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Who's Your Mammy?: Figuring and Refiguring Aunt Jemima

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**WHO'S YOUR MAMMY?
FIGURING AND REFIGURING AUNT JEMIMA**

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Dr. Merrill Schleier

by

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INTRODUCTION

In existence since the late 1890s, advertising icon Aunt Jemima has been indelibly etched into the American memory—virtually unchanged from her debut until her makeover in 1989. Before this recent transformation, Aunt Jemima was the quintessential embodiment of the mammy stereotype—a heavysset black woman, complete with apron and bandana. Her creation was situated at the locus of several racist traditions and discourses directed towards African Americans—the mammy stereotype, the minstrel show, *The Myth of the Old South*, and the *Exhibition of the Other*. This embodiment of multiple racist practices helps to explain how the mammy in general, and Aunt Jemima in particular, served white businessmen faithfully, who took advantage of the racist ideology inherent in the mammy stereotype to boost sales. It also sets the stage for contemporary black female artists, who use the icon to challenge the stereotypes constructed for black women by hegemonic racist discourses.

In the first part of the paper, I establish how Aunt Jemima is firmly rooted in racist traditions of post-Civil War America—describing how Aunt Jemima is the epitome of the mammy stereotype, her roots on the minstrel stage and her debut on the Midway Plaisance of the 1893 Columbian World's Exposition, which places her in the tradition of the "Exhibition of the Other."ⁱ I then move into a discussion of advertisements from the Legend of Aunt Jemima that began its run in 1919.

Cultural critic Michelle Wallace, in her article "Defacing History," posits questions one should consider when studying images of blacks in visual art. Her questions are, "Have racial myths been supported by specific visual constructions that have evolved in Western or American art history? What role, if any, does gender play in

visual representations of race?"ⁱⁱⁱ I work to answer these questions by examining how Aunt Jemima is the embodiment of the racialized traditions mentioned earlier and, taking these into consideration, how the advertisements of Aunt Jemima worked to maintain the status of black women as third class citizens—inhibited by their race, gender, and class.ⁱⁱⁱ The ads I select for analysis focus on different aspects of The Legend of Aunt Jemima, paying close attention to the narration, illustrations, and its relation to the Myth of the Old South^{iv}.

In the second part of the paper, I will look at Aunt Jemima as an icon of agency for contemporary black female artists, namely Faith Ringgold, Renee Cox, and Kara Walker. Whereas the representation of Aunt Jemima has been, for the most part, controlled by white men, these artists stake their claim in the image, challenging the mammy stereotype and the nostalgic Myth of the Old South. Drawing on their experiences as actual black women, these artists change mammy linguistically and visually, developing what cultural critic bell hooks calls "the oppositional gaze," a gaze that challenges the white patriarchal gaze imposed on women by the dominant American culture.

Ringgold elevates Jemima's class status and pens a new legend for Aunt Jemima. To analyze the work, I focus on the work's relation to the Ringgold's biography. Renee Cox, the second artist I focus on, places herself in the role of the stereotype—revealing stereotypical constructions of the black female body false. I work Cox's alter-ego, Raje, into the notion of the "northern servant" posited by Trudier Harris as a method the artist uses to upset raced and gendered stereotypes imposed on black women. Kara Walker explodes the stereotypes that have contained black women and in doing so, implicates the

viewer in the myth making process. In my analysis of Walker's works, I rely on concepts of boundaries and the body to examine how the artist creates spaces of agency to explode racial stereotypes. I also rely on Homi Bhabha's concept of the "time-lag" that, along similar lines to hooks' oppositional gaze, provides the postcolonial subject with a way to challenge hegemony. For all three artists, I consider the choice of media, discussing how Ringgold elevates traditional African American art forms to the level of high art, Cox's denial of the scientific gaze through her use of photography, and the potential for pollution in Walker's use of the cutout silhouette. All three artists work to subvert image modes that have historically been used to disempower the black female subject.

AUNT JEMIMA—MAMMY EXTRAORDINAIRE

The mammy stereotype is one of the most pervasive stereotypes in American culture, propagated by movies including *Gone with the Wind*, *Raisin in the Sun*, numerous novels and histories of the antebellum South, and of course, Aunt Jemima pancake mix.^v Mammy was the slave who was blessed enough to be in charge of all domestic work in her mistress's home. Her tasks were numerous and never ending—she cooked, cleaning, sewed, gave the mistress sage advice and cared for her children. She was loyal, hard working, and well cared for—the ideal slave.

Visually, she was depicted as dark-skinned, aged and obese. Dressed in rags, apron and bandana, she provides a foil to the femininity and sexuality of her mistress, as well as the sexualized, bestial Jezebel—the hypersexual female black slave.^{vi} Her clothing was a signifier of her class and slave status—artist and art historian Michael D. Harris points to the bandana, both as a sign of slave status that can be traced to Caribbean plantations, and as a desexualizing agent that covered black women's hair, which he

describes as a mark of identity for black women. Mammy's skin color, age and weight made it possible for her to work in the house—made grotesque against American ideals of femininity and beauty, mammy was aligned closer to the work animal than to her mistress—there was no chance that her presence in her master's home would lead to wandering eyes.

Mammy's heaviness also served another purpose—it was an indication that slavery could not have been that bad. If mammy was overweight, then she must have been well fed and well treated. The myth of mammy was vital to uphold the Myth of the Old South, used to gloss over the hardships enacted on black by slavery. Art historian Jo-Ann Morgan offers several reasons for mammy's popularity in post-Civil War America:

Because she was a survivor from the Old South, her continued service to a white mistress, now her northern employer, was a reunifying gesture toward North-South reconciliation. At the same time Mammy became a defender of class privilege and the status quo. By remaining in the kitchen or the nursery, she offered a ready solution not only to the problem of how to assimilate former slaves into contemporary society, but also to the challenge of how to keep the middle-class Euro-American woman in her "ladylike" role of home administrator.^{vii}

Along similar lines, advertising historian Marilyn Kern-Foxworth notes, "Blacks were used extensively during the post-slavery era because they reinforced the stereotype of the docile servant who was always ready to serve humbly. Whether consciously or unconsciously conceived, advertising was a structured mechanism that eroded the self-esteem of blacks and kept them powerless."^{viii}

Aunt Jemima is an exemplary mammy and one advertisement from *The Legend of Aunt Jemima* includes several hallmarks of the stereotype. *The Last Christmas on the Old Plantation*, 1919 (fig. 1) features Aunt Jemima's role as mammy, defined in terms of physical appearance, cooking ability, and childrearing duties. My analysis of this

advertisement will be followed by a history of the advertising icon, as well as analyses of other ads in the series, which generally focus on one of the hallmarks of the stereotype (in addition to Jemima's astounding cooking ability).

The series was developed by advertising agent James Webb Young, who drew on his experiences growing up in Kentucky to pen the Legend.^{ix} The Aunt Jemima Mills Company commissioned illustrator N.C. Wyeth to complete the imagery for the series. Wyeth visually molded Aunt Jemima in the form of mammy. Size and skin color create clear racial demarcations between Aunt Jemima and the white women in the advertisement. While the bodies of the white women are curved because of corsets and bustles, the protruding breasts and waist of Jemima are her own. Her skin, meanwhile, is much darker in comparison to the fair women who surround her. Indeed, the copy of the advertisement even emphasizes Jemima's skin color, stating, "the Colonel and his guests praise Aunt Jemima till her black face was all aglow with pride."^x

Another feature of Aunt Jemima in this advertisement that is characteristic of the mammy is her relationships with her master's children. One caption from the advertisement reads, "The children, stuffed like little geese, delight in teasing Aunt Jemima."^{xi} Jemima has provided for her white charges well—not only feeding them, but providing them with a source of amusement as well. The caption is also indicative of how low mammy's status was in the Southern household—Jemima didn't simply play with the children. No, they took "delight in teasing Aunt Jemima." The (at least) middle-aged mammy seems to earn little respect from the white children under her care.

Of course, all these stereotypical attributes are compounded on the one feature that makes Aunt Jemima the exemplary mammy—her ability to cook. The advertisement,

How Aunt Jemima Saved the Colonel's Moustache and His Reputation as Host (fig. 2) presents this cooking ability as a natural, inborn talent. The only reference to Jemima's family in the series, the ad recounts how Jemima's tremendous cooking ability was discovered. Her mother, Aunt Eliza, "got a mis'ry," and was unable to prepare breakfast for his Colonel's guests. All is saved, however, by "Jemima's unusual skill in the kitchen."^{xii} She immediately begins cooking and, impresses the Colonel so much, replaced her mother as head of the kitchen. By capturing Jemima's innate skills in a box, *The Last Christmas* promises, "the most inexperienced cook can make cakes with the same flavor that delighted those holiday guests on the old plantation!"^{xiii}

Morgan describes mammies as hucksters, who "became fixtures on trade cards, product labels, and song sheet covers—almost anywhere advertisers could exploit the former slaves' well-honed domestic skills to attract buyers."^{xiv} Of course, the most famous and enduring of these fixtures is Aunt Jemima, an icon that is well into its second century of existence. Her likeness was disseminated to the American public at large. Her presence branched out beyond the supermarket aisles—extending its reach through promotional objects, including rag dolls and salt and peppershakers.^{xv}

The history of Aunt Jemima as an advertising icon began in 1889 when Charles Rutt, owner of the Pearl Milling Company (the precursor to Aunt Jemima Mills), viewed a minstrel performance featuring the character of Aunt Jemima, and found the perfect image to represent his newly developed ready-mixed pancake flour. The white performer in blackface had donned a bandana and apron to play the role of a slave cook. These qualities were subsequently embedded in the mammy stereotype—loyal servitude, an overly genial outlook, and a profound ability to cook—that drew Rutt to the image.

The minstrel tradition was one grounded in racial difference. Consisting generally of traveling minstrel shows, minstrelsy was linked inextricably to blackface—the practice of putting black makeup on white performers, enabling them to portray black characters. Historian Robert C. Toll describes the act of the first successful minstrel group, The Virginia Minstrels, popular in the early 1840s:

They bust on stage in makeup which gave the impression of huge eyes and gaping mouths. They dressed in ill-fitting, patchwork clothes, and spoke in heave 'nigger' dialects. Once on stage, they could not stay still for an instant. Even while sitting, they contorted their bodies, cocked their heads, rolled their eyes, and twisted their outstretched legs. When the music began, they exploded in a frenzy of grotesque and eccentric movements.^{xvi}

Popular in the Northeast, where audience members were least familiar with the institution of slavery, minstrel performers in blackface fulfilled expectations on what blackness should be. Filling a prescriptive role, these actors helped to establish in the northern mind what blackness signified: stupidity, laziness, and buffoonish character. Toll goes on to describe the minstrel performance as a complete falsehood—more than just white actors in heavy makeup, Toll traces the themes and source materials for blackface back to Anglo-American, not African American, themes.

This discussion of how minstrelsy affected images of African American men allows us to see how much the tradition would have affected African American women, who were demeaned on account of both their race and sex. The performance of Aunt Jemima witnessed by Rutt was artificial on two counts—the performer was in blackface and in drag. As Judith Michelle Williams notes, "A black woman's absence in [the minstrel] milieu existed on several levels, two of the most significant are: black women were not the authors of their representations; they were not the actors who portrayed

those characterizations on stage. These representations of black women were also untruthful^{xvii} and contained on the absence of the reality of black women's existence."^{xviii}

The display of foreign bodies in exhibitions has been traced by artist Coco Fusco to the return of Christopher Columbus's first expedition to America, where he brought several Native American to show in Spain. The practice of displaying colonial subjects at fairs, zoos and museums continued through the early twentieth century, where nude "black" bodies were exhibited for their Otherness, emphasizing differences between colonizer and colonized. Nancy's Green debut as a "real-life" Aunt Jemima places Jemima within the tradition of the Exhibition of the Other. The Davis Milling Company presented her at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, where they "constructed the world's largest flour barrel, 24 feet high and 16 feet in diameter. Doors were mounted in the side, and the interior was fitted out as a reception parlor to entertain visitors. Outside the barrel, near the front, was Nancy Green in the persona of Aunt Jemima. She cooked pancakes, sang songs, and told stories of the Old South while greeting fair visitors."^{xix} (fig. 3) This exhibit was located on the Midway Plaisance, where it sat alongside villages constructed to represent cultures from across the globe. Included was a village representative of the African colony of Dahomey, where nude Africans were made to pose for onlookers in a display of difference.

The language used in Rossiter Johnson's comprehensive *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition* captures the reactions invoked by the Dahomey Village in its American audience:

The Dahomey Village consisted of thirty native houses, with a population of sixty-nine people, of whom twenty-one were Amazon warriors. Sight-seers regarded with wonder and intense interest the actions of these chocolate-hued West African barbarians and were fascinated with the

savagery of the fetish war dance performed by the Amazons. There was a museum of native arms, and the Dahomeyans worked at their rude arts of goldsmithing, weaving, and blacksmithing.^{xx}

The description of the village indicates that the Africans on display were viewed as inferior specimens. Adjectives such as "savagery", "fetish", and "rude" serve to place the Africans on a lower plane of civilization than the Eastern and European cultures. This was reinforced by the "natives" level of undress. The description is paired with a photograph of nude Dahomeyan women, promoting the popular notion that Africans were lascivious creatures—the village was constructed and filled to satisfy Western conceptions of blackness (fig. 4). In this context, Aunt Jemima must be viewed as linked to the tradition of the Exhibition of the Other—where the Dahomeyans were exploited by fair organizers to maintain an ideology of blackness, Nancy Green was used to promote Aunt Jemima pancake flour and the Myth of the Old South.^{xxi}

Indeed, it was this very practice of having women perform in supermarkets, county fairs and expositions that tied together the many racist traditions that are conflated with Aunt Jemima. Independent scholar M.M. Manring states that the performing Jemimas combine the tradition of traveling salesmen with minstrelsy, convincing audiences that the performer was an authentic slave cook. "A real living black woman, instead of a white man in blackface and drag, would reinforce the product's authenticity and origin as the creation of a real ex-slave."^{xxii} Hence, at Aunt Jemima's debut at the Columbian World's Exposition, the icon was already strongly linked to the minstrel stage and the Exhibition of the Other. However, while those links may have faded from the American collective consciousness over time, the advertisements and packaging for Aunt Jemima pancake flour continued to locate her as the stereotype of the mammy.

Aunt Jemima's grounding in the racist traditions of the mammy stereotype, minstrelsy, *The Myth of the Old South* and the *Exhibition of the Other* establishes and advertising icon that, in its very nature, works to uphold the racial hierarchy in which whites are valorized and blacks are made second-class citizens. The Legend of Aunt Jemima not only upholds the mammy stereotype, as outlined above, but serves to reinforce the idealized myth of the Old South as well. This is exemplified in the advertisement, *When the Robert E. Lee Stopped at Aunt Jemima's Cabin*, the only advertisement in the series that takes place after the Civil War (fig. 5). The advertisement was produced in 1919, in the aftermath of the First World War and in the midst of the large migration of African Americans from the rural south to the urban north, where they hoped to find employment and escape racism. The advertisement shows Aunt Jemima living in the same cabin on Colonel Higbee's plantation twenty years after the war as she did when she was still enslaved. Following the mammy tradition, Aunt Jemima was so loyal to her master that she failed to move off the plantation following her emancipation. Here, the ad indicates, is an ideal black person, one who remains in the South instead of fleeing north when given the chance. This advertisement served as a form of social control. In the midst of the mass migration of African Americans, the advertisement enumerated the "proper" place for black women. In terms of space, she belonged in the South, on the same plantation she worked on under slavery. In terms of occupation and class, she was relegated to domestic service occupations, at or near slave status.

Aunt Jemima's interaction with whites is also indicative of the mammy tradition. The Legend reflects on events that take place during the Civil War, in which Aunt Jemima rescues a band of Confederate soldiers with a generous helping of her famous

pancakes. How bad could slavery be, the advertisement seems to ask, if Aunt Jemima is willing to feed and house the very soldiers that are fighting to keep her enslaved? Art historian Jo-Ann Morgan combines the social control and idealizing functions of the mammy stereotype:

Scenes of happy mammies continuing to work in kitchens placated northerners concerned about preserving the southern labor force. And if mammy voluntarily remained with "Missus" and "Massa" even though now freed, perhaps the slave-holding planter had not been so villainous after all.^{xxiii}

Wyeth's illustrations also serve to marginalize Aunt Jemima within her own legend. Instead of being about Aunt Jemima, the story is really about the ex-soldiers aboard the Robert E. Lee, who remembered her pancakes and convinced her to sell her secret recipe for all to share. Indeed, the dominant image in the advertisement features only the soldiers aboard the Robert E. Lee—Aunt Jemima is pictured in smaller images, further down the page.

The advertisement, *The Poor Little Bride of 1860*, illustrates how mammy was used as a foil for white femininity (fig. 6). Always the friendly advice giver, Jemima allows the newlywed bride to observe her cooking the pancakes her husband found so delicious. The ad served a prescriptive function—not only in its placement of the black female body within a specific class and occupation—it used Aunt Jemima as a tool to educate women of the 1920s on how to be proper wives, or even as subservient as slaves. The copy states, "The little bride, filled with a sudden new interest in housekeeping, enjoyed nothing more than going out to the big kitchen. She never tired of watching Aunt Jemima bustling around preparing the delectable meals for which the Higbee's home was famous."^{xxiv} A wife, the ad states, must keep her husband satisfied

through housekeeping and, especially, food preparation. Where the poor little bride of 1860 failed to appease her husband's craving for delicious pancakes, "the bride of 1920 need never disappoint him."^{xxv} Furthermore, the availability of ready-mixed Aunt Jemima pancake flour ensured that white women would never need to work as hard as a slave to prepare her husband's food—she could spend more of her time outside of the kitchen.

This leads into my discussion of the boxed pancake mix. As the advertisements show, the Aunt Jemima boxes of the 1920s feature a portrait of Aunt Jemima, unlike today's boxes, which feature a photograph of the product, with Jemima relegated to a corner of the box front. The design of the packaging (having the likeness of ex-slave Nancy Green dominate the box front), as well as the concept of the product (selling Aunt Jemima's secret pancake recipe), creates a situation in which a daily reenactment of slave auctions take place at the local supermarket. Here, a black woman is literally bought and sold for the benefit of white consumers. Furthermore, when the product is spent and Aunt Jemima was no longer needed, the box—Aunt Jemima, herself—is thrown out. Although the institution of slavery as the trade of actual human bodies was made illegal in the 1860s, the symbolic slavery enacted by the purchase and disposal of Aunt Jemima continues in the present.

Indeed, the last idea I want to touch on in this section is the black woman's invisibility. Although narratives of the antebellum South recounted mammy as a beloved figure, in actuality, she too was removed from the plantation household when no longer needed. This is reflected in *How Aunt Jemima Saved the Colonel's Moustache*, as a young Jemima is able to jump into the kitchen to cook pancakes at the instant her mother, the previous mammy, falls ill. And this automatic replacement of the black woman continues

in the history of the product, reinforced as mostly anonymous African American women were hired to portray Aunt Jemima in supermarkets, trade shows, restaurants, and exhibitions. This is reflected again in the purchase and disposal of Aunt Jemima's likeness on her pancake boxes.

Despite the popularity of Aunt Jemima as an advertising icon, however, Jemima has never had a voice or identity of her own throughout her career as a huckster. She remains, to this day, a puppet of hegemony and the white business interests who craft her. Her character was determined years before her genesis, through minstrel acts, exhibitions, "scientific" documentation, and narrative that rewrote the history of the antebellum South. Illustrators like N.C. Wyeth, the various mills companies that have owned the trademark, and the admen who developed her story and marketed it to the public further shaped her.

CONTEMPORARY BLACK FEMALE ARTISTS

The circumstances surrounding the genesis of Aunt Jemima as an advertising icon ensured the creation of a spokeswoman for white hegemonic interests. Her roots lie in the racist traditions of the mammy stereotype, The Myth of the Old South, and the Exhibition of the Other—traditions that at once upheld an idealized revision of slavery and the antebellum South while ensuring a climate of white privilege. Aunt Jemima, throughout her career as a huckster, worked to aid white women uphold idealized visions of femininity, while directing a derogatory femininity towards African American women.

Aunt Jemima was never given an opportunity to speak for herself. Ever the obedient mammy, she was endlessly loyal to the power structures that worked to keep her enslaved. She existed as pure artificiality, a series of masks—worn by white men in

blackface on the minstrel stage and then by a series of anonymous women at local grocery stores. But it is this very quality of Aunt Jemima—her silence—that makes her a powerful icon of agency for contemporary black female artists, who build upon subversive elements present in the original minstrel act. Having imposed a specific body type, costume, occupation and class on generations of African American women, she was ready to gain the voice and insight of actual black women.

bell hooks has called on black women to develop an "oppositional gaze"—one that challenges the invisibility of black women in the realm of visual production. hooks writes, "Critical black female spectatorship emerges as a site of resistance only when individual black women actively resist the imposition of dominant ways of knowing and looking."^{xxvi} While hooks calls on black women to resist racist hegemony (such as embodied by Aunt Jemima), Michael Harris points to the power of imagery and language in the construct of such hegemony:

The gist of it is that images are laden with political and psychological potential and potency. They help ideological constructions like race take form in the physical world. They construct, confirm, and affirm identity. When associated with power, images can impose and reiterate social and conceptual models on others. [...] Images can affect people in realms just beyond language and below rational consciousness—harmful images imposed from power are more difficult to subvert than language. [...] images are produced by the few to be consumed but seldom manipulated by the masses.^{xxvii}

The artists I have selected to analyze in this section of my paper all answer the challenge raised by hooks. They produce a refiguring of Aunt Jemima, using a combination of language and image. They create narratives that replace the Legend of Aunt Jemima and, in doing so, regain the agency denied to black women because of their race, gender, and class.

Faith Ringgold

A trailblazer as a black, female artist, Ringgold has faced numerous obstacles to her success as an artist because of her race and sex. An undergraduate at the City College of New York, Ringgold was forced to pursue a bachelor's degree in education, because women were not permitted to declare majors in the School of Liberal Arts. As she continued her education, by taking night classes, Ringgold found it impossible to find a day job. She writes:

On the phone they were willing to accept me as gal Friday, but when I showed up for the interview, they were shocked to see that I was not white. The job that I had been assured would be mine was suddenly 'taken.' I became more determined than ever to complete my education and teach art.^{xxviii}

But, while Ringgold's inability to find a job in college fueled her drive to study and teach art, she faced obstacles because of her race and gender upon becoming a professional artist. A founding member of the United Black Artists' Committee, Ringgold protested the Museum of Modern Art's exclusion of black artists, pressing them to exhibit artists of color. Although the protests reached a modicum of success, and the museum did agree to show the work of black artists Romare Bearden and Richard Hunt, no opportunities opened up for black female artists to show their work.

Because Ringgold has borne the brunt of raced and gendered expectations (or, lack of expectations), she has been active in challenging hegemony in raced and gendered term throughout her body of work. She chooses Aunt Jemima as her subject, not only because it is a stereotype that has affected black women, but also because she identifies

with her. As someone who has struggled with her weight, Ringgold seeks to analyze the icon that has determined popular views regarding large black women in America.^{xxix} In her reimagining of Aunt Jemima, she seeks to remove her from the realm of the white stereotype, while maintaining a distance from the militant figure other black artists have rendered her as.^{xxx}

Faith Ringgold's *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima*, completed in 1983, is laid out in a checkerboard pattern, with 28 squares of imagery, 9 squares of text, 18 pattern squares, and one title square (fig. 7). In the story, Ringgold creates a new Legend of Aunt Jemima, one that positions Jemima in a new class, and gives her a husband and children as well. Through the medium of the story quilt, Ringgold is able to simultaneously challenge two artistic traditions that helped to establish the mammy stereotype—the literary and the visual.

In her story quilt, Ringgold has created a new Legend of Aunt Jemima. Whereas the original Jemima was defined solely through her relationship with her white master and his guests, Ringgold's Jemima is fleshed out, given a complete biography and genealogy. While she worked as a domestic, the job was taken as a way for Jemima to increase her independence—and while Ole Man Prophet and Ole Miss Prophet contribute much to Jemima Blakey's biography (their deaths gave Jemima the monetary resources to open her restaurant), their existence had little effect on her character. Rather, Jemima is defined in relation to her family and God.

The positioning of characters on the story quilt plays out like a family tree, with Jemima Blakey and her parents, Ma Tillie and Pa Blakey at the center of the quilt. To Jemima's left is her husband, Big Rufus, and her children, Lil Rufus and Georgia are

positioned below her and to her right, respectively. Besides Lil Rufus are his wife, Margo, and his children. The positioning of characters helps to reinforce Jemima's familial ties, once again showing that she has a biography and personality that exists outside of servitude to whites.

Ringgold also works to challenge stereotypes on a broader, more abstract level. As Thalia Gouma-Peterson points out, “Ringgold’s tale does not make absolute judgments; all blacks are not good, and all whites are not bad.” Rather than relying on established stereotypes, Ringgold thwarts the dominant raced binary expectations of white hero(ine)/black villain, or, from an African American perspective, perhaps, a black hero(ine) and white villain.

Additionally, it was not Ole Man Prophet or Ole Miss Prophet who was the villain to Jemima Blakey’s heroine—it was her daughter, Georgia.

Jemima’d blow up like a balloon when folks say’d she was Georgia’s maid. Georgia’d laugh and call her ma Aunt Jemima. Jemima’d take that piss-tail gal over her knee and whoop her till she quit. ‘You ain’ no more’n your ma,’ Jemima’d tell her, and Georgia’d screw up her lil horse face and holler.^{xxxix}

It wasn’t Jemima’s employers who sought to keep her within her stereotypical role (rather, it was Jemima who chose to work for them), it was her daughter, who called her mother “Aunt”—a signifier of slave status.

Ringgold disavows skin color as the sole signifier of race, as her black protagonists range from light to dark-skinned. Although Jemima is depicted as dark-skinned, she is not of full African descent, as her mother had Native American blood in her. Her husband, Big Rufus, is fair-skinned, but so is her daughter, Georgia, the “villain” of the story. Meanwhile, Ringgold’s dark-skinned characters include Lil Rufus, the good

child, as well as Dr. Jones, Georgia's husband, whom Ma Tillie described as an "evil ole ugly black man."^{xxxii} So even when considering a single race, skin tone fails to be an indicator of hero(ine)/villain status, as not all dark is good and not all fair is bad. Through these movements, Ringgold thwarts the dualities that determined blackness and whiteness to be opposing poles of humanity.

Visually, Ringgold has removed the hallmarks that identified Aunt Jemima as a slave. Gone are the rags, apron and bandana that characterized the original Aunt Jemima—in its place are floral print dresses, jewelry, and hats and scarves. Jemima's change in clothing is reflected in the 13 portraits that frame the story. The finest description of clothing comes in the funerary portion of Ringgold's story. "Lil Rufus brought they bodies back to Harlem, and give 'em an African funeral—praise God! Dressed Jemima in an African gown and braided her hair with cowery shells. Put Big Rufus in a gold dashiki." Not only has the change in clothing helped to elevate Jemima's class standing, it also creates visible links with her African heritage.

Ringgold's choice of medium is also a loaded decision, relating to African traditions as well as coded, political messages. Being the master of all things domestic, one of mammy's tasks was mending and quilting—work that, no doubt, would go underappreciated. But Faith Ringgold's intervention brings mammy's quilting work out of its undervalued and oft unconsidered craft status into the realm of high art.

In the story quilt, Ringgold also continues an artistic tradition that simultaneously creates links to African and African American artistic traditions. Embedded in the tradition of African American quilting is the inclusion of embedded coded messages in the design. Lisa E. Farrington discusses this tendency, noting that:

Women of color found that needlework could serve both the requirements of their white masters and their own artistic ends. They somehow found time to weave their own cloth and piece their own quilts—an exercise that developed into one of the most widely practiced of all the African-American crafts.^{xxxiii}

In terms of coded messages in quilting, Farrington points out that the presence of veiled symbols in African American art has its roots in the fabrics of the Ejigham of Cameroon, the Yoruba of Nigeria, the Asante of Ghana and the Bamana of Mali. Harriet Powers (1837-1911) used her quilts to create multi-scene narratives that retell Bible stories and contemporary events (see fig. 8).

The African and African American quilting traditions have also served as sites of coded and political messages. Jacqueline Tobin describes the roles that quilt patterns played in directing fugitive slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad.^{xxxiv} In creating story quilts, Ringgold rediscovers an African American artistic tradition that carries subversive elements within it.

Because Ringgold's work is literary as well as visual, analyzing her use of language is important. Where Aunt Jemima's "I'se in town, honey!" served as a marker of different, of a lower class, of inferior intellect, Jemima Blakey's dialect is in traditional African American vernacular, which serves to elevate African American traditions of language and storytelling. Where her white employers or copywriters had controlled the speech of Aunt Jemima, Ringgold provides her character with a voice that is authentically black and female.

In retelling the Legend of Aunt Jemima, Ringgold changes many key elements within Jemima's biography. Jemima is taken out of the realm of slavery and is made a successful entrepreneur. This change is represented not only in visual terms, but in

literary terms as well. This transformation is also marked by Jemima's name change—whereas the label “Aunt”, as discussed before, was a signifier of slavery, the addition of a last name gives Jemima a strong sense of identity, one that is separate from her white master/employer (in this case, Ole Man Prophet) and gives her familial ties that were lacking in the original Legend.

Ringgold's positioning herself as a writer carries important implications. As Henry Louis Gates writes:

It has been the traditional role of the black poet—again, given the nature of the oral tradition—to be the point of consciousness, or super-consciousness, of his or her people. It is the black poet who bridges the gap in tradition, who modifies tradition when experience demands it, who translates experience into meaning and meaning into belief.^{xv}

In her work, Ringgold tackles the false tradition of mammy and Aunt Jemima, bringing to the story a strong sense of her own biography. In her autobiography, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, Ringgold writes:

The story of Jemima Blakey, the name I gave to my radical revision of the character and story of Aunt Jemima, flowed from me like blood running from a deeply cut wound. I didn't want to write it—I had to. I was tired of hearing black people speak negatively about the image of Aunt Jemima. I knew they were referring to a big black woman and I took it personally.

For Ringgold, the stereotype of Aunt Jemima took on a personal dimension, as she identified with the heavysset character. She relies on the impact images of big black women have had on her biography to adjust the Legend of Aunt Jemima into a story grounded in reality, not mythology.

The quilt also serves to link Aunt Jemima with her previously invisible family. Knowledge of quilting is one that is passed down from mother to daughter, so mummies would have learned their cooking and sewing skills from their mothers and taught the

skills to their daughters—links between family members that have been left out by the Legend of Aunt Jemima. Indeed, Ringgold learned how to sew from her mother, Willie Posey, who was a seamstress. Ringgold's first quilt was made in conjunction with her mother and *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?*, completed shortly after her death, was made in her honor.

Ringgold returns to the image of Aunt Jemima in her work, *Two Jemimas: The American Collection #9* (1997) (fig. 9). Again, Ringgold transforms the stereotype by changing the women's clothing—instead of wearing the rags, apron and bandana that covered Jemima's body and desexualized her, these Jemimas wear low cut dresses that show off their curves. But the image seems claustrophobic, the women's bodies are pushed up against the edges of the quilt frame—representing the confines of the stereotype. Although they wear makeup and jewelry, the women look monstrous—uncomfortable in their own skin. In this work, Ringgold continues her concern for how the mammy stereotype has negatively impacted large black women in America.

Returning to black literature, Gates writes, "There is a long history of resistance to (white) theory in the (black) tradition. Unlike almost every other, the Afro-American literary tradition was generated as a response to allegations that its authors did not, and *could not*, create literature, considered the signal measure of a race's innate 'humanity.'"^{xxxvi} Much of Ringgold's work and drive springs from the opportunities that have been denied her on the basis of her skin color and sex. When she found an avenue of expression blocked, she found ways around the obstacles and became successful in each field, be it art or literature. She proved to her critics that she could create art and literature and, in doing so, helped regain some of Aunt Jemima's "humanity."

Renee Cox

Photographer Renee Cox immigrated to the United States from the West Indies and began her career as a fashion photographer. Lisa E. Farrington discusses her transition from professional photographer to fine arts photographer:

Debates about the black female body and the scarceness of its presence in the fashion industry came to the artist's attention and, by way of reaction, Cox began to use her own body in conjunction with the "scrutinizing eye" of her camera to consider matters of black female sexual empowerment.^{xxxvii}

Throughout her *oeuvre*, Cox shows her concern for the invisibility of the black body, reinserting it in scenes, derived from Art History, where it has been omitted. Cox's work, *The Liberation of Lady J and U.B.*, 1998, is part of a larger series that features the artist's superheroine alter ego, Raje (fig. 10). Throughout the series, Cox confronts American political, business, and cultural institutions that have worked to disempower African Americans.

In *Liberation*, Raje is seen pulling Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben from their prisons inside their pancake and rice mix boxes. Cox places herself at front and center, as Raje, with hair done up in braids, donning knee-high patent leather boots and a skin-tight superheroine costume. The costume, in red, black, green, and yellow, refers both to the Black Nationalist flag and the Jamaican flag—her country of origin.

The reference to black power and Raje's poster relate to the role Cox has given herself in the series. Raje, with linked arms, leads Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben out of their stereotype prisons, which have, as Gwendolyn Dubois Shaw puts it, "literally cornered them for the better part of the past century."^{xxxviii} The figures that emerge from the box now feature rock-hard bodies, contrasting the mammy stereotype and the "fluffier

waffles" and rice they have come to represent. The figures' ages, sexuality, personality and physicality are transformed from the older, sexless, jovial servant-cook into the youthful, virile, athletic bodies of models Roshumba and Rodney Charles.^{xxxix} Here, Cox leads the black body out of the molds that have entrapped them, imposed by the white power structure in a scene reminiscent of Delacroix's *Leading the People*, 1830. The superheroine alter ego replaces the allegorical Liberty, leading her black companions out of enslavement and into empowerment.

In depicting Aunt Jemima in photographic form, Cox negotiates two mediums that have been instrumental in establishing stereotypes in the American consciousness. Through the example of Aunt Jemima's advertisements, we have seen how illustration has been used to establish and reaffirm the mammy stereotype. Photography, on the other hand, has been used to establish a so-called scientific grounding for black stereotypes.^{xi} In doing so, Cox employs an interventionist strategy, denying the imperializing scientific gaze of its potency.

As Lisa Gail Collins puts it, "visual documentation lends credence to myth."^{xli} She then moves to a discussion of the Swiss natural scientist Louis Agassiz, who used daguerreotypes as a way to document physical differences in black bodies, to reinforce his theory that different races had different origins. Agassiz commissioned American photographer Joseph T. Zealy to complete these images, and his daguerreotype *Drana, Country Born, Daughter of Jack, Guinea*, of 1850 (fig. 11) is one of the few that survive. The way the image is cropped draws attention to the woman's breasts, which have sagged to elbow level, covered with stretch marks. The lighting also defines her facial features,

emphasizing her brow ridge, nose, and lips—with the breasts, all larger than would be expected in white women. And, as Deborah Willis points out:

Signifying undress rather than nudity, the state of their clothing emphasizes the unnatural and humiliating aspect of their condition... Denying the women's humanity and control over the representation of their bodies, the photographer and scientist neutralize their sexuality and sensuality in the photographic act; the women are represented as naked specimens lacking either identity or power.^{xlii}

As we have seen, nudity has been a hallmark in the display of black bodies, be it in ethnographic photography or in exhibition displays. This ensured the bestial notions of blackness maintained its power, denying black subjects the level of modesty afforded to whites.

Images such as this, as well as "scientific" illustrations of the Hottentot Venus, which will be discussed later, established the idea of black woman as the Other as objective fact. As Collins notes:

The camera became, in this case, an instrument of dissection, used to locate and capture difference. In this way, the work of the scientific laboratory was transferred to the photographer's studio, and the camera replaced the microscope.^{xliii}

By gaining control of the camera and assuming the roles of photographer, costume designer, and model, Renee Cox begins to repair the damage that so-called scientific photographs have inflicted on black women.

In addition to visually transforming Aunt Jemima, Cox's photograph works on the level of language, as well. The linguistic turn made by the piece is the subtler of the two methods. By renaming Aunt Jemima Lady J, Cox elevates the class status of Jemima, similar to the strategy employed by Faith Ringgold. Aunt was another signifier of slavery—a way to address older slave women apart from "ma'am," which was reserved

for white women. Rather than retaining this marker of slavery, Cox names her Jemima "Lady," a term often used for addressing women of a higher, noble class. The title also speaks to the agency of the artist, where Cox, as Raje, actively participates in the rescuing of the black body from its stereotyped form.

Raje and Lady J are examples of what Trudier Harris has coined the "northern maid":

They refuse to stay in the kitchen; they refuse to be silent; they refuse to recognize the power of any external force to shape their identities and redefine their cultural values. They will resort to violence when necessary to preserve their senses of self and the communities of which they are a part. Their ultimate act of violation against the place to which they have been confined and the injustices they have suffered is to return to the South and encourage violence there. Northern, militant maids are like true southern maids only in skin color.^{xliv}

Raje and Lady J have thrown off the mask of mammydom and are poised for action, down to the pointed fingernail, aggressive stance, and skin-tight patent leather costume. And, Raje's reaction to other forces that have limited the power of black women—the white businessman and the NYC taxicab, for example (fig. 12 and fig. 13)—border on violent. The "northern maid" can be seen in Betye Saar's 1976 work, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, in which Jemima's grin is exaggerated and made sinister. Cox takes the liberation of the advertising icon a step further, removing the hallmarks of the mammy stereotype from Lady J's body.

Cox's concern with stereotypes that have had their imprint on black female bodies is also evident in *Hot En Tott* (fig. 14). In this work, Cox works to deny the other stereotype that adult black women have been defined by—the Jezebel. Whereas mammy was an overweight, desexualized woman, the Jezebel was a hypersexual woman who sought to seduce her white masters. A "scientific" basis for this stereotype was found in

Sandra Baartman, otherwise known as the Hottentot Venus. As Sander Gilman writes in "The Hottentot and the Prostitute":

The antithesis of European sexual mores and beauty is the black, and the essential black, the lowest exemplum of mankind on the great chain of being, is the Hottentot. It is indeed the physical appearance of the Hottentot that the central icon for sexual difference between the European and the black was found, a deep physiological difference urged so plausibly on the basis of physical contrast.^{xlv}

Put on display in a series of fairs, exhibitions, and sideshows, she was shown for her large breasts and buttocks—signs of her lasciviousness. She was examined and rendered, in "scientific" illustrations, in the nude and, after her death, her dissected genitalia were placed on view—her labia were thought to be another sign of hypersexuality.

The artist places herself in the place of Baartman. Positioning her nude body in front of the camera, Cox refuses the scientific, sexualizing white male gaze by substituting Baartman's breast and buttocks with metal prosthetics. Science, Cox points out, can be as much cultural construction as objective fact, as natural scientists of the Nineteenth century sought out models that fit their preconceived notions of blackness and ignored those that did not exemplify their views.

In discussing the oppositional gaze, hooks states that "spaces of agency exist for black people, wherein we can both interrogate the gaze of the Other but also look back, and at one another, naming what we see."^{xlvi} This is exactly what Renee Cox has done—placing herself in the roles of model and photographer, Cox is in full control of her own representation. She has given herself control of the gaze, staring out at her viewers. And, she has taken control of the power to name, replacing the derogatory "Aunt" with the classy "Lady," and emphasizing the "Hot" in Hottentot.

Lisa E. Farrington has described Cox's work as, "a guerrilla performance captured on film."^{xlvii} Cox has said:

I think my work is very important... Right now it's popular for black artists to reappropriate stereotypes. There's the idea that because we spew it out it becomes different. Like teens saying nigger. But I don't think that genre represents a real change. Folks are still comfortable with us in positions of servitude. I think presenting a black woman superhero as an agent of change, ruffles a few feathers and shakes up the status quo.^{xlviii}

Although Cox relies on stereotypes, she does more than reappropriate them—she transforms them and gives them an authentic black voice. By transforming the bodies of Aunt Jemima and Saartje Baartman, rendering cultural and scientific notions of black female bodies utterly false, and creating protagonists that return the viewer's gaze, Cox has developed her critical gaze. She reaches back into Art History, finds the places in which blacks have been marginalized, denied, or oppressed and reinserts and reaffirms them. Her gaze out towards her viewers registers her defiance towards the white power structure that has, through the course of Art History and popular visual culture, determined the shape of the black female body.

Kara Walker

Kara Walker is a controversial young artist known for her black paper cutout silhouettes. Born in Stockton, California, she moved to Stone Mountain, Georgia at the age of thirteen when her father accepted a teaching position at Georgia State University. Thrust into the Deep South, Walker found herself alienated. Gwendolyn Dubois Shaw writes that Walker "believes other African American children in her community ostracized her because her Californian accent was too 'white.' At the same time, she was deemed to be too dark-skinned to be friends with the European-American children."^{xlix} In Georgia, Walker discovered that the politics of race were alive and well—indeed, her

new hometown is known for a memorial dedicated to the Ku Klux Klan. In her PBS

Art:21 interview, Walker says:

Before I even started working with a narrative that circled around representations of blackness, representations of race, racial history, minstrelsy, and everything that I wanted to investigate, I was making work that was painterly and about the body and the metaphorical qualities of the body.¹

Growing up in a world where the past was fused in the present, Walker creates scenes with a sense of timelessness, fusing past and present to investigate the way history intersects with racial discourses and traditions. By creating scenes rooted in nineteenth century imagery, the artist forces contemporary audiences to grapple with issues of race that dominate contemporary ideology.

Kara Walker has likened her life and her cut paper tableaux to the minstrel stage. Although the minstrel shows of the turn of the century often worked to reinforce notions of difference between blacks and whites, there is also an underlying subversion present in the performative tradition. While many of the actors who depicted black characters were whites in blackface, there were black actors and writers who included coded messages in their performances. Judith Michelle Williams notes how two black minstrel authors, Pauline Hopkins and William Wells Brown, create images of black women that thwart traditional notions of the mammy. In her plays, Brown questions the notion that slaves were taken care of by their owners. Hopkins, meanwhile, presents a character that is devoted first and foremost to her children—not the children of her mistress. "She provides a hopeful portrait of blacks who are comic in their resemblance to minstrel types, yet are a more politically savvy and self interested set of stage figures than those

that populate the white plays."^{li} The stereotyped figures Walker employs do indeed display more self-interest than in their traditional forms.

Michael Harris discusses Billy Kersands, the black minstrel who created the character of Aunt Jemima, and how he thwarts white expectations in his play. He focuses his attention on Kersand's lyrics, "My ole missus promise me/When she died, sh'd set me free, She lived so long dat 'er head got bal',/An' she out 'n de notion a-dyin' at all."^{lii} He discusses the mistress's loss of hair—her crown, source of energy and vanity. The line also reinforced that whites frequently broke promises made to black. Lastly, he notes that the cakewalk, which this song was performed as, "was a dance devised by African American to spoof the formal promenades of whites through exaggerated gestures."^{liii} Thus, embedded in the Legend of Aunt Jemima was a "kernel of African American authenticity,"^{liiv} ready for later generations of African American artists to manipulate. And, although these coded messages would have been inaccessible for white audience members such as Rutt, they were readily interpreted by African American audience members.

Walker's reliance on this tradition of minstrel subversion is perhaps most evident in her etching aquatint, *Vanishing Act*, 1997, (fig. 15) which takes place on stage. Because of its location, the scene becomes public spectacle—a sense enhanced by the blurred, monochromatic forms and scratch marks which extend vertically across the image, making the image reminiscent of an early silent film.^{lv} In fact, mammy made one of her most notable appearances (by a white actor in blackface and drag) in the silent film *The Birth of a Nation*—a film grounded in racism that glorified the formation of the Ku Klux Klan. The placement of the mammy stereotype on stage and screen places her in the

realm of the spectacle. This enactment of stereotype-as-spectacle indicates how these stereotypes become myth—first, a kernel of truth must be embellished beyond recognition, then, in the public arena, the stereotype must disseminate itself beyond containment.

This work features a crouching mammy who has swallowed the head of a young white girl, possibly the same young white girl she was purchased to care for. The act of devouring, which is prominent throughout Walker's body of work, as well as the excretion of various bodily fluids, ranging from breast milk to urine, speaks to society's concerns regarding miscegenation and pollution. Mary Douglas discusses the cultural significance of scatological traditions, "We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body."^{lvi} She also notes, "when rituals express anxiety about the body's orifices, the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group."^{lvii} Walker's mammy violates the categories that she has been placed in—she is not the ideal domestic slave. Where the mammy has been touted as an upstanding caretaker for her mistress's children, here, the mammy consumes her.

Throughout history, European and American culture has sought to categorize humanity based on variables including skin color and sex. Categories of race, however, having no scientific grounding, are highly susceptible to violation—evidenced by concerns held by whites towards miscegenation. The stereotypes developed regarding the black female body sought to limit miscegenation—the mammy ensured that white

masters would never copulate with black women. When they did, it was because the black woman was a Jezebel and seduced her master to sleep with her. In her work, Walker violates the subject/object dichotomy, as both slave and master lust after each other. This is reflected in the artist's interests. In her *Art:21* interview, Walker notes, "A lot of my work has been about the unexpected... kind of wanting to be the heroine and wanting to kill the heroine at the same time."^{lviii} The result of these simultaneous oppositional desires are scenes of chaos, lust and violence filled with frolicking, devouring, distorted stereotypes.

A cutout work that prominently features the mammy is *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven*, 1995 (fig. 16). From left to right, Walker presents four different scenes. In the first, three black women nurse each other, while a baby sits on the knee of one of them—his mouth grasping for the teat of one of them, the baby's hunger is left unfulfilled. Behind them stands a young, defecating black boy with a tambourine—both his gaze and the trail of feces connects him with a group of three figures. A young black boy stands, bucket in hand, facing a young white girl with an axe over her head. Behind her stands a black girl (with bandana and apron, she appears a mammy in the making) holding a pointed stick. This image is typical of Walker's oeuvre, conflating sexuality and violence. The white girl's axe is pointed back towards her head, while the black girl seems ready to sodomize the white girl with the stake in her hand. The little black boy, meanwhile, watches the scene unfold, bearing a tiny erection.

Following this image of sexuality and violence is another—here, a disabled, peg-legged white man sodomizes a black boy clutching a cornstalk, his master's stomach resting on his back. The rest of the white man's weight is supported by a saber, which

impales a young child lying on the ground behind him. Next, an elderly man, hands clutched to the sky, has given birth—an umbilical cord connects a small baby to the man's anus. In the final scene, three figures peer out from an ambiguous form that obscures their bodies. To the right, a young mistress stands while, to the left, a mammy and a little pickaninny peer out.

The first image in this work that I'll focus on is of the three mammies and a baby—the mammies are suckling at each other's breasts, while the baby is left wanting, his mouth just short of the lowest mammy's breast. The mammy, although in silhouette, is readily identifiable from her bandanna, that ever-present signifier of racism.

The stereotypes in Walker's works, however, are not the ones we have come to know (and, perhaps, love—or, at the very least, cling to). In *The End of Uncle Tom*, we have another image of the mammy as nurturer. Yet, whom is mammy nurturing? Each image of mammy is feeding another, her double—perhaps a commentary on how stereotypes feed themselves as a self-fulfilling prophecy. If American society expects African American to fulfill certain roles, in this case, the domestic servant, then that is where they will stay. The stereotype gives birth to and feeds itself. But also note that the very person the mammy should be feeding, the child, is left unfulfilled. Here is where the mammy stereotype begins to unravel—Walker's mammies are not the upstanding child nurturers that have been made out to be, feeding black images and not their white masters.

Upon closer examination, viewers begin to discern that these women embody more than the mammy stereotype. Although dressed in bandana and apron, these women are much thinner than the traditional mammy. Their engagement in nipple-play imbues

the scene with eroticism. What Walker has done, through these three figures, is conflate the mammy with the Jezebel—these women are failed nurturers with voracious sexual appetites, which consume them to the point at which they disregard the hungry baby on their laps.

Walker's reliance on black stereotypes in her works has led to much criticism from members within the African American artistic community. African American artist Betye Saar began a letter writing campaign, decrying Walker's choice of imagery, insisting that the works upheld the objectification of African Americans and kept negative imagery of African Americans in the public consciousness.^{lix} But Walker's presentation of stereotypes such as the mammy in cutout form is revolutionary because of the way Walker subverts the stereotype by the way the medium itself transmits information. The only information present in the image is in the edges of her shapes. Because all interior detail is left out, the viewer must use her imagination and knowledge of these raced stereotypes to bring meaning to the work. "Walker's silhouettes, far more than those of her predecessors, exemplify the ever present blankness of stereotype with its invitation for projection of audience fantasy and desire."^{lx} Indeed, the only reason why these cut paper images carry such an emotional response in viewers lies in the viewer's own knowledge of the racism and violence of slavery. As Michael Harris puts it, "Silhouettes require that all the information be contained on the edges of the figures, and Walker conveys complex movements and body positions while defining racial categories with her flat cutouts."^{lxi} This accomplishes one of Walker's objectives in her works—the implication of the viewer in the scene.^{lxii}

Returning to Mary Douglas for this discussion of boundaries, Douglas says, "margins are dangerous. If they are pulled this way or that the shape of fundamental experience is altered."^{lxiii} Through the cutout, Walker has violated the margins of her figures, as they are torn apart and merged into each other. When touching, her figures share the same contour, so one mammy is indistinguishable from the other, the master is meshed with the boy he sodomizes. She also imbues her white characters with the same stereotypes they have created—turning them into monstrous, hypersexual beings—transgressing the boundaries between black and white figures. Meanwhile, the female figures on the left edge of the scene are obscured, as Walker cuts into their bodies with negative space—with the figures' rough edges, it almost appears as if the two women have been torn from each other. In doing this, Walker opens up a site of agency in which she is able to renegotiate the stereotypes that have been projected on her own body, as well as the bodies of every other African American women.^{lxiv}

These familiar stereotypes have been exploded beyond recognition, and as Douglas writes, "We recognise that [disorder] is destructive to existing patterns; also that it has potentiality. It symbolises both danger and power."^{lxv} Walker's cutouts, with its combination of sex and violence, conflate The Myth of the Old South and chaos. Saar and Walker's other critics have pointed to the danger inherent in Walker's technique, as her imagery can be seen to play into popular, derogatory conceptions of blackness. This critique is even more pointed when one considers the gallery structure that has embraced Walker's work—one that is dominated by white interests, creating yet another reenactment of the auction block. But her work is also an incredible site of agency—

although Walker's figures are derived from stereotypes, she both mutilates them and destroys them.

Walker's work, of violated boundaries and repulsive stereotypes, can also be placed in what Homi Bhabha terms the "time-lag." The "time-lag," Bhabha posits, is an enunciative space between the colonial and the modern, in which the postcolonial subject can challenge the terms of modernity imposed on her by the dominant Western culture. Time, Bhabha goes on to argue, does not progress in a sequential fashion, progressing from colonial to postmodern; rather, the colonial and the postmodern can exist contemporaneously. This is what Walker reveals through her tableaux, where the knowledge and imaginations of contemporary viewers can extract narratives that spring from the Myth of the Old South. This simultaneity of past and present is drawn from Walker's childhood in Stone Mountain, where Ku Klux Klan monuments exist miles outside of the bustling metropolis of Atlanta and where Civil War reenactments continue to bring the past to life.

Walker opens up her time-lag at the point at which visual imagery becomes myth. Her work exists at the intersection of contemporary minds and antebellum constructions of both blackness and whiteness. She creates an enunciative position between the sign (the cut paper images) and symbolization (traditional stereotypes of blackness) where she thwarts the raced expectations of her viewers who, drawing from their knowledge of The Myth of the Old South, expect to find both blacks and whites in their familiar, non-violent and non-sexual roles. Before her stereotypes can assume their traditional forms, however, the artist mutilates and explodes them.

CONCLUSION

To answer the questions posed by Michele Wallace, visual constructions have been central to the creation of the myth-as-stereotype. Through Aunt Jemima, the image of the obese, bandana-ed, happy darkie graced supermarket aisles for a hundred years. Through pancake boxes, advertisements, and promotional items such as rag dolls and salt and pepper shakers, the image of mammy was disseminated widely in American culture. The visual representation of Aunt Jemima served to uphold notions of ideal black femininity—one that existed in a lower class, in a domestic occupation and was heavily desexualized through weight, skin color, and distorted facial features.

Wallace has discussed how the invisibility of the black subject in visual art has worked on two levels.

The chief way... is that blacks often seem not to exist in society because they are for the most part excluded from representation. [...] A second, much more infrequent but no less crucial way invisibility has worked—at least in figurative art—can be seen when blacks are depicted by are at the same time trivialized and degraded (made virtually invisible [emphasis hers]) by the terms of their representation.^{lxvi}

The three contemporary artists I discussed here have tackled the problem of the invisibility of the authentic black female—invisibility that resulted from the white minstrel performer's blackface interpretation of Aunt Jemima, Nancy Green and countless others' performances as "real-life" Aunt Jemimas, years of advertising and the Legend of Aunt Jemima. While the image of the black female body has been visible (but oft, marginalized) for many years, it existed as a white man in blackface and drag, a puppet to white marketing interests, or as an illustration completed by white hands. Not only have these reinserted and reinscribed black females into the depiction and the authorship of the Legend of Aunt Jemima, their works are larger than life, placing Jemima at front and center as well.

Faith Ringgold did this by giving Jemima a genealogy, transforming the Legend of Aunt Jemima into a story of entrepreneurship and strength. She took the rich tradition of African American quilting and fused it with the equally rich African American oral tradition, placing both in the realm of high art. She used frustration caused from difficulties in breaking into the American gallery system to fuel her art career, tackling subjects derived from the hardships embedded in her biography. Renee Cox, through her creation of her superheroine alter-ego, violently reasserts the presence of authentic black females in the visual arts, in what Trudier Harris has termed the "northern servant." Using photography, she reclaims a medium that has been used to disempower black women and, in doing so, thwarts the scientific and hegemonic gaze. Kara Walker uses the silhouette to question her viewers' knowledge of black stereotypes and, in the process, challenges the way these racist images have been transformed into myth. Her use of the cutout and her focus on bodily orifices speaks to ideas of pollution surrounding racial mixing, opening up an enunciative space that challenges how racist myth has become ideology. These artists have opened up spaces of agency, spaces that allow black women to speak for themselves. Although Aunt Jemima remains as visible as ever, critical interventions have been made to her history, genealogy and persona, ensuring that she will no longer remain a mere puppet of white business interests.

NOTES

ⁱ Beyond the World's Columbian Exposition, Coco Fusco provides a chronology of Expositions of the Other, dating from Columbus' return to Europe in 1493 to a Minnesota State Fair in 1992. See Coco Fusco, *English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (New York: The New Press, 1995): 41-43.

ⁱⁱ Michelle Wallace, *Dark Designs and Visual Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 341.

ⁱⁱⁱ African American feminist Deborah King posits the obstacles faced by black women on account of their race, gender and class as a "triple jeopardy." She expands on ideas put forth by earlier scholars, who tended to focus on black women's race and gender.

^{iv} The Myth of the Old South is an idealized construction of the antebellum South created after the Civil War. As the North and South faced a painful reconciliation following the war and Reconstruction, writers, illustrators and artists worked to create an edenic vision of plantation life (one that conveniently left out the hardships of slavery) that could rest in the minds of both white Southerners and Northerners. The mammy played a large role in this revision of history. As M.M. Manring notes, "the image of the mammy might not have squared with reality, it soothed white guilt over slavery." See, M.M. Manring, *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998).

^v Although the look of Aunt Jemima has moved out of the image of the mammy, the stereotype can still be seen in contemporary advertisements. Lorraine Fuller sees her "ghost" in the television commercials for Pinesol. Although mammy is often seen as a remnant of the past, with the present Aunt Jemima being stripped of her apron and bandana, (author) shows how the stereotype continues to haunt African American women in contemporary society. See, Lorraine Fuller, "Are We Seeing Things?: The Pinesol Lady and the Ghost of Aunt Jemima," *Journal of Black Studies* 32,1 (2001), JStor, via MetaLib, <http://metalibserv.pacific.edu>.

^{vi} Sander Gilman provides a history of the sexualized black female body in modern art in "The Hottentot and the Prostitute." See Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985):76-108.

^{vii} Jo-Ann Morgan, "Mammy the Huckster: Selling the Old South for the New Century," *American Art* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 86-109, 88.

^{viii} Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 62.

^{ix} Kern-Foxworth, 72.

^x Aunt Jemima Mills Co., *The Last Christmas on the Old Plantation, Ladies Home Journal* (December 1919): 141.

^{xi} *Ibid.*

- ^{xii} Aunt Jemima Mills Co., *How Aunt Jemima Saved the Colonel's Moustache and His Reputation as Host*, Ladies Home Journal (October 1920): 173.
- ^{xiii} Aunt Jemima Mills, Co., *The Last Christmas*.
- ^{xiv} Morgan, "Mammy the Huckster," 87.
- ^{xv} The history and impact of these promotional items are discussed by Kenneth Goings in his book *Mammy and Uncle Mose: Black Collectables and American Stereotyping* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- ^{xvi} Robert C. Toll, *Blackening Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 36.
- ^{xvii} In her research, Deborah Gray White questions the existence of actual mammies in the antebellum South. Being charged with duties that included nursing, cooking, sewing, advice-giving, and all other household tasks that were assigned would have been too much for any one woman to take—it was humanly impossible to be mammy.
- ^{xviii} Judith Michelle Williams, "Nineteenth-Century Stage Images of Black Women" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1997), 1.
- ^{xix} Kern-Foxworth, 67.
- ^{xx} Rossiter Johnson, *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition Held in Chicago in 1893* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898): 443-444.
- ^{xxi} The tradition of African American women performing as Aunt Jemima at expositions, county fairs, and supermarkets continued, including a popular restaurant in Disneyland. Kern-Foxworth provides brief biographies of some of the many women who have depicted the character.
- ^{xxii} Manring, 74-5.
- ^{xxiii} Morgan, 94.
- ^{xxiv} Aunt Jemima Mills, Co. *The Poor Little Bride of 1860*, Ladies Home Journal (February 1920): 143.
- ^{xxv} Ibid.
- ^{xxvi} bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 128.
- ^{xxvii} Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 14-15.
- ^{xxviii} Ringgold, 49.
- ^{xxix} In her performance piece and accompanying quilt, *Change 3: Faith Ringgold's Over 100 Pount Weight Loss Performance Story Quilt*, 1991, Ringgold chronicles the struggles she has had with her weight and food consumption throughout her life.
- ^{xxx} For an example done by a black female artist, see Betye Saar's *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972.
- ^{xxxi} Ringgold, 253.
- ^{xxxii} Ringgold, 253.
- ^{xxxiii} Lisa E. Farrington, *Creating Their Own Image: The History of African-American Women Artists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28.
- ^{xxxiv} The work, although controversial, has been widely discussed. Whether or not the quilt code is grounded in fact, Farrington says, "In either case, there is no question that the code has entered popular memory and thus deserves study." (*Creating Their Own Image*, 33) For more information on the code, see Jacqueline Tobin, *Hidden in Plain View* (New York: Random House, 2000)

- ^{xxxv} Henry Louis Gates, *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 176.
- ^{xxxvi} Henry Louis Gates, *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 75.
- ^{xxxvii} Farrington, 222-3.
- ^{xxxviii} Gwendolyn Dubois Shaw, *Seeing the Unspeakable: The Art of Kara Walker* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 32.
- ^{xxxix} Greg Tate, "Raje: A Black Woman Superhero" *Crisis (The New)* 105, no. 2 (1998). EBSCOhost, via Metalib, <http://metalib.serv.pacific.edu>.
- ^{xl} The tendency of scientists to use art to advance their culturally-derived views has been explored by Anthea Callen in her article "Ideal Masculinities: An Anatomy of Power," in which she discusses how anatomical rendering of skeletons conforms to ideological notions of masculinity. It can be found in Mirzoeff's *The Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), 603-616.
- ^{xli} Lisa Gail Collins, *The Art of History: African American Women Engage the Past* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 10.
- ^{xlii} Deborah Willis and C. Williams. *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 23.
- ^{xliii} Collins, 22-23.
- ^{xliv} Trudier Harris, *From Mammies to Militants: Domesticity in Black American Literature* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 24.
- ^{xliv} Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 83.
- ^{xlvi} hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze", 116.
- ^{xlvi} Farrington, Lisa E. Creating Their Own Image:
- ^{xlvi} Quoted in Tate.
- ^{xlvi} Shaw, 12.
- ^l *Art:21, Kara Walker* (PBS, 2003).
- ^{li} Williams, 260.
- ^{lii} Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 86.
- ^{liii} *ibid*, 86.
- ^{liv} *Ibid*, 86.
- ^{lv} One of the early classics of silent film, D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, is as well known for its racist, anti-black content as for its technical achievements.
- ^{lvi} Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York: Routledge, 1966), 142.
- ^{lvii} *Ibid*, 153.
- ^{lviii} *Art:21*
- ^{lix} Eungie Joo provides an excellent summary of the discussion stimulated by Walker's work in her dissertation "Crisis to Collapse: The Racialized Subject in Contemporary American Art."
- ^{lx} Rebecca Sue Wood, "Slavery's Visual and Literary Legacy: Trauma Studies and Recent Reconfigurations of Slave Bodies" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 2004), 127.
- ^{lxi} Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 211.
- ^{lxii} Several of Walker's cutout tableaus utilize overhead projectors to project colored patterns of light on the walls of the gallery, including *For the Benefit of All the Races of*

Mankind (Mos' Specially the Master One, Boss) An Exhibition of Artifacts, Remnants, and Effluvia EXCAVATED from the Black Heart of a Negress I and II, 2002. This takes the implication of the viewer one step further, as his shadow—his silhouette—are projected onto the scene. He has become a participant in the scene, in addition to his role as interpreter. Kara Walker discusses this in her segment of the PBS Series Art 21.

^{lxiii} Douglas, 150.

^{lxiv} Find quote about fulfilling raced expectations of behavior in Atlanta.

^{lxv} Douglas, 117.

^{lxvi} Wallace, Michele. *Dark Designs*, 340-41.

FIGURES

The Last Christmas on the Old Plantation

All the cousins and aunts and uncles had flocked home for the merriest reunion ever! The rafters of the old mansion fairly rang, from the moment the avalanche of guests and luggage arrived, till the last carriage rattled down the driveway the day after New Year's. Never a shadow of the fast-approaching struggle between North and South that was to make this their last Christmas together. . . .

The kitchen, where Aunt Jemima ruled, a gentle tyrant, had been all in a commotion for days. Such bringing in of plump poultry and little porkers, such baking of pies and plum puddings, such frosting of elaborate cakes as there had been!

Christmas dinner was a repast not soon to be forgotten. But it wasn't that alone which made the Colonel and his guests praise Aunt Jemima till her black face was all aglow with pride. It was her pancake breakfasts!

Oh, those breakfasts! Sometimes she would give them crisp little sizzling sausages, with pancakes. Another day it would be delicate strips of bacon, with pancakes. But always pancakes! Golden-brown ones, and so tender, so rich-flavored!

Many years later the fame of Aunt Jemima's pancakes reached the North, and she was finally persuaded to sell the recipe. Today every housewife has Aunt Jemima's secret at her command! Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour can be found in every grocery store, and with it the most inexperienced cook can make cakes with the same flavor that delighted those holiday guests on the old plantation!

Try it for muffins and waffles, too.

Look to the top of the package and see how to use the little Aunt Jemima's Rag Cook Family.

The Aunt Jemima pancake mix makes a delicious breakfast food.

"'Tis de Aunt, Massa!"

"Lawdee, but dey sho' do keep me humpin' fo' mo' pancakes!"

"Now thrice welcome Christmas Which brings us good cheer"

Figure 1. *The Last Christmas on the Old Plantation*, 1919



"Good Lord, massa, An' 'Liza's got a milt'ry!"

How Aunt Jemima Saved the Colonel's mustache and his reputation as a host.

NO DOUBT there was a day when Colonel Higbee had no mustache; yet, no picture of him as a boy having come down to us, it is impossible to state with any assurance that this was the case.

The Colonel's name, like that of many another historical figure, is a reflected glory. But for his famous cook, Aunt Jemima, he might indeed be quite forgotten, like the hundreds of gentlemen of those days before the war.

He knew him only with his mustache and his grout, when he was born with those or not, he has them on his face from that day to this. Aunt Jemima, then a girl of fifteen, saved his mustache to posterity, and started the world on the road to a fame that lasts until this day.

It is not to be supposed that the Colonel's mustache was taken with levity. He himself was proud of it, and he has done many a thing, except his reputation as a host, which they do say that there was one night at a ball in the city where he was when his mustache fell him—but that is another story.

It is sufficient now to say that at that ball the Colonel invited the Carters, the Southwells, and the Westons to come up and visit him at Rosemont, his big country house.

What he said to them, of course we cannot know, but we do know before his guests were not entirely satisfied, it is probable that he even bragged of his mustache on the day of their expected arrival, Rosemont was completely ready.

The great mansion fairly bulged with provisions—game and butter and eggs and rice, with barrels of flour and sugar. The chickens and turkeys were "ready to turn." And in each guest chamber the fire was kindled to the full.

The Colonel understood that he himself, at the early O'Connell

but plodded around the bend he put it on—a last deft twist of his mustache.

Then down to the landing he went.

Such cordial greetings, such gentle courtesies as those were, we seldom see nowadays. And it was a happy party that looked down to the stately mansion whose doors, swung open wide, beckoned the welcome of Rosemont.

BACK in the great kitchen, however, there was one who was quite unhappy—Ella, the Colonel's old mammy cook. With her head wrapped in cold cloths, her bulky form bent far over on her splayed arms, she sat—a picture of pain.

Her daughter Jemima, first helper in the kitchen, hardly knew which way to turn. Breakfast to get for all these guests. Her mother to care for. Things had come to a sorry state in the kitchen.

All this time, the negro butler, had taken in at a glance, and he tarried just long enough to enlighten poor Aunt Ella on the cause.

"Didn't Ah tell yo' 'lar' night as how some 'fiction was comin' when dat black debil bird come flyin' into de yard kitchen? Ah jes knowed it."

With that he disappeared around the corner of the house—to find the Colonel.

"Good Lord, massa, An' 'Liza's got a milt'ry!"

Mass wasted no words when he got the Colonel's ear. He said enough: the Colonel understood, but what to do he did not know.

The guests were making ready for breakfast—and there was no breakfast. Now at stake was his whole reputation as a host—his precious reputation, and his pride.

If only Jemima, he thought—that mawkish girl, she couldn't get this breakfast.

SOMEHOW Mass beat the Colonel to the kitchen by a dozen steps. "Somebody's got to be there," he blurted, "or de Colonel 'll have his whisker wiled plumb off."

That the Colonel might have done, too, if Aunt Ella hadn't calmed him with quick words. She told him how her mother heart had often been thrilled by Jemima's unusual skill in the kitchen, and the planter watched with satisfaction how she went about with the work. "You all's gwine ter have a great s'prise dis mornin'," the old mammy said assuredly as he left.

BREAKFAST was ready very close to the chosen time. It was not exactly as planned the night before; some things were left out; one was added—pancakes. But, from the performance of the guests, everything it seemed might have been left out except butter and molasses and those pancakes. How they did get!

The Colonel was in the height of his glory. His reputation was saved—and his mustache too, though perhaps he himself never realized how near both of his prizes came to ruin that morning.

So happy he was that, when breakfast was over, he came immediately to the kitchen. "I'll never forget this mornin', Jemima," he said. "From now on yo' ole mammy can just rest up. You be the cook and, bless yo' heart, whatever yo' want yo' shall have."

THAT, friends, is a story from tradition of the early life of the Aunt Jemima you know. Tuck her pancakes are America's favorite breakfast—so rich, so tender, so soft-flavored. And so easy to make, for her recipe the recipe she used that morning—is ready mixed in the pancake flour that bears her name. All one needs to add is water!

"It's in town, Homey!"

Look on the way of your cooking. Buy Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour. It's the best you can buy. It's the best you can buy. It's the best you can buy. It's the best you can buy.

Copyright 1920, Aunt Jemima Mills Company, St. Louis, Mo.



Figure 2. How Aunt Jemima Saved the Colonel's Moustache and His Reputation as a Host, 1920

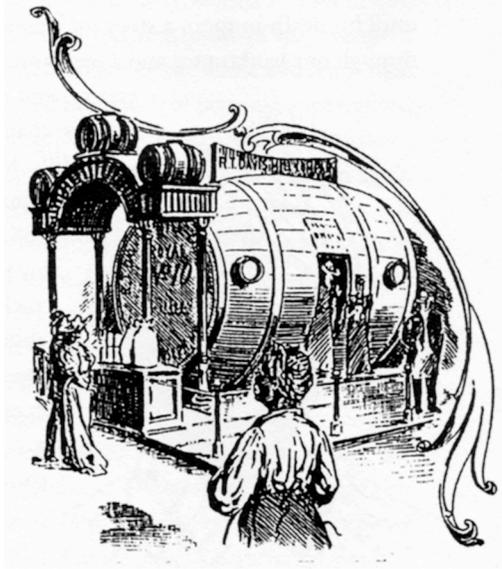
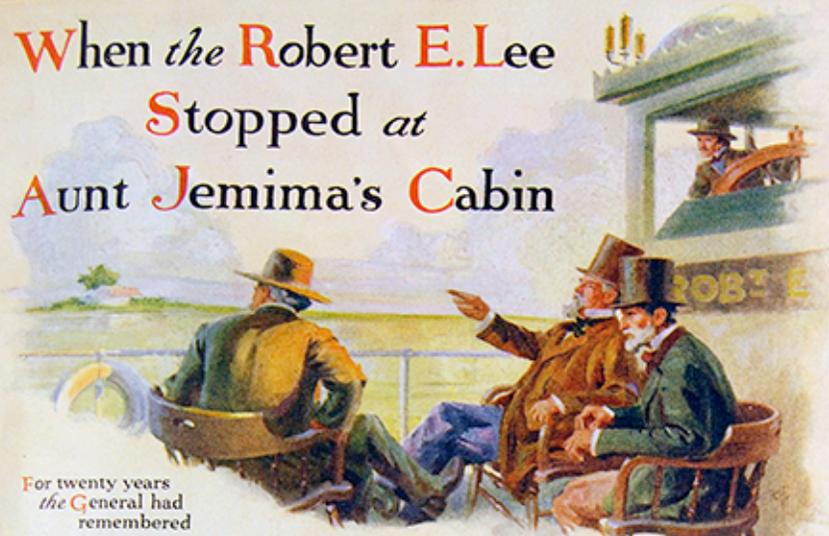


Figure 3. Aunt Jemima Barrel Exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893.



Figure 4. A Group of Dahomeyan Girls, 1893

When the Robert E. Lee Stopped at Aunt Jemima's Cabin



**For twenty years
the General had
remembered**

TWENTY years or so after the Civil War the "Robert E. Lee" was en route to New Orleans. As the famous old side-wheeler neared the junction of the Red River with the Mississippi, an old Confederate General on the upper deck called the attention of the other passengers to a little old cabin on the bank.

Then he went on to tell them how, twenty years before, he and his orderly had become separated from the troops and had stopped at that cabin to ask their way. A mammy had directed them and then had insisted that they stay for a "snack." He told them how that "snack" had turned out to be the most wonderful meal he had ever tasted. All she had given them was pancakes, he said, but oh, what pancakes they were! Later he had learned that before the war this mammy had been cook for the Colonel Higbee whose pancake breakfasts had been the talk of all that part of the country.

So enticing was the old general's description of the mammy's pancakes that when the steamer had tied up at the landing the party eagerly voted to go ashore and see if by any chance the old cook were still there.

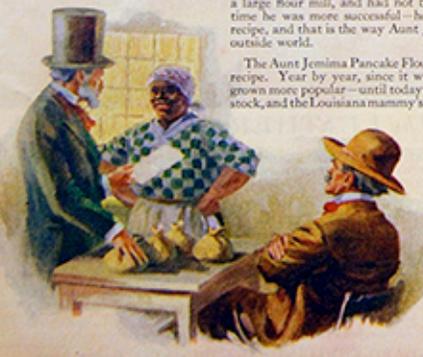
How Aunt Jemima became famous

Sure enough, she was still living in the same cabin and gladly mixed up a batch of her cakes for them. Several of the gentlemen immediately made her tempting offers for the recipe, but all were refused.

Later, however, one of the party returned. He was the representative of a large flour mill, and had not been able to forget those pancakes. This time he was more successful—he persuaded the mammy to sell him the recipe, and that is the way Aunt Jemima's pancakes became known to the outside world.

The Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour you buy nowadays is based on that same recipe. Year by year, since it was first put out in packaged form, it has grown more popular—until today every crossroads grocery store carries it in stock, and the Louisiana mammy's pancakes are America's favorite breakfast!

**The payment needs
must be made
in Gold**



Look on the top of the package and see how to get the jolly Aunt Jemima Rag Doll family



Try it for waffles and waffles, too

The Aunt Jemima people also make a delicious buttermilk flour

"I'm in town, Honey!"

Figure 5. *When the Robert E. Lee Stopped at Aunt Jemima's Cabin*, 1919

The Poor Little Bride of 1860

Outdoing himself to play the gallant host

IT happened one time years ago that a young bride and groom were spending part of their honeymoon on Col. Higbee's Louisiana plantation. What fun they did have, with everyone making a fuss over them, and parties galore!

The little bride, filled with a sudden new interest in housekeeping, enjoyed nothing more than going out to the big kitchen. She never tired of watching Aunt Jemima bustling around preparing the delectable meals for which the Higbees' home was famous. But it never occurred to her to ask Aunt Jemima just how she made those tender pancakes—it looked so easy. . . .

The honeymoon finally came to an end—as all honeymoons must do—and the young pair started housekeeping in their new home up North.

And then—a near tragedy! She *could* not make good pancakes—her husband's favorite breakfast. They would be tender—but tasteless. Or nicely browned—but leathery! Poor little bride! How she wished she had only had the foresight to get Aunt Jemima's recipe! But in the end they had to give up the idea of having pancakes.

Today—how different!

Nowadays little brides have no such trouble! They can get the famous old Southern recipe itself, at any grocery store. All the ingredients, in just the proportions Aunt Jemima herself worked out, come ready mixed in Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour. Ask your grocer for a package today—see how pleased your husband will be when morning after morning your cakes are perfect!

What fun to watch Aunt Jemima at work

But the bride of 1920 need never disappoint him

The Aunt Jemima people also make a delicious buckwheat flour

Alas! the cakes would not come right

Look on the top of the package to see how to get the only Aunt Jemima Rag that lasts!

AUNT JEMIMA PANCAKE FLOUR

AUNT JEMIMA BUCKWHEAT COOK 'N' WHEAT FLOUR

"I'm in town, Honey!"

Try it for muffins and waffles, too

Figure 6. *The Poor Little Bride of 1860, 1920*



Figure 7. Faith Ringgold, *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?*, 1983

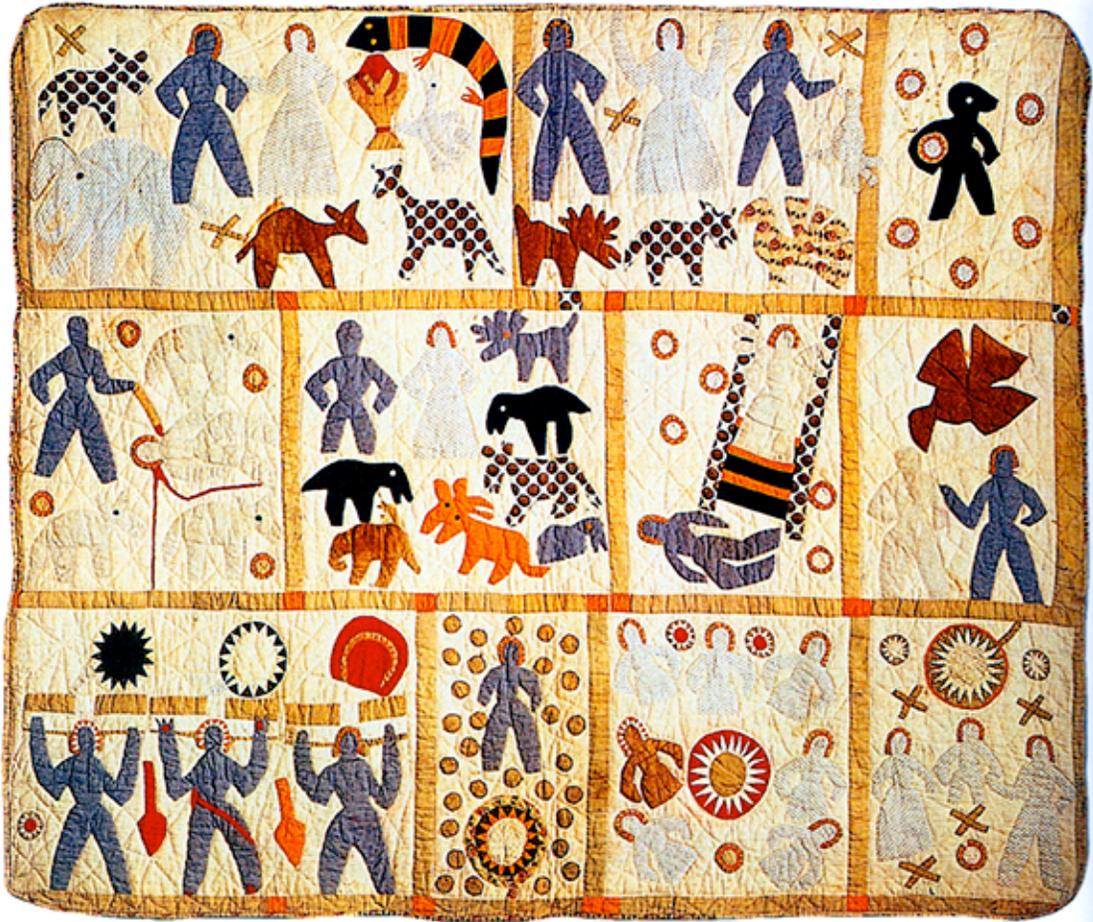


Figure 8. Harriet Powers, *Bible Story Quilt*, 1890s



Figure 9. Faith Ringgold, *The Two Jemima's: The American Collection #9*, 1997



Figure 10. Renee Cox, *The Liberation of Lady J. and U.B.*, 1998

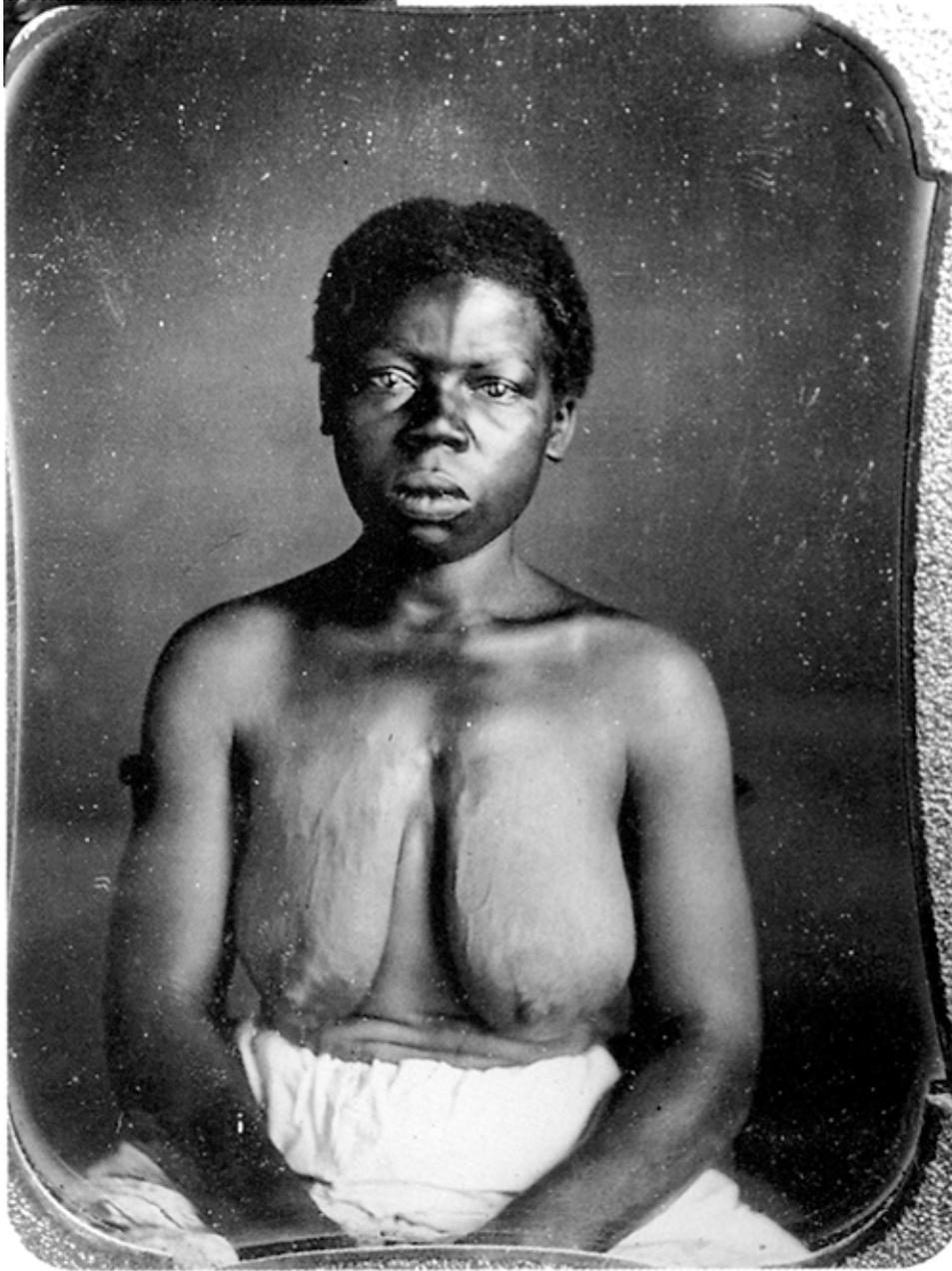


Figure 11. Joseph T. Zealy, *Drana, Country Born, Daughter of Jack, Guinea, 1850*



Figure 12. Renee Cox, *Lost in Space*, 1998



Figure 13. Renee Cox, *Taxi*, 1998



Figure 14. Renee Cox, *Hot En Tott*, 1994



Figure 15. Kara Walker, *Vanishing Act*, 1997

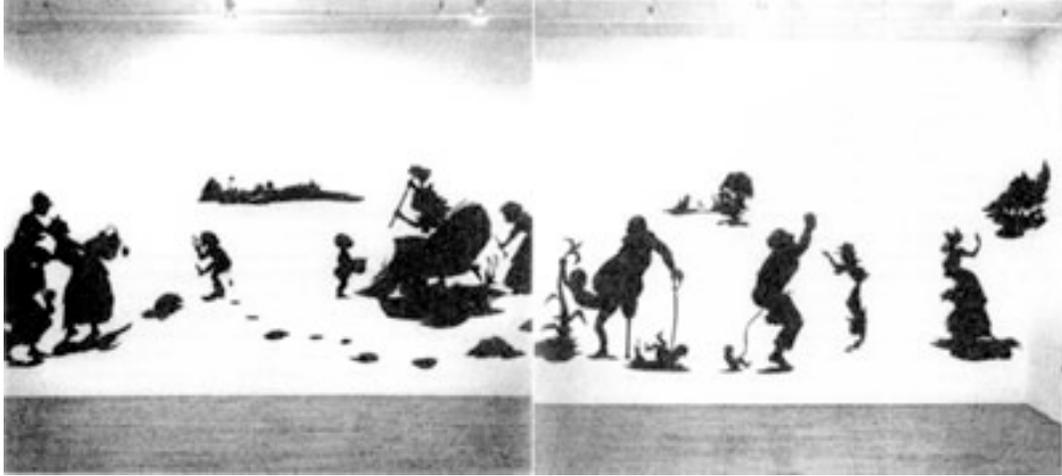


Figure 16. Kara Walker, *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven*, 1995

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- Wallace, Michele. *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory*. London: Verso, 1990.
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- Wood, Rebecca Sue. "Slavery's Visual and Literary Agency: Trauma Studies and Recent Reconfigurations of Slave Bodies." PhD Diss, Indiana University, 2004.

Magazine Advertisements

- Good Housekeeping*: Sept. 1922, Oct. 1922, Nov. 1922, Dec. 1922, Jan. 1924, Feb. 1924, Mar. 1924, April 1924, May 1924.
- Ladies' Home Journal*: Sept. 1919, Oct. 1919, Nov. 1919, Dec. 1919, Jan. 1920, Feb. 1920, April 1920, Oct. 1920, Dec. 1920.

CURRICULUM VITÆ

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA, 2002-2003, 2005-present

- BFA Graphic Design (Advisor: Prof. George Wenzel) Expected 12/2007
- BA Visual Culture (Advisors: Dr. Merrill Schleier, Dr. Diane Borden) Expected 12/2007
- Recipient of the Regents' Scholarship, 2002-2003, 2005-present
- Major papers: "Are You Chinese or Japanese?: Asian Americans in *King of the Hill*," "Pollution in Inner and Outer Spaces: Masami Teraoka's *McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan*"
- Major projects: "Using Digital Media to Aid Students Differentiate Primary and Secondary Sources"
- Curated and organized corresponding events for *Transgressions: Transgender, Transnational, Transsexual*, an art exhibit hosted by Reynolds Gallery, 2007

Hawai`i Pacific University, Honolulu, Hawai`i, 2004

- Undergraduate coursework in Film Studies

Punahou School, Honolulu, Hawai`i, 1994-2002

- Graduation with honors, National Honor Society

EXPERIENCE

University of the Pacific Library, Holt Atherton Department of Special Collections, Stockton, CA, 2002-2003, 2005-present

- Created a photocopy index of photographs from the Brubeck Collection.
- Accessioned documents and updated the finding aid for the Amos Alonzo Stagg Collection.
- Accessioned documents and updated the finding aid for the Warren H. Atherton Papers.
- Created an exhibit for the Brubeck Collection.

University of the Pacific Department of Visual Arts, Visual Resource Center, Stockton, CA, 2002-2003, 2005-present

- Photographed images from books for slides used in art history lectures.
- Created digital images of slides and compiled images into Powerpoint lectures for Art History courses

Punahou School Archives, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 2003-present

- Organized the Punahou Carnival Collection and the Siegfried Ramler Collection and created corresponding finding aids.
- Developed preliminary budgets and purchase orders.
- Created exhibits for library cases and alumni events.

Honolulu Academy of Arts Lending Collections, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 1996-2002

- Accessioned recently acquired artifacts and books
- Recognized for 100+ volunteer hours in 1999, 2000 and 2001. Recognized for 5 years of volunteer service in 2002.

LECTURES, PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCES

Cross-Cultural Perspectives of Visual Communication, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire, *Pollution and Hybridity: Cultural Collision in Masami Teraoka's McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan*, Presentation—April 2007

National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Dominican University of California, *Pollution in Inner and Outer Spaces: Masami Teraoka's McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan*, Presentation—April 2007

University of the Pacific, ARTH 116: Contemporary World Art, *Staging the Self Photography*, Guest Lecture—Oct. 2006

Pacific Undergraduate Research and Creativity Conference, University of the Pacific, *Pollution in Inner and Outer Spaces: Masami Teraoka's McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan*, Presentation—April 2006

University of the Pacific, ARTH 009: World Art after 1400, *Art of the Pacific and Post-Impressionism*, Guest Lecture—March 2006

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Freelance Design for Pacific Humanities Center, Pacific Social Justice Community and the Film Studies Program (Spring 2007)

Campaign-Work for Jerry McNerney, U.S. House (2006) and Rich Halverson, Hawaii House (2004)

Alpha Phi Omega National community service fraternity. Joined in Spring 2005 and served as chapter historian in Fall 2005.

SKILLS

Proficient with Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Word. Familiar with Adobe InDesign, Macromedia Dreamweaver and Macromedia Flash. Proficient in Dewey Decimal Cataloguing System.