in the years both before and after the passing of this legislation reflects the pervasive ambivalence to modernity emblematic of this period. This project will demonstrate how food advertising reflected wider anxieties about a nation being reshaped by urbanization, industrialization, and corporate capitalism.

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I never thought I would be here. When I graduated from the University of Western Ontario many more years ago than I care to admit, I thought I was done with school. It is a cliché, but it is impossible to predict where life will take you. After a career as a journalist and writer, I decided I wanted a change and chose to pursue graduate studies in history. I enrolled in the MA program at Carleton under the supervision of Andrew Johnston, who, in a twist of fate, was once one of my professors at Western. In this sense, I feel like I have come full circle. I could not have researched and written this thesis without his support and guidance, and for this I am eternally grateful. He is one of the many wonderful faculty members in the history department at Carleton who have made my experience here such a fulfilling one. Acknowledgements must also be given to Susanne Klausen, whose insights and friendship have helped me immeasurably throughout the process of coursework, researching and writing a thesis, and applying to Ph.D programs. As well, in addition to their brilliant work and always helpful advice, Danielle Kinsey and Jennifer Evans have both shown me that it is possible to be a "cool academic" (I can't make it through anything without at least one *Mean Girls* reference).

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Introduction

In the United States today, discussions about food safety and critiques of modern agribusiness have become commonplace. Prominent writers like Michael Pollan regularly recommend staying away from fast and processed foods while doling out tips like "avoid food products containing ingredients that no ordinary human would keep in the pantry" and "don't eat anything your great-grandmother wouldn't recognize as food."[1] In a time where product recalls and outbreaks of foodborne illnesses – not to mention soaring rates of obesity and diabetes – appear regularly in the headlines, it is not at all surprising that many Americans are increasingly critical about the food they eat. Shedding light on the cost-cutting and often dangerous practices of the country's industrial food producers, documentaries like 2008's *Food Inc.* paint a picture of a powerful and amoral industry more concerned with profit margins than the production of nutritious, environmentally sustainable food by adequately trained and compensated employees. Indeed, the inner workings of the food industry has become a popular topic for investigative journalists from Eric Schlosser (*Fast Food Nation*) to Michael Moss (*Salt, Sugar, Fat*) who have worked to uncover its frequently insidious practices and wide-ranging impact on health, lifestyles, and the planet itself.

As the news has grown more alarming and the evidence against the modern food industry has mounted, advertising for commercially produced food products has adopted a distinct message over the past decade or so. In a conspicuous effort to distance themselves from the perception that mass-produced food items contain copious amounts

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[1] These particular instructions are among the sixty-four food rules set out by Pollan in his 2009 book *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual,* which provides a series of guidelines aimed at steering people toward "real food" and away from the highly processed mass-produced items he describes as "edible food-like substances." Michael Pollan, *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).

of chemical additives and preservatives, advertising campaigns for major American food manufacturers now routinely emphasize their products' apparent wholesomeness. "Keeping Goodness Honest" and "The Purest for the Purists," proclaim two 2010 print advertisements for Häagen-Dazs's "Five" brand ice cream. As its name suggests, the products in this line contain just five easily recognizable and "all natural" ingredients, each of which is depicted in these advertisements so that wary consumers can handily identify the contents.[2]

Other campaigns have chosen to adapt rural and agrarian themes in order to create an association between their food products and ideals of healthfulness and goodness in their customers' minds. A 2008 commercial for Ocean Spray cranberry juice featured two baseball-capped, flannel-shirted and hip-wadered cranberry farmers standing knee-deep in their sunlit New England bog. Touting both the health and taste benefits of the company's "new 100% juice" that contains "no added sugar," these farmers (one appearing to be in his late twenties or early thirties, the other seemingly near retirement age) simultaneously pay tribute to the contemporary American food culture while subtly decrying in order to harken back to a simpler, more authentic age.[3] The younger farmer, ostensibly representative of more current values and trends, tells viewers that the juice is

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[2] "Häagen-Dazs Five Ice Cream, 'Caramel' print advertisement," 2010, *Coloribus Creative Advertising Archive,* accessed July 20, 2013, http://www.coloribus.com/adsarchive/prints/five-ice-cream-caramel-15871605; "Häagen-Dazs Five Ice Cream, 'Lemon' print advertisement," 2010, *Coloribus Creative Advertising Archive,* accessed July 20, 2013, http://www.coloribus.com/adsarchive/prints/five-ice-cream-lemon-15871705,

[3] Canadian philosopher and journalist Andrew Potter describes this conspicuous "quest for authenticity" as rooted in Western culture's "search for meaning in a world where all the traditional sources – religion and successor ideals such as aristocracy, community, and nationalism – have been dissolved in the acid of science, technology, capitalism, and liberal democracy." Andrew Potter, *The Authenticity Hoax: How We Get Lost Finding Ourselves* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 12.

"so delicious that it just won the Chef's Best Award for Best-Tasting Cranberry Juice."[4] According to him, such an accolade means the juice will "go over big with the foodies."[5] In response, the older farmer, an embodiment of more "traditional" attitudes, asks in a tone of voice that is both unimpressed and baffled, "what's a foodie?" The commercial ends with a shot of the bottled juices resting upon a rustic-looking wooden crate of cranberries and text that declares the product comes "Straight from the Bog." There are no mentions of modern processing and mass production in the ad, though Ocean Spray's 2010 fiscal sales of $2.05 billion and large manufacturing facilities located across the United States suggest that this product is much less artisanal than it wishes to appear to consumers.[6]

When driven by serious public health anxieties, some companies have a blatant vested interest in tying their product with this strange blend of bucolic rural imagery and nods to modern industrial technology. Consider the case of Smithfield Foods, the world's largest pork producer. Headquartered in Smithfield, Virginia and founded in 1936, Smithfield currently oversees operations across the globe, including its facility in Tar Heel, North Carolina, a large-scale slaughterhouse and meat-processing plant that employs 10,000 of 46,000 of the company's worldwide employees.[7] Certainly, this

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[4] "Ocean Spray 'Foodie' television commercial," 2008, video clip, accessed July 15, 2013, YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NE_cVKc_pn4.

[5] The term "foodie" is somewhat contentious, though it is generally thought of as a synonym for "gourmet" and has roots in the early 1980s with the work of food writers like Gael Greene and Paul Levy. A rumination on the term's origins and more current connotations can be found in Paul Levy, "What is a Foodie?," *The Guardian,* June 14, 2007, http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2007/jun/14/whatisafoodie.

[6] "Company Fact Sheet," Ocean Spray Electronic Press Kit, 2011, http://pimsmultimedia.com/Ocean_Spray_Fall_2011/about.php, accessed July 15, 2013.

[7] David Bracken, "Chinese company to acquire Smithfield Foods for $4.7 billion," *Charlotte Observer,* May 30, 2013, http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2013/05/30/4074792/chinese-company-to-acquire-smithfield.html#.UjRw6OChDFI.

company embodies the corporate-controlled and heavily industrialized style of agricultural production that has overtaken the small, independently-owned and operated family farms that once dotted the American landscape. Of all the major food conglomerates operating today, Smithfield has attracted some of the most unfavourable attention in recent years. A 2006 *Rolling Stone* article revealed disturbing information about its waste-disposal practices. Citing statistics from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), reporter Jeff Tietz pointed out that Smithfield's Tar Heel facility "dumps more toxic waste into the nation's water each year than all but three other industrial facilities in America."[8] Calling the company "a great pollution machine" that produces "unheard-of amounts of pig shit laced with drugs and chemicals," Tietz describes in stomach-churning detail the conditions inside the warehouse-like barns that hold hundreds of thousands of animals, as well as the negative environmental impact of the waste-collecting "lagoons" that surround these barns.[9]

Furthermore, a short documentary filmed undercover at a breeding facility operated by a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods gives viewers an inside look at the "extraordinarily inhumane conditions" the animals endure in such places. Produced by the Humane Society of the United States, the video condemns the company's use of gestation crates, which are cages that are only slightly larger than the pig itself that house the animals used for breeding. According to spokesman Paul Shapiro—and seemingly confirmed by the undercover footage filmed by one of the organization's investigators—these crates cause pigs to develop open wounds, pressure sores, and infections. As Shapiro puts it, "these animals aren't even being cared for with individualized veterinary

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[8] Jeff Tietz, "Boss Hog," *Rolling Stone* 1015 (December 2006): 89-90, 92, 94, 96, 139.
[9] Ibid.

attention."[10] Still though, these pigs make their way into our food supply: as Tietz reports, the factory-farm pigs from Smithfield "remain in a state of dying until they're slaughtered…As long as the pig remains ambulatory, it can be legally sold and killed as meat."[11]

In the wake of such disastrous public relations, it is obvious why some of Smithfield's recent advertising campaigns have chosen to promote an image of farm-fresh vitality and homespun charm to combat these images of the dark satanic mills where American food is produced. A 2009 series of television commercials for Smithfield appeared to be a direct response to these negative characterizations. Called "The Fine Families of Smithfield Foods," this campaign featured the apparently sincere and conscientious hog farmers who raise the pigs that are processed by the company. One of these advertisements featured a Southern-accented man named Pearly Vereen who, like Ocean Spray's cranberry harvesters, sported a flannel shirt and baseball cap as he took viewers on a tour through his property (though it is noticeable that this tour did not actually show any pigs or the interior of any of the barns).[12] Identifying himself as a third-generation hog farmer, the plain-spoken Vereen is accompanied by his cherubic three-year old grandson while he extolls the values of hard work and reflects on his family's long history in farming. As Vereen surveys the vast expanse of green fields on his property, he observed his grandson frolicking in the grass and declares without a trace of awareness, "I like to watch things grow. Life's like one big circle. We try to make the

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[10] "Undercover at Smithfield Foods (2012 Webby Award Winner)," 2010, video clip, accessed July 22, 2013, YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_vqIGTKuQE.
[11] Tietz, "Boss Hog."
[12] "Smithfield Foods, 'Pearly,'" 2009, video clip, accessed July 15, 2013, YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmshfLAdABE.

land better then when we got it." In another, Kraig Westerbeek, "animal waste manager" at Smithfield supplier Murphy Farms, discusses the measures he takes to "actively work on improving the environment every day." Sitting at a desk in his office, Westerbeek assures viewers that the company he works for is rigorous in scientifically testing the land and water that surrounds their facilities, not to mention the animals themselves. However, he notes that his favorite thing is "testing the pork chops." The next shot depicts a quintessentially American scene: a backyard barbecue where Westerbeek proudly serves grilled pork to his family.[13] Passing a platter of meat around the table, the young and old alike smile brightly as they dig in.

1.1 Historical Context and Research Objectives

With this new attention to food safety and nutrition, it is clear that Smithfield and other companies have strong motivations for using such striking, and frankly fairly obvious, imagery in their advertising campaigns. What is perhaps more surprising, however, is that by attempting to assuage consumers' anxieties in such a manner these companies are tapping into a discursive framework that has existed in American food advertising since the dawn of the modern advertising industry itself in the late 1800s. As historian Harvey Levenstein and others have pointed out, this "fear of food" is certainly not new.[14] Discussions today are part of a legacy that dates as far back as the nineteenth century when food began to become industrially processed and the "germ theory" of

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[13] "Smithfield – Kraig," 2009, video clip, accessed July 15, 2013, YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9Ex1A9Nmt8.

[14] Harvey Levenstein's 2012 text, *Fear of Food: A History of Why We Worry About What We Eat* adeptly discusses the roots and implications of these anxieties. Levenstein, *Fear of Food* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012). Others who have written about these fears include Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); E. Melane DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

disease developed by French scientist Louis Pasteur took hold. The concept that serious diseases were caused by microscopic bacteria was especially appealing to middle-class Americans, who since the early nineteenth century had become fixated with hygiene and personal cleanliness.[15] Food and beverages were quick to come under scrutiny and were thought of as "particularly dangerous because they were the main vehicles for germs entering the body."[16] As Levenstein writes, "any kind of dirt was thought to be synonymous with disease," and domestic scientists and health officials increasingly warned Americans about the perils of purchasing food from dusty grocery stores and street vendors, preparing food with unwashed hands, and the propensity of the housefly to contaminate food and spread germs that would cause illnesses like typhoid and cholera.[17]

As the response to Upton Sinclair's classic 1906 novel *The Jungle* demonstrates, the American public at the turn of the century was highly sensitive about the food products available to them. Sinclair's book, though intended to expose the corruption and appalling working conditions faced by labourers in Chicago's meatpacking industry, was especially disturbing to readers for its graphic descriptions of filthy slaughterhouses and diseased animals processed for human consumption. Indeed, he famously remarked several months after the novel's publication, "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach."[18] The novel is often credited for its "instrumental role in

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[15] Victorian ideals on hygiene that linked cleanliness to good health, gentility, and one's overall respectability and morality had taken a firm hold amongst Britain and America's middling classes during the nineteenth century. Katherine Ashenburg, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (New York: North Point Press, 2007), 169-176.
[16] Levenstein, *Fear of Food,* 6.
[17] Ibid., 6-12.
[18] Upton Sinclair, "What Life Means to Me," *Cosmopolitan,* October 1906, 594, quoted in Levenstein, *Fear of Food*, 46.

the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act," but the push to create this legislation actually emerged years earlier.[19] As historian Lorine Swainston Goodwin has explained, the campaign for pure food legislation was rooted in the work of women's clubs at state and national levels from the late 1870s and onward, as well as organizations like the National Consumers' League (founded in 1899 by a group of prominent social reformers including Jane Addams and Florence Kelley).[20] Furthermore, Harvey Washington Wiley's role in the passage of the Act has been well documented by academics. The chief of the Bureau of Chemistry in the Department of Agriculture from 1882 to 1912, Wiley is often cited as a "central figure in the passage of the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906," and portrayed by historians as a longtime moral crusader who was as interested in protecting consumers against fraud as he was about safeguarding public health.[21]

Perhaps not surprisingly, corporate food manufacturers were quick to capitalize on these rampant fears of germs and concerns about contamination of the food supply in the United States. As Levenstein observes, these companies "now promoted their mechanized production systems as preventing food from being touched by germ-laden human hands."[22] By the turn of the twentieth century these discourses had become prevalent in advertising for food products. For example, a 1910 advertisement for

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[19] Chris Bachelder, "The Jungle at 100," *Mother Jones,* January/February 2006, http://www.motherjones.com/media/2006/01/jungle-100.

[20] As Goodwin and others have pointed out, middle-class women's activism in the campaign for pure food was an offshoot of their involvement of the temperance movement and other Progressive Era reformist causes.

[21] Clayton A. Coppin and Jack High, *The Politics of Purity: Harvey Washington Wiley and the Origins of Federal Food Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 3; Mark Pendergrast, *For God, Country and Coca-Cola: The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and the Company That Makes It* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 111; James Harvey Young, *Pure Food: Securing the Federal Food and Drugs Act of 1906* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 293.

[22] Levenstein, *Fear of Food,* 11.

Welch's Grape Juice boasted of the "clean, pure water" used to rinse the grapes before proclaiming that "[n]o human hand touches the grapes after they go into the washing process."[23] Much like the contemporary advertising we have seen from brands like Ocean Spray and Smithfield, many of these Progressive Era advertisements featured the same seemingly odd coupling of rural imagery and tributes to their age's new technology. Consider a 1904 advertising campaign for Gold Medal Creamery Butter that prominently featured images of cows grazing in grassy fields, old-fashioned butter churns, and quaint farmhouses. However, this brand simultaneously boasted of their modern facilities and cutting-edge production methods. With the tagline, "Old Ways and New Ones," one advertisement containing a drawing of butter and milk churns warned that "[o]ld-time dairy methods produced a butter that was sometimes good—more often not … Twentieth Century creamery science gives the consumer the perfect butter."[24] Others boasted of the product's "air-tight and odor-proof package," as well as Gold Medal's technologically advanced creamery, billed as "the world's cleanest."[25]

One of the most prominent food manufacturers to tout the apparent purity of its products, the H.J. Heinz Company launched a large-scale advertising campaign at the turn of the twentieth century comprised of these ostensibly opposing discourses. With their entire product line described in one 1906 advertisement as "pure in the strictest sense of the word," the company's advertisements consistently embraced new technology

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[23] Welch's advertisement, *Munsey's Magazine*, October 1910, back advertisement section.
[24] Gold Medal Creamery Butter advertisement, 1904, Folder 1, collection no. 59, box 27, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C. (hereafter N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records).
[25] Gold Medal Creamery Butter advertisements, 1904 series, Folder 1, collection no. 59, box no. 27, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.

while concurrently romanticizing food that was made in "the old-fashioned way."[26] As an advertisement for Heinz baked beans in tomato sauce shows, the company tended to juxtapose copy about new production methods ("Heinz Baked Beans are sealed after baking but while still hot, in sterilized tins *without solder or lead.* That's the story of their goodness") with text about the virtues of food that tasted like dishes that "mother used to make."[27] Heinz even encouraged consumers to visit their manufacturing facilities to see for themselves the hygienic practices carried out in their sunlit and "spotless" kitchens that were at the same time both homestyle and industrial.[28]

As I have alluded, these cultural conversations about manufactured food were not limited to the era's advertising. The campaign for "pure food" – whether waged at the grassroots level through consumer activism, by advertising and mass media, or by government officials – was wide-ranging and reflected a broader ambivalence toward modernity that has come to characterize the Progressive Era. When the push for pure food emerged, the United States was in a state of transformation wherein it had shed its rural and agrarian roots to become a society characterized by rapid urban and industrial growth. With these structural and demographic changes came fears that the Jeffersonian ideal—namely, that the United States would be a democratic republic driven by the will of ordinary citizens—was slipping away, and social activism and political reform movements for a diverse array of causes flourished during these years.[29]

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[26] Heinz – 1906 Records, collection no. 59, box 248, book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.
[27] Heinz Baked Beans in Tomato Sauce advertisement, collection no. 59, box 248, book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records. Emphasis is original.
[28] Heinz Wide Open Kitchens advertisement, 1906; Heinz Sunshine and Purity advertisement, 1906, collection no. 59, box 248, book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.
[29] In response to these changes and anxieties grew the Progressive movement, though there is much debate among historians about whether or not there is enough coherence within Progressivism for it to be considered a "movement" as such. For example, some Progressives sought to regulate the actions of

The broad campaign for pure food indicates that the nation's food supply was a significant part of these fears. Though new industrial production methods and the emerging corporate economic structure meant that manufactured food products had become commonplace in middle-class homes across the United States by the 1880s, consumers were wary about purchasing food that was produced under conditions that they could not see first-hand. Moreover, the emergence of the modern food industry (driven by new processing methods and technologies as well as the interconnectedness of markets via railroads) meant that Americans now had access to a much greater variety of foods at different times of the year. As Levenstein observes in *Revolution at the Table,* a comprehensive exploration of the changes in the American diet from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, "large new organizations now transported, processed, and marketed the farmer's products."[30] In other words, technological and industrial advances meant that American consumers were increasingly unlikely to know how and where their food was produced, and by whom. To acclimatize consumers to these new ways of experiencing food, marketing played a critical role in helping manufacturers and other interested parties assuage these anxieties. In analyzing the wide-ranging promotion of pure food in the United States during this period, this project is an attempt to connect several strands of historical scholarship on American consumer culture, food production and consumption, and Progressive social reform and public policy efforts. My goal in conducting this research is to show that so much of the contemporary debates

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corporations through antitrust laws, others were focused on causes like prohibition of alcohol and women's suffrage, while others still tried to modernize production through "efficiency" and worked to professionalize the social sciences. The historiography of Progressivism will be discussed in more detail on pages 13-14 of this chapter and in Chapter 1.

[30] Harvey A. Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 42.

surrounding food, nutrition, marketing, and health in North America has direct (yet under-explored in my estimation) roots in this time period. It may be a historian's cliché, but to adequately understand current American fears surrounding food production and consumption, we must develop a more nuanced understanding of how they began with the emergence of the modern food industry.

Given the noticeable connections between the marketing of pure food and the era's pervasive ambivalence toward modernity, it is remarkable that there have been few studies that have fully explored this relationship. While there are significant bodies of scholarship on both the development of the United States' food industry and the push to introduce pure food legislation, these studies – especially those that are focused on pure food more narrowly – have largely examined these issues from an institutional or political standpoint. For instance, consider Clayton Coppin and Jack High's 1999 book *The Politics of Purity.* The authors (a management consultant/historian and an economist respectively) frame their argument around the economic theory of regulation, and view the introduction of the pure food and drug laws as "the result of regulating competition in the food industry."[31] Coppin and High also focus heavily on the work done by USDA chief chemist Dr. Wiley. According to them, Wiley "did everything necessary to bring about the passage of a law and to give himself a large measure of control of its enforcement," and was therefore "the central figure in the passage of the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906."[32] James Harvey Young's older history, *Pure Food: Securing the Federal Food and Drugs Act of 1906*, shares a similar institutional approach, placing the bulk of its attention on the act as a piece of regulatory legislation intended to benefit the

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[31] Coppin and High, *The Politics of Purity,* 3.
[32] Ibid., 165.

public interest, like other Progressive measures. Lorine Swainston Goodwin's 1999 study, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders, 1879-1914,* lauds the act for being one of the first pieces of legislation to "promote the welfare of the general public in the United States," and she remarks that it is often cited by scholars as one of the landmark achievements of Theodore Roosevelt's administration and of the Progressive Era as a whole. While she is innovative in emphasizing the grassroots roles of women and consumer activist groups in the campaign for pure food, she failed, however, to consider the promotion of pure food through the lens of cultural history.[33]

In asking new questions about the campaign for pure food, this research aims to move the scholarship beyond these institutional and political narratives. Looking more closely at the wider cultural discussions on pure food that involved advertisers, consumers, the popular press, and government officials, this project aims to contextualize the significance of the idealization of so-called "pure food" during this period: what can it tell us about the broad social and cultural anxieties Americans faced during the Progressive Era? More specifically, what can it tell us about the ambivalence toward modernity and tendency towards nostalgia that has come to characterize this period of American history? What role(s) do gender, race, and class play in these discussions? How do ideas about health and wellness fit in to this idealization of purity? This project also looks at the significance of "authenticity" in the marketing of pure food. What are the implications of this tendency to juxtapose the "traditional" (a synonym for "authentic" and therefore "moral" in this context) with modernity and efficiency in food production?

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[33] Lorine Swainston Goodwin, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders, 1879-1914* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1999), 5.

There is, however, a key limitation to my research that must be acknowledged. Though the reform movement for pure food (and the resulting federal legislation it led to) also involved alcoholic beverages and patent medicines, this thesis looks only at food products. For a project of this scope and size, it was necessary to narrow my focus: given the vastness and complexity of each of these elements of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, it would be possible to write three separate theses on the relationships between production, marketing and advertising, and the regulation of each, respectively.

1.2 Historiography

When contemplating scholarship on the Progressive Era more generally, academics have long acknowledged the period's inherent complexities, and have even debated whether or not there is enough coherence within "Progressivism" to warrant a distinct periodization.[34] A landmark 1982 article by Daniel T. Rodgers describes it as a period where Americans advocated for various reforms that "represented a widespread and varied response to the multitude of changes brought by industrial capitalism and urban growth."[35] Indeed, Rodgers acknowledges the elusive nature of Progressivism, describing it as three distinct but overlapping "languages of discontent" that promulgated antimonopolist rhetoric, calls for social harmony, and demands for efficiency.[36] He writes that these three languages "did not add up to a coherent ideology"; rather it is more beneficial to think of them as a flexible – and often fragmented – approach to enacting

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[34] These historiographical debates are discussed further in Chapter 1 of this thesis.
[35] Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 13.
[36] Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* 10, no. 4 (December 1982): 123.

social change and regulation through state intervention.[37] In drawing upon these loosely connected and occasionally contradictory threads, Progressives were able to use these discourses in different ways and for different (and sometimes opposing) purposes. Building on this idea that Progressivism was less of a "coherent reform movement" and more of a variety of "shifting, ideologically fluid, issue-focused coalitions," Gail Bederman's seminal *Manliness and Civilization* draws upon Michel Foucault's ideas on discourse to examine the divergent writings of four notable Americans from this era to explore the complex relationship between race and gender under the new conditions of "modernity."[38] According to her argument, intertwined (and yet frequently inconsistent) viewpoints on gender, race, and class came together to form a larger "discourse of civilization" that was used by Progressives to legitimize vastly different points of view and claims to power.[39] Echoing Rodgers, Bederman shows that it was possible to interpret and apply Progressive ideology in many ways, from Theodore Roosevelt's fervent imperialism to Ida B. Wells's anti-lynching campaign. From here, we can also deduce that the social reformers who were focused on pure food during this period can be accurately described—and to some degree self-identified—as Progressives in terms of their outlooks and approaches.

If Progressive ideology can at its most basic level be described as response to the era's profound economic, demographic, technological, and social changes, then it is useful to consider it in relation to the work of cultural historians who have looked at the

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 114.
[39] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States,* 1880-1917 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 22-25.

American tendency toward the "backward glance."[40] There is a large body of scholarship that explores the ways that American identity and values are inextricably linked with a nostalgic-modernist impulse that causes Americans to simultaneously embrace and resist change, or to adjust to change by embracing parts of the past in therapeutic ways.[41] A deeply ingrained part of the collective national psyche, this predisposition has long helped Americans "legitimize new political orders, rationalize the adjustment and perpetuation of old social hierarchies, and construct acceptable new systems of thought and values."[42] Though historians like Michael Kammen have portrayed the nostalgic modernist impulse as a transhistorical phenomenon, the changes that swept across science, culture, and politics in the United States at the turn of the century made it particularly apparent at this moment.[43] As Laura Lovett has observed, nostalgic modernism in this period was especially inconsistent: Progressive Era social reformers "embraced the possibility of social change," but aimed to built a society that "was created in the image of an idealized past."[44] In his comprehensive study of the origins and effects of American antimodernism, T.J. Jackson Lears also focuses on this era. To him, this

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[40] Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 295.
[41] One of the best known of these works is T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). Lears describes this phenomenon as "antimodernism, and George Cotkin as "reluctant modernism" in a 1992 book of the same title, but following the lead of Laura Lovett in her 2007 study on American pronatalism, I will instead use the term "nostalgic modernism" to characterize it in this chapter and throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapter 3. This is a more accurate description, since nostalgic modernism is not staunchly traditional as the term "antimodernism" implies. Though traditionalists and nostalgic modernists alike both looked backwards to the past, only the latter "always moved forward" to embrace new opportunities, albeit cautiously and even at times critically. Laura L. Lovett, *Conceiving the Future: Pronatalism, Reproduction, and the Family in the United States, 1890-1938* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 10-12).
[42] Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 295.
[43] The bulk of Kammen's book covers the years spanning from 1870 to 1990, but his first chapter includes discussion on the period before 1870.
[44] Lovett, *Conceiving the Future*, 10.

phenomenon was largely a reaction to the secularization of American culture and was "a complex blend of accommodation and protest which tells us a great deal about the beginnings of present-day values and attitudes."[45] Drawing from this body of literature, my study will place the discussion surrounding pure food more firmly into this historiographical and cultural context.

It is also important to note that the shifts in the way food was produced and consumed were part of the period's move toward a culture that revolved around consumption rather than production.[46] A marked departure from the Protestant ideals of self-denial and austerity that had long been the foundation of bourgeois American morality, this consumer culture is described by William Leach as an ethos characterized by "acquisition and consumption as the means of achieving happiness; the cult of the new; the democratization of desire; and money value as the predominant measure of all value in society," and was linked to so much of the change ushered in during this period.[47] Using food as a mode of analysis to explore these transformations is especially effective: since food has always been a central part of human life, it can reveal much about consumerism and cultural attitudes and values. As Katherine Parkin points out in the introduction to her 2006 book *Food is Love*, food is different than most other advertised products because it is "not at its core a luxury...People of all classes have always had to buy food, as opposed to other items more easily borrowed, put off, or done

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[45] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, xiii.
[46] The cultural effects of this shift in focus from production to consumption are discussed in Wilfred M. McClay, *The Masterless: Self and Society in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). As the era created more (unskilled) blue-collar and (slightly skilled) white-collar wage jobs, there grew a large mass of people whose sense of self was no longer defined through their profession. Consequently, marketing and advertising was used to help Americans redefine how they created their identities.
[47] William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 3.

without."[48] Paradoxically, food is also a consumer product that is culturally and socially distinctive and can act as a strong marker of identity, class, or ethnicity.

This nascent consumer culture in which food played such a critical role was closely tied to the advertising industry, which became increasingly professionalized and influential during these years. As the economy boomed, consumer merchandise "flowed out of factories" after 1885, creating a need for advertising on a scale that had not been seen before.[49] Much has been written about the development and impact of advertising in the United States, emerging as a distinct historical genre in the 1970s and 1980s as part of the burgeoning field of cultural history. Its popularity stems from the way that advertising can create "a symbolic universe where certain cultural values [are] sanctioned and others rendered marginal or invisible."[50] In other words, the study of advertising can provide insight into the predominant desires and viewpoints (not to mention anxieties) that are present at a given moment in time and space, whether these are consciously expressed or otherwise.

As this large body of literature indicates, there are strong links between advertising and the promotion of cultural attitudes and ideals. Studies by Roland Marchand and Pamela Walker Laird demonstrate that advertising during this particular moment in the United States was especially notable because it helped Americans cope with the period's large-scale societal changes. Though the bulk of his landmark monograph is focused on the years spanning from 1920 to 1940, Roland Marchand looks

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[48] Katherine Parkin, *Food is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2.
[49] Leach, *Land of Desire,* 42. The emergence of the modern advertising industry is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.
[50] T.J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of American Advertising* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 3.

at the origins of the modern advertising industry at the turn of the twentieth century and he characterizes those who worked in this burgeoning industry as "apostles of modernity," who, like town criers, "brought good news about progress."[51] Laird's work also examines more closely the transformations that reshaped the advertising industry. Describing it as the "modernization of advertising," she argues that advertisers widely adopted the era's "prevailing progress discourse" in order to assert their legitimacy. Like Marchand, she describes advertisers as "the new prophets of modernity," and her study looks at advertisements themselves as "elements of material history in the context of the business and cultural dynamics in which they were produced."[52]

Given the plethora of available primary source material, it is surprising that there has been so little scholarship specifically focused on food advertising within the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though some of the historiography on American advertising does offer some pertinent insights into food, this body of literature tends to provide a much more broad overview of the ways that different consumer goods were advertised. Books like Marchand's, James Norris's *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society*, and Lears' *Fables of Abundance* demonstrate that historians have tended to address food as a small part of more wide-ranging studies about the history of the advertising industry as a whole in the United States. Although Parkin's work on representations of gender in food advertising is an exception to this, her 2006 text *Food is Love* spans the entire twentieth century, which also makes it more of an

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[51] Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 1.
[52] Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 6, 9.

overview than a detailed look at a specific time period, even one as formative to that century as the Progressive Era.

Research that connects advertising to the campaign for pure food is even more elusive. Some academics have acknowledged the relationship between the two in passing. For example, the author of an essay on candy consumption and gender includes about a page and a half of discussion on the way that turn-of-the-century candy companies "barraged consumers with messages of purity."[53] This piece by anthropologist Jane Dusselier makes the point that these commercial representations of candy reflected some of the tensions and fears of the period: "Candy advertisements during the Progressive Era were saturated with the words *clean, fresh,* and *pure* and images of virtuous candies abounded. Manufacturers felt compelled to educate the public on the degraded production process of competitors while simultaneously highlighting the pristine conditions of their own factories."[54] Others have also raised the issue of purity in food advertising but seem to (wrongly) imply that it is not worth studying in more depth. As James Norris puts it in his book about the origins of modern American advertising, it was only natural that advertisers would emphasize the purity of the brands during this time period: "Given that advertisers were attempting to persuade customers to purchase food products often manufactured or processed in distant and unknown places, the emphasis on brand identification is understandable, and in the absence of federal standards for purity, the

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[53] Jane Dusselier. "Bonbons, Lemon Drops, and Oh Henry! Bars: Candy, Consumer Culture, and the Construction of Gender, 1895-1920," in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 23.
[54] Ibid.

stress on purity is hardly surprising."[55] Consequently, he includes just a single paragraph on the subject. The majority of the literature that discusses advertising and purity in a more detailed sense are specific case studies focused on one food manufacturer, the H.J. Heinz Company.[56]

It is within this context that I hope to place my work. In making deeper connections between these bodies of scholarship, I intend to explore how the relationship between advertising and the campaign for pure food in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflects a wider ambivalence toward modernity itself that can still be felt today. The broad campaign for pure food—waged at the grassroots level, by government officials, and by big business—can be read as a therapeutic adjustment to the acceptance of mechanization and corporatization. The campaign for pure food gives us a tremendous amount of insight into the fundamental tension that has existed at the heart of the American experience since the advent of industrial modernity: it illustrates the extent to which Americans wanted both what modernity was offering, and also their impulse to resist it in favor of the traditional values that are the basis of their collective identity. As I have suggested, the current North American anxiety about food production and consumption displays the same sort of Progressive Era paralysis about whether modernity hurts or helps, and about whether or not Americans can retain their identity and values in the classic Jeffersonian sense against the advent of capitalism and industrialism.

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[55] James Norris, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society,* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 108.

[56] H.J. Heinz Company founder Henry J. Heinz was a strong supporter of pure food legislation and consistently used purity as a theme in his company's advertising and marketing strategies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. More thorough discussions on Heinz can be found in works including Gabriella M. Petrick, "'Purity as Life'": H.J. Heinz, Religious Sentiment, and the Beginning of the Industrial Diet," *History and Technology* 27, no. 1 (March 2011): 37-64; Mona Domosh, "Pickles and Purity: Discourses of Food, Empire and Work in Turn-of-the-Century USA." *Social & Cultural Geography* vol. 4, no. 1 (2003): 7-26.

1.3 Theory and Methodology

As Marchand, Laird, and countless others who have studied advertising have pointed out, advertisers at the turn of the century were no longer focused primarily on describing the qualities of the products themselves; rather, they now aimed to produce imagery and text that would be easily recognizable and appealing to the consumer's innermost sensibilities. During this period, emphasis was now placed on "creating brand names, logos, package designs … that, below their literal appearance, tap into unconscious desires, urges, and mythic motifs embedded in the human psyche."[57] According to Marchand, this strategy was quite effective: by the end of the 1920s, advertisements had in effect taught Americans a new kind of "ideogrammatic language" made up of slogans, logos and trademarks that essentially "familiarized people with an entire 'vocabulary' of repeated visual motifs and social parables."[58] Though he points out that advertising was not a "language" in the traditional sense, it nonetheless served a similar function, giving Americans the means to understand and participate in the era's broader social and cultural changes. In a period that was characterized by rapid urbanization and industrialization alongside rampant consumerism and fears about food safety, advertising "established and disseminated a vocabulary of visual images and verbal patterns" that helped Americans "assimilate … into a culture of high technology, complex economic and social relationships, and urbane sophistication."[59]

In adapting this sort of semiotic framework—in which advertising images are thought to have both literal and symbolic content—the impact of Marchand's analysis is

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[57] Ron Beasley and Marcel Danesi, *Persuasive Signs: The Semiotics of Advertising* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002), 15.
[58] Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream,* 335.
[59] Ibid.

twofold. First, in highlighting the way that advertising was used as a means to normalize new cultural ideals during the early to mid-twentieth centuries, he is able to demonstrate the historical significance of advertising in a particular time period and context. Second—and more importantly—his work provides a strong example of how this mode of analysis can be used to study advertisements as historical documents. Going beyond the verbal to emphasize the visual, works like Marchand's show the utility of drawing upon such a method: analyzing advertisements through visual semiotic theory fosters a greater understanding of advertisements themselves as designed objects that are rich in meaning. In using visual semiotic theory to underpin my analysis of archival documents, the intricate processes in which advertising is able to both convey and create meaning through imagery and text becomes much clearer.

For the sake of clarity, when I refer to "advertising" in this project, I am extending the definition to refer not just to print advertisements for mass-produced food products, but more generally to materials that in some way promote and advocate for the idea of "pure food." By expanding my definition of what constitutes advertising to include items like product cookbooks, advertising cards, souvenir booklets from "pure food exhibitions" and trade shows, prescriptive literature, government pamphlets, annual reports from consumer groups, and magazine and newspaper articles, it becomes evident that the marketing of pure food was not a limited promotion waged solely by food manufacturers themselves, but rather a more widespread cultural phenomenon. As archival collections such as the N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records and the Warshaw Collection of Business Americana at the National Museum of American History demonstrate, the campaign for pure food was driven by various parties and

interests (though the majority of those who held leadership positions within it were white, native-born, and from privileged backgrounds), and it was certainly not limited to traditional print advertising for consumer products.[60] My analysis of these varied forms of print media using this theoretical approach is intended to foster a deeper understanding of the marketing and promotion of pure food, especially the extent to which it permeated American culture during this time period.

More generally, visual semiotic theory has been helpful in moving historical studies of advertising beyond the textual and towards the visual. Closely connected to linguistics, semiotics is described by scholars as "the science of signs—a sign being anything that can be used to stand for something else, to deliver some kind of a message, to generate some kind of meaning."[61] According to *A Dictionary of Media and Communication,* semiotics "is widely assumed to be purely a structuralist method of textual analysis, but it is much more broadly concerned with how things signify, and with representational practices and systems (in the form of codes)."[62] Though philosophers throughout much of history have shown interest in the study of both verbal and non-verbal signs, semiotics as we know them today were largely developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[63] During this period, two dominant systems for analyzing signs emerged: one was based on the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, and the other on the work of American philosopher C.S. Peirce. In the

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[60] The top-down nature of the campaign for pure food and America's commercial food culture as a whole is discussed further in Chapter Two.
[61] Arthur Asa Berger, *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture: Advertising's Impact on American Character and Society* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefields Publishers, 2004): 127.
[62] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, "Semiotics," in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[63] As Beasley and Danesi point out, "[t]he fact that human-made signs bear their meanings through social and historical convention was first pointed out by Aristotle and the Stoic philosophers;" see Beasley and Danesi, *Persuasive Signs,* 24-26 for a brief overview of the history of semiotics.

Saussurean model, signs are made up of "signifiers" (sounds or images) and "signifieds" (concepts or ideas), and the relationship between the two is socially constructed and arbitrary.[64] For instance, clothing can act as a sign that signifies a particular mood or set of beliefs. To compare, the Peircean model includes three kinds of signs: "signs that signify by resemblance—what [Peirce] calls *icons;* signs that signify by some kind of cause-and-effect relationship—what he calls *indexes*; and signs that signify convention—what he calls *symbols*."[65] As examples, a photograph under this model is an icon, smoke coming out of a house is an indexical sign, and a Star of David is a symbolic sign.[66]

But in spite of the seemingly obvious connections between this nascent field of study and the concurrent rise of mass advertising in the early twentieth century, it was not until the 1950s that scholars began to explore seriously the relationship between the two. After publishing his landmark text *Mythologies* in 1957, French literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes sparked an interest in studying advertising's messages and techniques through this structuralist lens. As Ron Beasley and Marcel Danesi explain in their 2002 book on semiotics and advertising, *Mythologies* helped open up "a new branch of research in semiotics" that focused "on how advertising generates its meanings, animating, at the same time, a society-wide debate on the broader ethical and cultural questions raised by the entrenchment of advertising as a form of discourse in contemporary societies."[67]

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[64] Berger, *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture,* 128. A sign cannot purely represent something because the two are fundamentally unrelated.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Beasley and Danesi, *Persuasive Signs,* 19.

In *Mythologies,* Barthes uses a semiotic analysis to explore how myths and age-old archetypes become embedded in modern media and popular culture: "the starting point of these reflections was usually a feeling of impatience at the sight of the 'naturalness' with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality which, even though it is the one we live in, is undoubtedly determined by history."[68] The first section of his book is a series of essays on ostensibly mundane topics—like wrestling, children's toys, and indeed, advertising—to show how they are part of a larger system of signs that have shaped (and continue to shape) the broader culture.[69]

Building on this work, Barthes published his influential essay "Rhetoric of the Image" in 1964. Providing a conceptual framework for studying the relationship between words and images in cultural artifacts, this piece is indicative of the visual turn in semiotics.[70] Centering his analysis on an advertisement for Panzani brand tomato sauce, cheese, and pasta, Barthes is explicit in explaining his focus on this particular medium: "Why? Because in advertising the signification of the image is undoubtedly intentional; the signifieds of the advertising message are formed *a priori* by certain attributes of the product and these signifieds have to be transmitted as clearly as possible."[71] According to Barthes, advertising images are immensely valuable, and convey multiple layers of meaning in a way that text alone cannot. There are three classes of messages within the

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[68] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies,* trans. Annette Lavers (New York: The Noonday Press, 1972), 10.
[69] Of particular note is "Soap-powders and Detergents," an essay on soap product advertisements in France. Barthes, *Mythologies,* 35-37.
[70] According to *A Dictionary of Media and Communication,* visual semiotics involves "[t]he systematic study of the use of visual signs and codes in the production and/or interpretation of texts and in processes of representation in any medium or genre, and sometimes also of the role of perceptual codes in visual perception;" Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, "Visual Semiotics," in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[71] Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image, Music, Text,* trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 33. Emphasis is original.

Panzani advertisement he discusses: the "linguistic message" (conveyed in the photograph's accompanying text), the "symbolic message" (the connotations surrounding the photograph of an overflowing grocery bag; for instance, tomatoes and peppers signify "Italianicity," as Barthes puts it), and the "literal message" (this is the non-coded imagery; in other words, the objects in the image represent what they are).[72] In devising a process to look at advertising images and examine how they create and transmit meaning, Barthes's work thereby gives these designed objects value. Furthermore, his work has since allowed scholars to consider advertising as a "useful category of analysis," to borrow Joan Scott's famous words.

Barthes's influence is clear in Judith Williamson's 1978 book *Decoding Advertisements,* an analysis centred upon the idea that advertising "creates structures of meaning."[73] Though drawing largely upon semiotic theory, Willamson's work also looks toward Lacanian psychoanalysis and Althusserian Marxism.[74] Her background in left-wing activism strongly influenced this book—initially written as a project for a course in popular culture at UC Berkeley. She notes in the preface to a 2005 edition that "grasping the tools for understanding ideology and meaning in advertising can form part of the wider struggle for change, for the liberating transformation of ourselves and the world."[75] Building upon Barthes's ideas on the relationship between modern mythology and advertising, Williamson explains how advertising aims to link the meanings of signs onto broader cultural myths in order to imbue objects (products to be sold) with significance in

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[72] Ibid., 33-37.
[73] Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertisements* (London: Marion Boyars, 1978), 12.
[74] To her, these theoretical frameworks are complementary to one another, and make it possible to form a deeper understanding of "the patterns of how we feel and think," Williamson, preface to *Decoding Advertisements,* 15th ed. (London: Marion Boyars, 2005), n.p.
[75] Ibid.

order to make them desirable to consumers. To her it is important to be aware of the medium's more insidious aspects: "We can only understand what advertisements mean by finding out *how* they mean, and analyzing the way in which they work. What an advertisement 'says' is merely what it *claims* to say; it is part of the deceptive mythology of advertising to believe that an advertisement is simply a transparent vehicle for a 'message' behind it."[76] Looking to a number of 1970s print advertisements to support the analytical framework she sets out, Williamson highlights the complex processes in which we both create and are created by the systems of meaning that are present inside advertisements.

Though originating primarily from cultural studies and sociology, these key works on visual semiotics are often cited in historical analyses of advertising. As previously mentioned, Marchand's work draws extensively on semiotic theory, as does Anne McClintock's widely lauded 1995 book, *Imperial Leather.* An interdisciplinary work that is extensive in its scope, *Imperial Leather* examines the many complex intersections between race, gender, and class that shaped British imperialism and colonial discourses from the Victorian era to post-1948 South Africa. In making her argument that imperialism was not just an "inherently British power that impelled itself outward from a European centre to subjugate the peripheral territories of the 'Other,'" McClintock looks largely at consumer culture and advertising to show how domestic space became racialized and colonial space became domesticated.[77] In her chapter about commodity racism and imperial advertising, McClintock analyzes advertisements for a number of

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[76] Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, 17. Emphasis is original.
[77] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 16.

different nineteenth and early twentieth century consumer products (such as soap, biscuits, and toothpaste) to point out how "commodity kitsch made possible, as never before, the mass marketing of empire as an organized system of images and attitudes."[78] In looking at the sign systems at play in these advertisements, she is able to demonstrate how imagery can be used to create representational links between consumer products and particular desires and values, which in these cases were largely associated with nationalism and ideas of racial superiority.[79]

Taken individually, works like "Rhetoric of the Image" and *Decoding Advertisements* present readers with an almost scientific method for analyzing advertising images.[80] Barthes and Williamson call attention to the referent systems—based on shared cultural codes and signs—that make advertisements so laden with meaning. As their texts demonstrate, it is crucial to uncover the *unconscious* elements that are present within advertising images in order to discern their broader significance. After all, advertisements "provide a structure which is capable of transforming the language of objects to that of people, and vice versa."[81] The frameworks that these scholars have outlined to analyze advertising images have allowed historians to consider advertisements as important visual sources that can reveal much about the culture and society that produced them.

My study is also informed by the work of anthropologists like Mary Douglas and Sidney Mintz, who have each looked at "purity" as a deeply-rooted concept that has been

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[78] Ibid., 209.
[79] According to Beasley and Danesi, the very core of semiotics is the creation of such links: "[t]he premise that guides semiotic analysis is that signification systems created by advertising are, more often than not, reflective of innate structures in the sensory, emotional, and intellectual composition of the human body and the human psyche." Beasley and Danesi, *Persuasive Signs,* 27-28.
[80] Indeed, semiotic analysis has often been referred to by scholars as a science; see Beasley and Danesi, *Persuasive Signs,* 36-37 for further discussion on whether or not this is valid label.
[81] Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements,* 12.

considered across a wide variety of cultures and time periods, thereby demonstrating that the Progressive Era's fixation with "pure food" was both timely and age-old. Finally, my research has been shaped by works from cultural theory and criticism that deal with the notion of "authenticity" as a response to modernity, such as literary critic Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972). I am particularly interested in how the concept of authenticity has become enmeshed with consumption and consumer behavior—as Andrew Potter puts it in his excellent 2010 book *The Authenticity Hoax,* "the quest for authenticity is the contemporary advertising equivalent of the search for the holy grail, the ultimate marketing position that can elevate a brand."[82] Potter also considers the quest for authenticity as something that is "motivated by a visceral reaction to secularism, liberalism, and capitalism, and the sense that a meaningful life is not possible in the modern world, that all it offers is a toxic mix of social climbing and alienation."[83] There are obvious connections between these ideas and the discourses found in archival materials I have consulted with. For instance, a 1903 speech given by Dr. Wiley discusses the historical relationship between "pilgrims and pure food." As he saw it, these early American settlers were much stronger and healthier than contemporary New Englanders who had become spoiled by "wealth" and "the persuasive allurements of luxury" that included a diet rich in the age's new mass-produced and heavily processed foods. To Wiley, "[t]he plain and unadulterated food which the pilgrims ate must have been an element of no mean importance in their character."[84]

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[82] Potter, *The Authenticity Hoax*, 103.
[83] Ibid., 264.
[84] Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, "Pilgrims and Pure Food" (presentation, c. 1903), 3, 6, Box 188, Harvey Washington Wiley Papers, 1854-1954, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

1.4 Thesis Overview

The chapters of this thesis are thematic rather than chronological. The next chapter places my study into its proper historical context: it provides an overview of the emergence of the modern American food industry, and it indicates how these structural changes were part of broader economic and cultural shifts in the United States during the Progressive Era. The second chapter provides a critical examination of the symbiotic relationship between corporate food producers and the pure food reform movement. By examining a number of the different voices at play—beyond advertisers, these include government officials like Dr. Wiley, consumer advocacy groups such as National Consumers' League, and the popular press—this chapter explores the seemingly unexpected way that production and marketing became intertwined with social reform efforts to ensure food safety and purity. Using the concepts of nostalgic modernism/anti-modernism (as set out by historians like Lears and Kammen) as a basis for discussion, the third chapter looks in detail at the significance of purity in food advertising during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This chapter also draws upon the work of Mary Douglas and Sidney Mintz to look at purity as an age-old anthropological concept. To conclude, I have considered the search for "authenticity" in the marketing of pure food. In drawing from theoretical works about authenticity, I have attempted to illustrate how this term became analogous with "superior" or "moral" and how this idea has come to permeate food advertising in a way that is still very much felt today.

1 Chapter: From the Farm to the Factory: America's Changing Food Industry

At a time when food consumption was so fraught with anxiety, producers had a vested interest in giving consumers first-hand evidence of their modern production techniques and facilities. Opening their doors to interested members of the public was a calculated attempt by some companies to build trust – and therefore sales: "The Ryzon plant is open to domestic science teachers, food officials, and others properly interested in a model food establishment," proudly proclaimed one 1918 cookbook produced by the makers of Ryzon Baking Powder. It is "constructed to conform to the most approved modern ideals in food production."[1] Featuring illustrations of a sparklingly clean manufacturing facility inhabited by white-coated workers resembling laboratory technicians, the accompanying text boasted of the "absolute cleanliness" found not only in the building structure itself, but also among the workers, who were "examined at regular intervals by a physician."[2] At a time when many middle class Americans were exceptionally conscious about the food available to them, these factory tours were apparently quite popular: a 1906 Heinz advertisement boasted that in the previous year 30,000 people visited their "immaculate" and "perfect" manufacturing facility in Pittsburgh.[3]

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[1] *Ryzon Baking Book: A Practical Manual for the Preparation of Food Requiring Baking Powder* (New York: General Chemical Company Food Department, 1918), n.p. Box 4, folder 51, Product Cookbooks Collection, 1874-1990, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Heinz Sunshine and Purity advertisement, 1906, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C. Other companies that opened their doors to visitors in order to flaunt their cleanliness and hygienic practices included Franco-American Foods, Blue Label Food Products, and the Armour meatpacking company; Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 40-41.

As I suggested in my introduction, American anxieties about the food they ate stemmed largely from both the advent of the germ theory of disease and the changes in the ways that food was produced and consumed. By the nineteenth century, industrialization, transportation, and rapid urban growth had profoundly altered the American diet. Harvey Levenstein explains in *Fear of Food* that as food was transported to America's booming urban centers by steamship and by rail, consumers grew wary about what they ate. It was not simply the distance food travelled, but the impersonal nature of new food processing methods that worried people. In the past, food came from, and was made by, home or neighbours or local market places. Food products now "passed through the hands of strangers with plenty of opportunities to profit by altering them, to the detriment of the quality and the healthfulness of the foods. There was, then, plenty of reason to mistrust what had happened to food before it reached the table."[4] This was compounded by technological and industrial advances that helped change the types and varieties of foods available to consumers. For example, the introduction of refrigeration and the development of the railroad led to the growth of the meat-packing industry in the midwestern United States, while improvements in canning technology made certain goods like fruit, vegetables, and even meat available nationwide throughout the year.[5] In looking more closely at the changes that took place in three major sectors of the food processing industry—meat-packing, canning, and dairy—this chapter will outline in more detail the historical context in which the campaign for pure food emerged. In doing so, it will indicate how it was connected to the wide organizational

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[4] Harvey Levenstein, *Fear of Food: A History of Why We Worry About What We Eat* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1-2.
[5] Marc T. Law, "The Origins of State Pure Food Regulation," *The Journal of Economic History* 63, no. 4 (December 2003): 1105.

transformation of the United States from a rural, regionalistic society to an integrated urban society shaped by industrialism and corporate capitalism. It will also discuss how this campaign for federal pure food legislation was linked to the Progressive movement.

Though much of the historical work on industrial food production in the United States focuses on the Civil War era and afterward, the mechanization of food production began as early as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[6] Though the Jeffersonian ideal of the self-sufficient yeoman farmer was still very much in place at the turn of the nineteenth century, a number of food processors had begun to increase the scales of their operations and reach out to consumers in markets located much farther away. This trend was especially notable in the meatpacking and milling industries: by the eighteenth century, slaughtering and packing districts had been established in colonial America's coastal cities, and attempts were made to mechanize production in the milling industry.[7]

The industrialization of food production in the United States did not occur at a uniform pace, of course, but the expansion of the meatpacking industry in the first half of the nineteenth century showed that food processing as a whole shifted from localized, small-scale operations to larger national (and international) ones. Originating in the

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[6] The most notable example of these works is Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), which focuses primarily on the last two decades of the nineteenth century and beyond.

[7] Mark W. Wilde, "Industrialization of Food Processing in the United States, 1860-1960," (Ph.D diss., University of Delaware, 1988), 5-6. Wilde clarifies by saying that although these expanded meatpacking and milling facilities revealed a "relatively significant level of mechanization, specialization, and capital investment," production was limited by slow and expensive transportation networks. In the case of the milling industry more specifically, he gives the example of Oliver Evans' flour mill which was established on the Red Clay Creek in Wilmington, Delaware in the 1780s as an example. Wilde describes it as "filled with elevators, screw-type conveyors, and other contrivances," which were used to "fashion a mill which took grain in at one point and fed bags of flour out at another location with only a minimum of human labor."

midwestern states, the meatpacking industry in the decades prior to the Civil War was centered in river cities like Cincinnati and Louisville. As Mark Wilde explains, merchants began to produce pickled and salted pork, which was then packed into barrels and shipped to New Orleans via the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, where it would then find its way to the eastern seaboard and even to the Caribbean and Europe. However, this for many years was a seasonal business, since meat would spoil quickly during the non-winter months. Additionally, throughout much of the antebellum period, owners of these meatpacking facilities tended to be more interested in obtaining capital to cover basic operating expenses than they were in investing in buildings and equipment, which made their facilities, in Wilde's words, "technologically unsophisticated."[8]

Nevertheless, these early meatpacking operations revealed that food production and processing in the United States was becoming driven by large-scale organizations that employed sophisticated production technology. These changes in food processing were part of a profound shift wherein the country's largely agrarian economy was in the process of being supplanted by a corporate capitalist system.[9] The Civil War sped up developments that were already well underway. As Wilde writes, "the food processing industries looked far different to census takers in 1870 than they had in 1860."[10] In his analysis of the war's impact on the Chicago meatpacking industry, he observes that it

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[8] Ibid., 18-19.
[9] For more on the emergence of corporate capitalism in the United States, see Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982). As Trachtenberg describes it, the modern system of incorporation (based "on the legally established authority of a small group of directors and managers to act in the name of a larger, amorphous body of otherwise unrelated stockholders") first appeared in America during the 1850s with the building of railroads, and it quickly became entrenched. Another excellent examination of the rise of modern corporate capitalism in the United States is Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977).
[10] Wilde, "Industrialization of Food Processing in the United States," 22-23.

overtook Cincinnati as America's center for both livestock trading and meatpacking because a number of Chicago meat processing companies were able to take "advantage the city's excellent transportation connections" and become suppliers to the Union Army. By war's end in 1865, the Union Stock Yards (later made infamous by Upton Sinclair) had opened in the city's south side, effectively moving the midwestern meatpacking industry away from the boat transport of the Ohio River and toward the rail-lines of Chicago.[11] Then the largest meat-processing complex in the world, this "immense network of railroad lines, livestock pens, offices, restaurants, bars, and hotels…provided the crucial focal point for the future growth of Chicago's meatpacking industry."[12]

After refrigerated rail cars were introduced in 1879, beef prices fell and taste and quality rose, which meant that more Americans were able to consume it on a regular basis.[13] According to Levenstein's *Revolution at the Table*, by the mid-1880s many "thought they were living in the 'Golden Age of American Beef.'"[14] This optimism was short-lived however, as a series of scandals and controversies fostered a sense of mistrust and fear among consumers by the turn of the twentieth century. In an ironic twist, the push beginning in the 1880s by smaller producers to regulate the meat processing industry and protect their interests "often paved the way for [their elimination] and

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[11] The introduction of refrigerated rail cars in 1879 meant that meat-processing companies were able to ship their products further, in larger quantities, and over a longer period of the year.
[12] Ibid., 24. More detail about the origins and development of the American meat-packing industry can be found in Margaret Walsh, *The Rise of the Midwestern Meat Packing Industry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1982); Roger Horowitz, *Putting Meat on the Table: Taste, Technology, Transformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Jimmy M. Skaggs, *Prime Cut: Livestock Raising and Meatpacking in the United States, 1607-1983* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986).
[13] This included middle-class Americans as well as poorer people—new techniques in canning made beef affordable to a wider spectrum of consumers. Indeed, by 1900, "no nation in the world except Australia had as high a per capita consumption of meat than the United States, 179 pounds a year [of beef], 186 pounds if lard was included." James Harvey Young, *Pure Food: Securing the Federal Food and Drugs Act of 1906* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 226.
[14] Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 32.

increased the concentration of economic power in a few hands."[15] As these marginal producers pressured state governments to pass legislation that would, in effect, prevent the sale of beef slaughtered out of state by large corporations, the large firms responded by lobbying for a federal meat inspection law. Passed in 1891, the Meat Inspection Act ultimately had a devastating impact on smaller producers, driving many local slaughterhouses out of business.[16] Furthermore, the push by large producers to drive out competition led to the formation of "the Big Five" (known as "the Beef Trust" by its opponents), a conglomeration of the largest midwestern meat packers.

Described by Levenstein as an "oligopoly," the so-called Beef Trust not only absorbed and eliminated its competition, it also "managed with considerable success to control prices in that volatile industry."[17] This triumph was fleeting: a number of scandals and health scares erupted about the quality of American meat, most notably about "embalmed beef" in 1898.[18] Shortly after the United States' victory in the Spanish-American War, General Nelson Miles (a commanding officer during the Puerto Rican campaign) testified to a commission investigating the war effort that the canned beef supplied to American troops in Puerto Rico was "responsible for the great sickness in the American army," and "had an odor like an embalmed dead body."[19] As Edward Keuchel has observed, Miles's allegations were among the "constant criticisms from both the military and the general public over the quality of canned beef" that had swirled since it

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[15] Ibid., 38.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 39.
[18] These scandals and health scares are detailed in Young, "Initiative for a Law Resumed," in *Pure Food*, 125-145.
[19] "Gen. Miles on the Stand: Tells His Views to the War Investigating Commission," *New York Times,* December 22, 1898.

was introduced as a travel ration for American soldiers in 1878.[20] The widespread suspicion that "Beef Trust" had used chemicals to mask the fact that their product was low quality (or even rotten) fostered a great deal of mistrust among consumers about the country's beef supply.

The 1906 publication of Upton Sinclair's sensational novel *The Jungle* only compounded the controversy surrounding "embalmed beef." As I alluded to earlier, the book had the somewhat unintended consequence of stoking readers' fears about the meat they ate. Sinclair, a socialist, wrote the book to shed light on the terrible working conditions faced by labourers in Chicago's meatpacking industry, but his grisly descriptions of the city's filthy slaughterhouses and bloody production processes captured national attention. After spending seven weeks among the stockyard workers and observing the squalid conditions in which they worked and lived, he structured his observations into a fictional framework, telling the story of Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis Rudkus, who tries to make ends meet as a worker at a slaughterhouse in Chicago. Sinclair's characterization of the lax government inspectors in Packingtown, coupled with his descriptions of diseased and crippled animals whose slaughtered flesh had been treated with chemicals in order to make them marketable justifiably horrified readers.[21] His observations on the cattle used to produce canned beef were particularly damning: "covered with boils," aged, sick, and fed with a low-quality diet, these animals were what

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[20] Edward F. Keuchel, "Chemicals and Meat: The Embalmed Beef Scandal of the Spanish-American War," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 48, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 250. Certainly, Keuchel's description of canned beef is less than appetizing: as he writes, "the meat was boiled, packed into cans in broth, and placed in steam retorts for the sterilization process. Since poor quality beef was used, undoubtedly much of the resultant product was gristly and stringy."
[21] Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (New York: Doubleday, 1906), 96-97.

"made the 'embalmed beef' that had killed several times as many United States soldiers as all the bullets of the Spaniards."[22]

It is no wonder then, that the book's publication "spurred a mighty reaction in the body politic" that ultimately contributed to the enactment of stronger legislation to regulate meat processing in the United States.[23] In spite of its significance, Sinclair cannot take sole responsibility for ushering in these changes—we must also consider the way that these widespread uncertainties that surrounded the Beef Trust were emblematic of the era's broader fears about the nation's nascent corporate capitalist economic system. As James Harvey Young argues, meat processing reflected these anxieties perfectly. After all, it had for a quarter of a century "reigned as one of the nation's largest industries, with the giant Chicago-based packers pressuring the railroads to give them rebates, constantly increasing the extent of their oligopolistic power. To muckracking journalists, all trusts endangered the populace, and the beef trust came to be seen as the most threatening of all."[24] By the end of 1906, more than a million people had read Sinclair's book, including president Theodore Roosevelt, who invited Sinclair to lunch at the White House and then threw his support behind a meat inspection bill that had previously gained little attention in Congress.[25] Passed in 1906, the Meat Inspection Act initially faced resistance from the "Big Five" packing companies, but ultimately gained their backing when they realized that government inspection would reassure consumers

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[22] Ibid., 97.
[23] See Young, "The Jungle and Meat Inspection," in *Pure Food,* 221-252 for more detail about the relationship between Sinclair's book and the introduction of new legislation.
[24] Young, *Pure Food*, 226.
[25] Levenstein, *Fear of Food*, 46.

about product safety.[26] At no cost to them (as the new inspection system was taxpayer-funded), the packers could now assuage consumers' fears by packaging their meat with an official United States Department of Agriculture stamp that would guarantee their products' apparent purity and wholesomeness.[27]

The controversy over canned meat indicates that canning was a particularly contentious method of food processing at the turn of the twentieth century. Though the technology had been around since the early nineteenth century, canned goods remained a high-priced niche product until the 1860s when the canning industry rapidly expanded. However, it was not always easy for producers of canned food to find a willing market for their wares by the turn of the twentieth century. American consumers were leery about canned goods for largely similar reasons as they were about meat products: without an effective regulatory apparatus in place, fears about adulteration and the possibility of foodborne poisoning were rampant. Furthermore, labeling (or rather, the lack thereof) was a common problem. Wilde points out that containers often left canneries without labels: "after a wholesaler had placed his label on a can, there was no way of determining the quality or source of the contents."[28] These fears that canned foods were unsafe meant that the canning industry had to struggle to achieve legitimacy in consumers' minds.

The canning industry developed fairly slowly in the United States. In Boston in 1819, a British immigrant named William Underwood began bottling ketchup, pickles, fruits, and jellies for trade with Latin America and Asia using the same methods as those pioneered about a decade earlier in France by Nicholas Appert, who is often credited with

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[26] Ibid., 47.
[27] Ibid., 47.
[28] Wilde, "Industrialization of Food Processing in the United States," 45.

innovating the techniques used in modern canning.[29] In the same year, another British immigrant named Thomas Kensett established a cannery in New York City, and in 1824 he obtained a patent to preserve food in "vessels of tin."[30] In these early years, canning was a small-scale industry that produced goods that were unlikely to be found in many middle and working-class cupboards. James Harvey Young explains that the industry in the United States began as a "handicraft operation afflicted with high spoilage rates, selling its luxury goods like lobsters and oysters to those who could afford them out of season and to those making long ocean voyages, to navies and captains of commerce."[31] Canning was initially centered in locations like Baltimore, Portland, Maine, and Oneida County, New York, but began to spread as Americans migrated to the midwest and California in search of new opportunities. Migration also meant that canned food became an increasingly important form of sustenance for travellers who ventured over land or by sea to California during the gold rush of the 1840s. It also became a staple in western mining camps.

Like the meat processing industry, the 1860s were critical years for the canning industry. The demands spurred by the Civil War led to the development of new companies, and they also prompted the development of new mechanized technologies and methods that transformed both canning and can-making.[32] Furthermore, the Civil War years marked the first time that many Americans had encountered canned food. Soldiers were provided with canned meats, milk, and fruits and vegetables in their

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[29] Appert won a prize in 1810 from the Napoleonic-era French government for his efforts to create a new military food preservation technique.
[30] Young, *Pure Food*, 107.
[31] Ibid.
[32] The second chapter of Wilde's dissertation provides a detailed overview of the technological innovations of canning and can-making in the United States during the 1860s. Wilde, ""Industrialization of Food Processing in the United States," 31-40.

rations, and a civilian market for canned food had also emerged by war's end. Indeed, the canning industry was first noted as its own category in the 1870 United States census, with nearly one hundred active companies producing thirty million cans of food in that year.[33] A *New York Times* article from the same year noted the impact that canned goods (fruit in particular) had on people's lives: "Ten years ago, comparatively few were regular consumers of these articles; now, scarcely a family, except the very poor, will be without them. Thousands who formerly put up their own fruit, etc., have abandoned the practice, and depend entirely upon the grocers."[34] This growth in the industry was also fueled by the broader demographic and technological changes reshaping the United States. As Young observes, at this moment America become the world leader in canning, surpassing Europe. Transportation networks grew larger, meaning that perishable goods like fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat could be brought quickly to American cities from the canneries that were increasingly appearing near the sources of raw products.[35]

This was also the moment when new – and often large-scale – canning companies were established, some of which are still around today including Borden's, Van Camp's, and Campbell's.[36] These large companies were the ones who took advantage of continuous process methods of production: the first canning companies to adopt the "automatic-line" model in their factories were the ones who had already previously developed products that could be produced year-round, which then allowed them to

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[33] Wilde, "Industrialization of Food Processing in the United States," 31; Young, *Pure Food*, 108. Wilde notes that most of these companies were located in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.
[34] "Canned Fruit: How and Where They are Prepared—Facts for Consumers to Note," *New York Times,* November 20, 1870.
[35] Young, *Pure Food,* 108.
[36] Wilde, "Industrialization of Food Processing in the United States," 7.

"remain large and dominant firms."[37] Arguably the best-known of these firms (and certainly one of the most widely analyzed by Americanist scholars who focus on food history) is the H.J. Heinz Company.[38] Founded near Pittsburgh in 1869 by Henry J. Heinz, the company was focused on assuaging consumers' fears about adulterated mass-produced foods right from its outset. The first product Heinz produced and marketed was bottled horseradish, which came packaged in an airtight clear glass container so that he could emphasize its apparent wholesomeness to consumers and grocery store and hotel owners alike.[39] By the 1880s, alongside the company's modern production methods, Heinz had built a network of sales offices to sell in the national market and extensively advertise its products.[40]

In an era when the production and consumption of canned food was so fraught with anxiety, this deliberate emphasis on purity set Heinz apart from its competitors and allowed the company to gain a reputation for high quality products.[41] Though never as prominent in the public imagination as the canned meat scandals, there were instances in which the media focused on deceptive practices involving the manufacturers of canned fruits and vegetables.[42] For example, the aforementioned 1870 *New York Times* article detailed the ways that the "tricksters" of the canning industry purchased "the refuse—

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[37] Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, 295-296.
[38] Some of the recent historical works about the H.J. Heinz Company, their marketing strategies, and their influence on the American diet include Mona Domosh, "Pickles and Purity: Discourses of Food, Empire and Work in Turn-of-the-Century USA." *Social & Cultural Geography* 4, no. 1 (2003): 7-26; Nancy F. Koehn, "Henry Heinz and Brand Creation in the Late Nineteenth Century: Making Markets for Processed Food," *The Business History Review* 73, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 349-393; Gabriella M. Petrick, "Feeding the Masses: H.J. Heinz and the Creation of Industrial Food," *Endeavour* 33, no. 1 (March 2009): 29-34; Petrick, "'Purity as Life'": H.J. Heinz, Religious Sentiment, and the Beginning of the Industrial Diet," *History and Technology* 27, no. 1 (March 2011): 37-64.
[39] Koehn, "Henry Heinz and Brand Creation in the Late Nineteenth Century," 356.
[40] Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, 295.
[41] Heinz's promotional strategies, particularly the active role the company played in the marketing of pure food and the way it supported pure food legislation will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3.
[42] Young, *Pure Food,* 109.

half-spoiled berries, knotty peaches, stale corn, green tomatoes." Canning such subpar ingredients, the reporter declared, would result in a product that would be even "worse when it comes out" as it would be when it went in.[43] The press also often publicized cases of sickness that were attributed to canned food, which led to wider debates among both the public and the scientific community about the cause(s) of these illnesses.[44]

The most contentious of these debates involved the use of additives and preservatives in canned and other processed foods. Lead Department of Agriculture chemist Dr. Wiley warned Americans that "the arts of the adulterator are coming into vogue. Instead of the hard cider of 200 years ago we have the apple juice kept sweet with salicylic acid. Instead of hard wood, smoke and salt for curing codfish, we find borax and saltpeter."[45] Though he was adamant that "[l]egislation has no right to prescribe what food a man shall eat," he was insistent that foods containing "injurious substances" should be clearly labeled so that consumers could make an informed decision whether or

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[43] "Canned Fruit: How and Where They are Prepared—Facts for Consumers to Note," *New York Times,* November 20, 1870.

[44] Young, *Pure Food,* 109-113. As Young points out, by 1893 "metals seemed to the Division of Chemistry scientists a clear and present danger." There were concerns about the health effects of the copper and zinc salts that were often used as preservative agents, and there were even greater fears about the tin and lead used in the plating on cans.

[45] Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, "Pilgrims and Pure Food" (presentation, c. 1903), 6, Box 188, Harvey Washington Wiley Papers, 1854-1954, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. However, Levenstein has argued that Wiley was more hesitant to question the safety of chemical preservatives than he was about additives (commonly referred to as "adjuncts" or "adulterants"). As Levenstein speculates, this is because of Wiley's prior scientific training in Germany, which he describes as "the mecca of research in chemistry" during the late nineteenth century. According to Levenstein, Wiley's reluctance stemmed from the fact that "many of [these chemical preservatives] were concocted by the same German chemists at whose feet he had sat." Levenstein, *Fear of Food*, 63. Furthermore, Keuchel has pointed out that because Wiley's tests of the "embalmed beef" during the Spanish-American War had turned up "no traces of chemicals except salt used as seasoning," Wiley was hesitant to condemn the use of preservatives overall. Rather, Wiley put forth the idea that the problems with canned meat were likely caused by the hot tropical climate that encouraged the product to spoil quickly. Keuchel, "Chemicals and Meat," 258-259.

not to purchase these products.[46] In the face of both growing public concern and a belief that adequate study had not yet been done on the safety of chemical food preservatives, Wiley persuaded Congress in 1902 to give him $5,000 to carry out such research himself. After recruiting a group of twelve young male volunteers (most of whom were either low-paid government clerks or medical students) to act as his test subjects, Wiley then provided them with three free meals per day in a special dining room at the Bureau of Chemistry. There were harsh conditions for the volunteers: they were to eat nothing but the fare provided by Wiley, they had to collect samples of their urine and feces for laboratory analysis after each dinner, and they were required to absolve the Department of Agriculture and its employees from any responsibility should they become ill or worse. Most worryingly of all, the meals they were given were laced with borax and other additives and preservatives.

In a United States where anti-corporate sentiments were running high, these experiments soon captured the attention of a press which was eager to cover stories about the apparently nefarious deeds carried out by unscrupulous big business. The idea that food-processing companies may be producing tainted, poisonous goods for human consumption captivated reporters and readers alike. Dubbed the "Poison Squad" by George Rothwell Brown of the *Washington Post,* these twelve men and their seeming willingness to put their lives at risk in order to uncover the truth about this "caught the public's morbid fancy."[47] As historians have observed, these experiments also

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[46] Quoted in Young, *Pure Food,* 151; Harvey Washington Wiley, "Injurious Food Adjuncts," *Good Housekeeping* 38, no. 5 (November 1901): 386.
[47] Young, *Pure Food,* 156. According to Young, the coining of this term "embodied [Brown's] slant on the experiments, that they were dangerous, as well as humorous, a perspective adopted by other reporters and by the general public."

transformed Wiley into a well-known public figure known affectionately as "Old Borax."[48] As he developed a rapport with the press, news articles about his research became increasingly commonplace—for instance, a 1904 *New York Times* article proclaimed that "few scientific experiments have attracted more attention from the general public than the chemical boarding house or the poison squad, as the young men called themselves."[49] Even songs about the Poison Squad began to appear on the vaudeville stage, and the group of volunteers became the focal point of skits and jokes at events like the annual Gridiron Dinner held by the Washington press corps.[50] Though ultimately none of the men who volunteered to be part of the Poison Squad were severely sickened or killed, the notoriety this experiment received brought national attention to the issue of food safety and to Wiley's campaign for federal "pure food" legislation.

Another key sector of the American food industry to be transformed during this period was the dairy industry.[51] Indeed, fresh milk occupies an especially unique place within this context because of its relative newness as part of the American diet: sociologist E. Melanie Dupuis argues in her 2002 book *Nature's Perfect Food* that milk-drinking itself essentially began as a habit in the mid-nineteenth century, and the modern business strategies employed by the American dairy industry to facilitate this new custom makes "the story of modern milk…the story of the modern corporation."[52] A very notable

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[48] Ibid.; Levenstein, *Fear of Food*, 64.
[49] "Testing Food Stuffs at Appraiser's Stores: Work Accomplished in Department of Agriculture's New Branch Laboratory – A Chat With 'Old Borax,'" *New York Times,* September 18, 1904.
[50] Levenstein cites the lyrics of several of these songs. As one went, "They take a batch of poison every time they eat a meal. For breakfast they get cyanide of liver, coffin-shaped." Levenstein, *Fear of Food,* 64.
[51] For the sake of clarity, references to "dairy products" and "the dairy industry" in this chapter are focused on milk (fresh and condensed) and not on other related goods like cheese, butter, and yogurt.
[52] E. Melane DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 4-5, 9, 46-47. According to Dupuis, "fluid milk drinking was an extremely minor aspect of the human diet until modern times." However, in Chapter 3 of her book, she acknowledges that

part of the culture of fear that surrounded food consumption, examining the rise of milk as both a popular drink for adults and children and as a mass-produced commodity offers insight into the changing ways that Americans experienced food during this period.[53]

Prior to the introduction of refrigerated rail cars, milk – like meat – had a less than stellar reputation among city dwellers. Without convenient access to the fresh milk that was produced in the countryside, few urbanites chose to drink it, especially during warmer months when it could turn sour within just a few hours.[54] It is worth noting that fresh milk became a popular food in the mid-nineteenth century largely as a breast-milk substitute or as a drink for younger children; previously, much American milk produced was made into butter and cheese, and the byproducts (whey and buttermilk) fed to livestock.[55] Using Manhattan as a case study to exemplify the growth and development of the fresh city milk industry in the United States, DuPuis outlines the way that this borough was able to develop one of the first organized, modern systems of milk distribution. As she observes, the majority of the milk available to Manhattanites in the earlier part of the nineteenth century was "swill milk," an unpleasant-sounding product of cows kept in stables attached to breweries and distilleries throughout the city. These cows, fed on grain mash that was a byproduct of distillation and fermentation and packed

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"artificial feeding" (the practice of giving milk to infants) is a practice that dates back to ancient Rome; furthermore, in some areas of central Europe and Scandinavia, artificial feeding was the norm. She writes that this form of feeding "generally meant death for an infant," pointing to the "high" infant death rates in Norway and northern Sweden in 1825.

[53] Though there is a vast body of historical scholarship on cow's milk as a product consumed by babies and children, this section of the chapter is focused on providing a more general overview of milk production and consumption across a wide spectrum of age groups. For examples of historical studies that look more closely at milk and child-raising in the United States, see Rima Apple, *Mothers and Medicine: A Social History of Infant Feeding, 1890-1950* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Janet Golden, *A Social History of Wet Nursing in America: From Breast to Bottle* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[54] Levenstein, *Fear of Food*, 17.

[55] DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food,* 5, 29-30.

into tightly crowded, unsanitary quarters, produced an unappealing liquid she describes as "a thin, bluish fluid, ridden with bacteria, yet often sold as 'country milk.'"[56] It is no wonder then, that by the mid-nineteenth century when milk became an increasingly important part of Americans' diets (especially among children) that middle-class reformers in New York and other northeastern American cities began to call for an overhaul of this system.[57]

Milk producers reformed their practices by the late nineteenth century thanks to two key advances in technology: the aforementioned introduction of refrigerated rail car, and pasteurization. By 1880, for instance, railroads were able to bring fresh milk from the countryside to New York City from surrounding areas including New York State, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont. Although this meant fresher and more hygienic milk was now available to a wider spectrum of consumers, questions about its safety remained, especially as fears of typhoid intensified in American cities. Typhoid outbreaks were usually blamed on public water supplies rather than milk, although this shifted in New York City in the 1890s after a series of deadly epidemics of infant diarrhea made milk again a target of scrutiny. Scientific tests showed by 1900 that "milk was a much friendlier host to typhoid germs than water. Scientists now reevaluated the typhoid epidemics, concluding that many of them could be 'traced, beyond a doubt to the

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[56] Ibid., 18. So-called country milk was (likely rightly) seen as being safer and more nutritious than the "swill milk" produced in urban areas.

[57] The second chapter of DuPuis' book looks closely at the campaign for pure milk in nineteenth-century New York City waged by Robert Hartley, whom she describes as "probably the country's first public consumer advocate." A former factory manager turned social reformer, Hartley either joined or founded many of the city's major reform organizations, including the New York City Temperance Society, the City Mission Tract Society, and the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. His 1842 publication *An Historical, Scientific, and Practical Essay on Milk as an Article of Human Sustenance* exposed the unsanitary practices of the swill-milk system while also outlining the importance of fresh cow's milk for human nutrition. DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food,* 16-45.

milk supply.'"[58] Further studies discovered milk's capability to harbor microbes that caused other deadly diseases including tuberculosis, scarlet fever and diphtheria, which made the beverage a serious public health concern at the turn of the century.[59]

In New York City, alarm about how to safeguard the city's milk supply led to two solutions: the certified dairy and the pasteurized milk system. The former was a "labor- and capital-intensive form of dairying in which milk was produced under the direction of a city Medical Milk Commission, composed mostly of doctors," and under this system, cows and barn conditions were frequently inspected, resulting in prohibitively high prices for most consumers.[60] The latter used a process established by French scientist Louis Pasteur in the 1860s, which involves raising the temperature of a liquid and then rapidly cooling it to kill microbes. Pasteurization seemed to be a more cost-effective solution to ensure milk's safety than the certification system, but pasteurization's opponents argued that it would strip milk of essential nutrients and put small producers who could not afford the necessary new equipment out of business.[61] After much heated debate, in 1911 New York City enacted legislation to ensure that most market milk would be pasteurized. This was part of a wider trend: by 1917, nearly all of the fifty largest cities in the United States had passed similar laws.[62]

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[58] Levenstein, *Fear of Food*, 17.
[59] Ibid., 18. Levenstein cites a number of *New York Times* articles that documented the issue with an alarmist tone, including one from 1907 that blamed cow's milk for "the deaths of thousands of babies" and "those tens of thousands of others who die annually from the 'great white plague' [tuberculosis] after years of suffering."
[60] DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food,* 76-77.
[61] Levenstein, *Fear of Food,* 19-20. Dr. Wiley was among the opponents of pasteurization, as he wrongly believed that the process would make milk a less nutritious food.
[62] DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food,* 75. In New York City, certified milk and manufacturing milk (not intended to be sold for drinking purposes) were exempt from the mandatory pasteurization law.

Pasteurization had a profound economic impact on the dairy industry. In enhancing milk's ability to stay fresher for longer, pasteurization "thereby facilitate[d] large-volume operations and the distribution of milk over extensive areas from central plants."[63] In other words, pasteurization allowed companies to sell milk treated by this process at greater volumes and lower prices. Though this happened slightly later in the milk industry than it did in the meat-processing and canning sectors, technological advances and introduction of regulatory legislation resulted in the consolidation of power in this industry into fewer hands: citing the way that the number of milk processing plants in Detroit decreased from 159 to 68 after pasteurization became mandatory there in 1915, DuPuis observes that "the implementation of pasteurization regulations transformed an industry of small-scale dealers into one of major, large-scale, capital-intensive distributors."[64] Indeed, by the 1920s, the dairy industry in the eastern United States was largely controlled by two major corporations, Borden's and National Dairy.[65]

As these three case studies indicate, the structural changes to the American food industry were part of a series of larger developments taking place—profound changes to the economic structure and to business organization had reshaped American life by the turn of the twentieth century. Each of these sectors of the food industry highlight the way that the decades after the Civil War known as the Gilded Age (described by Alan Trachtenberg as a period characterized by "the emergence of a changed, more tightly structured society with new hierarchies of control") saw the emergence of the modern

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[63] Leland Spencer and Charles J. Blanford, *An Economic History of Milk Marketing and Pricing, 1800-1933* (Columbus, OH: Grid, 1973), 67.
[64] DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food,* 82.
[65] Ibid., 82-83. DuPuis explains that in the 1920s, these two companies "initiated expansion policies involving the purchase of hundreds of smaller companies," and by 1932 they had "purchased one-third of all milk in the north Atlantic states and over 20 percent of all milk in the United States as a whole."

corporate form of business ownership.[66] Considered "more flexible and far-reaching" than earlier forms of ownership like family businesses, corporations had "transformed the face and character of American capitalism" by the 1870s.[67] Moreover, by the turn of the twentieth century, the merger movement had consolidated American economic interests into even fewer hands: by 1904, around three hundred corporations dominated about forty percent of all the manufacturing in the United States, which thereby affected the operations of approximately eighty percent of the nation's industry.[68] This was the age when "Robber Baron" industrialists like Andrew Carnegie and J.D. Rockefeller became enormously rich, but it was also a time of upheaval and clashing ideals: underneath this dazzling wealth and rapid growth lay an unstable economy characterized by frequent cycles of boom and bust alongside a growing number of social problems and widespread mistrust of the new system.

Most notably, corporate capitalism helped erode the more competitive small-scale capitalism that had flourished in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Increasingly, working and middle-class people's livelihoods were linked to wage-dependent jobs—between 1870 and 1910, waged labor replaced self-employment for the majority of American men.[69] To many Americans – particularly men – this was not a welcome change. The rise of large-scale enterprises and their immediate impact on people's day-

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[66] Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 3-4.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid. Martin J. Sklar also includes some discussion of the legalities of the merger movement in *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916.* Martin Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 143-145.
[69] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 12. The statistics she cites here state that between 1870 and 1910, the proportion of self-employed men dropped from sixty-seven percent to thirty-seven percent.

to-day lives was unsettling, especially considering the deep-rooted individualism that was so much a part of the American psyche. Michael McGerr has summarized it this way: "For all the talk of individualism…Americans realized that there was no being let alone anymore, even out on the frontier…Bigness [of corporations], [economic] interdependence, limits [an new understanding that the nation's resources were finite]—these realities compelled Americans to reconsider the right of businesses, large and small, to do as they pleased."[70]

These fears about mass-produced food products and the resulting fight for their regulation were a significant part of this compulsion to curtail the powers of big business. The desire to enact reforms to ensure the safety of the food industry's products and practices was part of the era's larger Progressive movement, although as I suggested in the introduction, there has been much historiographical work and debate over the past sixty or more years about whether or not Progressivism was coherent enough to constitute a movement.[71] In spite of this long-standing dispute, I have adapted the views of historian Shelton Stromquist, who argues that Progressivism can be accurately

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[70] Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 149. In Chapter Five of his book, McGerr provides an overview of the five major "approaches to the threat of big business," laissez-faire, socialism, antitrust, regulation, and compensation.

[71] For example, earlier works like Richard Hofstadter's 1955 *The Age of Reform* explore the connections between reform movements spanning from 1890s Populism and the Progressive Era up to the New Deal. However, questions about who or what is considered "Progressive" have long pervaded academic history: in 1970, Peter Filene wrote an "obituary" for the Progressive movement, urging historians to discard the term. As he argued, it was too confusing and ambiguous to carry any real meaning. On the opposing side of this viewpoint, Richard L. McCormick contended in 1986 that "progressivism was the first (perhaps the only) reform movement to be experienced by the whole American nation." By 1999 and beyond, historians had started to make overtures to connect political history to social history to advance a more nuanced understanding of Progressivism. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Knopf, 1955); Peter G. Filene, "An Obituary for 'The Progressive Movement,'" *American Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 20-34; Richard McCormick, "Progressivism: A Contemporary Reassessment," in *The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press), 263-288; Steven J. Diner, "Linking Politics and People: The Historiography of the Progressive Era," *OAH Magazine of History* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 5-9.

described as a "response to the mounting social crisis of the late nineteenth century that was most clearly revealed in the battles between labor and capital and in the campaigns to save the wasted lives produced by industrial growth."[72] Though the Progressive movement drew inspiration from older efforts, like the abolitionists' antislavery campaign, at its core it was "created by a new generation born and reared since the Civil War and steeped in the labor and social conflict of the nineteenth century."[73] Associated with neither older republican ideals nor the era's nativist rhetoric, Stromquist argues instead that these "self-styled reformers arrayed themselves in the universalistic garb of what they termed 'the people,' a social category broadly conceived and undifferentiated by class interests."[74] In other words, this new language of reform was predicated on the idea of social harmony among all classes.

This decreased emphasis on class differences is indicative of both the inherent strengths and difficulties faced by Progressive reformers involved more narrowly in the campaign for pure food legislation. As McGerr explains, if the campaign was to succeed, it would require "not only a powerful sense of urgency, but a broad, cross-class coalition."[75] In this sense, Progressives and their political allies had a distinct advantage because they were able to "[invoke] disparate Americans' shared identity as consumers." By fostering this common sense of identity among people, reformers were to unite and

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[72] Shelton Stromquist, *Reinventing 'The People': The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 3.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid. Though nativism has been a difficult term for historians to precisely define, John Higham's 1963 book *Strangers in the Land* describes it as an "intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (i.e., 'un-American') connections." Strongly associated with ideals about rural life and individualism, nativism was a deeply ingrained part of the American tradition that had grown especially strong by the end of the Gilded Age and into the early Progressive Era. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925*, 2nd ed. (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 4-11.
[75] McGerr, 160.

mobilize a wide range of Americans behind this singular cause, including physicians, federal and state officials, and women's groups.[76] But in order for their goals to be fully achieved, reformers "also needed to win over some business opponents, or at least force their acquiescence to regulation." In this sense, McGerr argues, pure food campaigners were less successful:

> In the conservation battle, reformers never managed to produce a self-conscious consumers' coalition. Instead there was a battle of different groups who acted on their interest as producers. In these circumstances, progressives could easily find themselves on the defensive, their cause described as socialist usurpation and their enemies trumpeting the virtues of individualism.[77]

These broad discussions on pure food indicate how widespread this issue became. Despite its Progressive roots, pure food was ultimately – and somewhat ironically – commoditized. The campaign for pure food may have legitimized the power of the consumer via the state over corporations, but often, these reform efforts served to concentrate more power in the hands of the commercial enterprises that were most able to bear the costs. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the divergent variety of voices that championed pure food illustrates how this campaign became as commercial as it was ideological.

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[76] Ibid., 160-163.
[77] Ibid., 160.

2 Chapter: "Nothing Could Be Of Greater Advantage to the Consumers": Advocacy, Commerce, and the Fight for Pure Food"

"The food laws have been described as chaotic in this country, and they cannot be anything else until we have a national law," wrote Pure Food Committee chair Alice Lakey in a letter to delegates at the 1905 annual meeting of the National Consumers' League (NCL) in Philadelphia.

> What is wanted now is a National law that shall guard interstate commerce so that manufacturers who are dishonest cannot put up goods in violation of their own state laws and ship them into a neighboring state where there is no law to protect the people. The only cure for this evil is a National law, and the quickest way to secure it is by enlisting every consumer in this country to work for the passage of the Pure Food Bill which will guarantee food and drugs that are truthfully labeled.[1]

By calling on consumers in such a manner, Lakey's comments were indicative of the way that the lines between consumption and activism became blurred within the campaign for pure food at the turn of the twentieth century. Though the campaign for pure food was rooted in the work of seemingly disparate parties, including women's groups, temperance organizations, religious organizations, state and federal chemists, public health workers, medical professionals, journalists, and politicians dating back to the late 1870s, wider efforts to engage everyday Americans like this one "created a unified consumer front" behind the common cause of federal pure food legislation.[2]

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[1] Alice Lakey, "A Letter to the Delegates – Annual Meeting, National Consumers' League, March 7, 1905, Philadelphia," Container A4-A6, Reel 3, National Consumers' League Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. It is important to note that although almost every state had passed some kind of pure food legislation by 1900, enforcement was inconsistent and compliance was very difficult for food producers, especially given the ways that the manufacture and transport of food products had become national in scope by the turn of the century. See pages 57-58 and footnote 19 for more about the state laws that preceded federal pure food legislation.

[2] Lorine Swainston Goodwin, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders, 1879-1914* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1999), 152.

These efforts also included corporate interests. This chapter will examine more closely the ways that business and pure food reform efforts like this one put forth by the NCL became intertwined during the Progressive Era. In the words of sociologist Donna Wood, academics have come to challenge the then-popular notion that the federal food and drug legislation was passed because of an overarching need to protect consumers: rather, there is much evidence that indicates "business interests used public policy for strategic purposes."[3] Instead of adopting the position that it was driven primarily by the public interest, much of the historical work on the pure food cause has looked at the role played by business interests in the passage of legislation, or as Clayton Coppin and Jack High have put it, in the way that "legitimate business interests…were intent on using regulation to gain an advantage over their competitors."[4] However, to date there have been few attempts made by scholars to analyze the role of advertising—a increasingly powerful part of the American business world during this period—within these efforts. A close examination of the relationship between business and the pure food cause reveals that a complex, though largely collaborative, relationship was forged between these seemingly competing interests. An awareness of these alliances is critical in understanding the cultural hegemony at play here: in drawing upon discourses about

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[3] Donna J. Wood, "The Strategic Use of Public Policy: Business Support for the 1906 Food and Drug Act," *The Business History Review* 59, no. 3 (Autumn 1985): 404. Though Wood raises a number of important arguments about the relationship between business and the pure food cause, her article ultimately does not look at the role played by the advertising industry. This chapter builds upon her work to further acknowledge this role. This view fits in with one of the general themes of the New Left's critiques of Progressivism, namely that the chief beneficiaries of business legislation was big business. The left view of "corporate liberalism" can be found in diverse sources, but for example, see Martin Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916: The Market, the Law, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900-1918* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

[4] Clayton A. Coppin and Jack High, *The Politics of Purity: Harvey Washington Wiley and the Origins of Federal Food Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 16.

consumer protection and the public interest in their advertising and marketing strategies, the ultimate aim of business was to increase demand for their newly pioneered packaged food products.

Corporate interests had been part of the campaign for pure food practically from its outset.[5] According to Wood, the rationale put forth by and on behalf of businesses who were in favor of federal pure food legislation was fourfold:

> First, the possibility that workers were being cheated of proper nutrition or made ill by poisonous adulterants and patent medicines posed a problem in the efficient use of human resources (a moral and economic argument). Second, the growth of interstate commerce meant that a uniform federal law would be more rational and cost-effective than complying with a multitude of state laws, and that reputable manufacturers needed protection against adulterators and misbranders located in other states (arguments for shared rules, honesty, and integrity). Third, the need to increase exports to absorb increased production was hampered by the tarnished reputation of U.S. processed foods overseas (general economic interest arguments). Finally, the interest of certain businesses desiring protection from domestic competitors was expressed in legislation spurred by the numerous trade wars among food and drug companies…(arguments for control over entry, control over substitutes and complements, and price-fixing through "punitive" taxation).[6]

Wood also observes that the interests of businesses and consumers were "often compatible and occasionally identical."[7] After all, accurate labeling and a ban on fraudulent substitution and adulteration in food products benefited consumers who

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[5] For example, I noted in Chapter One that the growth of giant meatpacking companies in the Midwest in the 1870s and 1880s not only undermined smaller local slaughterhouses and butchers, it also led to their successful lobbying for federal inspection legislation that would ultimately facilitate their virtual monopoly of the beef trade. As economic and legal historian Charles McCurdy points out, there was a sense that these actions taken by the large meatpackers were less about promoting safe and properly labeled food products and more about tightening their hold on the industry: in an 1888 testimony in St. Louis, a Senate Select committee found that small-scale meat processors "believed almost unanimously that the 'Big Four' packers had conspired to 'freeze out' all competitors." Charles W. McCurdy, "American Law and the Marketing Structure of the Large Corporation," *The Journal of Economic History* 38, no. 3 (September 1978): 644-645.
[6] Wood, "The Strategic Use of Public Policy," 414.
[7] Ibid., 430.

wanted safe and honest goods as well as manufacturers who sought profits from the sale of these goods.

There are many instances in which business became involved in this Progressive reform effort, but the battle over oleomargarine is especially notable for the way that it reflected the age's broader struggles. The world's first viable butter substitute, oleomargarine was introduced in 1869 by French food chemist Hippolyte Mège-Mouries and soon became widely produced and consumed in the United States, much to the chagrin of butter producers since it was "significantly cheaper" than their product.[8] Made primarily of beef fat, Mège-Mouries's patented formulation for oleomargarine also contained "carbonate of soda to enhance emulsion and coloring and salting to make the final product resemble butter."[9] Amidst an agricultural sector that had slumped in the wake of a wider economic depression, the American dairy industry in the 1870s and 1880s was particularly threatened by oleomargarine's popularity, and state regulatory laws were enacted in some areas to protect farmers' interests. The unease surrounding oleomargarine was compounded even further when a number of Chicago's meatpacking giants began to manufacture and aggressively market a substance called "butterine" that drew upon Mège-Mouries's methods without using his patent.[10] By the 1890s, butterine was being touted as a pure and healthful product by advertisers and the media alike: the *New York Times* noted briefly that Swift's butterine "was given the highest award" at the

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[8] Marc T. Law, "The Origins of State Pure Food Regulation," *The Journal of Economic History* 63, no. 4 (December 2003): 1105. A shortage of edible oils in Europe, compounded by needs brought on by the Franco-Prussian War had prompted the invention of oleomargarine; James Harvey Young, *Pure Food: Securing the Federal Food and Drugs Act of 1906* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 71.
[9] Young, *Pure Food,* 72.
[10] Young's book details the manufacturing processes involved in butterine, as well as its impact on both the dairy industry and on distributors of oleomargarine made in the United States according to Mège-Mouries's patent. Ibid., 73-74.

1893 Chicago World's Fair for its "good taste, appearance, and color," and an editorial from the same year in the *Kansas City Times* claimed that wary consumers had finally begun to embrace butterine, since "none but experts" could taste a difference between it and "genuine butter."[11]

From 1880 onward, the oleomargarine issue was before Congress.[12] In 1886, a protracted debate over the butter substitute raged after a bill was introduced into the House of Representatives aimed at imposing a federal tax in order to elevate oleomargarine's price and lessen the chance that retailers would sell it as butter. As Young observes, the "nine straight days of debate" between House members made this "the first major consideration given by either House of Congress to a pure-food issue."[13] These heated exchanges on oleomargarine during the spring and summer of 1886 involved discussions on public health concerns and the authority of government to regulate commerce, but most notably for this study, they challenged the deep-rooted agrarian myth that is so profoundly linked to American identity.[14]

To those wary of oleomargarine, this debate was cast as a heroic struggle between the American farmer and greedy corporate interests over the very survival of the cherished rural way of life. Rhetoric about the hard work and patriotism of American farmer abounded. As Maine Republican congressman Seth Miliken remarked, agriculture was "the very father and mother of all industries…The farmers are the conservative force of this country, to be relied upon in times of excitement which threaten the good order

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[11] "Swift's Butterine at the World's Fair," *New York Times,* October 26, 1893, 5; "Millions in Butterine," *Kansas City Times*, November 10, 1893, 8.
[12] Young outlines the play-by-play of this in Young, *Pure Food,* 74-93.
[13] Ibid., 76. After much debate, the Oleomargarine Act was passed on July 23, 1886 and signed into law by President Grover Cleveland.
[14] Ibid., 77.

and safety of society."[15] Conversely, oleomargarine's champions "pitted against the yeoman farmer's ancient and sacred status the imperatives of advancing technology."[16] For instance, Pennsylvania Republican William Kelley exasperatedly asked Congress if they "could prohibit men of science from making new discoveries."[17] To these parties, it was natural, expected, and even desirable that technological, scientific, and economic progress would weaken some industries while strengthening others.

This bombastic rhetoric – though highly symbolic of the divide in American culture that was especially apparent during the Progressive Era – was flawed and largely misguided. Though the dairy industry was at this point less industrialized than other sectors within the food-processing sector, these depictions of the American dairy farmer as small-scale and highly localized were inaccurate. The dairy industry was certainly not exempt from the structural changes sweeping across the rest of the food industry at this time—as I pointed out in the previous chapter, new technologies like pasteurization and the refrigerated rail car were quickly modernizing dairy production. Furthermore, the dairy industry was less the province of humble Midwestern farmers than it was of an incredibly powerful and sophisticated political lobby. Indeed, the dairy industry's support in Congress and in various state legislatures was much stronger than that of the oleomargarine manufacturers, who were "severely buffeted by legislative efforts (sponsored by the dairy lobby) to hinder the production and sale of their products."[18]

This battle over oleomargarine in conjunction with the work of Bureau of Chemistry chief Harvey Washington Wiley were among the major catalysts that pushed

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[15] *Cong. Record,* 49 Cong. I ses., 5042, quoted in Young, *Pure Food,* 78.
[16] Young, *Pure Food*, 81-82.
[17] William D. Kelley, *Cong. Record,* 49 Cong. I ses., 4898, quoted in Young, *Pure Food*, 81.
[18] Wood, "The Strategic Use of Public Policy," 429.

the federal pure food cause forward politically after localized reform efforts spurred the passage of legislation at state levels. Though this thesis is not about the legislative and regulatory aspects that would ultimately lead to the 1906 passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act, a brief discussion of these elements is necessary for context. Prior to the passage of the federal Act, pure food laws existed at the state level in most states by the 1890s in varying forms and degrees of severity in terms of enforcement and consequences for those who violated them.[19] As economist Mark Law has observed, this lack of uniformity was especially apparent with regard to enforcement. For example, in Arizona it was illegal to sell adulterated products, but there was no agency in charge of actually enforcing these regulations or establishing penalties for those who broke them. To contrast, "enforcement was unquestionably more vigilant in states where an enforcement agency was present," as was the case in Massachusetts where the State Board of Health and the State Dairy Commissioner jointly oversaw the enforcement of their pure food laws.[20]

This patchwork system of state laws became increasingly inefficient as interstate commerce flourished under the nascent corporate capitalist system, creating a real need for a more streamlined federal structure. At the same time, many Americans became fearful of the foods they ate, and became captivated by the work of Dr. Wiley, who was

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[19] More about the state pure food laws that preceded the federal Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906 can be found in Law, "The Origins of State Pure Food Regulation," 1103-1130; W.D. Bigelow and H.W. Wiley, *Food Legislation in the United States Reprinted from the Report of the Vth International Congress of Applied Chemistry, Berlin 1903* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag, 1904), Box 189, Folder 1904, Harvey Washington Wiley Papers, 1854-1954, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (hereafter referred to as the Harvey Washington Wiley Papers).

[20] Law, "The Origins of State Pure Food Regulation," 1107-1109. He also notes the punishments that violators of some of these state laws could face: In Massachusetts, offenders could be taken to court and fined up to $500 for producing adulterated food, and in Minnesota violators could be subject to a fine not exceeding $500, a prison sentence not exceeding one year, or both.

named chief of the Bureau of Chemistry in 1883 after a career as a chemist at Purdue University in his native Indiana.[21] Under Wiley's leadership, the Bureau placed an intense focus on investigating adulteration in foods, which stemmed largely in part from his prior work for the Indiana State Board of Health analyzing sugars and syrups. Between 1887 and 1893, the Bureau produced an eight-part study based on multitudes of tests conducted that showed that many typical mass-produced food items (such as dairy products, canned vegetables, and spices and condiments) were adulterated with substances including colouring and preserving agents. Though it initially received little press attention, this study, according to Wood, "helped provoke the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists, of which Wiley was a founder, to support and lobby for federal legislation."[22] I have previously noted that academics have paid a great deal of attention to Wiley's role in the passage of the Act, which was certainly not insignificant; the law itself was often publically referred to as the Wiley Act.[23] Coppin and High point out that Wiley "drafted most of the law, gave extensive testimony to Congress on its behalf, lectured tirelessly of its virtues, and built a coalition of businesses, bureaucrats, and politicians to support it."[24] Furthermore, under Wiley's stewardship the Bureau of Chemistry grew from a small group of ten employees and an annual budget of $50,000 in

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[21] It is interesting to note, as Young does, that Wiley and "almost all" the congressional leaders involved in the pure food cause came from agricultural states in the Midwest and West (he cites Senator Henry Hansbrough of North Dakota, Senator Weldon B. Heyburn of Idaho, and Iowan William P. Hepburn specifically). However, Young observes that none of these men had been Populists, "nor were they in any thorough sense Progressives. On many economic issues they took conservative stands." Young, *Pure Food,* 182-183.
[22] Wood, "The Strategic Use of Public Policy," 405.
[23] Beyond Coppin and High's work, other scholars who focus on Wiley's regulatory activities include Young, *Pure Food;* Oscar E. Anderson, *The Health of a Nation: Harvey W.Wiley and the Fight for Pure Food* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); William Lloyd Fox, "Harvey W. Wiley: The Formative Years" (Ph.D diss., George Washington University, 1960).
[24] Coppin and High, *The Politics of Purity*, 3.

1883 to a powerhouse of over 600 employees and a budget exceeding $1,000,000 when he resigned in 1912.[25]

For government officials like Wiley, legitimate business interests, and consumers alike, two key concerns surrounded food adulteration in the years leading up to the passage of the Act: injurious adulteration (which, as discussed in the previous chapter, involved the addition of poisonous substances and culminated in a series of scandals such as the one about "embalmed beef") and economic adulteration, meaning the use of additives to save money by altering the integrity of the product. Less sensational than poisoning but much more widespread, the latter "was not seen solely as a problem in business ethics equivalent to the moral disdain of thievery; there was an economic justification as well for federal legislation to control such prices."[26] Unlike its more dangerous counterpart, fraudulent adulteration done by food manufacturers to save money (which might include, for example, cheeses that contained skim milk in place of cream, or cocoa and chocolate containing flour and starch) was not a direct public health concern.[27] Rather, it was largely a business issue—legitimate food manufacturers feared their prices would be undercut by competitors who used low-cost substitutions in their products while marketing them as authentic. As well, it affected consumers' trust and peace of mind: the short-term economic impact of fraudulent adulteration might be successful, but in the long-term, revenues might suffer if consumers felt they were not

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[25] Ibid., 16. Coppin and High argue that Wiley was successful in increasing the "size and importance of his bureau" only after he decided to pursue food regulation: "His decision to devote his bureau to securing a food law was an entrepreneurial choice that was crucial to his success."
[26] Wood, "The Strategic Use of Public Policy," 408.
[27] A fairly comprehensive list of commonly adulterated food products encompassing both deleterious and commercial frauds can be found in Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, *The Adulteration, Misbranding, and Imitation of Foods, Etc., in the District of Columbia, Etc.,* H.R., REP. NO. 56-1426, at 11-12 (May 10, 1900).

getting "the full value they expected from dollars spent on food."[28] Consequently, the push for accurate labeling became a cornerstone of the pure food cause, as it appealed to the interests of the various parties involved.

For consumers—who played a pivotal role in the campaign for pure food—their interests were directly tied to the Progressive impulse to be fearful of corporations and to curtail their growing power through state intervention. As Wood writes: "if manufacturing and commercial enterprises could not be trusted to behave honestly, then consumers would transfer their trust to the government, which could assure them at least that the product information on which they depended was accurate."[29] Middle-class women were a driving force in these grassroots efforts to lobby for federal pure food legislation. Because women had long been tasked with the responsibility of preparing food for their families, their interest in the politics of food came naturally and within the bounds of the ideology of separate spheres. NCL co-founder Alice Lakey observed in 1906 that the turn-of-the-century woman was forced to reconsider her food purchasing and preparation habits after the manufacture and processing of food was transformed by industrialization: "a rude awakening convinced her that what she was feeding her family did not meet the standards of human decency."[30] Indeed, these links to traditional gender roles that cast middle-class women as nurturing caregivers is what drew many toward the pure food cause; they approached it "not from the standpoint of stepping out of conventional roles, but as a natural and necessary extension of their historic function as

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[28] Wood, "T.he Strategic Use of Public Policy," 408.
[29] Ibid., 412.

[30] Alice Lakey, *Federation Bulletin,* November 1906, 87, quoted in Goodwin, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders*, 48.

creators and protectors of life. In the context of traditional motherhood, promoting and pursuing food and drug legislation did not breach social mores."[31]

In the decades that followed the Civil War, the pressure women faced to uphold these traditional roles was especially palpable. Though it emerged earlier in the nineteenth century largely as a reaction to Britain and North America's new industrial capitalist economic system, the so-called "Cult of True Womanhood" still reigned supreme as an ideal, and was especially appealing against the tumultuous backdrop of postbellum America.[32] Predicated on the notion of separate spheres for men and women, this pervasive domestic ideology became entrenched as more and more people left rural areas to live in cities and work for an hourly wage outside the home in offices, stores, factories, and workshops—as the line between the home and the workplace became more clearly drawn, gender roles grew polarized.[33] While men were expected to participate in economic and political life in the public arena, bourgeois women were placed firmly within the private domain of the home where they were expected to fulfill traditional duties as wives and mothers. Indeed, the home itself was now regarded with utmost reverence as a refuge from the pressures of the outside world.[34] The woman was the moral guardian at the centre of this quasi-sacred space, responsible for ensuring that it was a calm and nurturing environment for her husband and family.

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[31] Goodwin, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders*, 59.
[32] Barbara Welter's classic 1966 article delineates this ideal in more detail; see Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (1966): 151-174. It is important to note that this domestic ideology had begun to erode as the nineteenth century came to a close; ironically, women's participation in social reform causes like the campaign for pure food would ultimately play a significant role in the formation of the so-called "first wave" of feminism and in the suffrage movement of the early twentieth century.
[33] Ibid., 151.
[34] Lori Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels*: *Advertising and Victorian Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 18.

It is no wonder then, given these expectations, that middle-class women were drawn toward the campaign for pure food. Lorine Swainston Goodwin's 1999 book *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders* provides a thorough account of their participation in the pure food cause, highlighting the way that this activism stemmed initially from the activities of independent women's clubs, which had grown popular in the 1880s. These diverse grassroots groups – which could be found in rural and urban areas across the United States, and included literary clubs, civic improvement societies, mother's circles, and temperance organizations to name a few – tended to be driven by their dedication to "self-improvement and to the well-being of their friends and neighbors."[35] Temperance women in particular became involved with the pure food cause. As Goodwin writes, they began to associate adulterated food and drugs with alcohol abuse. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) activists broadened their original mandate to incorporate pure food "into their agendas…and attracted a great number of women who recognized the need to address the tangle of abuse that was consuming American communities."[36] By initiating education efforts to teach consumers about the dangers of adulteration and launching outreach campaigns for state and federal legislation, groups like the WCTU were key in expanding the scope of the pure food cause.

Arguably the strongest voice in the consumer movement, however, was the National Consumers' League, which "formalized the emerging coalition of major

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[35] Goodwin, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders,* 35. As Goodwin writes, these clubs embodied women's growing participation in the public sphere during the Progressive Era: "The formation of these women's organizations forsaged the end to male supervision of formal women's alliances and projects, and opened the door for a great diversity in association, experimentation with fresh ideas, and participation in almost all aspects of Progressive Movement reform."

[36] Ibid. As well, Chapters 4 and 5 of Goodwin's book provide detailed looks into the WCTU's involvement in the campaign for pure food.

national forces that were working for pure food, drink, and drugs."[37] Founded in 1899 by a group that included notable Progressives Jane Addams and Florence Kelley, the NCL initially focused on protecting women and children in the garment trades from harsh labour conditions and industrial exploitation. But it shifted its focus in 1904 to include the increasingly prominent pure food cause.[38] In doing so, it managed to unite at a national level the divergent array of groups campaigning for federal pure food legislation, including women's clubs, temperance unions, religious organizations, state and federal chemists, public health workers, medical professionals, journalists, and politicians. By appealing to "a wide cross section of consumer advocates" (which included both men and women; both sexes were permitted to join), many pure food crusaders "felt that the [NCL] came close to providing the ideal medium for advancing their cause."[39] This unification was a successful one: by 1907, the NCL was supported by "sixty-three [state-level] Leagues in twenty-two states; California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, and Wisconsin."[40] The NCL's overarching aim placed the onus on American consumers to be aware of how the goods they purchased were produced, but more specifically, they

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[37] Ibid., 152.
[38] After receiving support from the General Federation of Women's Clubs for their work on child labour, the NCL "were in a favorable mood to reciprocate when the Federation solicited their assistance in the pure food, drink, and drug crusade." However, Goodwin argues that "their response was more than a courtesy between women's organizations, or a bid to increase their membership and power." Instead, the pure food cause "expanded [the NCL's] base of operation and was a logical companion cause to their work in the garment industries." Ibid., 155,156.
[39] Ibid., 152-153.
[40] The NCL's secretary's report for 1907 boasted of the way that their efforts had helped transform the campaign for pure food from an interstate to a national effort. "Report of the Secretary," *National Consumers' League Eighth Annual Report Year Ending March 5, 1907*, 14, Container A4-A6, Reel 3, National Consumers' League Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

also set out a series of objectives to work toward in terms of pure food.[41] In their 1907 annual report, the NCL's Committee on Food Investigation excitedly lauded the passing of the Pure Food and Drug Act before detailing their plans to help ensure it would be adequately enforced. Among these ideas were public addresses by NCL members, education outreach efforts, and an alliance with the People's Lobby, a powerful national political organization made up of reformers who aimed to influence legislation that favoured the "public interest."[42]

A key reason many consumers rallied behind the pure food cause was what Harvey Levenstein has called the "revolution at the table."[43] The sweeping changes to the production and distribution of food products detailed in the previous chapter profoundly altered the eating habits of American consumers, though it was most apparent in the middle-class diet.[44] As a multitude of mass-produced food products became widely

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[41] The mandate of the NCL, as outlined in their Constitution, made it clear that their goals to protect consumers and labourers alike were intertwined: "It shall be the special object of the National Consumers' League to secure adequate investigation of the conditions under which goods are made, in order to enable purchasers to distinguish in favor of goods made in the well-ordered factory…The National Consumers' League further recognizes and declares the following: That the interests of the community demand that all workers shall receive fair living wages, and that goods shall be produced under sanitary conditions." "Constitution," *National Consumers' League Tenth Annual Report for Two Years Ending March 2, 1909*, 5, Container A4-A6, Reel 3, National Consumers' League Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[42] Alice Lakey, "The Committee on Food Investigation," *National Consumers' League Eighth Annual Report Year Ending March 5, 1907*, 46-48, Container A4-A6, Reel 3, National Consumers' League Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. This alliance with the People's Lobby, described by Lakey as "[t]he most important work in February 1907" was made to protest the Tawney amendment to the Act, which "would have impaired the efficiency of the Food and Drugs Act and almost prevented its enforcement."

[43] This term is the title of his book that discusses the changes to the American diet and food industry during this time period and beyond; Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[44] Eating habits among the American upper classes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were influenced by a "French hegemony [dominated by the ideas of famed chef Georges Auguste Escoffier] that did not take kindly to American ideas about diet." To contrast, working-class and immigrant Americans were "highly sensitive to food prices," spending between forty and fifty percent of their earnings on food: "[W]orkers often chose the cheaper cut of meat, the less expensive bread, the lower priced drink. Even goods that were classified as adulterated found a market if the price was low enough." Coppin and High, *The Politics of Purity*, 24-26.

available (some of which, like ready-to-eat breakfast cereal, had not existed prior to the mid-nineteenth century), bourgeois housewives were faced with new concerns about what foods to serve their families and how to prepare them. Though processed and packaged foods allowed Americans to experience a greater variety in their diets and promised to save women time, they also brought about "a de-skilling process" in the kitchen alongside "the concomitant deterioration of the cuisine."[45] The "food question" vexed consumers and cultural commentators alike; much like today, articles about diet and nutrition regularly appeared in the pages of the popular press.[46] "Foods may be rich in nourishment, but if they are preserved, even with common salt, the amount of nourishment is not equal to the amount of food we have taken," a 1906 *Ladies' Home Journal* article warned. "The delicate machinery of the sensitive person cannot bear the rough, heavy food suitable for the one of coarser nature," advised another from 1898.[47] These doubts and uncertainties gave rise to the food expert, who was regarded – and often promoted by the media and by business – as an authority on nutrition, health, and food purity.

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[45] Glenna Matthews, *"Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 103-106.

[46] "The food question" is a term that appears with regularity in American periodicals during this time period; it refers to the complex relationship(s) between diet, health, and nutrition. As one writer opined in an 1894 issue of the *New England Kitchen Magazine*, "as yet we know comparatively little of either the art of cookery or the science of nutrition." Until these gaps could be filled in, she argued, "we will lack the information necessary to enable us to supply the missing link on the food questions." Emma P. Ewing, "The Missing Link in the Food Question," *New England Kitchen Magazine* 1, no. 4 (August 1894): 220. See also "Some Hints on the Food Question," *The Healthy Home Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (February-April 1905): 17-21, Collection no. 60, Box 28, Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C. (hereafter referred to as the Warshaw Collection).

[47] S.T. Rorer, "What to Eat to Get Strength," *Ladies' Home Journal* 23, no. 7 (June 1906): 38; S.T. Rorer, "The Right Food for Different Men," *Ladies' Home Journal* 15, no. 11 (October 1898): 22. There are countless examples of nutrition information and advice from publications during this period; these are just two.

Much has been written on the rise of domestic science and scientific cookery in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[48] Emphasizing nutrition over taste, home economists (a newly-professionalized vocation) proclaimed that Americans should eat "'what was good for them' rather than 'what they liked'"; in other words, the idea of eating for health rather than for pleasure caught on.[49] Advocates (including prominent cookbook authors/food writers of the era like Fannie Farmer, Mary J. Lincoln, and Sarah Tyson Rorer[50]) claimed that a diet that adhered to principles set out by domestic science would improve Americans' mental and physical conditions. Driven by what Levenstein refers to as the "New Nutrition" – the emerging idea that food was made up of nutrients like fat, protein, and carbohydrates that each performed specific physiological functions – proponents of scientific cookery covered all areas of culinary and dietary practices, from meal preparation and menu planning to how to shop for groceries effectively and maintaining hygienic habits in one's kitchen.[51] These experts also functioned as

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[48] The study of home economics and domestic ideology has and continues to be an important part of American women's and gender history. See, for example, Marilyn Ferris Motz and Pat Browne, eds., *Making the American Home: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Material Culture, 1840-1940* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988); Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); Megan J. Elias, *Stir It Up: Home Economics in American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[49] Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 46; Coppin and High, 28.

[50] Fannie Farmer is best known for her 1896 culinary text *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, which was one of the first texts to recommend the use of standardized and level measurements when cooking. Mary J. Lincoln was also a cookbook author associated with the Boston Cooking School; in addition she endorsed products and edited the *New England Kitchen Magazine.* Sarah Tyson Rorer founded the Philadelphia Cooking School and edited *Table Talk* and *Household News* before becoming a staff writer for the *Ladies' Home Journal.*

[51] In the mid-nineteenth century, German scientists had separated foods into protein, carbohydrates, fat, minerals, and water, and had made this conclusion. As Levenstein observes, "[c]arbohydrates and fats seemed to provide two different kinds of fuel while proteins repaired worn-out tissues." Scientists were unsure about the health benefits of minerals in the diet, but they generally agreed that people should eat foods containing the minerals also present in the human body. Levenstein, *Revolution at the* Table, 46. See also Kiyoshi Shintani, "Cooking Up Modernity: Culinary Reformers and the Making of Consumer Culture, 1876-1916" (Ph.D diss., University of Oregon, 2008) for a discussion of how scientific cookery helped modernize both American cooking and eating habits as well as society as a whole.

intermediaries between producers and consumers: by endorsing products, editing periodicals and other publications like advertising recipe booklets, and giving cooking demonstrations at food expositions, they helped transform middle-class women into informed consumers of food.[52] At a time when consumers were much less likely to have a relationship with those who had produced their food, the authoritative voice of the food expert played an important (and deliberate in many cases) role in shaping views on diet and assuaging fears about mass production, purity, and adulteration of foods.

To do so, food experts carefully underscored the need for women to become savvy shoppers. Like the NCL who declared that it was "the duty of consumers to find out under what conditions the articles they purchase are produced and distributed," the message these authorities delivered was one of individual responsibility, albeit responsibility that was shaped by top-down forces.[53] Largely taking the view that food products were more likely to be adulterated with cheap (even if harmless) substitutions than poisonous ones, the domestic science movement "preferred to treat the issue of food adulteration as an education problem rather than an industrial one, and put a great deal of emphasis on teaching women to shop carefully."[54]

Worries about hygiene, however, were still very much a part of these efforts to educate women. An 1895 article in the *New England Kitchen Magazine* warned of "the dangers of uncleanliness and the transmission of disease germs" found in "impure and improperly cared for" food products, kitchens, and stores: "[The housewife] is learning

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[52] Shintani, "Cooking Up Modernity," iv-v.
[53] "Constitution," *National Consumers' League Tenth Annual Report for Two Years Ending March 2, 1909*, 5, Container A4-A6, Reel 3, National Consumers' League Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[54] Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986), 196.

there is immunity…only when…food supplies of all kinds have been cared for with intelligence."[55] In this same fashion, a series of 1907 articles in the *Woman's Home Companion* provided readers with information on what to watch out for when grocery shopping. "Don't you think it is about time you got acquainted with your grocer and his helpers?" the first article pointedly asked. "Are the men and boys who handle the food for your family worthy of the trust?"[56] Moreover, the NCL warned New York City consumers against purchasing food manufactured and sold in tenement houses (described as "basement bakeries") as well as foods like ice cream sold by street vendors. There were distinct racial and class-driven elements behind some of these warnings about food at the retail level; for example, the venues that so offended the NCL were located in working-class Italian neighborhoods and the manufacturing processes carried out by recent immigrants.[57]

In terms of the pure food cause, domestic scientists echoed Alice Lakey's proclamation that "every consumer in this country [should work] for the passage of the

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[55] Kate H. Watson, "Report of Committee on Food," *New England Kitchen Magazine* 2, no. 4 (January 1895): 186.

[56] "Do You Know Your Grocer? First of a Series of Editorial Articles on the Clean Grocery, and What It Really Means to Woman's Home Companion Readers," *Woman's Home Companion* (November 1907): 9; "Keeping the Bins Closed: An Editorial Article Showing the Dangers of the Unclean Grocery and How to Avoid Them," *Woman's Home Companion* (December 1907): 23-24; "Can We Afford to be Clean? An Editorial Article Containing a Comparison of the Cost of Trading at Clean and Dirty Grocery Stores," *Woman's Home Companion* (January 1908): 17, 46, Book 394, Collection no. 59, Box no. 212, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C. (hereafter referred to as N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records)

[57] The NCL seemed to believe these foods were purchased mainly by the poor and those with poor judgment: "Those who can afford to buy food in the cleaner and better stores feel safe when buying nuts in glass jars, peanut butter from a health food bureau, cakes on Fifth Avenue, and candies wrapped in paper and apparently spotless." Mary Sherman, "Manufacture of Food in Tenements," *National Consumers' League Seventh Annual Report Year Ending March 1, 1906,* 35, Container A4-A6, Reel 3, National Consumers' League Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Pure Food Bill."[58] In their estimation, individual consumers played an equally powerful role alongside business and legislators in ensuring the federal Act would be passed and enforced. Proponents of scientific cookery, such as Boston Cooking School teacher and food writer Maria Parloa, spoke out in favour of the Pure Food and Drug Act, acknowledging that an awareness of the correlational nature of the consumer and the state's interests was critical. "Many people do not realize their responsibilities in regard to pure food laws," she wrote in the updated 1908 edition of her 1880 cookbook:

> In food, as in everything else, the demand controls the supply. If the consumer demands pure food and will not accept any other there will be no market for an adulterated or debased food, and so it will not be supplied. Lack of knowledge of the subject is largely the reason why so many housekeepers are not more actively interested in pure food laws and their enforcement.[59]

As well, reformers often spoke of consumer participation in the pure food cause in highly gendered language, making it clear that although this was a Progressive cause, it was as much about upholding old ideas as it was a response to newness. For instance, consider a memo from the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) that encouraged women ("who usually [do] the buying for the family") to stop buying from "the dirty food shop." "We need pure food laws and market inspection," wrote GFWC Good Sanitation Committee Chair Jane McKibben. "As women are the housekeepers of the world, they make the best food shop housekeepers, i.e., local market inspectors."[60] These gendered discourses that surrounded women's activism further underscored the

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[58] Alice Lakey, "A Letter to the Delegates – Annual Meeting, National Consumers' League, March 7, 1905, Philadelphia," Container A4-A6, Reel 3, National Consumers' League Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[59] Maria Parloa, *Miss Parloa's New Cook Book and Marketing Guide: Revised Edition of 1908 With Up-To-Date Treatises on Food, Working Appliances, and Sanitation* (Boston: Dana Estes and Company Publishers, 1880, rev. ed 1908), x-xi.
[60] Jane McKibben, "Brains and Buying" *General Federation of Women's Clubs* (undated), Box 207, Harvey Washington Wiley Papers.

idea that the pure food cause was intimately related to the persistent nineteenth century domestic ideology that cast women as maternal, nurturing caregivers.

It hardly needs to be repeated here that consumerism has long been gendered female.[61] This is especially apparent when looking at the purchase and preparation of food, an activity so strongly linked to discourses on motherhood and marriage. It is not surprising then, that advertising for food products during this period was largely aimed at a female audience. According to the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, women were responsible for "85% of retail purchases," which included food and other consumer goods.[62] Thought of by advertisers as "the home buyer of the entire establishment of this century," women were apparently "never too tired" to inform themselves on products that could "add comfort and happiness to her household," and should be targeted accordingly with information about specific branded products and photographs to accompany descriptions.[63] In an age when many mass-produced food items were relatively new to American consumers – such as cereal, canned milk, and canned meat – advertising was crucial to both create and enlarge demand for these products, while also minimizing fears about them. Indeed, manufacturers quickly recognized its importance: for example, food advertising represented just one percent of Philadelphia-based advertising agency N.W. Ayer's revenues in 1877, while by 1901 it made up fifteen percent. By 1920 the food

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[61] In the words of two noted historians of consumer culture, "[s]ince Eve reached for the apple, and so led Adam astray, Western women have been seen as more covetous than men. Classical philosophers and Christian moralists have long associated men with the rational world and women with the material." John Styles and Amanda Vickery, introduction to *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830,* eds. John Styles and Amanda Vickery (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 2.
[62] "Women in Advertising," New York: J. Walter Thompson Company, 1918.
[63] J. Ellsworth Gross, "The Woman Buyer and the Photograph," *Ad Sense* 20, no. 5 (May 1906): 395-396, Collection no. 60, Advertising Industry Box 5, Warshaw Collection. Katherine Parkin's work (see footnote 64) provides a detailed analysis of how advertisers of food targeted women specifically.

industry was spending "well over $14 million" annually on advertising, a total much greater than the nine million spent by their "closest rival" (toiletries and cosmetics).[64]

The emphasis on educating the female consumer found in many of the era's food advertisements was no accident, nor was the distinctly paternalistic tone that accompanied them. Acknowledging that the advertising industry at the turn of the century was dominated by "an extraordinarily privileged [East Coast Anglo-Saxon Protestant male] elite, increasingly elevated above and isolated from the concerns of ordinary Americans," cultural historian T.J. Jackson Lears argues that practitioners of advertising had a profound effect on the construction of "the category of 'knowledge'" for a mass audience that was based on their own apparently intellectually and culturally superior viewpoints.[65] This perception advertisers had of themselves as influential educators was not uncommon in the American business world during this time period: "like other aspiring professionals of the era, advertising executives participated in the regnant fantasy that 'we' (the managerial elite in question) had acquired the capacity to predict and control 'them' (the consumers) through 'social science.'"[66] If the modern advertising industry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was indeed a top-down effort to shape culture by a privileged male few, it is not surprising then that marketing

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[64] Katherine J. Parkin, *Food is Love: Food Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2.
[65] T.J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 154, 196, 220-221. On page 154, Lears observes that by the early 1910s, the most influential advertising agencies with the biggest accounts were staffed by a homogenous group of college-educated (usually at prestigious Northeastern schools) white, native-born American men: "they were the sons (only three percent were women) of the late-nineteenth-century liberal Protestant elite, and they clung to a secularized version of their parents' worldview: a faith in inevitable progress, unfolding as if in accordance with some divine plan. They also had a tendency to cast themselves in a key redemptive role."
[66] Ibid., 206.

materials for packaged food products so often reinforced traditional gender roles using the era's new social science to justify them.

Taking on this tone of authority and expertise was also a way for advertising to legitimize itself as a profession. Prior to the late 1880s, visual advertising was considered disreputable and was largely dismissed for its associations with "circuses and P.T. Barnum hokum."[67] Moreover, it was initially concentrated at local rather than national levels. After emerging during the 1850s, American advertising agencies mainly "purchased advertising space and prepared copy for local newspapers and periodicals" and relied heavily on the patronage of mass retailers.[68] It was only in the last two decades of the nineteenth century that advertising became both powerful and respectable. Against the backdrop of a booming economy, major manufacturers and retailers sought for the first time to directly reach consumers across the United States via large-scale national advertising campaigns.[69] By 1910, big businesses (including prominent food manufacturers such as Borden, Campbell's, and Armour) were spending more than $600 million on advertising, compared to just $30 million in 1880.[70] As well, the rise of mass circulation print media in the 1880s and 1890s allowed advertisers to reach larger audiences than ever before.

The overarching attitude among advertisers that women needed to be educated about what to purchase to feed their families directly parallels the ideas put forth by groups like the GFWC and the NCL and advocates of scientific cookery. Promulgating

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[67] William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 42.
[68] Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977), 228.
[69] Leach, *Land of Desire*, 42-43.
[70] Ibid., 42.

largely the same notion that education would create informed consumers and help do away with impure, low-quality foods, these supposedly disparate interests were not at all dissimilar, to say the least. As Lears writes, "food advertisers and their female allies sought to re-create man's world in woman's sphere. No longer…would the home be a refuge from the calculating world outside; instead it would mimic the steady productivity of the modern factory."[71] Additionally, like the elite Anglo-Saxon men who dominated the advertising industry, the women who played significant roles in domestic science and the pure food campaign largely came from similarly privileged backgrounds.[72] Indeed, their differences were only on the surface: food experts and activist groups were ostensibly focused on health and consumer protection rather than on profits, but when, for example, domestic scientists and pure food advocates like Sarah Rorer and Mary Lincoln endorsed branded food products and services, the boundaries between advocacy and commerce become difficult to discern and define firmly.[73] This interweaving of male expertise (the advertising industry) and female expertise (domestic science) ultimately resulted in a commercial food culture that was shaped from the top-down.

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[71] Lears, *Fables of Abundance,* 184.

[72] For example, Florence Kelley of the NCL was the Cornell-educated daughter of a founder of the Republican Party and member of the House of Representatives, and Ellen Richards of the American Home Economics Association was a pioneering research chemist and the first woman to be admitted to (and later teach at) the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Lears argues that "the rationalization of the kitchen" undertaken by advertisers and advocates of scientific cookery alike "expressed the ethnocentrism of Northeastern WASP elites" so heavily invested in both. Ibid.

[73] Sarah Rorer founded a cooking school in Philadelphia in 1884 where middle-class women paid to be taught how to prepare foods according to the new principles of domestic science, and she advertised Cottolene brand shortening, writing in a 1900 product cookbook that she found it to be a "pure and unadulterated article, and a much more healthful product than lard." Likewise, Mary J. Lincoln authored a number of advertising pamphlets for food and cooking equipment companies, including Jell-O, which she described as a "boon" for "the beginner in the culinary art and for the perplexed housekeeper in emergencies." Both of these examples are from product cookbooks found in the Product Cookbooks Collection, collection no. 396, box 4, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.

It was sometimes even difficult to tell the difference between an advertisement and a public service announcement during this period. For instance, a 1912 advertisement that appeared in the *Evening World* at first glance appears to be a public health notice of some kind: "Dr. Wiley Please Note," the tagline blares before referencing "[his] fight against benzoate of soda and other chemical preservatives and colors in foods" (Illustration 1).[74] However, a closer inspection reveals that the document is actually an advertisement for Premier Food Products. Mentions of the product line's "delicious flavor" and "beautiful appearance" are contrasted against descriptions of the company's hygienic and technologically advanced manufacturing processes. As well, the ad does not contain any product photographs or illustrations; the only image depicted is a star-shaped logo (denoted as "the Sign of the Star") intended to act as "the connecting link between the Premier ideals of perfection and a discriminating public."

The most extensive effort by business to connect their advertising and marketing strategies to the campaign for pure food was undoubtedly that of the H.J. Heinz Company. Especially attuned to the economic and social changes that were altering American foodways, the founder of the Pittsburgh-based company "understood that shifting household priorities represented an important strategic opportunity."[75] Practically from the outset of the company's 1869 founding, Henry J. Heinz – the self-made son of German immigrants – had a seemingly intuitive sense of what his customers wanted. Aware that American consumers "would not buy a completely new product, especially a good they could make themselves, unless its quality was assured," Heinz deliberately

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[74] Premier Food Products advertisement, October 11, 1912, *Evening World,* Box 207, Harvey Washington Wiley Papers.
[75] Nancy F. Koehn, "Henry Heinz and Brand Creation in the Late Nineteenth Century: Making Markets for Processed Food," *The Business History Review* 73, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 349.

sought to build a brand that would be associated with intangible qualities like goodness and wholesomeness.[76] Devoting "significant company resources to advertising and promotion," Heinz wanted to convince middle-class women that manufactured food was as good (or even better) than food that they were used to making from scratch in their homes.[77] His strategies paid off. By the early twentieth century, Heinz was one of the United States' most profitable businesses. Its product line expanded greatly beyond its initial offerings of bottled horseradish and vinegar, the firm's sales and productive capacity had grown markedly each year after its inception, and it had established a national and international presence.

Heinz's unequivocal backing of federal pure food legislation was a key part of their branding strategy. One of the "few leaders in the canning and preserving industries who openly and forcefully supported federal regulations that would set standards for the contents and labeling of food and drugs," Heinz appointed a staff of three to assist the president and Congress in securing these laws.[78] As his biographer Robert C. Alberts observes, Heinz believed his company would not truly grow until it had gained the public's confidence: "the way to earn that confidence was to work in partnership with a federal regulatory agency."[79] This view overlaps with Wood's argument that the political position of businesses on the pure food law was based more "on each [company's] desire

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[76] Ibid., 361-362. However, Koehn notes that Heinz himself would have never used a quintessentially twentieth and twenty-first century term like "brand creation" to describe his efforts.
[77] Ibid., 375.
[78] Wood, "The Strategic Use of Public Policy," 419. Wood points out on page 413 that most businesses who were affected by the possibility of federal pure food legislation "expressed support for the *idea* of a federal law, but opposed various particulars in the many bills that were presented to Congress. Support, opposition, and ad hoc objections alike arose from businesspeople's perceptions of how the law would affect their own operations" (emphasis is original).
[79] Robert C. Alberts, *The Good Provider: H.J. Heinz and His 57 Varieties* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973), 171. According to Alberts, "regulation would make the industry respectable and trusted—an achievement beyond any price."

to maintain or strengthen its own competitive position in the marketplace" than it was on consumer protection per se.[80]

To ensure the buying public was aware of his company's collaboration with the federal government, Heinz turned to the advertising industry to help shape a message that was informed by the consumer movement and its campaign for pure food. According to the N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency's records, a 1906 Heinz campaign the agency worked on, contained a central message about the absolute purity of the company's products. Moreover, Heinz goods were "made not only to conform to, but to actually exceed the requirements of all State and National Pure Food Laws."[81] Like the Premier Food Products advertisement, many of the advertisements from this campaign also blurred the lines between marketing and public service. "An Impartial Statement of Grave Importance to The Public Health," one began. Outlining the perceived dangers of benzoate of soda (a preservative substance which, though not illegal under the Act, was hotly debated by Wiley and others involved in the pure food cause), this advertisement does not appear to be for a consumer product at all except for a paragraph at the bottom of the page that states Heinz would avoid this potential public health threat by not including benzoate of soda in any of its goods.[82] Another ad urged consumers to "Make [Their] Own Pure Food Law" by reading labels and becoming informed shoppers,

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[80] Wood, "The Strategic Use of Public Policy," 413.
[81] Heinz, Wide-Open Kitchens advertisement, collection no. 59, box 248, book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.
[82] Heinz, An Impartial Statement on the Grave Importance to The Public Health advertisement, collection no. 59, box 248, book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records. Benzoate of soda, though not prohibited under federal law, was a preservative considered by some (including Dr. Wiley) to be dangerous to human health if present in food in large amounts. As well, it was associated with economic adulteration—this Heinz advertisement claimed that benzoate of soda "permits the cheapest and most unsanitary methods of manufacture" by allowing food manufacturers to use low-quality components (like produce peelings and cores) that "would otherwise be thrown away."

directly echoing the consumer movement and domestic science's individualistic rhetoric (Illustration 2).[83] Most tellingly, one advertisement even tried to disassociate the company from its commercial interests altogether by describing the benzoate of soda controversy as "nothing more nor less than an alignment of profit-seeking food manufacturers' interests against the health and physical welfare of the people" (Illustration 3).[84] Overtly excluding itself from the category of "profit-seeking food manufacturer," this was a deliberate attempt by Heinz to distance itself from the Progressive view of the modern American corporation as avaricious and dangerous.

In small typewritten font at the bottom of these advertisements, Heinz declared it was a "Member of the American Association for the Promotion of Purity in Food Products." Beyond Heinz, members included prominent food manufacturers like the Shredded Wheat Company and the Franco-American Food Company who united to "severally and jointly give their moral and financial support and undivided influence toward upholding the proper and legitimate efforts of the regularly constituted officials charged with the administration of all Laws looking to the elevation of the standards of the food producing interests of this country."[85] This concerted effort by American

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[83] Heinz, Make Your Own Pure Food Law advertisement, collection no. 59, box 248, book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.

[84] Heinz, The Food YOU Eat! advertisement, collection no. 59, box 248, book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records. Emphasis is original. Another advertisement in the same folder echoes this theme, with a tagline reading, "Your Health or the Manufacturers' Profit!"

[85] American Association for the Promotion of Purity in Food Products, "Platform Subscribed to By Members" (1909), Purity in Food Products, collection no. 59, box 411, series 02, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records. It is not entirely clear if this organization was legitimately concerned with the creation and enforcement of regulatory legislation for food production, or if it was formed primarily for marketing purposes, but articles from the popular press like the one cited in footnote 86 lauded it for the "renewed energy" it lent to the "fighters for the pure food cause." See also "Big Firms to Incorporate in Great Pure Food Fight," *North American,* September 11, 1910, and "The Association for the Promotion of Purity in Food Products," *National Food Magazine,* August 1910 in the same folder in the N.W. Ayer collection. The former discussed the way that the twenty manufacturers that made up the association called for resolutions including the establishment of a federal department of public health that would deal with food

business indicates the scope and reach of the campaign of pure food even years after the 1906 Act was passed (when concerns and debates about its enforcement and efficiency still raged). To some involved, the cause needed the association's support if it was to succeed at all. A 1909 *National Food Magazine* article claimed that in spite of the hard work of physicians, women's organizations and retail grocers, "the fight looked more like a losing one" before "makers of legitimate food" joined in.[86] "Nothing could be of greater advantage to consumers," supporters of the association declared. "It will make the food issue one of clearly defined lines, showing the people who are the makers of pure food and who are not, teaching them to distinguish between the brands of purity and impurity. It will cause all the wolves to remove their sheep's clothing."[87]

Whether or not this was entirely true—and the evidence suggests that it likely was not—the symbiotic relationship that developed between business and the campaign for pure food, reflected so prominently through marketing and advertising, is a critical part of this story. In commodifying older ideals surrounding domesticity and gender, the elite Northeastern class that largely oversaw the promotion of pure food was able to foster an association between the campaign for federal legislation and consumer protection that was ultimately self-serving. Advancing the idea that purity—and its attendant links to hygiene, public health, and safety—was a commodity that could be purchased, business and middle-class reformers alike used the modern American consumer culture to impose their apparent expertise and values onto a changing demographic landscape. In a time

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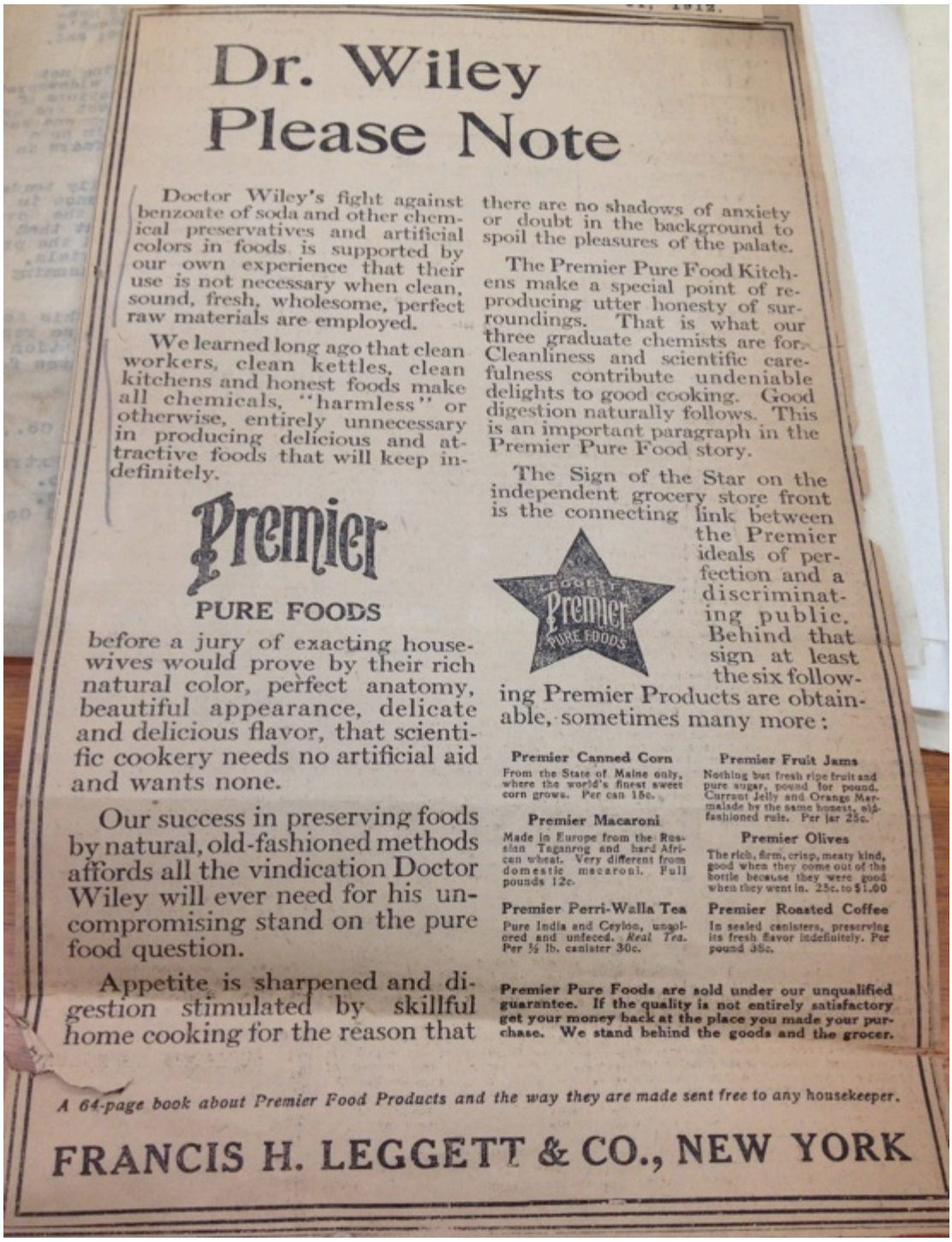
issues, and the latter fawned over the association, proclaiming that "the consumers of food in the United States owe a lasting debt of gratitude" to its "honorable" and "honest" members.

[86] "Credit to Whom Credit is Due," *National Food Magazine,* December 1909, Purity in Food Products, collection no. 59, box 411, book 669, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.

[87] Ibid.

characterized by increasing immigration and urbanization as well as the loosening of rigid class stratifications, this broad campaign for pure food was a way for the dominant native-born American bourgeoisie to uphold their status in a society where it seemed to be at risk.

Illustrations



Dr. Wiley Please Note

Doctor Wiley's fight against benzoate of soda and other chemical preservatives and artificial colors in foods is supported by our own experience that their use is not necessary when clean, sound, fresh, wholesome, perfect raw materials are employed.

We learned long ago that clean workers, clean kettles, clean kitchens and honest foods make all chemicals, "harmless" or otherwise, entirely unnecessary in producing delicious and attractive foods that will keep indefinitely.

Premier

PURE FOODS

before a jury of exacting housewives would prove by their rich natural color, perfect anatomy, beautiful appearance, delicate and delicious flavor, that scientific cookery needs no artificial aid and wants none.

Our success in preserving foods by natural, old-fashioned methods affords all the vindication Doctor Wiley will ever need for his uncompromising stand on the pure food question.

Appetite is sharpened and digestion stimulated by skillful home cooking for the reason that there are no shadows of anxiety or doubt in the background to spoil the pleasures of the palate.

The Premier Pure Food Kitchens make a special point of reproducing utter honesty of surroundings. That is what our three graduate chemists are for. Cleanliness and scientific carefulness contribute undeniable delights to good cooking. Good digestion naturally follows. This is an important paragraph in the Premier Pure Food story.

The Sign of the Star on the independent grocery store front is the connecting link between the Premier ideals of perfection and a discriminating public. Behind that sign at least the six following Premier Products are obtainable, sometimes many more:

LEGGETT'S Premier PURE FOODS

Premier Canned Corn
From the State of Maine only, where the world's finest sweet corn grows. Per can 15c.

Premier Fruit Jams
Nothing but fresh ripe fruit and pure sugar, pound for pound. Currant Jelly and Orange Marmalade by the same honest, old-fashioned rule. Per jar 25c.

Premier Macaroni
Made in Europe from the Russian Taganrog and hard African wheat. Very different from domestic macaroni. Full pounds 12c.

Premier Olives
The rich, firm, crisp, meaty kind, good when they come out of the bottle because they were good when they went in. 25c. to $1.00

Premier Perri-Walla Tea
Pure India and Ceylon, uncolored and unfaced. *Real Tea.* Per ½ lb. canister 30c.

Premier Roasted Coffee
In sealed canisters, preserving its fresh flavor indefinitely. Per pound 38c.

Premier Pure Foods are sold under our unqualified guarantee. If the quality is not entirely satisfactory get your money back at the place you made your purchase. We stand behind the goods and the grocer.

A 64-page book about Premier Food Products and the way they are made sent free to any housekeeper.

FRANCIS H. LEGGETT & CO., NEW YORK

Illustration 1 This 1912 advertisement for Premier Food Products at first glance appears to be a public health notice of some kind. The star-shaped logo (denoted as "the Sign of the Star") is intended to act as "the connecting link between the Premier ideals of perfection and a discriminating public."

Make Your Own Pure Food Law

WHETHER you eat clean, pure wholesome food, or food that you would not eat under any circumstances if you knew how and of what it was made, is in your own hands. *You are the law.*

Take ketchup, for instance: You can get that which is composed of decayed tomatoes, peelings and other unfit materials, preserved by that dangerous coal tar drug, Benzoate of Soda, or you can select the kind that requires no preservative because it is made of ripe, sound tomatoes, the purest spices, prepared under the most cleanly and exacting conditions. *It is merely a matter of choice.*

What the Government Does.

The U. S. Government, while permitting the use of Benzoate of Soda, recognizes its danger to the public health by decreeing that not more than 1-10 of 1 per cent. shall be used in any one product.

As a further protection the law also insists that the use of Benzoate of Soda shall be clearly stated on the label—therefore, it is merely a matter of looking at the label to know what kind of food, or how much of this harmful drug you are eating.

Remember This!

Benzoate of Soda is absolutely unnecessary to preserve a pure, clean product. Its chief use is to cover up unfit materials—refuse which any housewife would throw away—or slovenly methods concealed behind closed doors.

For these reasons the House of Heinz does not, and will not, use Benzoate of Soda or any other artificial preservative. Every one of Heinz 57 Varieties is composed of the choicest materials the world produces. They are prepared in kitchens where cleanliness is the law of every worker; where nothing is concealed; where the doors are always open and visitors welcomed at all times. Heinz 57 Varieties keep because they are pure.

When you want to be sure of the food you eat, make your own pure food law by insisting that the label bears the name "Heinz."

THE H. J. HEINZ COMPANY

Illustration 2 This 1906 Heinz ad was part of a series that emphasized product purity and encouraged consumers to read labels and become informed shoppers, thereby directly echoing the consumer movement and domestic science's individualistic rhetoric.

The Food YOU Eat!

Aren't You the One to Say Whether It Shall Be Drugged or Pure?

This Benzoate of Soda controversy is nothing more nor less than an alignment of profit-seeking food manufacturers' interests against the health and physical welfare of the people.

The governments of Great Britain, France and Germany have officially recognized the danger of Benzoate of Soda in foods. The world's Pure Food Congress recently assembled at Geneva, Switzerland, declare it harmful. Leading authorities of two continents condemn it.

All experts may not agree, but the evidence is sufficient to establish a doubt as to the safety of its use.

To you—the person who eats the food—belongs the benefit of that doubt—not to the manufacturer who uses Benzoate of Soda simply because it enables him to use low grade materials, employ loose methods and in general reduce the nutritive value and cost of the food he sells you.

Benzoate of Soda is never used to improve a product; its chief function is to permit the use of something questionable.

H. J. Heinz Company maintains—and always will maintain—an unalterable stand for food purity—against Benzoate of Soda, regardless of the attitude of any chemist or any other manufacturer.

In the making of Heinz 57 Varieties—as well as the product of many other reputable manufacturers—Benzoate of Soda or any chemical preservative is not used. Our products are made of fresh fruits and vegetables in sanitary surroundings; like carefully-made home foods (where drugs are never thought of), they keep and keep, opened or unopened, the last used being as fresh and sweet as the first.

With fresh foods just as easily obtainable, can you name a single reason for accepting doubtful products prepared with Benzoate of Soda?

The labels tell the story—read them.

H. J. HEINZ COMPANY

Members of American Association for the Promotion of Purity in Food Products.

Illustration 3: In this 1906 Heinz ad, the company overtly tries to disassociate itself from the apparently nefarious practices of other "profit-seeking food manufacturers."

3 Chapter: Nostalgic Modernism and the Marketing of Pure Food

In 1910, an advertisement for Borden's Eagle Brand Condensed Milk blatantly celebrated the idealized American child (Illustration 4). Featuring a drawing of a beaming Uncle Sam lording over of a line of plump, rosy-cheeked babies with their arms outstretched toward him, all were depicted as white and well-dressed, signifying their bourgeois status.[1] The headline, "Our Babies Must have the Best Milk" implied that these ideal American children ("*Our* babies," as the advertisement reminds readers twice), gained strength and were protected from harm by consuming a particular branded "pure food" product that could be easily purchased in stores throughout the nation: "It is Superior to Fresh Cow's Milk and solves the Infant Feeding Problem," the copy reads.[2] The message was clear: feed your children this product and they would become the strong and successful next generation that bourgeois Americans felt their nation so sorely needed.

This particular advertisement also exemplified the "nostalgic modernism" that ran through so many of the cultural discourses that were crafted and disseminated by an elite class.[3] In a paradoxical manner, it celebrated what was the new and modern (canned condensed milk and the practice of feeding it to infants to protect them from illnesses caused by foodborne pathogens), but the overall sentiment was very much tied to

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[1] It is important to note, as art historian Christina Cogdell does in her study on the relationship between eugenic ideology and material culture, that advertisers largely did not target black Americans because they did not consider them to be part of "modernity". Christina Cogdell, *Eugenic Design: Streamlining America in the 1930s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 180.
[2] Borden's Eagle Brand Condensed Milk advertisement, *National Food Magazine,* June 1910, Collection no. 60, Box 28, Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C. (hereafter referred to as the Warshaw Collection). Emphasis is mine.
[3] As discussed earlier in this thesis, this concept is predicated on using discourses of "modernity" and "newness" to emphasize and reinforce ideals that were actually very traditional. See Introduction, footnote 41 for an explanation of my usage of this term.

domestic ideals set out in the nineteenth century, and a traditionalist vision of America where the bourgeois white "native-born" class retained their sociocultural superiority without challenge. But even further than this, the idealization of purity within this advertisement, while certainly emblematic of the age's worries, was actually part of a much more deeply embedded cultural framework in which fears of contamination are enmeshed with ancient belief systems. Using this Borden's advertisement as entry point to examine these concerns more closely, this chapter will demonstrate how these idealized representations of the concept of "purity" in American food advertising are both specific to the era in which they were produced and yet at the same time, age-old.

Given both the time period and the advertisement's intended audience, such an overt glorification of white American children is not surprising. In explicitly linking child-raising to both nationalist rhetoric and consumption of branded, mass-produced items, this advertisement reveals a number of connections between consumerism, gender roles, and the eugenic ideology that had become so prevalent during this period of upheaval, anxiety and imperialism. To explore these ideas in greater detail, I will place my research into its wider historical context (by looking more closely at the connections between Progressive ideology, nostalgic modernism, and the rise of the advertising industry in the United States) and I will broadly discuss purity as a cultural and anthropological concept. Throughout, I use visual semiotic theory to provide a more detailed analysis of food advertisements themselves in order to illustrate how they are connected to both a contemporaneous ambivalence about modernity and deep-seated and

fairly universal human beliefs on purity.[4] Though I consulted with hundreds of print advertisements and other marketing documents for packaged food products that appeared between 1890 and 1920 while conducting research for this chapter, I focus my discussion on several specific examples of advertisements for consumer products that demonstrate these connections and tensions particularly well.[5]

By the turn of the century, eugenic ideology had taken a firm hold in the United States.[6] Rapid urban and industrial growth, the closing of the frontier in the popular

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[4] Roland Barthes's influential 1964 essay "Rhetoric of the Image" has provided scholars with a conceptual framework for studying the relationship between words and images in advertisements and other forms of visual culture. In this chapter I have drawn from the methodology he uses to analyze an advertisement for Panzani brand Italian food products, wherein he identifies three classes of messages ("linguistic," "symbolic," and "literal") that allow advertisements to convey meaning; Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image, Music, Text,* trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 33-37.

[5] The term "advertisements" in this chapter encompasses a variety of promotional documents. Beyond traditional print advertising campaigns that appeared in the popular press, I looked at marketing materials including product cookbooks, pamphlets, and advertising cards.

[6] Scholars have often pointed out how difficult it is to firmly define eugenic ideology. In the Anglo-American context, it was rooted in the work of British scientist Francis Galton, who coined the term "eugenics" in 1883 from a Greek word that meant "good in birth." With a belief that selective breeding would strengthen the human race, Galton's use of this term was meant to "denote both the science and the practice of improving human stock 'to give the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable.'" Some historians have observed that in America, eugenic ideology's overarching emphasis on societal improvement and state regulation tie in well with the equally nebulous Progressive ideology, itself a series of broad responses to large-scale societal changes. Historian Wendy Kline points out that eugenic ideology "comprised a complex combination of popular scientific beliefs and interests," which thereby appealed to an array of reformers representing "a wide range of interests and politics, who applied their own varied definitions of eugenics." In looking at some of the policies and initiatives that grew out of this ideology, it is possible to see the extensive (and divergent) impact of eugenics in the United States. For examples of eugenics-based policy and legislation, one can look to the 1907 passing of the world's first involuntary sterilization law in Indiana, or the federal Immigration Act of 1924, which was aimed at restricting immigrants of ethnic backgrounds that were considered undesirable. As well, organizations like the Children's Bureau and the American Eugenics Society were established to promote eugenic ideology across the country. However, it is important to note that eugenicist beliefs and policies were in no way exclusive to the United States. As the vast body of historiography summarized in *The Oxford Handbook of Eugenics* indicates, eugenics movements can be found in the histories of a large and diverse array of countries. See Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "Galton, Sir Francis (1822–1911)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2005, http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/view/article/33315 (accessed March 30, 2013); Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Lovett, "Fitter Families for Future Firesides," in *Conceiving the Future,* 131-161; Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford, "Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3-24.

imagination, increases in immigration, and shifting gender roles had created a great deal of anxiety among the dominant white bourgeois class about the survival of the family and of the so-called "American race."[7] As historian Laura Lovett has observed, these worries were largely twofold: first, many believed that shifts in "women's morals, dress, and behavior" that took place around the turn of the twentieth century had put motherhood and family at risk; and, second, they feared that ostensible "American values" were in danger as new immigrants from Asia and southern and eastern Europe populated the country's booming cities and "failed to adopt American traditions as their own."[8] In a period characterized by such profound changes, questions were raised about who—or what—could be considered authentically "American," and whether or not it was possible to preserve a racialized national ideal.

Many of the era's scientific texts, such as 1918's *Applied Eugenics*, tackled these anxieties head on. Co-written by a professor and the editor of the *Journal of Heredity* (which was a publication associated with the American Genetic Association), a chapter on immigration detailed at length the many uncertainties surrounding the presence of newcomers in the United States. These fears were especially palpable in their discussion of immigrants from countries that were considered undesirable, based on the "scientific" taxonomy of world races prevalent at the time.[9] As the authors wrote, "the effects of the immigration then depends on whether the immigrants are better or worse in average quality than the older residents. If as good or better, they are valuable additions; if

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[7] As Lovett points out, references to the so-called "American race" by the era's reformers, politicians, and social commentators concerned the white population of the United States, ideally those of western and northern European and Anglo-Saxon descent; Lovett, *Conceiving the Future*, 7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] In particular, the authors discuss at length the apparent perils of "Oriental immigration"; Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1918), 312-316.

inferior they are biologically a detriment."[10] Furthermore, they tied immigration to America's apparent destiny: "The duty of the United States is to make itself strong, efficient, productive, and progressive. By so doing they will be much better able to help the rest of the world than by progressively weakening themselves through failure to regulate immigration."[11] In other words, if the country could not "slow down the flood of immigrants who are not easily assimilable," it would become unable to maintain its sense of superiority and influence on the global stage.[12]

But these anxieties were not limited to this context. When rising immigration rates were coupled with falling birth rates among white, "native-born" citizens, a highly racialized pronatalist discourse became a dominant force within mainstream American culture.[13] Consider, for instance, president Theodore Roosevelt's fears that white Americans' seeming reluctance to reproduce would lead to "race suicide."[14] A term coined in 1901 by sociologist Edward A. Ross, "race suicide" was also linked to "broader fears about effeminacy, overcivilization, and racial decadence."[15] Cultural commentators increasingly linked race suicide to masculinity, arguing that the same "manly self-denial" that had allowed the apparently superior white race to prosper now also threatened its survival: in the wake of increasing economic competition from nonwhite men seen to be racially inferior (which included both immigrants and African-Americans), there were fears that white men's wages would go down and their families' standards of living

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[10] Ibid., 299.
[11] Ibid., 317.
[12] Ibid., 306.
[13] According to data cited by historian Wendy Kline, the white birth rate in the United States had experienced a precipitous decline by the turn of the twentieth century: the average American family had six children in 1840 and only three by 1900. Kline, *Building a Better Race,* 11.
[14] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 199-206.
[15] Ibid., 200.

would fall with them.[16] As historian Gail Bederman describes it, concerns then mounted that there would be fewer and fewer births among the "desirable" white ethnic groups: "Unwilling to sire children they could not provide for…American men would 'quietly and unmurmuringly eliminate' themselves."[17] The stakes appeared to be high if bourgeois white men were unable to compete with men from racial and class groups that were considered to be inferior.

Fears of "race suicide" were also linked to (and compounded by) the changing roles of middle and upper-middle-class women. Though the ideals set out by the so-called "Cult of True Womanhood" discussed in the previous chapter still reigned supreme, this deeply ingrained domestic ideology began to lose some of its allure by the turn of the century as women became more involved in public life. Middle and upper-middle class women became increasingly vocal about their desire for new opportunities. Beyond their participation in the campaign for pure food and in domestic science, women began to argue for greater access to education and employment outside the home. This period also, not surprisingly, marked the emergence of a national suffrage movement.[18]

By the 1890s and into the twentieth century, the upheaval surrounding prescribed female roles was embodied in a cultural archetype that became known as the "new woman." A symbol of female discontent, the "new woman" was independent and often politically conscious and career-minded; she argued that the notion of separate spheres

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[16] Ibid. For the sake of clarity, I will not discuss at great length the associated racism directed toward black Americans (particularly in the South) because the inherent complexity and associated regionalism go beyond the scope of this thesis.
[17] Ibid.
[18] According to Kline, American women's enrollment in universities tripled between 1890 and 1910, and by 1920 they made up nearly fifty percent of the university population. Furthermore, the median age of women at marriage went from twenty-one in 1860 to twenty-four by 1890; Kline, *Building a Better Race,* 10, 12.

set out by the "Cult of True Womanhood" was culturally rather than naturally constructed, and she demanded that women be allowed the same rights, privileges, and opportunities as those enjoyed by men.[19] It should also be acknowledged that she was also generally white and middle class, which meant that she was able to access economic and cultural options that would be difficult for working class women to attain. Regardless of this limitation, for many men, this was cause for alarm: by calling into question the sanctity of gender roles, the "new woman" created a sort of moral panic. As Wendy Kline observes, "women were becoming masculine just as men were becoming increasingly weak and effeminate. Home and family were the cornerstone of society, and if women abdicated their domestic duties, what was to become of moral order?"[20]

Though the alarmism was strong, "race suicide" was depicted as a danger that could be overcome through "willful procreative effort."[21] To address these anxieties, Roosevelt and others drew upon eugenic ideology, encouraging white Americans to reproduce and advocating for an idealized vision of the family that emphasized and reinforced women's roles as wives and mothers. As Roosevelt wrote in a 1902 letter, those who did not wish to have children should be considered "in effect, a criminal against the race." Furthermore, he believed that women "must recognize that the greatest thing for any woman is to be a good wife and mother."[22] This eugenicist discourse was not limited to scientific and prescriptive texts and political messages however: its tenets

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[19] Carolyn Christensen Nelson, introduction to *A New Woman Reader: Fiction, Articles, and Drama of the 1890s,* ed. Carolyn Christensen Nelson (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), ix.
[20] Kline, *Building a Better Race,* 11.
[21] Ibid., 202.
[22] As quoted in Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization,* 202.

also seeped into the era's consumer culture, particularly advertising.[23] If, as some historians of the American advertising industry have suggested, advertisements "did and still do reflect or mirror the society that produces them," then this connection—while underexplored—is not particularly unexpected.[24]

In drawing on positive eugenic ideology—which involves measures taken to "promote reproduction among those considered to be 'fit'"—the era's advertisements for packaged food products directly reflected some of these anxieties about the shifting demography of the United States.[25] By depicting ideas about motherhood, child-raising, and family alongside discourses on purity, as the 1910 Borden's advertisement did, food advertising presented a type of aspirational "eugenic ideal" associated with middle-class white femininity in order to encourage consumption (and possibly, though more implicitly, reproduction) among American women. In overtly (and sometimes more subtly) disseminating popular ideologies like these and capturing broader fears about

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[23] While there are significant bodies of historical scholarship on both the impact of this advertising-driven consumer culture and on eugenic ideology in the United States, it is only fairly recently that Americanists have looked toward the connections between the two. However, much of the work that explores the relationship between eugenics and popular culture has focused on the "Better Baby" and "Fitter Family" contests that became commonplace at state fairs by the 1920s. A notable exception to this can be found in art historian Christina Cogdell's work. Her book *Eugenic Design* examines the relationship between eugenics and the streamline style of industrial design that gained prominence in 1930s America. She argues that "the stamp of eugenic ideology" could be felt "upon the material culture of the decade," and includes some relevant discussion on the role played by advertising in this. It is her work that raises the idea of an aspirational "eugenic ideal" that was presented to white middle-class consumers by advertisers, and though she focuses on the 1930s, it is apparent that these ideas also apply to advertising that appeared in the Progressive Era: "By promoting the ownership of modern products and hygienic design as a natural part of membership in the eugenic elite, advertisers furthered the redemptive mission shared by eugenicists to elevate the nation's cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic standards to 'civilized' ideals." Christina Cogdell, *Eugenic Design*, 5.

[24] James D. Norris, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society, 1865-1920* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), xvi.

[25] Lovett, *Conceiving the Future*, 9. Positive eugenics might involve strategies like tax schemes to encourage certain people to marry and have large families. To contrast, negative eugenics was characterized by measures like "voluntary and involuntary sterilization, segregation of the supposedly 'unfit,' immigration and marriage restriction, and euthanasia." Furthermore, in this context, those who were considered "fit" were middle-class, native-born, and white.

societal and cultural changes, this relatively new visual medium was better able to reflect, negotiate, and reinforce the dominant cultural order in Progressive Era America.

The emphasis on purity found in so many of the era's advertisements for food products is especially significant in what it reveals about these values and ideas. It must be pointed out first however, that the term "purity" is a complex one. As anthropologist Sidney Mintz has explained, it has related, yet contradictory meanings. In a 1996 essay, he asks an important question about how we define purity, especially when considering the foods that we consume: "Do we mean something that is natural, unaltered, unprocessed—an unspoiled product of nature's agents: the unfettered action of sun, water, air, soil, and organic growth, unaltered by the action of humankind? Or do we mean something else—something that may be equally comforting though quite different: aseptic, scientifically clean, hygienic, chemically quantifiable, free of germs and microbes, guaranteed not to make us sick?"[26] To him, both of these meanings are correct—many of us appear to hold these dissimilar views simultaneously. This "unresolved…polarity in our thinking" has links to deeply rooted religious and cultural beliefs that exist across various societies and time periods; as he writes, "every religious system must deal in some way or another with the problems posed by the issue of purity in the process of defining itself."[27]

Anthropologist Mary Douglas anticipated this idea when she pointed out in the 1960s that almost all cultures have conceptions of what is considered pure and what is considered impure. In *Purity and Danger,* her 1966 study on dirt and contagion, she

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[26] Sidney Mintz, "Color, Taste, and Purity" in *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions Into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996): 85.
[27] Sidney Mintz, "Color, Taste, and Purity: Some Speculations on the Meaning of Marzipan," *Etnofoor* 4, no. 1 (1991): 104. This article is an earlier version of the book chapter cited in footnote 26.

argues that humans have long had a need to categorize, maintain, and police the environment around us, which is manifested by labeling certain things as clean and others as taboo and then regulating and ritualizing people's interactions with them.[28] Douglas wrote that "ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience."[29] In other words, these rules are intended to help impose order and define boundaries within a given community. In her work, Douglas blurs the lines between sacred and secular, identifying a relationship between ancient religious rituals used to ensure purity and modern Western ideas on cleanliness that date back to the nineteenth century and the advent of the germ theory of disease. Rejecting the notion that "our washing, scrubbing, isolating and disinfecting has only a superficial resemblance with ritual purifications," Douglas observed "only two notable differences between our contemporary European ideas of defilement and those, say, of primitive cultures."[30] According to her, the major differences between ancient and more contemporary cultures is that today humans avoid dirt primarily for hygienic or aesthetic (rather than religious) reasons, and our idea of dirt is shaped by knowledge of bacteriology and pathogenic organisms that cause disease.[31]

Despite this fundamental divide, at their core these ideas involve the same essential principle: namely, the notion of "dirt as matter out of place."[32] To Douglas, there was a correlation between perceptions of defilement and social order that are relative to one another—for example, shoes are not considered a dirty object in and of

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[28] As an example of this, consider *kashrut,* the set of Jewish dietary laws that excludes (among other regulations) the consumption of "unclean" animals such as pork and shellfish and sets out regulations for the slaughter of mammals and birds according to a process known as *shechita*.
[29] Douglas, 4.
[30] Ibid., 32, 35.
[31] Ibid., 35.
[32] Ibid.

themselves, but doing something like placing them on a dining room table would be deemed by most to be unhygienic. Nor is food thought of as dirty, generally speaking, but it is safe to assume that say, leaving unwashed cooking utensils in an atypical location like a bedroom would be widely frowned upon. According to Douglas, what a given culture identifies as impure, polluted, or defiled is above all something that deviates from established boundaries.

Douglas's ruminations on contamination and purity are especially helpful when thinking more deeply about the anxiety surrounding food consumption in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. As I have repeatedly emphasized throughout this thesis, changes to the established system and its attendant boundaries—in this context, new ways that food was being produced and consumed—meant that many Americans were increasingly fearful about what they ate. Given this cultural climate, it is natural that the comparison Douglas draws between modern secular hygienic practices and deeply rooted religious beliefs can be seen so blatantly in some of the era's food advertising. For example, a 1909 series of advertisements for Parksdale Butter prominently featured a winged and horned demon that is ostensibly meant to represent contamination. "Look Out For Trouble If You Buy Exposed Butter," one of these advertisements warns alongside an illustration of the demon about to enter into a person's mouth on top of a piece of bread (Illustration 5). Another admonishes consumers for not being "butter-wise" as an image of the evilly grinning demon sits atop a mound of the product, wielding pitchfork in hand: "Every time you open the door of your refrigerator you *may*

let in a passing microbe." (Illustration 6)[33] The message is clear: the product itself might be pure, but if packaged improperly or mishandled, it would become dirty and unfit to ingest. In other words, if a consumer deviated from the established hygienic codes by buying butter that was not kept properly according to modern methods, they would face certain danger.

Returning to Mintz and his ideas on the dualistic way we think about purity, a large-scale advertising campaign by the H.J. Heinz Company launched at the turn of the twentieth century was almost entirely comprised of these seemingly opposing discourses that cast purity as something *both* unprocessed and heavily manipulated. With Heinz's entire product line described in one 1906 advertisement as "pure in the strictest sense of the word," the company's advertisements were consistently paradoxical, embracing new technology while concurrently romanticizing food that was made in "the old-fashioned way" using farm-fresh ingredients.[34] For example, this advertisement for Heinz tomato soup prominently features an illustration of the fruit ripening on the vine, and the accompanying copy boasts of the "red-ripe tomatoes, grown on our own farms, from seed of our own cultivation." (Illustration 7)[35] Furthermore, the ad points out that once picked, the tomatoes are cooked with "cream fresh from the dairies." But alongside this emphasis on the natural and wholesome are mentions of the state-of-the-art equipment used to ensure that consumers associated the product with purity and hygiene: "after cooking…the perfect product, steaming hot, is conducted through silver-lined tubes to

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[33] Parksdale Brand Butter advertisements, 1909, Collection no. 59, Box no. 27, Book 126-128, Folder 2, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C. (hereafter referred to as N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records). Emphasis is original.
[34] Heinz – 1906 Records, Collection no. 59, Box no. 248, Book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.
[35] Heinz Tomato Soup advertisement, 1906, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.

sterilized tins of special Heinz make…Consider, moreover, the cleanliness of surroundings, the purity of materials, the painstaking care given to the smallest details." Notably, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, food manufacturers like Heinz and numerous others used their ads to encourage consumers to visit their modern manufacturing facilities to see first-hand the hygienic practices carried out in spaces that were at the same time both homestyle and industrial.[36]

This tension between homemade and manufactured is important when considering the meaning of "pure food" during this period. As Mintz points out, foods that are apparently "natural" and relatively unprocessed are often thought as more healthful and nutritious than those that are heavily manipulated. This is a long-standing discourse that we still see in food writing and advertising and it was certainly also apparent during the Progressive Era. For example, a 1910 Welch's Grape Juice advertisement in *National Food Magazine* that warns consumers against buying other brands of grape juice containing added corn syrup would not be out of place in a similar magazine today. According to this ad, Welch's was superior because it "is just the juice as nature puts it into the choicest Concord grapes…delicious and wholesome as well as pure; an ideal table beverage for old and young."[37] These sentiments are echoed in another advertisement that appeared in the same magazine for Libby's Natural Flavor Food Products. A competitor of Heinz, this manufacturer of canned goods boasted of "the

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[36] Heinz Wide Open Kitchens advertisement, 1906; Heinz Sunshine and Purity advertisement, 1906, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records.
[37] Welch's Grape Juice advertisement, *National Food Magazine* (June 1910), Collection no. 60, Box 28, Warshaw Collection.

natural crispness and flavor" of their pickled vegetables and the lack of preservatives used in their products.[38]

At the same time however, relatively unaltered food products such as raw and unpasteurized milk were regularly condemned for being hazardous to health. "And just what is meant by the expression *dirty milk*?" asked a 1905 report on milk by the Food Committee of the National Consumers' League. "Dirty milk is that which contains large numbers of bacteria due to disease or to lack of care in production, handling and storage at the farm, during transportation and in the home."[39] Authored by a Harvard professor and secretary of Massachusetts' Board of Health, the report provided an outline of the "unfit places" where so much American milk was being produced: "the cows, often diseased, are never cleaned; the milkers are dirty in person and slovenly in their ways; the milking pails and other vessels are not properly cleaned; the milk is not properly cooled, handled and stored, the water supply is quite likely to be of more than doubtful character and exposed to the possibility of contamination with the causes of infective disease."[40] These fears about milk perfectly mirrored Mintz's idea that "pure food" also means goods that are industrially and scientifically manipulated to be aseptic. In their advertisements and marketing materials, Carnation Milk and Borden both describe the sterilized and "hermetically sealed" cans and jars their products were sealed in, with Borden even making special mention of the modern transportation networks that enabled

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[38] Libby's advertisement, *National Food Magazine* (June 1910), Collection no. 60, Box 28, Warshaw Collection.
[39] Charles Harrington, M.D., "The Sanitary Importance of Clean Milk," *Food Committee of the National Consumers' League* report, 1905, 6, Containers C19-C20, Reel 66, National Consumers' League Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. This document was a published speech that was originally read at the Boston Medical Library on December 20, 1905. Emphasis is original.
[40] Ibid.

them to get their milk to consumers quickly and safely.[41] Milk processors were not the only food manufacturers that played up this manmade version of "purity" in their advertising—for example, Walter Baker & Co. branded cocoa was "scientifically blended" to be pure, and the cottonseed oil and beef suet that made up Golden Cottolene cooking fat was "highly refined" to ensure its purity.[42]

Inherently contradictory, these representations of purity based on both ideas of "naturalness" and of scientific manipulation are indicative of a wider discomfort with the industrial production of food, and more broadly, with modernity itself. By the end of the nineteenth century, a growing sense of discontent with modern life began to ferment in the United States as "many of the beneficiaries of modern culture began to feel they were its secret victims."[43] In a complex, ambivalent manner, this unease about modernism often coexisted comfortably alongside an "enthusiasm for material progress," and this was practically nowhere more apparent than in food advertising.[44] This does not come as a surprise, considering that nostalgic modernists were largely among the same "old-stock Protestant…leaders of the American WASP bourgeoisie" who ran the country's nascent advertising industry and on a wider level had a great deal of influence on culture.[45] In what T.J. Jackson Lears describes as a "crisis of cultural authority" in the years after the Civil War, the leaders of the American bourgeoisie grew dissatisfied and even fearful of

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[41] Borden's Condensed Milk pamphlet, undated, Collection no. 60, Box 1, Milk, Warshaw Collection; Carnation Milk advertisement, *American Cookery* (November 1917), Collection no. 60, Box 28, Warshaw Collection.
[42] Cottolene advertisement, *Table Talk* (February 1892): iii, Collection no. 60, Box 28, Warshaw Collection.
[43] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, xiii.
[44] Lovett, *Conceiving the Future*, 11.
[45] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, xiv-xv. According to Lears, this class of men had a profound influence on "the official common sense" of American life: "as some of the most educated and cosmopolitan products of an urbanizing, secularizing society, they were the 'point men' of cultural change. They experienced and articulated moral and psychic dilemmas which later became common in the wider society."

all aspects of modern life, and "began to recognize that the triumph of modern culture had not produced greater autonomy (which was the official claim) but rather had promoted a spreading sense of moral impotence and spiritual sterility—a feeling that life had become not only overcivilized but also curiously unreal."[46] It was these feelings that led to fears of race suicide, the popularity of eugenicist beliefs, and the growing sense that gender roles were in crisis, to name but a few manifestations.

Direct ideological descendants of the Puritans and Jeffersonian republicans, this class had a long history of establishing—and then fretting about upholding—a set of moral standards for Americans to live up to. In a sense, these concerns harkened back to the early seventeenth century Puritan dream of creating a "city upon a hill" for the (Old European) world to look toward as a model, and they had not faded by the second industrial revolution of the 1880s.[47] The American idea that the United States occupies a unique place among nations for the ideals it was founded upon is a deeply rooted one, perhaps expressed best in 1840 by French political thinker and historian Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*:

> The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one. Their strictly Puritanical origin, their exclusively commercial habits, even the country they inhabit, which seems to divert their minds from the pursuit of science, literature, and the arts,

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[46] Ibid., 4-5. These men were most notably dissatisfied with modernity's fixation on so-called "progress," its individualistic ethos, and its emphasis on scientific and technological rationality.

[47] Ibid., 4. As Lears writes, "Puritans and republicans alike had been haunted by fears of the urban 'effeminacy' and 'luxury' produced by material progress," and this only intensified at the turn of the twentieth century as demographic and technological change profoundly altered American life. This deeply ingrained intellectual/philosophical tradition was based on a core idea that "man was a depraved creature whose history was not a linear path of progress but a cyclical process of development and decline." However, in spite of these seemingly obvious parallels between the Puritans and Progressive Era Americans, it is important to note that although Puritanism is often invoked to explain the American character, caution must be exercised. Puritans were not "Americans," and they only inhabited three colonies for a fairly limited period of time before America itself was founded. For more about the flexibility and limitations of Puritan symbolism, see Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York: Routledge ,1993).

> the proximity of Europe, which allows them to neglect these pursuits without relapsing into barbarism, a thousand special causes, of which I have only been able to point out the most important, have singularly concurred to fix the mind of the American upon purely practical objects. His passions, his wants, his education, and everything about him seem to unite in drawing the native of the United States earthward; his religion alone bids him turn, from time to time, a transient and distracted glance to heaven. Let us cease, then, to view all democratic nations under the example of the American people.[48]

In defining itself against the Old World and its apparently corrupt values, the United States fashioned itself from the outset as a moral beacon that could act as a new global leader.[49]

While attempting to describe an inherent, singular American ethos is exceedingly difficult and likely impossible scholarly task, cultural commentators and historians writing at the turn of the twentieth century largely "believed that the fundamental components of American nationality had in fact been recognizably fashioned by the beginning of the nineteenth century."[50] Most notable among these was Frederick Jackson Turner, whose famous "frontier thesis" presented at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair

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[48] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in American Volume 2,* trans. Henry Reeve (New York: J. & H.G. Langley, 1840), 36-37.

[49] Until fairly recently, de Tocqueville's assertions on American exceptionalism held significant sway in the way United States history has been written and taught at all levels. This view has led to a focus on themes like manifest destiny and the idea that the United States has a duty to spread their democratic ideals around the world. One of the most well-known of these is Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955). For newer contrary views, read: Daniel T. Rodgers, "Exceptionalism," in *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, ed. Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 21-40; Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History," *American Historical Review* 96 (October 1991): 1031-1055; Ian Tyrrell, "Ian Tyrell Responds," *American Historical Review* 96 (October 1991): 1068-1072; Rogers Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: the multiple traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* (September 1993): 549-566.

[50] Michael Kammen, *People of Paradox: An Inquiry Concerning the Origins of American Civilization* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 3. Indeed, Kammen's book recognizes the difficultly in doing this, preferring instead to talk about "national style" over "national character." To him, "there are differences between style, which can be perceived, and character, which cannot." He defines style as "the ways we clothe ourselves in certain social roles and emotional robes, the ways we respond to problems, relate to others, and recognize the realities within ourselves; the accommodations and compromises we make." Moreover, he argues that American identity was, from the beginning, built around a series of contradictions.

advanced the argument that American democracy was forged not by established institutions but on the westward-moving frontier. According to Turner, this taming of the wilderness by pioneers—whether seventeenth-century Puritans in New England or the prospectors who rushed to California in search of gold in 1849—is what created the liberal democratic United States. "Now, the frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist," he wrote. "At first, the frontier was the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier becomes more and more American."[51] According to this way of thinking, by throwing off the shackles of Old World life—rigid class stratifications, long-established societal institutions, mores, and practices—in favor of individualism and self-sufficiency, those who settled in the United States had crafted a distinct society unlike any the world had ever seen. By the turn of the twentieth century the United States had a rich cultural and intellectual tradition dominated by a Protestant, native-born elite who held these views.

In spite of their beliefs about (white, native-born) Americans' exceptional status, the "modern predicament"—namely, the ambivalence about whether to embrace or reject the era's changes—had come to vex members of this group during this period. The modernist impulse was especially acute during this particular period in American history, however nebulous it is to firmly define.[52] As Laura Lovett puts it, "when historians

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[51] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894): 199-227.

[52] In his 1987 article on modernist culture in the United States, David Hollinger acknowledges that academics have long fixated on exploring modernity despite this difficulty in capturing its essence: "One savant after another has called for a richer vocabulary, but no one seems willing to give up on 'modernism,' which, for all its vagueness, continues to confer a unique, almost spiritual authority." David A. Hollinger, "The Knower and the Artificer," *American Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 37.

discuss [this impulse] in the science, culture, and politics of the twentieth century, they emphasize a sense among American artists and intellectuals of change, impermanence, subjectivity, and possibility."[53] Heavily shaped by the era's growing faith in science (and social science), the modernist impulse was rooted in the idea that the rationality and pragmatism of these spheres would save the United States from looming ruin. In the words of David Hollinger, it was characterized by the sense "that what our civilization requires in order to be rescued from itself is more likely to come from communities of knowers than from a succession of artist-heroes."[54] These two archetypal personas identified by David Hollinger as "the Knower" (the modern scientist) and "the Artificer" (the modern artist) have historically "been developed in a dialectical relation" wherein those who idealize art disdain science for producing only "meaningless facts" while champions of science have tended to doubt the ability of art to do much more than "express emotions."[55] This schism was certainly apparent during this period, though the lines between these personae were frequently blurred with the rise of social scientists, proponents of "realism" in the arts, and theorists of social democracy and Progressivism.[56]

While some artists and intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century embraced the modernist impulse, others worried about a loss of morality and order: for these people, "the realization of impermanence exposed the groundlessness" of traditional sources of power, and they sought to recreate and uphold order by "directing the process

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[53] Lovett, *Conceiving the Future,* 10.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Hollinger, "The Knower and the Artificer," 40.
[56] Ibid., 37-38. Among these figures were John Dewey, Charles Beard, and H.G. Wells.

of the continual construction of modern society."[57] It was this ambivalence that allowed nostalgia to become so deeply (and paradoxically) enmeshed in the modernist impulse in the United States during this period. Tumultuous times like the Progressive Era have often prompted Americans to look backwards with reverence. As historian Dorothy Ross writes, "the American love of the new turns out the desire to carry within it the desire to recreate the old."[58] Indeed, the nostalgic modernism that appeared during this period was in many ways representative of the age. Michael Kammen writes that "dramatic or unanticipated alterations" often bring about a fetishizing of nostalgia in a given culture or nation. The upheaval brought about by the Civil War, the shift to corporate capitalism, and the secularization of culture during the years from 1860 to 1917 meant that the conditions were particularly ideal for nostalgic modernism to flourish in the United States: "as one momentous century ended and the prospect of a new and uncertain one loomed, [Americans] faced the future as culturally displaced persons. Nostalgia meant more to them that consolation. It provided identity, integrity, and perhaps even a sense of security—however false."[59]

Nostalgic modernism became deeply embedded within mainstream American culture, with its influence felt in the work of historical societies, artists, politicians and reformers who came from the bourgeois class who felt their status was threatened.[60] In the words of historian George Cotkin, "to deal better with the disintegration of society,

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[57] Lovett, *Conceiving the Future*, 10. Social reformers who are considered "Progressives" would fall into this category. Lovett writes that Progressive reformers and politicians attempted to manage and maintain order by creating "a mandate for increasing and consolidating the power of the state."
[58] Dorothy Ross, "Modernist Social Science in the Land of New/Old," in *Modernist Impulses in the Social Sciences 1870-1930,* ed. Dorothy Ross (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 188-189.
[59] Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 295.
[60] Lovett, *Conceiving the Future*, 11-12.

which they understood to be a consequence of modernity, they established cultural and intellectual institutions designed to ease the transition from the Victorian into the modern world. By doing so, they hoped to retain the essential flavor of the earlier era while erecting a system of culture that would synthesize the increasingly diverse and antagonistic parts of American society."[61] Viewing themselves as "cultural custodians" who believed it was "their noble duty" to instill their values into a wide audience, this class attempted to forge a shared culture between "worker and capitalist, immigrant and native-born" that was based on elite values and assumptions.[62]

Though attempts to diffuse "high culture" throughout all levels of American society largely failed, a "cultural synthesis" of sorts was ultimately forged through consumerism, particularly the advertising industry, which was so closely tied to elite interests and values. As Cotkin writes, the bonds that consumer culture created were "not necessarily dissimilar to the original intent behind the dissemination of high culture—to pave over class, racial, ethnic, and sexual distinctions with a roadway that would produce some degree of stability in a world increasingly marked by social conflict and instability."[63] Building upon these themes, William Leach argues that consumer culture at the turn of the century was deliberately shaped by business leaders who worried about the economic crises induced by over-production, which was, they came to see, also a problem of under-consumption. There, the problem was not simply material (did workers earn enough to sustain demand) but cultural: the older Protestant rejection of luxury and

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[61] George Cotkin, *Reluctant Modernism: American Thought and Culture, 1880-1900* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 101.
[62] Ibid., 102. Cotkin notes that these so-called cultural custodians had two reasons for feeling this way: firstly, they believed their values were inherently worthy and good, and secondly, they thought that workers and immigrants "might forget the realities of [the era's troubling] class and power struggles by accepting the assumptions of elite culture."
[63] Ibid., 103.

personal indulgence that had given birth to American industriousness now had to be inverted. By appealing to people's innermost desires, corporations could create longings that would stimulate demand (and therefore profits) for new products and services. This "democratization of desire," as Leach calls it, resulted in "the transformation of American society into a society preoccupied with…comfort and bodily well-being, with luxury, spending, and acquisition, with more goods this year than last, more next year than this."[64] These companies and their institutional allies, Leach argues, were then able to use consumerism to profoundly reshape and even partially erode long-standing American ideals and traditions like producerism and Jeffersonian republicanism. As he puts it, the "nonconsensual" nature of consumer culture (he argues that it came not from "the people," but from the top down) "diminished American public life."[65] By unifying Americans "through desire and consumption—two mainstays of the modern world,"[66] consumer culture and advertising helped acclimatize a mass audience to life under industrial capitalism, but as Roland Marchand's work on the development of this industry has shown, the consumerist vision of modernity presented by advertisers was often a limited one.

This was particularly true in food advertising, where nostalgic modernist discourses served to assuage consumer fears that were both timely and deep-rooted. Whether consciously or unconsciously (though there is no way of knowing for certain), these fears and doubts shaped the ways that "pure food" was marketed to Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. For example, the H.J. Heinz Company used the "Girl in

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[64] William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), xiii.
[65] Leach, xv.
[66] Cotkin 103.

the White Cap" to market its products (Illustrations 8 and 9).[67] In her starched white apron and matching cap, she looks more like a middle-class housewife in her kitchen than a factory worker. Alongside depictions of new equipment and modern manufacturing processes engineered to efficiently produce food in large quantities, Heinz deliberately cultivated an image for their workers that harkened back to domestic ideology set out earlier in the nineteenth century. The Girl in the White Cap was an embodiment of the bourgeois Victorian femininity that was becoming displaced as turn-of-the-century women became increasingly vocal about their desire for new opportunities. Reflective of an earlier feminine ideal, the Girl in the White Cap was depicted as a nurturing caregiver. Her presence in a modern manufacturing facility was a way for Heinz to refashion people's fears about mass-produced food by blurring the lines between impersonal, potentially dangerous modern working space and the safe, secure atmosphere of the home, wherein women were expected to conform to an old-fashioned wifely and motherly ideal.[68] As geographer Mona Domosh explains, "[t]he workplace is not a factory but a 'kitchen,' the workers are not rough and tumble, working-class men but are naturally pure women, and therefore the products are both natural and scientifically germ-free…women are in their proper place…producing good food for their families,

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[67] Heinz advertising card, "The Girl in the White Cap," undated, Collection no. 60, Box 28, Warshaw Collection.

[68] Even in popular women's magazines that in some ways played an activist role in the suffrage movement, there were still articles written by men containing calls to return to earlier gender roles. "Is it not, therefore, about time to put on the brakes, turn our leaders and go back?" asked writer F. Hopkinson Smith in a 1905 *Ladies' Home Journal* article. "[F]or in that way, and in that way only, *can we go forward.* The old-fashioned mother is not so long dead that we can have forgotten her teachings. Her ideals helped us in the old days; they will help us again. Let us go back – *and now*!" F. Hopkinson Smith, "Let Us Go Back," *Ladies' Home Journal* vol. 22, no. 10 (September 1905): 40. Emphasis is original.

albeit families that might reside around the world."[69] In smoothing out the era's anxieties about gender and about industrial modernity, the impact of the Girl in the White Cap was twofold.

In a similar manner, nostalgic modernism in advertisements for "pure food" products often romanticized business practices that were tied to America's agrarian past. At the turn of the century, there was a sense that agriculture was in crisis and there were calls to make farm life more attractive to young people that were fleeing to the nation's booming cities. "The farmer, then, who feels that, because the city papers call him a 'Rube' … he is inferior, lacks character; and he who follows the glare of the electric lights of New York and Chicago on the horizon with longing eyes, because they symbolize unmanly and unworthy pleasures, is less than half educated," declared a 1906 *Ladies' Home Journal* article that discussed the importance of helping farmers obtain formal education to maximize their productivity and happiness. "It is these farmers who have suffered the most from the desertion of the children to the more nervous life of the cities."[70] Idealized images of rural life were common in consumer culture, as advertisements for Heinz and Gold Medal Creamery Butter show, especially when juxtaposed alongside messages about the modern techniques and environment a product was manufactured in.

Moreover, advertising for manufactured food products used nostalgic modernism to address consumer concerns about the distances food travelled before it was purchased,

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[69] Mona Domosh, "Pickles and Purity: Discourses of Food, Empire and Work in Turn-of-the-Century USA." *Social & Cultural Geography* 4, no. 1 (2003): 66.

[70] "The President's Ideas of the Farmer and the Young Man on the Farm," *Ladies' Home Journal* 23, no. 11 (October 1906): 19. This article, purportedly penned by "a writer intimately acquainted and in close touch with [President Theodore Roosevelt]" proclaimed that Roosevelt believed it was "the duty of the Government to help the farmer to help himself," since "the farmers' interests…are not to be separated from the interests of the nation."

and the relative anonymity under which it was produced. A 1910 product cookbook for Campbell's Soups featured a full-colour illustration of the company's expansive red-brick manufacturing facility in Camden, New Jersey. Billed as "the largest establishment devoted to soup-making in the world," it is a clear embodiment of modern mass production[71] (Illustration 10). However, the tone and the illustrations change sharply on the very next page where the reader encounters a full-page illustration of farm workers harvesting bright red tomatoes by hand from a lush green field, a symbolic representation of America's idealized rural past (Illustration 11). The linguistic message conveyed by the accompanying text tells us that the company's production space and their marketing document alike reflect the nostalgic modernist impulse. "Most of the tomatoes we use are grown on our own and adjoining farms," the cookbook (which is titled *Helps for the Hostess*) declares. Having a farm right next door to a factory meant that the produce used by Campbell's would retain "their freshness and natural flavor," and stay "rich in natural sugar and other desirable properties" in comparison to foods from other similarly-sized companies whose raw materials had to be transported across great distances.[72]

As well, by growing their produce locally, this large corporation then was able to support American agriculture, then thought to be in crisis: "Enterprising growers

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[71] *Helps for the Hostess, Compliments of the Makers of Campbell's Soups,* (Camden, NJ: Joseph Campbell Company, 1910), 51. Interestingly, this cookbook is also an example of how marketing was used to distil elite cultural practices and values to a mass audience. It offered not just recipes, but also tips for entertaining that were clearly inspired by the habits of elite Americans. "The manner in which the regular meals are prepared and served is the true index of a family's civilization and class," it proclaimed. "A refined, well-appointed home table gives a recognized social standing…such a table is entirely within reach of moderate means." With a cover illustration of the Campbell Kids dressed in elegant eveningwear, "Helps for the Hostess" included tips about how to properly give a formal dinner, "perhaps the highest test of the social skill and ability of the hostess." Though it is difficult to imagine a middle or working class American woman at the turn of the century caring much about such matters in her own home, it offered hints like how to properly serve a formal dinner à la Russe ("as [it] must be served"), as well as other matters.
[72] Ibid., 54.

cooperate with us cordially in these efforts. In fact, the growing of vegetables for use in Campbell's Soups has become an important and profitable branch of farming throughout this locality."[73] But this promotion of local agriculture was largely illusory when compared to the company's overarching emphasis on industrial modernity. With "every process…conducted with a scientific nicety impossible in a home kitchen or a hotel kitchen," Campbell's attempted to foster an image in its consumers' minds that the many "accomplished experts" involved in the making of their soups ("our Chef and his assistants, our inspectors, buyers, chemists, superintendents") would ensure a final product that was nutritious and pure.[74] By reinforcing the idea that mass-produced food was safe to consume, but only if it was produced in a way that was both modern and old-fashioned, this advertisement and others like it were a microcosm of the American paradox as a whole.

In displaying new technology and ideas on mass production directly beside older ideals surrounding gender roles, race, and rurality, this Campbell's product cookbook—and many other advertisements and marketing documents like it—appealed to the tendency towards nostalgic modernism that was (and still is) ingrained in the collective American imagination. Torn between a longing for their idealized agrarian roots and traditions, and a perpetual desire for newness and change, tumultuous times like the Progressive Era have often prompted bourgeois Americans to look backwards with reverence. In embracing social and cultural changes but romanticizing the past—which advertisers reflected by juxtaposing seemingly incongruous ideals alongside one another—food manufacturers hoped to invoke a nostalgic longing for the past that would

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 11, 12, 14.

foster a sort of "emotional warmth" they hoped would earn them a special place in the hearts (and cupboards) of consumers.[75] Creating these types of symbolic associations between foods made at home and those made in the era's large-scale new manufacturing plants thus had two key consequences. First, more directly, advertisements enabled manufacturers and agencies to benefit financially from this nostalgic modernist impulse, And second, more broadly, they reflect a schism that is still very much a part of American culture: a desire for newness is so often coupled with a sense of anxiety and doubt about the consequences. These conflicting representations of purity, while tapping into age-old discursive frameworks, are also emblematic of a time in the United States that was characterized by acute anxiety about the profound changes sweeping across science, politics, society, and culture.

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[75] Katherine J. Parkin, *Food is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 43.

Illustrations

Illustration 4: This nationalistic 1910 advertisement for Borden's Eagle Brand Condensed Milk is an example of the way advertisers used a "eugenic ideal" to market food products.

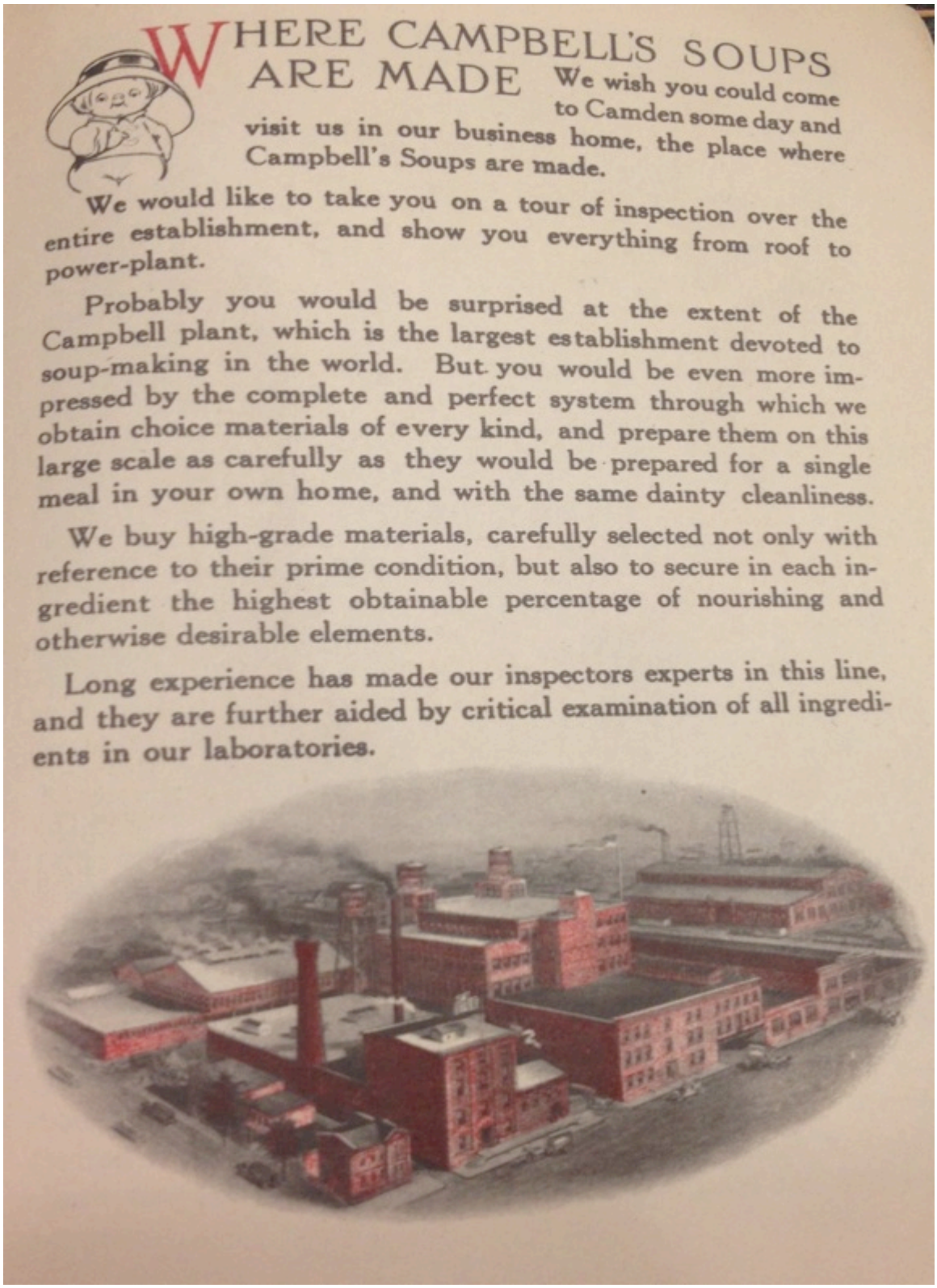
Illustration 5: By depicting impurity as a winged demon, this 1909 butter advertisement ties into the idea expressed by anthropologist Mary Douglas that modern Western beliefs on purity are linked to ancient religious beliefs and rituals.

Illustration 6: Another 1909 advertisement for Parksdale Brand Butter, this depiction of the demon figure on top of the product echoes Douglas's assertion that human beliefs on purity are wrapped up in a need to categorize, maintain and police the environment around us. In this case, a consumer would put their health at risk if they deviated from the established hygienic codes by buying butter that was not kept properly according to modern methods.

Illustration 7: Part of a 1906 advertising campaign, this ad for Heinz tomato soup displays the inherent paradox found in so many of the ads for "pure food" during this time period: new technology was embraced, but traditions were romanticized.

Illustration 8: Heinz used the "Girl in the White Cap" to market its products in order to refashion people's fears about mass-produced food and about shifting gender roles.

Illustration 9: The Girl in the White Cap was an embodiment of the bourgeois Victorian femininity that was falling out of favor in the Progressive Era.



WHERE CAMPBELL'S SOUPS ARE MADE

We wish you could come to Camden some day and visit us in our business home, the place where Campbell's Soups are made.

We would like to take you on a tour of inspection over the entire establishment, and show you everything from roof to power-plant.

Probably you would be surprised at the extent of the Campbell plant, which is the largest establishment devoted to soup-making in the world. But you would be even more impressed by the complete and perfect system through which we obtain choice materials of every kind, and prepare them on this large scale as carefully as they would be prepared for a single meal in your own home, and with the same dainty cleanliness.

We buy high-grade materials, carefully selected not only with reference to their prime condition, but also to secure in each ingredient the highest obtainable percentage of nourishing and otherwise desirable elements.

Long experience has made our inspectors experts in this line, and they are further aided by critical examination of all ingredients in our laboratories.

Illustration 10: This illustration from a 1910 product cookbook for Campbell's Soups shows the company's expansive and modern factory in Camden, New Jersey.

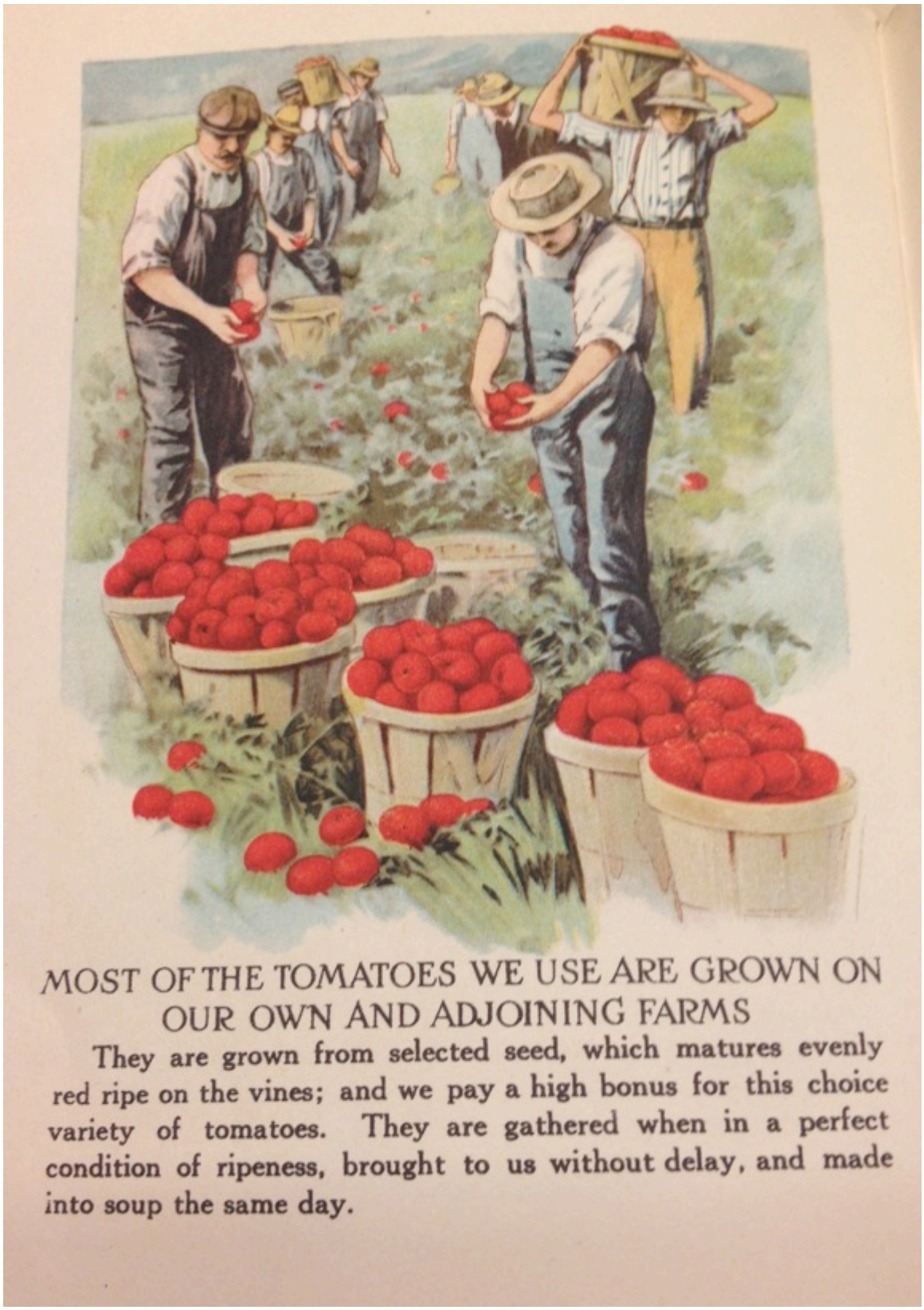


Illustration 11: In the same cookbook, agriculture is romanticized, demonstrating the nostalgic modernist impulse that was so pervasive in the era's food advertising.

Conclusion

Above all, the search for authenticity eluded the American bourgeoisie at the turn of the twentieth century. Trapped in a world increasingly far-removed from the way of life espoused by their Jeffersonian and Puritan predecessors, the "internalized morality of self-control and autonomous achievement" of secular modern culture was profoundly troubling for them.[1] Deep-seated Victorian notions of social and sexual propriety made it seem next-to-impossible to achieve what historian T.J. Jackson Lears describes as "intense experience," which could be either physical or emotional. As he writes, "there was no longer the opportunity for bodily testing provided by rural life, no longer the swift alteration of despair and exhilaration which characterized the old-style Protestant conversion. Bourgeois existence seemed a narrow path, with no erratic emotional detours."[2] It was no wonder, then, that this pervasive feeling of "frustrated helplessness" seeped into the nation's consumer culture, then largely the province of this class who shaped it from the top down.[3] The nostalgic modernist impulse seen in so much of the era's advertising (particularly for mass-produced food products) is a direct byproduct of this urge to recapture the fading "realness" of American life.[4] Looking even more narrowly at the way "pure food" was marketed to consumers in the United States during this period, we can see that these documents can be interpreted as a microcosm for a much larger cultural phenomenon.

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[1] T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture* (Pantheon Books: New York: 1981), 5-6.
[2] Ibid., 48.
[3] Lears writes that "because they were among the most influential cultural leaders of the American ruling class, antimodern thinkers played a key (albeit often unknowing) role in revitalizing the cultural hegemony of their class during a protracted period of crisis." Ibid., 57-58.
[4] There is a rich irony about this, since advertising itself is in many ways an embodiment of the impersonal, artificial, and highly bureaucratic aspects of modernity that nostalgic modernists wished to decry.

This demand for realness and honesty (in other words, for the authentic) was a powerful part of American culture during the Progressive Era and it remains so today. As philosopher and journalist Andrew Potter writes in his 2010 book *The Authenticity Hoax,* "in reaction against the isolation, shallowness, and alienation of everyday life, people everywhere are demanding the exact opposite."[5] Today, just like at the turn of the twentieth century, "authenticity"—namely, the concept that it is analogous with sincerity and morality—"has worked its way through our entire worldview…[for example] when we meet people who are living inauthentic lives, we call them 'shallow' or 'superficial,' as opposed to the more authentic folk who are 'deep' or 'profound.'"[6] These feelings were especially palpable in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Miles Orvell writes that this period was characterized by "a shift from a culture in which the arts of imitation and illusion were valorized to a culture in which the notion of authenticity became of primary value."[7] As he describes it, late nineteenth century faith in the machine "as a agent for democratizing luxury and diffusing high culture through imitations of elite forms" was replaced by ambivalence about industrial production and a need to create "more 'authentic' works that were themselves real things."[8] Moreover, he incisively points out that conditions during this period were perfect for concerns about authenticity to arise: in a society like Progressive Era America, fears about fraud

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[5] Andrew Potter, *The Authenticity Hoax: How We Get Lost Finding Ourselves* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 4.
[6] Ibid., 10.
[7] Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), xv.
[8] Ibid., xvi, xv.

(whether commercial, social, political, or aesthetic) "routinely occur, especially when the society becomes so large that one usually deals with strangers, not neighbors."[9]

Then and now, food consumption is a particularly effective framework when examining these ideas. Much as we can see when studying the myriad of anxieties surrounding food consumption during the Progressive Era, today's mounting concerns about the evils of corporate factory farming, and the importance of locally grown, fairly traded, and organic foods are centered around an underlying idea that "a small community is more valuable and more rewarding that the wasteful and messy free-for-all of mass consumerism."[10] In other words, no matter the period, we romanticize the supposedly "more authentic" past when we feel alienated from modern culture, and given the centrality of food in all of our lives, it becomes a helpful lens to look though when exploring this compulsion more closely.[11]

Although questions about realness and falsehood have long vexed scholars, literary critic Lionel Trilling's 1972 book *Sincerity and Authenticity* is widely considered to be one of the first works to look closely at the relationship between ideas on authenticity and the birth of the modern world.[12] According to Trilling, "[authenticity] is a word of ominous import" borrowed from the art world that "points to the peculiar nature of our fallen condition, our anxiety over the credibility of existence and of

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[9] Ibid., xvii.
[10] Potter, 13.
[11] Indeed, Potter's central argument is that "the whole authenticity project that has occupied us moderns for the past two hundred and fifty years is a hoax…there is really no such thing as authenticity, not in the way it needs to exist for the widespread search to make sense." Ibid.
[12] Beyond Trilling's book, other seminal texts about modernity and authenticity include Peter Berger, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1973); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). While each author approaches the subject differently, all three emphasize the connections between the formation of ideas on authenticity and profound shifts in the relationship with the individual self and society.

individual existences."[13] Building on this idea that has notable biblical overtones, Potter and others have explained that "we became separated from nature, from society, and even from ourselves" following the advent of modernity; our goal ever since we have lived in this "fallen state" is to "find our back to that original and authentic unity."[14] To him, this search for authenticity "is about the search for meaning in a world where all the traditional sources—religion and successor ideals such as aristocracy, community, and nationalism—have been dissolved in the acid of science, technology, capitalism, and liberal democracy."[15] In a time like Progressive Era America where many of these elements had began to fade away or shift, the conditions were especially ripe for the idealization of the authentic.

The search for authenticity was markedly present in the way that mass-produced food products were marketed in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. In fetishizing ideas about "realness" and "honesty," this quest directly paralleled the values advertisers and manufacturers wanted to highlight about the apparent purity of their goods. When purity was emphasized for both timely and age-old reasons, touting a product's "natural" ingredients and unadulterated composition was a way for companies to lessen consumers' hesitations and fears about product safety. On a deeper level, taking this approach—whether consciously or otherwise—allowed advertisers to create a symbolic association in consumers' minds between particular branded products and nostalgic modernist ideals. Embracing the age's industrial methods of production while

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[13] According to Trilling, authenticity as a concept in the art world (and otherwise) directly corresponds to an object's worthiness, in terms that are both reverential and financial, or as he puts it, if certain works are what they are claimed to be, then they become "worth the admiration they are being given." Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: Harvard University Press, 1972), 93.
[14] Potter, 11. See also Jay Newman, *Inauthentic Culture and its Philosophical Critics* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).
[15] Potter, *The Authenticity Hoax*, 12.

also venerating aspects of "authentic" American culture thought to be in crisis largely because of this new economic style (i.e., traditional gender roles, small-town agrarian life), the way that "pure food" products were marketed reflect a paradox that cuts to the very core of the American experience and acted as a sort of therapeutic method to allow for the accommodation of the modern.

In no place is this more apparent than the way that Westfield, Massachusetts was promoted as the United States' "Pure Food Town." In 1903, chemistry professor and pure food advocate Lewis B. Allyn took a position at the Westfield State Normal School and approached his new job with the outlook that "practical chemistry ought to be made really practical."[16] Offering courses in food analysis, he taught students how to detect common adulterants considered so problematic in food and drug products. This apparently began after a number of students became ill after eating strawberry jam during a school lunch. His chemistry class then tested it and found that in spite of the "brightly lithographed label" featuring "berries luscious and ripe on the vine," the product contained "no particle of strawberry" but plenty of red coal-tar dye, grass seeds, artificial flavors, and salicylic acid instead.[17] Shocked by these findings, Allyn and his students then dedicated themselves to making further investigations into American-made food products. Gaining the attention of the local board of health, and the popular press, Westfield soon became a key center of the pure food movement in a way that would likely have been impossible had it been located in a larger metropolis and spearheaded by different people.

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[16] "How Westfield Became a Pure Food Town," *The Day* (New London, CT), December 10, 1914.
[17] Ibid.

Westfield was the archetypal small town so revered by Americans. Located in New England—arguably a very "authentically" American region of the country, especially to the elite native-born class that exerted so much influence over the nation's culture—it is described in a 1914 newspaper article as "a typical little New England town of broad streets and tall elms."[18] With a population of 16,044 in 1910, it would not be incorporated as a city until 1920.[19] When the Westfield Board of Health partnered with Allyn and the Normal School students to formulate the "Westfield Standard" for food products, it was welcomed enthusiastically.[20] Starting in 1912, the Westfield Board of Health published a guide to pure food products (*The Westfield Book of Pure Foods)* that, although intended initially for local use only, soon became circulated nationwide. For example, *Vogue* magazine ran an advertisement for the guide in 1915 that prominently featured Allyn and described "his exacting food standards" that could "likewise make your home 'A Pure Food Home.'"[21] Containing an exhaustive list of branded food products that met the Westfield Standard, this guide was written with the notion that "public interest seems centered more upon hearing the name of an honest brand of goods,

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[18] Ibid. The accompanying illustration for this article features a prototypical American main street lined with leafy trees and Federal style buildings. However, it must be noted that a New England town like Westfield would not be considered "authentic" according to the famous Turner thesis, which postulated that authentic Americanism occurred far away from this region on the frontier.

[19] *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Statistics for Massachusetts Containing Statistics of Population, Agriculture, Manufactures and Mining for the State, Counties, Cities, and Other Divisions,* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), 575.

[20] The Westfield Standard stipulated that food should not contain additives and preservatives including alum, benzoic acid, boric acid, copper, formaldehyde, coal tar dyes, or poisonous coloring agents. Furthermore, it stated that food products should be packed and sold under hygienic conditions and labeled properly. "Westfield – "The Pure Food Town," *Hampden County History,* accessed April 15, 2014, http://www.hampdencountyhistory.com/westfield/wf250/p26.html.

[21] Pure Food Department advertisement, *Vogue* 46, no. 6 (September 15, 1915): 144. This advertisement was for the *Westfield Pure Food Book*, which was being offered by the Pure Food Dept. of McClure Publications where Allyn acted as food editor.

than in knowing what a dishonest one contains."[22] Created in a small town in part by amateurs rather than by slick corporate professionals working out of one of the nation's teeming cities, the Westfield Standard and corresponding "detailed list of high grade, pure, honest, food products" seemed above all, authentic for its ties to small town America and therefore more trustworthy.[23]

Linking standards for pure food to deeply-rooted ideas about small town life and values is a prime example of what Potter describes as "conspicuous authenticity." If, as he writes, "authentic social relations are built around small, organic communities that are nonhierarchal, noncommercial, and nonexploitative," then Westfield represents a fairly calculated attempt to craft a discourse around "pure food" based on notions of wholesomeness, morality, and honesty.[24] However, at a time when fears about mass-produced foods were at an all-time high, and the advertising industry was becoming a force to be reckoned with in the United States' new corporate capitalist economy, this discourse became inextricably linked with marketing interests. One need only look at Heinz's 1906 advertising campaign to see this, with its declarations about product purity ("Vinegar That is Vinegar," "The Real Goodness of Heinz Mince Meat") and assertions that it had the consumers' best interests at heart ("Your Health of the Manufacturers' Profit!).[25] By co-opting this discourse on authenticity and capitalizing on consumer fears—not simply about food safety, but also about the changing nature of American

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[22] L.B. Allyn, Luther H. Beals, A.T. Schoonmaker, W.M. Porter, *The Westfield Book of Pure Foods* (Westfield, MA: Board of Health of the Town of Westfield, 1912): 2, Box 207, Harvey Washington Wiley Papers, 1854-1954, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Potter, *The Authenticity Hoax,* 133.
[25] Heinz – 1906 Records, Collection no. 59, Box no. 248, Book 447, N.W. Ayer Advertising Agency Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C.

culture at large—advertising for commercially produced "pure food" items reflected a broader ambivalence about modernity that remains an ever-present part of American life.

Although these Progressive Era advertisements provide us with a direct window into the cultural attitudes and values of the society that produced them, they also reveal much about the origins of present-day attitudes on food production and consumption in the United States. By moving the story of the pure food movement away from political and women's histories and towards cultural history (particularly that of advertising and consumer culture), this study has aimed to demonstrate that the marketing discourse surrounding pure food was ultimately reflective of broader themes about American life that still resonate. With a legacy that can be seen so blatantly in the current (and relentless) promotion of American-made food products that are apparently "organic," "natural," and "artisanal," this discourse is certainly an enduring one that captures the paradoxical essence of the American experience, namely that progress is welcomed, but also feared. As the promotion of pure food[26] then and now demonstrates, the compulsion to return to an earlier age when life was more "real" and "honest" existed at the turn of the twentieth century as strongly as it does today.

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[26] Though the term "pure food" is not used as a frequently as a marketing tool today as it was at the turn of the twentieth century, the same sentiments remain, albeit using different terminology. For example, words found in contemporary food advertising such as "natural," "wholesome," and "goodness" can be considered synonymous with the Progressive Era's "purity" and "pure."

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