

CHANGING REALITY: *COLLIER'S* CRUSADE,
CONSPIRACY AND THE GREAT
AMERICAN FRAUD

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of
Southwest Texas State University
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements

For the Degree of
Master of ARTS

By

Sara B. Baron, B.A.

San Marcos, Texas
May, 1994

COPYRIGHT

by

Sara B. Baron

1994

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is not complete without special thanks to the people who made it possible. Heartfelt thanks to the members of my committee: Dr. Roseann Mandzuik, who always pushed my critical thinking capacities; Mrs. Sue Fitch, a delightful and inspirational rhetor; and Dr. John McLaren, whose Drug Law class led me to this project. My appreciation also goes out to Dr. Barry Smith, who kept me intrigued with corrections. It would have been hard for me to finish this project without my dear friend Lisa--Thanks for everything! Thanks to everyone at the Speech Communication Department who has shown continuing interest and support during my undergraduate and graduate careers here at SWT. My appreciation also goes to my family: Mom, Dad, Pete and Kate, thank you for your love and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	viii
I. A CHANGING WORLD VIEW.....	1
A. Significance.....	2
B. Review of Literature.....	4
Defining Consumerism	
Consumerism at the Turn of the Century	
The Rise of Advertising	
Magazine Advertising	
Patent Medicine History and Advertising	
The Role of <i>Collier's</i>	
C. Methodology.....	12
Creating Reality	
Communication Creating Reality	
Media Creating Reality	
The Paranoid Style	
Conspiracy Rhetoric, Challenging Reality	
Argumentation, Changing Reality	
Strategic Framework	
II. DEMOCRATIZATION, CONSUMERISM AND GENERATING A CRUSADE.....	22
A. Democratization.....	23
B. Consumerism.....	26
C. Decline of Professional Medicine.....	29
Medical Specializations	
Decrease of General Physicians	
Lack of Medical Education	
Alternative Diagnosis	
D. Patent Medicine Advertising.....	36
E. Generating a Crusade.....	40
Suggestive Ads and Testimonials	
Harmful Compounds and Effects	
A Secret Alliance	

III. THE GREAT AMERICAN FRAUD: EXPOSING CONSPIRACY AND CHANGING REALITY.....	50
A. The Series.....	50
B. The Conspiracy.....	54
C. Analysis.....	57
Exposure of Multiple Realities	
Exposure of the Evil Conspirator	
Reaffirmation of the Renegade	
Reconstruction of Reality	
IV. A NEW WORLD VIEW.....	110
A. Rhetorical Implications.....	112
Redefining Conspiracy	
Strategies	
Reform	
Persuasive Campaigns	
B. Directions for Future Research.....	124
WORKS CITED.....	128

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure		Page
I.	"Death's Laboratory"	78
II.	"A Fraud's Gallery"	82
III.	"The Great American Fraud"	84
IV.	"'Patent' Nostrum"	85
V.	"Alcohol in 'Medicines'"	87
VI.	"Clergymen Endorse Duffy's"	89

CHAPTER I

A CHANGING WORLD VIEW

At the turn of the century, the world view of many Americans was influenced by newspapers and weekly magazines. These channels of communication were the sole source of news, advertisements and current events. While the majority of media were ethical, in the early 1900's controversy arose over deceptive practices of some newspapers. Much of the early debate was over false advertisements and testimonials run by the patent medicine industry. As more people became aware of the fraudulent practices of the patent medicine industry, more newspapers and magazines began to speak out against "quack cures," nostrums which often contained alcohol and narcotic mixtures. While many articles ran in various media sources, one weekly magazine offered a series of articles designed to inform the public of the medicines and the fraudulent practices of the newspapers and the patent medicine, also called proprietary, industry. *Collier's*, *The National Weekly* published the series of eight articles and two full-page illustrations in 1905. This thesis is an examination of how the 1905 series in *Collier's* attempted to change the popular belief in the goodness of

the patent medicine industry, a belief evidenced by the enormous amounts of money spent on patent medicines and by the patent medicine industry on advertising.

The first *Collier's* piece was written by the editor of the magazine, Norman Hapgood. The six "Great American Fraud" articles were written by Samuel Hopkins Adams. One additional article, "The Patent Medicine Conspiracy Against the Freedom of the Press," was written by Mark Sullivan, a journalist for *Ladies' Home Journal*. The two full page illustrations, "Death's Laboratory" and "Her Last Dollar for a Bottle of Patent Medicine" were drawn by E. W. Kemble and A. B. Frost, respectively. The Adams articles and Sullivan piece subsequently were published the next year as a set by the American Medical Association. This exposé is significant because it was the first mediated series which attempted to change society's perception of reality with regards to medicines, health, and advertising.

Significance

Societal changes, governmental actions and a growing media contributed to an individual's view of the world at the turn of the century. As class differences and government influence became less clear in the late eighteenth century, the media became more animated as it offered news, entertainment, and a plethora of

advertisements to the public. Advertisements grew inexorably in the late 1800's. The most rapid growth in advertising was from the patent medicine industry. Millions of dollars were spent advertising so-called "medical" products, which resulted in millions of dollars in sales.

As the industry boomed, more doctors, academicians, and intellectuals began examining popular cure-alls. While the ads promoted the positive effects of the patent medicine industry, people who analyzed the medicines found several negative effects. Studies revealed some of the most popular cure-alls had large quantities of alcohol, shown to promote drunkenness when used habitually. Habitual use also contributed to addictions to medicines with morphine and opium derivatives. In addition to harming public health, the proprietary industry used false ads and testimonials about the medicines, thus provoking an unsuspecting society to believe everything they read. The industry also prevented some newspapers from fully printing the news through the infamous "red clause," part of the contract which allowed a patent medicine company to break its agreement with the newspaper if it ran any article which could be detrimental to the industry. Because the newspaper's messages were often influenced by the patent medicine industry, the information they released was not always accurate.

Collier's was the first weekly magazine to question the

alliance between the media and the propriety industry. The "Great American Fraud" series exemplified the growing campaign of literature which questioned patent medicine uses, safety, advertisements, and influence on the media. *Colliers'* series went much further than an earlier set of articles in *Ladies' Home Journal* that focussed on general health questions, one often mentioned as a pioneer of this campaign. *Collier's* waged a war against the rampant uninformed consumerism which engulfed cure-all medicines and their advertisements. The magazine sought to expose fraudulent ads and the alliance between the newspapers and the patent medicine industry. It is significant as a forerunner of mediated rhetoric which seeks to change society's beliefs and thus, the cultural world view. The persuasion used by *Collier's* informs, argues, and ultimately changes the reality established by consumerism and advertising at the turn of the century.

Review of Literature

The history of advertising has been documented extensively in literature. Aspects important to this thesis include the rise of consumerism, the rise of advertisements in newspapers and magazines, the influence of weekly magazines, and the influence of *Collier's*, *The National Weekly*. While several of these issues have been covered

extensively as advertising and mass media history, persuasion, particularly in a campaign like the *Collier's* 1905 series, has not been examined.

Defining Consumerism. Consumerism is a term that refers to the creation of desires and habits which will persuade people to buy products and "experience a self conscious perspective that . . . had previously been socially and psychically denied" (Ewen 36-37). Stewart Ewen offers an exemplar discussion of consumerism and advertising in his book, Captains of Consciousness; Advertising and the Social Roots of Consumer Culture. Ewen argues that consumerism was created by advertisers as an attempt to entice people into buying products and ideas associated with them. Furthermore, he agrees that "Consumerism was a world view, a 'philosophy of life'" (108). Ewen's notion of consumerism is fundamental when considering the influence of advertising at the turn of the century. Even so, he does not attempt to critically analyze persuasive campaigns outside of a few examples in his discussion of "A Modern Architecture of Daily Life" (113-185). Persuasion is part of advertising, and as such, consumerism's influence should be examined to see its effect on the persuasive campaign.

Consumerism at the Turn of the Century. The act of purchasing products changed dramatically in the early 1900's. Gone were the local store and hand made goods. With the rise of technology, communication and

transportation, "shopping" became a more social, mass event. Though numerous articles have been written about consumerism at the turn of the century, two articles attempt to capture the spirit of consumerism and the rise of advertising in the early 1900's. In "The Historical Roots of Consumer Culture," Michael Schudson claims, "As the early 1900's brought improved systems of transportation and communication and a vastly improved system for the distribution of goods to rural parts of the country, consumer 'lifestyle' and individual expression and identity-formation through lifestyle became more widely available" (48). As a larger variety of goods became available to more people, the growing industry of advertising informed society of the benefits of these products. As mass society grew in technological advances and consumer products, means of communication had to grow as well. Schudson stops short here, however, leaving any analysis of advertising as a means of communication to other scholars.

Daniel Pope, in "Advertising as a Consumer Issue: An Historical View," chronicles the rise of persuasive national advertising from the late 1800's to present. He notes that advertisements which began as merely announcements for products soon changed their strategies: "Proprietary drugs were already the leaders among national advertisers; for these, persuasion, not announcement, was clearly the main task of advertising" (43). While Pope turns this discussion

to a truth in advertising movement, he leaves behind consumerism and its influence on persuasion in advertising and persuasive campaigns.

The Rise of Advertising. Many books have been written about the history of advertising. In particular, James Playsted Wood's, The Story of Advertising is often cited as an exceptional source on this subject because it offers an exhaustive chronicle of the historical roots of advertising. The author notes that the earliest newspaper ads are believed to have been in English newspapers in the 1600's (32). By the early 1700's he argues, "Advertising was now a commonplace, an accepted and expected part of almost all the periodicals of the day" (37). After examining the rise of advertising in newspapers through the mid 1800's, Wood turns to weekly magazines. Magazines in the 1800's were "literary monthlies or quarterlies patterned after conservative English models" (193). These intellectual magazines tested the waters with advertising literary papers and events. Even so, they continually turned down offers for additional advertisements.

Magazine Advertising. In the 1890's a new class of magazines began to emerge. These magazines attempted to reach the common man. They were business oriented and designed to make money. Wood notes:

They were directed not at the educated few but at the newly literate many; not at the wealthy, but at the prospering middle class untouched by, untroubled by, and uninterested in the literary monthlies. They set out to achieve large circulations . . . They were founded, in reality, as advertising media. (202)

Because of the growing numbers of magazines designed for a common audience, advertisements utilized persuasion and testimonials to capture the attention of a reader. Furthermore, industries experiencing growth at this time became the bulk of all advertisements.

Patent Medicine History and Advertising. Though patent medicine advertisements were new at the turn of the century, the products were not. In The Toadstool Millionaires, A Social History of Patent Medicines in America Before Federal Regulation, James Harvey Young traces the first medicines back to England in the 1600's. In colonial America, medicines were willingly accepted. Young states: "Heir to the same ancient traditions, Americans dosed themselves with galenicals, and chymicals (sic), and swallowed complicated concoctions containing disgusting ingredients, in their efforts to drive away the ills that attacked them" (8).

The English patent medicines were overcome by American products in 1796 when an American, Elisha Perkins, received the "first patent issued for a medical device under the Constitution of the United States" (Toadstool Millionaires 16). In the following years, an explosion of products became available to society. As Young argues:

Patent and copyright legislation, the expansion of means for advertising, rapid growth in the population of the country, the unabated suffering from many ailments, the spirit of therapeutic laissez-faire in a democratic age--all these were factors broadening the market for vendors of packaged remedies. (41)

Advertisements for patent medicines constituted nearly half of all the advertising in magazines at the turn of the century. Many newspapers and magazines remained in publication because of advertising contracts. Wood notes, "The religious and farm papers, many of them in chronic financial straits and dependent on the bounty of quacks, could not afford to indulge in ethical niceties" (111). As such, businesses often influenced the media and what was printed. While Wood briefly discusses this problem, he does not attempt to analyze it as part of his history of advertising. Furthermore, he does not do an in depth analysis of persuasive campaigns and their effect on the public. Even so, his history covers nearly every conceivable step in the growth of advertising.

The Role of Collier's. Any exhaustive research of the history of advertising at the turn of the century will procure the names of popular weekly magazines. *Collier's* is mentioned numerous times as a pioneer of the early advertising weeklies, and also is credited in many sources for the "Great American Fraud" series of articles. Charles Goodrum and Helen Dalrymple in Advertising in America, The First 200 Years, note "*Collier's*, *Saturday Evening Post*,

American Magazine, *Woman's Home Companion*, and *The Delineator* were candidly promoted in the business world as being created primarily as a vehicle to advertise in" (31). Frank Presbrey in *The History and Development of Advertising* notes, "The most important mediums among magazines were the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Munsey's*, *Delineator*, *McCall's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's*, *Century*, *Scribner's*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *Collier's* and *McClure's* (437). Wood refers to *Collier's* as an "established weekly" along with *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* (214).

In addition to being noticed as a pioneer of the popular weeklies, *Collier's* often is mentioned for the "Great American Fraud" series of articles published in 1905. Though this was not the first attempt to expose abuses of the proprietary industry, it often is noted as the most forceful attempt. Young argues, "The most famous series of articles in American patent medicine history began on October 7, 1905, in the pages of *Collier's*, *The National Weekly*" (205). Presbrey states, "The *Collier's* stories, written by Samuel Hopkins Adams, and accompanied by cartoons showing skulls and snakes in association with the nostrum bottle, exerted a force more powerful than even the *Ladies' Home Journal* articles" (533-534). Wood notes, "The nostrums that claimed to cure cancer and tuberculosis, the barely disguised narcotics, and the undisguised aphrodisiacs and vicious cure-alls were another matter. *Collier's*, as well as

Ladies' Home Journal, was pouring broadsides into these in 1905 and 1906" (332). Pope mentions the exposé in connection with Samuel Hopkins Adams' influence on the passage of the Food and Drugs Act of 1906: "(his) articles in *Collier's* had done much to pave the way for passage of the 1906 measure" (45). In addition to being mentioned in advertising books, this series of articles is also discussed in drug history books. In The War on Drugs II, James A. Inciardi explains: "the most provocative effort (of muckraking journalism) was 'The Great American Fraud,' a long series of articles written by Samuel Hopkins Adams that began in 1905 in the pages of *Collier's*" (13). William Butler Eldridge, in Narcotics and the Law, directs readers to Adams' series following a discussion of patent medicines. These are just a few examples of *Collier's* notoriety; yet while the series of articles is touted as exceptional, none of these sources examines it as a persuasive mediated campaign.

In the early 1900's, the more stable magazines and weeklies, namely *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Collier's*, began questioning the truthfulness of patent medicine ads, the harmfulness of their compounds, and the relationship between the advertisers and the media. These questions arose from a society which endured the rapid rise of consumerism, advertising, the influence of weekly magazines, and hundreds of patent medicine ads. While much has been written about

consumerism, the rise of both advertising and weekly magazines, and even the role of *Collier's* as an influential weekly during the time period, no attempt has been made to specifically analyze the series of articles which attempted to change popular views of reality in addition to taking on an influential portion of the business world, the proprietary industry. Though the "Great American Fraud" series in *Collier's* has been mentioned numerous times throughout advertising and drug history literature, it has not been examined as a distinctive piece of rhetoric.

Methodology

This thesis will examine how the 1905 series of articles in *Collier's* attempted to change the popular belief in the patent medicine industry by informing the public about the medicines and the alliance between the media and the proprietary industry. The broad theoretical perspective that will be used for this analysis is epistemological, in the sense that the rhetoric of *Collier's* creates knowledge in the audience. Furthermore, social reality is modified through persuasion and strategies, which will be discussed later in this section. These theoretical principles will be used to examine the mediated communication efforts of *Collier's* to create reality. Because the magazine was an influential source of information and persuasion, I will

analyze how the "Great American Fraud" series created reality by challenging and changing people's perceptions of patent medicines and the proprietary industry.

Creating Reality. This thesis is based on the epistemological assumption that reality is created through rhetoric. Beliefs, values, and one's world view are all malleable to rhetorical influences. In The Social Construction of Reality Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann explain the sociology of knowledge. They assert that in order to analyze how reality is socially constructed, one must analyze the process in which that construction occurs (1). Everyday life is the framework for this construction: "It is a world that originates in their [individuals'] thoughts and actions, and is maintained as real by these" (20). Furthermore, the reality of everyday life is shared intersubjectively with others (Berger & Luckmann 23). While most of a person's reality is determined by face-to-face experiences, some is second hand. Second hand knowledge of reality may come from "mediators of specific sectors of the common stock of knowledge" (76). The mediators promote "specific areas of socially objectivated knowledge . . . in the sense of the 'knowledge' of norms, values and even emotions" (76).

Communication Creating Reality. While reality is constructed face-to-face and through mediators, communication is the key to construction. C. Jack Orr, in

"How shall we say, 'Reality is Socially Constructed through Communication?'," claims symbolic interaction among groups, or intersubjectivity, creates and sustains notions of reality (263). In addition, "reality and truth are rooted solely in human authority" (264). Orr offers the concept of critical rationalism as a means for examining communication in the social construction of reality. One aspect of critical rationalism involves the frame of reference held by a receiver of a message. For example, Orr states:

"knowledge claims are contingent upon the framework of the knower and socially constructed frames of reference may be distinguished qualitatively as rational, or irrational" (272). Important to an examination of *Collier's* are the notions of intersubjectivity and the construction of a frame of reference. Intersubjectivity encompasses truth in some human authority, in this case, the writers at *Collier's*. The frame of reference for *Colliers'* audience is one ground in consumerism. The series attempts to show this framework in an irrational light.

Media Creating Reality. Not only is reality constructed through communication, but it is significant that this communication is often mediated. In Mediated Political Realities, Dan Nimmo and James Combs argue that direct and indirect experience influences the way people see reality. Moreover, the media often provides indirect experience. They claim that there are three underlying

reasons why communication expresses and explains reality: (1) our everyday taken-for granted reality is a delusion; (2) reality is created, or constructed, through communication, not expressed by it; and (3) for any situation, there is no single reality, no one objective truth, but multiple subjectively derived realities--some contradictory (Nimmo & Combs 3). Because some representations of reality are contradictory, new arguments may be developed to transform popular beliefs. The "Great American Fraud" series was an attempt to change popular support of the proprietary industry. While the patent medicine ads attempted to create a reality in which cure-alls were necessary for life, the *Collier's* articles strived to change that view by providing a contradictory view of reality in which patent medicines were bad.

The Paranoid Style. The attempt to change world views because of danger, threat or dishonesty is not a new practice in rhetorical studies. The party demanding change often pits itself against the party it sees as causing the problems. Richard Hofstadter, in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, writes "The paranoid tendency is aroused by a confrontation of opposed interests which are totally irreconcilable . . ." (39). Furthermore, he argues "the spokesman of the paranoid style finds it [the enemy] directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others" (4).

Collier's magazine and Samuel Hopkins Adams became the "spokesmen" against the proprietary industry. They pitted themselves against the medicine men and through the 1905 series, exhibited the basic elements in the paranoid style.

Hofstadter argues that the paranoid style has four basic elements. The first is that conspiracies and plots are not seen as brief individual lapses of history: "exponents . . . regard a 'vast' or 'gigantic' conspiracy as the motive force in historical events" (29). Furthermore, "The paranoid spokesman sees the fate of this conspiracy in apocalyptic terms--he traffics in the birth and death of whole worlds, whole political orders, whole systems of human values" (Hofstadter 29). In addition to viewing the conspiracy as an enormous affront against human values, the paranoid style also rejects compromise and vows to fight to the end.

The second basic element of the paranoid style labels the enemy as evil. Hofstadter asserts "Since the enemy is thought of as being totally evil and totally unappeasable, he must be totally eliminated--if not from the world, at least from the theater of operations to which the paranoid directs attention" (31). In the case of *Collier's*, this theater would be the media and advertisements, both of which were mastered by the proprietary industry. Indeed, Hofstadter argues, "Very often the enemy is held to possess some especially effective source of power: he controls the

press; he directs the public through 'managed news'; he has unlimited funds . . ." (32). These factors all apply to the proprietary industry and how *Collier's* seeks to expose them.

The role of the crusader is the third basic element of the paranoid style. Hofstadter states, "in the spiritual wrestling match between good and evil which is the paranoid's archetypal model of the world struggle, the renegade is living proof that all conversions are not made by the wrong side" (35). A renegade strives for conversion and supports arguments with enumerable proofs. The fourth element of the paranoid style is that there is usually a quantum of evidence to support a conversion, or in other words, to defeat the enemy. Hofstadter found "elaborate concern with demonstration . . . and heroic strivings for 'evidence'" (35-36).

Hofstadter's paranoid style blends completely with the purposes of the *Collier's* campaign. The proprietary industry is seen as an enormous enemy reeking havoc on society through manipulating the mass media and running false advertisements. This series attempted to do three things: (1) inform the public about false advertisements; (2) inform the public about the dangers of patent medicines; and (3) expose the alliance between the media and the proprietary industry. With the paranoid style as a backdrop, this type of crusade has been labelled conspiracy rhetoric by the speech communication field.

Conspiracy Rhetoric, Challenging Reality. Conspiracy rhetoric is a form of argumentation that challenges existing views of reality. G. Thomas Goodnight and John Poulakos offer three factors of the struggle of a rhetor to expose a conspiracy. They are: (1) awakening to the possibility that conspiracy is responsible for some events or social problems; (2) struggle between contending parties claiming to represent the real interpretation of events; and (3) overturning of a formerly consensually defined reality. As a rhetor attempts to expose a conspiracy, contradictory views of reality emerge. Through argumentation, one view becomes superior, thus transforming the widely held view. Conspiracies have been studied extensively in political contexts, but for the purposes of this study, a social context will be examined. In addition, the "renegade" is not an individual, but a member of the mass media, *Collier's* magazine. Likewise, the "enemy" is not just one person or persons, but the entire proprietary industry.

Argumentation, Changing Reality. Usually when a framework of reality is constructed, an authority (or mediator, as Berger and Luckmann call it) communicates the norms, values and emotions to be included. This is often done through argumentation. Charles Kneupper, in "Argument: A Social Constructivist Perspective" defines argument as "a structure for comprehending reality" (183). Kneupper claims social reality is created by human constructions which are

"capable of transformation" (185). A rhetor seeking to expose a conspiracy must use strategic argumentation as a means for evoking a conversion of reality.

Reality is transformed through "adherence or rejection of the regulative structure of arguments provided by the symbol system" (Kneupper 186). The renegade persuades an audience to discard the popularly held argument. Furthermore, "tradition and context provide a web of beliefs, definitions, and argument forms in which constructs become meaningful" (Kneupper 186). *Collier's*, as a renegade, relies heavily on social mores, particularly religious beliefs, as it argues against a conspiracy and attempts to provoke change. For example, the *Collier's* exposé lays the foundation for the concept of "truth in advertising" by recognizing society's right to be given correct information about medicines and honest advertisements with real testimonials. While the "Truth in Advertising" campaign did not reach its height until the 1920's, it began with questions and articles about the ethical implications of running false advertisements (Pope 44-47). Tradition and an alternative view of society, manifested through argumentation, come together as a means of communicating the need to change a popularly held view of reality.

Strategic Framework. When Hofstadter wrote about the paranoid style, he was discussing radical right-wing

politics. His view of conspiracy was limited to the evil use of power. Hofstadter's four elements of the paranoid style lay the foundation for conspiracy rhetoric, as discussed by Goodnight and Poulakos. They attempt to (1) establish "a theory of conspiracy discourse (which) must account for the usefullness of this appeal to mainstream speakers and audiences" and (2) establish a theory that accounts "for the possibility that those holding an unpopular or presumably lunatic point of view may be participating in the restructuring of social consensus" (300). By broadening the scope of conspiracy rhetoric, Goodnight and Poulakos shift Hofstadter's radical right approach to a more mainstream, political emphasis. Even so, their analysis remains politically oriented. An analysis of "The Great American Fraud" as a mediated persuasive campaign battling conspiracy takes the concept one step further. It makes conspiracy rhetoric a more mainstream social issue than the political avenue Goodnight and Poulakos reached for, and it illustrates a mediated restructuring of social reality.

The following analysis of the "Great American Fraud" series and its attempt to challenge and change people's perceptions of patent medicines and the patent medicine industry, will be examined using a social conspiracy framework. The exposure of a social conspiracy must: (1) expose multiple realities; (2) expose an evil conspirator;

(3) reaffirm the renegade; and (4) reconstruct reality. Strategies used to prove the conspiracy include language strategies, visual appeals, strategies of proof, resources of evidence, and irony. Conspiracy and argument strategies are forms of persuasion which strive to alter ideas, viewpoints and beliefs about specific aspects of a situation. The situation is one in which *Collier's*, in its attempt to inform the public about the evil proprietary industry, exposes a social conspiracy. By informing the public and demanding a change of popular beliefs, the magazine also changes the public's view of reality.

CHAPTER II

DEMOCRATIZATION, CONSUMERISM AND GENERATING A CRUSADE

The mid to late 1800's were a time of American transformation and invention. The movement of people to the West, followed by the construction of railroads, led to the development of communities across America. In addition, the railroads reduced space between communities, required standard time nationwide, and spurred technological innovations such as the Westinghouse air brake (Norton 286). As settlers in rural areas began to interact with the railroad industry through trading, mail order companies, and the postal service in the 1890's, channels of communication opened: "Now farmers no longer lacked news and information; they could receive letters, newspapers, advertisements, and catalogues at home nearly every day" (Norton 292).

As the demand for information grew, so did the means of communication. It was not until 1896 that Rural Free Delivery, which increased the area covered by the postal service, was developed by the government (Norton 292). Even so, the preceding decades had developed other means for capturing images and communicating verbally. Representations of life were saved and passed on through

dry-plate photography, developed in 1873. Daniel J. Boorstin states: "Bell patented the telephone in 1876; the phonograph was invented in 1877; the roll of film appeared in 1884; Eastman's Kodak No. 1 was produced in 1888; Edison's patent on radio came in 1891; motion pictures came in and voice was first transmitted by radio around 1900" (Image 13). With the proliferation of technology and products came changes at every level of society.

Democratization

Events and inventions common in the 1920's were nearly unheard of in the 1880's. Steven Kern argues: "From around 1880 to the outbreak of World War I a series of sweeping changes in technology and culture created distinctive new modes of thinking . . . (resulting in) transformations of the dimensions of life and thought" (1-2). Kern studies these changes in terms of cultural views of time and space. His analysis of technological advances and their impact on society offers an informative backdrop for studying life at the turn of the century.

Among the technological advances during this time period were the "telephone, wireless telegraph, x-ray, cinema, bicycle and automobile" (Kern 1). Innovative changes in technology created sweeping changes in communication, entertainment, and travel. Kern states:

"The technology of communication and transportation and the expansion of literacy made it possible for more people to read about new distant places in the newspaper, see them in movies, and travel more widely" (34). Because more people were able to read, travel, and enjoy entertainment such as the telephone, cinema, and photography, social boundaries began to dissolve. Kern argues:

The telephone, first used by the rich, soon became a democratic instrument, levelling class lines and binding nations in a single electronic network . . . Compared to theater, the cinema was not only far more accessible but, more importantly, enabled all of its viewers to see anywhere that a camera could see . . . The newsreel, invented around the turn of the century, threaded knowledge across class and national frontiers. (208)

When new inventions allowed anyone to have a photograph, or attend the cinema or travel, a shift in thought occurred as well.

Democratization occurs when social barriers between the rich and poor deteriorate (Americans 1). Modern inventions of the new century were enjoyed by all classes. In addition, people came together in suburban communities, at the cinema, and shopping. Boorstin argues: "A new civilization found new ways of holding men together--less and less by creed or belief, by tradition or by place, more and more by common effort and common experience, by the apparatus of daily life, by their ways of thinking about themselves" (Americans 1).

The old ways of thinking were hierarchical, where

everyone had a certain place. Kern argues: "The traditional world was rooted in conventions that dictated how an individual should experience his own self, other people, and objects in the world" (209). Because people had their own places, jobs, and ways of life, the shift to the new way of thinking was dramatic. In addition, it occurred at social and familial levels. Kern states, "The change affected relations between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. The prevailing sound of the age was 'the sound of breaking and falling, crashing and destruction (of old norms)'" (183). As the old norms receded, democratization and new norms emerged.

With democratization came a lessening of social boundaries. In families, social scenes, and the business and professional worlds, the old hierarchical order was less established. Poorer women could wear the same outfits as wealthier women, while less educated men could work in the same jobs as men who were educated. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English argue: "Incredible, once unthinkable, possibilities opened up as all the 'fixed, fast-frozen relations'--between man and woman, between parents and children, between the rich and poor--were thrown into question" (6). With the new order came changes in relationships and everyday life.

Consumerism

Daily activities like school, housekeeping and shopping increasingly became standardized as learning materials, cleaning utensils and food and clothing became mass produced. Mass production provided innovative products, and shopping arenas sprouted up throughout the nation. With all levels of society suddenly able to purchase and enjoy similar items, a boom in advertising occurred. The development of consumers was strengthened by the business industry. Stuart Ewen argues that business used shorter working hours and higher wages for employees, in addition to lines of credit, to demand "that the worker spend his wages and leisure time on the consumer market" (29). Consumer credit allowed people to buy more products and was a way of "socializing the family to the idiom of mass-produced life" (Ewen 136). Consumers knew what products to purchase from the plethora of advertisements which bombarded them daily. Consumerism at the turn of the century gained momentum as several societal factors, including the boom of advertising, therapeutic ethos, and product identification, made shopping an everyday event.

The number of advertisements grew inexorably at the turn of the century, spurred on by consumerism. Stuart Ewen defines consumerism as "the mass participation in the values of the mass-industrial market" (54). Advertisements

encouraged people to buy new modern products and thus join the ranks of other consumers. Ads reached people in the inner cities in the columns of newsprint and on the prairies in catalogues. The growing numbers of family-oriented magazines reached people with low literacy rates while academic journals reached the intellectuals. Men, women and children were all targets for persuasive techniques which challenged everyday living, relationships and one's self-realization.

Advertisements often fulfilled a personal need which was unmet by traditional methods. In general, therapeutic ethos is a concept that refers to self-realization through physical and mental well-being. More specifically, advertisers created therapeutic ethos in the early 1900's to "heal the wounds of rationalization (caused by democratization), to release the cramped energies of a fretful bourgeoisie" (Lears 17). T. J. Jackson Lears argues that this notion first emerged at the turn of the century. He argues:

By the late nineteenth century those [larger communal, ethical or religious] frameworks were eroding. The quest for health was becoming an entirely secular and self-referential project, rooted in particularly modern emotional needs . . . The coming of the therapeutic ethos was a modern historical development, shaped by the turmoil of the turn of the century. (4)

Democratization, consumerism and a sense of loss regarding traditional values left people feeling disconcerted. As citizens turned to the medical profession for help, they did

not receive the care they needed. Women, for example, were often diagnosed with chronic depression, when they were merely suffering from boredom. The therapeutic ethos, through advertising products, provided help for physical and mental health which was not met through traditional medical authorities. In addition, fear appeals were used with therapeutic ethos, implying sickness would persist if a certain product was not used.

The advertising industry easily implemented the therapeutic ethos into their strategies. Because people were looking to advertising to meet their needs, "the implication was clear that human minds were not only malleable but manipulable" (Lears 19). Furthermore, Lears notes: "And the most potent manipulation was therapeutic: the promise that the product would contribute to the buyer's physical, psychic, or social well-being; the threat that his well-being would be undermined if he failed to buy it" (19).

While advertisements strived to create and meet needs, they often used product identification as a means of recognition for consumers. The United States Patent Office registered the first trademark in 1870 (Wood 260). In addition to symbolizing a product, Wood notes that the trademark "came to be seen as a guarantee of excellence, an assumption of responsibility by the manufacturer, and a protection to the public" (269). The rise of advertising, therapeutic ethos, and product identification filled a void

left by the medical community.

Democratization contributed to the decline of traditional relationships and consumerism stepped in to make necessary changes less disruptive. Consumerism gave birth to an advertising industry which was modern through its products and strategies. Advertising redefined changing relationships, norms and necessities of life. Consumerism offered positive relationships with the use of certain products. Negative overtones and fear appeals threatened breakdowns in relationships for those who did not use the products.

The positive and negative appeals used through therapeutic ethos were the most prevalent in advertising. Advertisements sought to fill a void resulting from the breakdown in relationships caused by democratization. As such, therapeutic ethos was vital to all advertisers, particularly those in the patent medicine field. For centuries, people had used medicines of ancient relatives. Patients at the turn of the century looked to the promises offered them by the patent medicine industry on the pages of newspapers and magazines.

The Decline of Professional Medicine

Democratization and consumerism were new, invigorating forces at the turn of the century. Class boundaries and

family roles were levelled. Professions also experienced changes in social influence, especially those in the medical realm. While doctors remained essential to many communities, cultural changes nationwide caused a decline in the credibility of medical professionals. The traditional methods of providing health care changed as rapidly as the times at the turn of the century. The rise of medical specializations, decrease of the number of general physicians, questionable educational credentials, and rise of alternative diagnoses were all factors in the weakened medical profession at the turn of the century.

Medical Specializations. Early attempts to organize and standardize medicine in this country led to the development of the American Medical Association. James G. Burrow, in AMA, Voice of American Medicine, dates early efforts to organize American medicine to a small meeting of New York physicians in 1846. Though the incentive to form a unified medical group was present, physicians instead chose to form their own specialization groups. A variety of practices, associations, and other divisions arose, including: electrical and hydrotherapy and the American Electro-Therapeutic Association, 1891; physical methods for the treatment of disease and the American Association of Physio-Medical Physicians and Surgeons, 1883; the National Medical Society of the District of Columbia, formed by black physicians; numerous regional organizations; and specialized

medical organizations such as the American Ophthalmological Society, 1864; the American Gynecological Society and American Dermatological Association, 1876; and the American Climatological Association, 1883 (Burrow 4-8). Many other medical associations were formed, but more important than the specific groups, is to note the general growth of specializations and varied information. Because there were so many different types of doctors and medical physicians, an individual at the turn of the century was not sure who could be trusted or which method of healing was best.

Decrease of General Physicians. Due to increasing medical specialization, the availability of general physicians decreased in the early 1900's. The rapid movement of people west and the development of new towns and communities was progressing faster than the training of medical professionals. Often, settlers in small towns did not have a doctor:

when a forehanded man took his family to a country where there was no physician within a hundred miles, he laid in a chest stocked with such favorites as Mandrake pills, Pulmonic Syrup, Radway's Ready Relief, Piso's Cure for Consumption, Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, Dr. Olcott's Pain Paint or Pain Annihilator. (Rowsome 48)

Many settlers in the west relied on patent medicines, and therefore, did not have a relationship with a physician. In the cities however, relationships between doctors and patients, particularly women, were well established.

Erenreich and English discuss womens' traditional reliance on medical "authorities" in their book For Her Own Good, 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women. They state:

The relationship between women and the experts was not unlike conventonal relationships between women and men . . . women responded--most eagerly in the upper and middle classes, more slowly among the poor--with dependency and trust. It was never an equal relationship, for the experts' authority rested on the denial or destruction of women's autonomous sources of knowledge: the old networks of skill-sharing, the accumulated lore of generations of mothers. (4)

The medical advice doctors gave women at the turn of the century, such as the "rest cure," a type of brainwashing, was often detrimental and sometimes, deadly. Society proscribed that women should marry, have children and take to bed when sickly. Many women became even more despondent when following doctor's orders and, like Charlotte Perkins Gilman, ventured close to insanity (102). Gilman suffered severe bouts of boredom, though she did not have a name for it. Medical professionals and her husband declared that she was a chronic, manic, depressive and subjected her to harsh physical and mental treatment. Erenreich and English state, "Thousands of other women, like Gilman, were finding themselves in a new position of dependency on the male medical profession . . . (which) was consolidating its monopoly over healing" (102).

As women began to speak out against certain medical practices, the profession lost some of its glamour. This

became evident too, in woman's magazines. Most magazines which catered to women had medical advice columns. *Good Housekeeping* had a column named "Dr. Wiley's Department." Dr. Harvey W. Wiley offered facts and opinion, that women may not receive from their regular physicians, to the readers of *Good Housekeeping*. In addition to a lack of trust in the medical profession, other factors also contributed to the declining credibility of medical doctors in the early 1900's including the lack of medical education and growth of alternatives to traditional medical diagnosis.

Lack of Medical Education. In addition to the large variety of practices and decreased numbers of general physicians, questionable medical education was another factor which contributed to the decreased credibility of physicians. Due to burgeoning ideas about treatment, a standard medical education was not to be found across American medical schools at the turn of the century. Burrow states: "The lengthy list of schools devoted to therapeutic instruction ranged from a few with high standards to some which held no sessions and others that had no graduates" (11). Furthermore, factors such as race and geographical location effected which doctors were admitted as members of the American Medical Association. Burrow notes that the National Medical Society of the District of Columbia, for black physicians, was disbarred in 1870 "ostensibly on grounds of lower educational requirements" (6). The late

1800's saw a growth in medical schools promoting a particular treatment or style of medicine. Burrow states: "The rapid increase in the number of medical colleges devoted to the advancement of some therapeutic system and the laxity of their standards continued as a threat to scientific medicine well into the twentieth century" (8). As therapeutic styles of physicians increased and standards decreased, the medical profession reached a low point. As James Harvey Young states:

The old killers were still the big killers in 1900: influenza and pneumonia, tuberculosis, and gastrointestinal complaint. With respect to drugs, (physicians) received less training than had once been the case, since therapeutic nihilism (physicians should use extreme caution in treatment) had weakened the emphasis in the medical curriculum upon pharmacology and the materia medica. (Medical Messiahs 25)

While physicians mulled over medical styles, sick people in society were left to pick a particular treatment or diagnose themselves. In the 1800's and earlier, they turned to the secret potions of ancestors. An alternative to traditional medicine was suddenly available in the early 1900's. The alternative was a cure-all, complete with explanations of sickness, symptoms that would lead to death, explanations of use, and testimonials of its effectiveness.

Alternative Diagnosis. The variety of medical practices, decreased numbers of general physicians, lack of medical education and growth of alternatives to traditional medical diagnosis led to the decreased credibility of the

medical doctor. Alternative diagnosis often was done by the sick party or drug store owners. Young argues: "The spirit of medical laissez-faire also accentuated the ancient tradition of medical self-help" (Pure Food 24). Medical self-help books were published at this time, including *New Guide to Health and Domestic Medicine, or Poor Man's Friend* (Pure Food 24). In addition to books, alternative diagnosis occurred when people responded to patent medicine promoters for medical help. In light of the varying therapeutic styles of the medical profession, Young posits:

Like the sectarians, patent-medicine promoters belabored regular physicians for murderous bleeding and purging, promising instead swift and sure cures for diseases great and small to be wrought by mild, pleasant-tasting remedies (Pure Food 25).

As a wide variety of therapeutic styles emerged, educational levels of physicians were lessened thus causing instability to the profession. Self-help books and self-diagnosis became popular. Young states: "Medical democracy also spurred a great increase in self-dosage with patent medicines" (Pure Food 25). Nostrum cures were popular because they were easy to use and widely held as effective. While democratization afforded all people the opportunity to use new technological advances and entertainment, and consumerism made this all easily available, people also became their own doctors and physicians, like their ancestors had been in the centuries before. Just as anyone could capture an image with the Eastman Kodak No. 1, so too

could they go to the local druggist and get a medicine to cure their ills. In addition, most people already knew what sicknesses they had and medicines they should buy because the patent medicine ads told them.

Patent Medicine Advertising

Many advertisements for patent medicines diagnosed diseases and prescribed cures. They claimed to cure every known disease; and while small, regular doses of the medication could save life, ads warned that failure to use the medication would surely result in death. In addition to using therapeutic ethos, according to Michael Schudson, ads at the turn of the century strived to do two things: to promote product identification through "the association of a name or picture with a given product" and product identity, associating "the product with its function" (55). For patent medicine ads, the function was always attainment of health by using the product.

Patent medicine historian James Harvey Young dates the first newspaper advertisement for a nostrum cure in America to the *Boston News-Letter*, October 4, 1708. The ad ran "DAFFY'S Elixer Salutis, very good, at four shillings and six-pence per half pint bottle" (Toadstool Millionaires 7). Ads for English nostrums continued until American chemists began developing medicines in the late 1700's. An example

of a American ad which adopted European language was published in 1791:

A NEW MEDICINE. BEAUME DE SANTE. For Coughs, Colds, Catarrals, Asthma, Etc. The publication of this celebrated medicine is owing to its unexempld success in very extensive practice; as it never failed in a single instance, where medicine could afford relief . . . elegant in its composition, pleasant to the palate, grateful to the stomach, and certain in its effect. (Dyer 27)

With the creation of the patent in 1796 came a class of medicines, including bitters, syrups, oils, lotions, cremes, and pills; all were available for purchase without a prescription.

Once products were patented and had an identifiable name and/or logo, advertisements began appearing first in newspapers and then magazines. Illustrations became part of the advertisements of the 1800's. Ads for Ely's Cream Balm, for example, depicted a face with diseases written over the area in which the affliction occurred. "Deafness" curved around the ear. "Cold in Head" was at the base of the brain while "Headache" covered a larger portion of the head. Next to the drawing was a reiteration of what the product did, "Cleanses the head. Allays inflammation, heals the sores, restores the senses of taste, smell, hearing. A quick relief. A positive cure" (Perlongo 21). Testimonials of doctors, druggists and satisfied clients often accompanied patent medicine ads in the late 1800s. The Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. often provided letters from satisfied customers:

Dear Mrs. Pinkham, In march I wrote you a letter . . . I received a reply, a very kind, helpful letter. I followed your advice. Today, I am glad to be able to write that I am a well woman . . . Mrs. James J. Hogan, Nicetown, Phila., PA. (Perlongo 47)

The ads which stressed effectiveness, provided helpful illustrations, and comforted with testimonials met a need for medical attention at the turn of the century.

The number of newspapers increased rapidly in the early 1800's. Young notes: "At the beginning of the century, there had been 200 papers, some 20 of them issued daily. By 1860 there were nearly 4,000 papers, almost 400 of them dailies" (Medical Messiahs 19). Much of the increase in newspapers was due to a growth in education, literacy and rural free delivery. Presbrey states: "The educational activities of the (mid 1800's) had created the habit of reading among more people; by 1870, 57 per cent of the country's population of age five to eighteen was enrolled in the public schools" (260). Literacy continued to grow, and with the assistance of rural free delivery which increased routes from 44 in 1897 to 25,000 in 1903: "Great masses of the 'unreached millions' of previous decades were now reading regularly a newspaper or periodical" (Presbrey 437).

Burrow states:

In 1900, the number of patent medicine establishments reached 2,026, with a production valued at \$59,611,335, that had quadrupled in twenty years. Fortunes rolled in to firms whose extensive and extravagant advertisements baited a gullible public (70).

While newspapers and magazines informed people about news and current events, they also bombarded the public with advertisements. Nearly half of all advertisements published in newspapers and magazines at the turn of the century were for patent medicines. Young lists the rapid progression of products and growth of their ads:

A New York drug catalogue in 1804 listed some 80 or 90 names; by 1857 a Boston catalogue included 500 to 600 . . . A list compiled in 1858 from newspaper advertising totaled over 1,500 patent medicine names . . . In 1905 a leading drug journal listed the names of over 28,000, and the next year a witness before a Congressional committee estimated that there were 50,000 patent medicines made and sold in the United States. (Medical Messiahs 19,23)

The large number of products led to even more advertisements for them, and patent medicine ads became a lucrative business for the press.

Many newspapers and magazines were able to stay in publication due to the income they received from the proprietary industry. In 1898, the more successful proprietors "with individual expenditures running up to \$700,000 a year, still were the most important group of general advertisers" to the media (Presbrey 364). By 1906, \$80 million was spent on patent medicine advertising (Holbrook 4). Because patent medicine advertising was vital to the success of a newspaper or magazine, publishers rarely questioned the truthfulness of ads. In addition, the public, in the throes of democratization and consumerism, did not question the advertising. Rather, society saw

patent medicine advertisements as answers to common medical questions and replacements for untrustworthy doctors.

Generating a Crusade

Patent medicines were used for hundreds of years before people questioned their authenticity. Millions of dollars were spent by the proprietary industry on advertising and by members of society on the medicines before the practice was questioned. Why did it take until 1905 for a major campaign to challenge the proprietary industry? The money spent on advertising kept newspapers and magazines in business, and in addition, people were buying cure-all products, as evidenced by 50,000 brands on the market in 1906. Several factors led to the most noted campaign against the patent medicine industry, *Colliers'* "The Great American Fraud." These included suggestive advertisements and testimonials, the chemical compounds of many medicines and their effects on people (including habitual use and death), and the alliance between the proprietary industry and the media.

Suggestive Ads and Testimonials. Patent medicine advertising constituted the majority of ads in newspapers and magazines across the country at the turn of the century. J. C. Ayer, a man who was in the advertising business for over thirty years and was responsible for advertising dozens of popular medicines, stated his philosophy for advertising

nostrums: "with people spreading thinly across the land, with doctors scarce and often untrained, home remedies should be kept close at hand by one and all" (Rowsome 53). Settlers across the land received this message in the thousands of advertisements which graced the pages of newspapers and magazines, available through the railroad and rural free delivery.

While many people looked to these advertisements for answers to medical questions, they rarely questioned the truthfulness of the ads and testimonials. Gillian Dyer notes the patent medicine ads contains "the most repulsive details of diseases and scourges they claimed to cure" (28). There is no doubt that many of the advertisements stretched the truth. For example, consider a popular advertisement for Peruvian Syrup:

This well known remedy has been used extensively and with great success for Dyspepsia, or impaired and imperfect digestion; for the consequent of deterioration of the blood; and for the following forms of disease. Most of which originate in Dyspepsia: Liver Complaint, Dropsy, Neuralgia and Nervous Affections, Loss of Appetite, Headache, Langour and Depression of Spirits, Carbuncles and Boils, Piles, Scurvy, Affections of the Skin, Consumptive Tendencies, Bronchitis, Diseases Peculiar to Females, and all Complaints Accompanied by General Debility, and Requiring a Tonic and Alternative Medicine. (Rowsome 57)

This advertisement, while not the most exhaustive that can be found, does illustrate the wide variety of illnesses "cured" by any given nostrum, in this case, Peruvian Syrup. Other ads claimed to cure baldness over night, solve the

mystery of love-making, treat complexions with face bleach, cure ills such as catarrh, cholera, weak blood, female weakness and a plethora of other sicknesses, ailments, diseases, disorders, maladies, and afflictions. Anything and everything could be cured with some miracle medicine.

Advertisements were bolstered by testimonials from politicians, clergymen, businessmen, prominent citizens and average people. Young states:

The reader who perused the testimonials found them penned by humble people like his neighbors and himself. If he was of religious bent, he might be pleased to note the devout praise . . . from a clergy man. If he was awed by health professions, he might find persuasive commendations from an apprenticed pharmacist or nurse. (Medical Messiahs 322)

For example, the above mentioned ad for Peruvian Syrup had two testimonials, both from doctors. One reads:

Certificate of A. A. Hayes, M. D., of Boston
In the PERUVIAN SYRUP this desirable point
[Protoxide of Iron] is attained by COMBINATION IN
A WAY BEFORE UNKNOWN; and this solution may
replace all the proto-carbonates, citrates and
tartrates of the Materia Medica. (Rowsome 57)

While testimonials often captured attention and lent credibility to products, in the early 1900's they were questioned by the media and many medical officials.

Doctors were popular sources of testimonials. Arthur J. Cramp, an editorial assistant for the AMA, had a "Testimonial File" which, according to Young: "held the names of over 13,000 American and 3,000 foreign doctors who had given testimonials for proprietary drugs" (Medical

Messiahs 132). The American Medical Association was a forerunner in discounting many testimonials in patent medicine ads, undoubtedly, because many were provided by doctors. Burrow states: "The AMA explained that few 'unsolicited' nostrum testimonials were actually unsolicited, and that some sort of gift to a nostrum victim often produced an effusive recommendation of a product" (115). *The Journal of the American Medical Association* informed the public about job listings for testimonial writers, including one published in the *Chicago Tribune*: "MEDICAL TESTIMONIAL GATHERERS-Experienced; leads furnished; give references" (115).

Harmful Compounds and Effects. In addition to often false, suggestive advertisements and testimonials, some patent medicines had harmful compounds which produced harmful effects on people, including habitual use and death. Presbrey argues:

A sensational exposure of the evil was needed to bring wide realization of its nature. This was contributed by the *Ladies' Home Journal* . . . (when it) courageously began to print chemical analyses of various widely advertised preparations showing many of them contained habit-forming drugs (532).

Nostrums often contained chemicals, alcohol, and narcotics.

Chemicals were among the first ingredients used in patent medicine manufacturing. Chemists followed the example of food producers, as Young notes: "Chemicals were employed to heighten color, to modify flavor, to soften

texture, (and) to deter spoilage" (Toadstool Millionaires 210). Alcohol was another compound of many proprietary tonics. Hostetter's Bitters, for example, contained thirty-two per cent alcohol (Toadstool Millionaires 129). Indeed, it was reported that: "Up in Sitka, Alaska, Hostetter's potent liquid had been served in saloons by the drink. Bars and stores in the States now and then followed the same practice" (Toadstool Millionaires 130).

More harmful than chemicals and alcohol was the presence of narcotics in some nostrums. Habit-forming drugs like opium, morphine, cocaine, and acetanilid were present in many syrups and powders. Of the opium habit, Young states:

Nothing could be more cruel than the fastening of this insidious monster on the backs of innocent men, women and children. To make things worse, the disease often became more serious while the patient, his pain deadened by the narcotic, acquired a false impression he was on the road to recovery. (Toadstool Millionaires 68)

Chemicals, alcohol and narcotics were easily sold over the counter to thousands of people everyday. When it became apparent that they often were consuming alcohol to cure nervous disorders, morphine to cure pain, and opium to soothe the throat, people became concerned about the possibility of habitual use and death. As Young states: "From Connecticut to North Dakota state chemists began to test tonics for alcohol, soothing syrups for morphine, headache powders for acetanilid" (Toadstool Millionaires

210).

Secret cure-alls had been around for centuries before 1905, but it was the advertising of patent medicines that was new to the era. Advertising proved essential for informing the public about medical lore and prescribing nostrums. With the rising tide at the turn of the century towards the progressive era, including the temperance movement and shift toward pure food and drug laws, society began to question what they drank, ate and what medicines they used. Often, they turned to the media for answers. While the media was a trusted source of information, it was not completely accurate. Behind the print and paper was the overwhelming influence of the proprietary industry.

A Secret Alliance. During the advertising boom at the turn of the century, it was well known that patent medicine ads supported many newspapers. Because the media relied on the advertising contracts from proprietors, editors rarely questioned the truthfulness of ads. The relationship between the media and the proprietary industry was strengthened by the development of a "red clause." Frank J. Cheney, a well known proprietor and member of the Proprietary Association, takes the credit for developing this clause, printed in red ink on advertising contracts, which states: "It is mutually agreed that this contract is void, if any law is enacted by your State restricting or prohibiting the manufacture or sale of proprietary

medicines" (Toadstool Millionaires 211).

Newspapers and magazines wanted to stay in business. Many did so by adhering to the red clause and maintaining their proprietary contracts. Young argues: "During the 1890's, therefore, the newspaper reader saw columns of patent medicine advertising, but almost no questioning of patent medicine efficacy" (Medical Messiahs 29). When editors did attempt to examine ads, they often could not prove falsity. Presbrey notes: "Clever scamps obtained the use of good names and salted the avenues of investigation to a depth that made it difficult for the newspaper to determine whether a promotion was fake" (536). The red clause held editors bound within a contract that refused negative information and promoted a lack of state action towards the nostrums.

Even so, information was forthcoming daily about untruthful advertisements, fake testimonials, harmful chemicals, and alcohol and narcotics in popular medicines which caused drunkenness, drug habits and sometimes death. What were the media to do? Several united to expose the red clause, remove patent medicine advertising from their pages and admonish the industry. However, the times needed a crusader, someone to take on the proprietors who would fight tooth and nail for their billion dollar industry. The crusade was adopted by *Collier's*, *The National Weekly*. Crusades were not new to this young publication.

Peter Fenelon Collier began publication of a popular religious family magazine named *Once a Week* in 1888. In 1895 the magazine was renamed *Collier's, the National Weekly* and circulation grew to 200,000 in the early 1900s ("Collier, P." 728). The magazine was noted as an "outstanding force in public affairs and was a leader in a small group of magazines that . . . had taken the intellectual leadership of the country away from the universities" ("Hapgood" 93). In addition to being an intellectual leader of the times, *Collier's* "Played a leading part in various reform movements . . . (and was a) champion of conservation of the country's natural resources" (93). Reform movements were important to Collier's son, Robert, who became editor of the magazine when his father died. He stated that he would carry out "a fearless policy in truth-telling and exposure of governmental and public evils" ("Collier, R." 397). The authors and illustrators of these "exposures" were upper-class, well-educated men. Although the magazine began as family, religious reading, as it became more of an intellectual leader, it catered mostly to men. Editorial comments illustrate male readers who are doctors and members of intellectual societies, as well letters from poor men.

With a readership of mostly men, the magazine had to use a creative writer who could make the problem of the proprietary industry reach all sectors of society. Editor

Norman Hapgood enlisted young journalist Samuel Hopkins Adams to lead the fight. What developed was an exposé that altered the course of medicine, strengthened the fight for the Pure Food and Drug Law of 1906, and ultimately changed American lifestyles for decades to come.

The cultural milieu was a vital source of the *Collier's* crusade. Democratization lessened hierarchies and people became more equal than they had ever been. This notion of equality was strengthened because both rich and poor could enjoy technological advances and mass production. Likewise, city folks and prairie settlers could purchase the same products from department stores and mail order catalogues.

In this age of consumerism, advertising helped define peoples' roles and relationships. Goodness came from product usage while bad things happened to people who did not use the product. Furthermore, relationships were strengthened by using a certain soap or toothpaste while failure to use these products resulted in job insecurity and life alone.

Advertising and the therapeutic ethos defined lifestyles and answered questions not met by the breakdown of hierarchies. As professions like the medical community lost credibility, advertising assumed the role of physician. Medical advertisements defined sicknesses, helped diagnose hundreds of ailments and then prescribed medications that

would save lives. At the same time that these ads and testimonials promised health, they also warned of impending doom if the product was not used.

While thousands of advertisements for patent medicines were printed in newspapers and magazines throughout the country, few questions were asked about their truthfulness until the early 1900's. With the disclosure of false ads and testimonials coupled with alarming information about the chemical compounds and harmful effects of some nostrums, people in society began questioning the media and the proprietary industry. It was soon discovered that the media was loyal to the patent medicine industry for its livelihood. This loyalty was strengthened by a clause which prevented newspapers and magazines from printing information harmful to the patent medicine industry.

As all of this information boiled to the surface of a democratic society which sought the truth, *Collier's* adopted the crusade. Democratization, consumerism, the decline in professional medicine, nostrum ads and the factors of false ads, harmful chemicals, and the secret alliance all contributed to the crusade against the proprietary industry.

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT AMERICAN FRAUD: EXPOSING CONSPIRACY AND CHANGING REALITY

"The Great American Fraud" was a massive undertaking for *Collier's The National Weekly*. Advertising for the campaign began months before the introductory article. In July, 1905, following the introduction to the series by editor Norman Hapgood, the magazine received several letters from the proprietary industry warning *Collier's* to be careful with their accusations. This merely encouraged the staff of *Collier's* to find more information and evidence against the industry.

The Series

The first article appeared on July 8, 1905. Titled "Criminal Newspaper Alliance with Fraud and Poison," it seeks to introduce the evilness of the proprietary industry and the alliance between the media and patent medicine men. The responsibility of the media as advertisers is questioned. Those who manufacture nostrums are classified as swindlers. Audience members susceptible to falling prey to advertising are mentioned. Particular attention is given

to women and children who rely on patent medicines. Blame is put on "the newspapers, the law-makers and the men who make and push the stuff" (22). Hapgood states *Collier's* will provide proof of the harmfulness of patent medicines and introduces Samuel Hopkins Adams as a prominent, successful journalist and expert on the subject.

Samuel Hopkins Adams' first article appears on October 7, 1905. Titled "Nostrum Evil", it is the beginning of Adams' crusade against the proprietary industry. The article introduces, explains and exposes patent medicine methods. Major points include the argument that many nostrums promote habitual use and sometimes, death. The truth of popularly advertised testimonials is questioned. Adams claims most are false and unfairly aimed at less educated people who easily believe them. The red clause, a muzzle clause which prevents newspapers from printing information harmful to the proprietary industry, is exposed as well. Finally, Adams credits several organizations joining him in the crusade against patent medicines.

"Peruna and the Bracers" by Adams is the third article of the *Collier's* series. Appearing on October 28, 1905, this article attacks one of the most popular nostrums of the day, Peruna. Because it is made of water and "cologne spirits," also known as alcohol, Peruna promotes drunkenness. Peruna is not sold to Indians because of this fact. Adams also discusses fake testimonials and exposes

percentages of alcohol in other popular medicines. Last, Adams offers several suggestions for governmental action.

The fourth article in the "Great American Fraud" series was written by journalist Michael Sullivan. Sullivan worked for *Ladies Home Journal*. When he collected more information on patent medicines than *Ladies Home Journal* was willing to print, Hapgood offered to publish Sullivan's scoop as part of the exposé. The result was "The Patent Medicine Conspiracy Against The Freedom of the Press," published on November 4, 1905. Sullivan writes solely about the alliance between the media and the proprietary industry. He begins with a vivid example of how the proprietary industry controls the media. Evidence of sales and money spent on patent medicines by the public is provided. "Muzzle clauses" like the red clause are exposed and proven with actual documentation of contracts and speeches from meetings. The proprietary industry and its leader, Frank Cheney, are attacked for their practices, advertising, and manipulation of the press. Newspapers also are attacked for their irresponsibility in doing absolutely nothing against the industry responsible for false advertising and a stronghold on the media.

Samuel Hopkins Adams turns to another popular nostrum of the day, "Liquizone," the fifth article in the series published on November 18, 1905. Advertisements for Liquizone claim that it cures germs. This article exposes

the fraud surrounding the nostrum. An historical view of the birth of the Liquizone company and advertising campaign is given. Adams' investigation of the nostrum includes information about false testimonials and fake medical evidence. Issues surrounding the invented creator of Liquizone and an advertising booklet also are examined. Last, Adams offers startling evidence about the danger of Liquizone illustrated through a scientific experiment in which many guinea pigs were killed with the medicine.

The battle continues with Adams' article "The Subtle Poisons," appearing on December 2, 1905. Societal ignorance is addressed as Adams exposes the fact that many people do not know what they are taking in their consumption of patent medicines. Many medicines do not have labels on the bottles and, even when there are, people do not actually know what they are consuming. The contents of many habit forming drugs including headache powders, soothing syrups and cocain [sic]/catarrh cures are exposed. Many illustrations of deaths and habitual users are provided.

"Preying on the Incurables" by Adams is the seventh article in the series, appearing on January 13, 1906. Patent medicine advertisements claimed to cure every illness known. This article exposes nostrums that claim to cure diseases that are "incurable." Six popular medicines that claim to cure just about everything are targets. Adams explains the contents of these nostrums and offers proof of

deaths they have caused and their fake testimonials. In addition, Adams provides examples of audience support of the *Collier's* campaign.

The last article of the series appeared on February 17, 1906 and was titled "The Fundamental Fakes." Adams resumes his fight against the media as he exposes guilty newspapers that publish false advertisements. He especially attacks religious papers, which were the most widely read and trusted sources of information in the early 1900's. Additional schemes are exposed, such as reimbursement claims and guarantees of refunds. A final argument is made against testimonials with an attack on the strategy of personal medical advice offered in ads and a discussion of types and creators of testimonials.

The Conspiracy

Collier's was one of the most popular weekly magazines in publication at the turn of the century. The editors and writers were prominent thinkers of the day. Under the leadership of Norman Hapgood, who became editor in 1903, *Collier's* "became an outstanding force in public affairs and was a leader in a small group of magazines that William James said had taken the intellectual leadership of the country away from the universities" (National Cyclopædia 93). As *Collier's* reached its height of popularity, it

often wrote about social reform issues.

The writers at *Collier's* saw themselves as exposers of societal evils. With the proprietary industry, they had a perfect enemy to take on. They were convinced that the proprietors were lying in advertisements. They were convinced patent medicines were dangerous to people. They were convinced that the proprietors had control over the media. By adopting the topic as a social reform issue, they sought to convince the public of these three concerns.

With "The Great American Fraud" series, *Collier's* hoped to: (1) inform the public about dangerous patent medicines; (2) reveal false advertisements and testimonials; and (3) expose an alliance between the patent medicine industry and the media. In doing these three things, *Collier's* pitted itself against the proprietary industry. As it assumed the role of social crusader, the magazine used evidence to discredit the other side. This practice coincides with conspiracy theories.

The conspiracy, as *Collier's* saw it, was that false information was being given to the public. This false information came from three fronts: through advertisements, through the druggists who sold the nostrums, and through the media. At the root of each of these sources was the evil proprietary industry. They solicited false testimonials and advertisement writers. They lied to druggists about the safety of nostrums. They controlled the media through

advertising contracts and the "red clause," a clause which forbade the media to print news detrimental to the proprietary industry.

Conspiracy theories have varied over the years. Early theories focussed on radical right politics. Later theories examine conspiracy as a more mainstream political activity. With the *Collier's* exposé, it is possible to examine conspiracy rhetoric as a mainstream, mediated social activity. The writers at *Collier's* were not radical right politicians like McCarthy and Goldwater, as Hofstadter analyzes. Nor were they struggling reporters like Wooddard and Bernstein, discussed by Goodnight and Poulakos. The writers at *Collier's* epitomized investigative journalism as they delved deeply into the minutiae created by the proprietary industry.

Because the *Collier's* campaign was different from earlier conspiracies studied, criteria judging the effectiveness of the campaign should be different as well. The criteria I will use has been adapted from earlier conspiracy theories, mediated campaigns and reality construction theories. The four criteria of a mediated campaign which exposes conspiracy are: (1) exposure of multiple realities; (2) exposure of the evil conspirator; (3) reaffirmation of the renegade; and (4) reconstruction of reality. The analysis of "The Great American Fraud" will examine these four criteria and strategies used to achieve

Collier's purposes.

Analysis

Because this series attempted to change societal beliefs, it will be analyzed with the four criteria as a tool for the social construction of reality. The exposé was a response to the conspiracy of the proprietary industry. The series focuses on three components of the conspiracy: (1) the products themselves; (2) the advertisements; and (3) the alliance. The argument and stylistic strategies in the series were used to expose these conspiratorial factors and reconstruct societal beliefs about them, thus supporting the criteria. The series contains several strategies throughout all eight articles and two full page illustrations. These include: (1) strategies of proof (refutation and enumeration) which expose multiple realities; (2) language strategies (devil terms, alliteration, and repetition) and visual appeals, which help expose the evil conspirator; (3) resources of evidence (examples, statistics, and authority) which reaffirm the renegade; and (4) a fortiori, a strategy of proof, and irony (an intended, covert, fixed and finitely applicable message), which aid in the reconstruction of reality. These strategies support the criteria for exposing conspiracy, and in turn, reconstruct reality.

Exposure of Multiple Realities. The first criteria of

exposing a conspiracy involves showing both sides of the issue. In this case, *Collier's* had to illustrate what the proprietary industry says and does while at the same time provide information about what the magazine finds. This information is often given through refutation and enumeration.

Refutation occurs when an opponent's argument is stated, answered and rejected. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell notes in The Rhetorical Act: "it can work strategically to answer questions in the minds of the audience and to inoculate them against competing persuaders" (267). The competing persuaders in this instance were the patent medicine men. Each author in the series uses refutation to prove the enemy wrong. In doing so, they expose the reality as seen by the proprietors and the "true reality," which they wish society to believe. Refutation usually occurs in a "what they say versus what they do" format. For example, Hapgood writes about a prominent publisher whose "admirable and interesting weekly newspaper holds up very high business standards (what they say) . . . while it advertises obviously fraudulent and dangerous medicines for profit (what they do)" (12). The strategy of refutation helps *Collier's* discredit the arguments of the proprietary industry. Hapgood promises in the introduction that proof of conspiracy would be provided; in the series, this proof often comes on the form of refutation.

Adams uses refutation not only as a strategic device for discrediting the conspirators and their reality, but also as a chance to inform the public about patent medicines and their advertisements, the "true reality." He begins the introductory article of the series by stating what proprietors said when they heard he was writing about them:

"Don't make the mistake of lumping all proprietary medicines in one indiscriminate denunciation," came warning from all sides when this series was announced. But honest attempts to separate the sheep from the goats develops a lamentable lack of qualified candidates for the sheepfold.
("Introduction" 14)

Adams received numerous warnings such as this one. He uses these to illustrate the fear of the proprietary industry in what may be exposed about them. Adams acknowledges their warnings, and refutes them by claiming few of the medicines are worthy of being recognized as better than the others.

Specific patent medicine firms also are refuted. A. C. Meyer & Co., of Baltimore, stated in a letter to Adams: "We do not claim that Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup will cure an established case of consumption" ("Preying" 18). Adams responds by stating:

But A. C. Meyer & Co. evidently don't follow their own advertising very closely, for around my sample bottle (by courtesy of the Postoffice Department) is a booklet, and from that booklet I quote:
"There is no case of hoarseness, cough, asthma, bronchitis . . . or consumption that can not be cured speedily by the proper use of Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup." ("Preying" 18)

Adams offers the argument of the proprietor, which states that claims are not made in their advertisements that

guarantee a cure and then he provides proof from the very advertisement of the drug that says the opposite. In addition, the advertisement came to him freely through the mail, a practice used by many proprietors. Adams' readers, be they at home or the office, would have been familiar with this method of receiving nostrums.

Still another area of refutation when dealing with the patent medicine men is their response to nostrums promoting habitual use. The nostrum maker argues: "But why should anyone who wants to get drunk drink Peruna when he can get whiskey?" ("Peruna" 18). Adams offers two responses; first, "in many places the 'medicine' can be obtained and the liquor can not," and second, "the drinker of Peruna doesn't want to get drunk" (18). Many people were not aware that Peruna contained alcohol.

Ignorance of ingredients in patent medicines was another area Adams sought to expose through refutation. He points out: "Syrup of Figs . . . which makes widespread pretense in the dailies to be an extract of the fig, advertises in the medical journals for what it is, a preparation of senna" ("Introduction" 15). Another attack is made on Dr. Hartman's nostrum, Peruna, following a long list of illness Peruna claims to cure in its advertising:

"Peruna is not a cure-all," virtuously disclaims Dr. Hartman . . . That alcohol and water, with a little coloring matter and one-half of one per cent of mild drugs, will cure all or any of the ills listed above is too ridiculous to need refutation. ("Peruna" 17)

Many popular consumptive cures of the day had no ingredients on their bottles. Dr. King's New Discovery for Consumption proclaimed merely "to be the only sure cure for consumption" ("Preying" 18). Adams notes that this sure cure is made of a morphin (sic) and chloroform mixture. It "cures" because: "The chloroform temporarily allays the cough, thereby checking Nature's effort to throw off the dead matter from the lungs. The opium drugs the patient into a deceived cheerfulness" (18).

Deception was vital to the success of nostrums. It usually began with the advertisements and was ever-present in testimonials. The discrediting of testimonials was another major area of refutation in "The Great American Fraud." In an analysis of thirty-six testimonial letters, Adams found "that in twenty-one of the thirty-six there is no indication that the writer has ever tasted the remedy which he so warmly praises" ("Peruna" 19). In the third article of the series, "Liquizone," Adams exposes several "certified" testimonials. One "is an enthusiastic 'puff' of Liquizone, quoted as being contributed by Dr. W. H. Myers in *The New York Journal of Health*. There is not nor ever has been any such magazine as *The New York Journal of Health*" (20). Another is from the president of the Suffolk Hospital and Dispensary of Boston. While he praises the value of Liquizone, "the medical authorities say they know nothing of Liquizone and never prescribe it" (21). One testimonial

states: "Some Chicago Institutions . . . Constantly Employ Liquizone . . . Hull House, the Chicago Orphan Asylum, the Home for Incurables, the Evanston Hospital, and the Old People's House" (21). This is what Adams discovered:

Letters to the institutions elicited the information that Hull House had never used the nostrum . . . the Orphan Asylum had experimented with it only for external applications, and with such dubious results that it was soon dropped; that it has been shut out of the Home for Incurables; that a few private patients in the Old People's Home had purchased it, but on no recommendation from the physicians; and that the Evanston Hospital knew nothing of Liquizone and had never used it. (21)

Again the trickery of proprietors and their advertisements is exposed. This passage illustrates the scope of deceit by listing several medical institutions. The fact that none of them actually supported the testimonials probably made many other medical testimonials appear false.

Deception of proprietors is also the target of Sullivan's article "Patent Medicine Conspiracy Against the Freedom of the Press." He begins his argument by discrediting the Proprietary Association of America (PAA). He states:

It seems incongruous, almost humorous, to speak of a national organization of quack doctors and patent medicine makers; but there is one, brought together for mutual support, for co-operation, for--but just what this organization is for, I hope to show. (14)

With this battle cry, Sullivan takes on the proprietary industry. He begins with their constitution, and in particular, Article II:

The objects of this association . . . are: to protect the rights of its members to the respective trade-markets that they may own or control; to establish such natural co-operation as may be required in the various branches of the trade; to reduce all burdens that may be oppressive; to facilitate and foster equitable principles in the purchase and sale of merchandise; to acquire and preserve for the use of its members such business information as may be of value to them; to adjust controversies and promote harmony among its members. (14)

This is the reality of proprietors. They belong to the PAA, an organization that guarantees in its constitution to protect their rights. While this clause may seem fine for any other business, it implies much more simply because it belongs to the proprietors. For instance, this clause implies that it will reduce oppressive burdens. In most cases, this would require legislative action, yet nowhere in the constitution is legislation or the word "lobbying" mentioned. Even so, Sullivan is quick to point out in bold-face type, "The fighting of public health legislation is the primary object and chief activity, the very *raison d'etre*, of the Proprietary Association" (15). The chief way the PAA carries out its objectives is through the media.

As an organization, quack doctors can pool their funds and become more influential as a whole. Sullivan argues:

Here are some scores of men, each paying a large sum annually to the newspapers. The aggregate of these sums is forty million dollars. By organization, the full effect of this money can be got (sic) and used as a unit in preventing the passage of laws which would compel them to tell the contents of their nostrums, and in suppressing the newspaper publicity which would drive them into oblivion. (15)

The suppression of the newspapers comes in the form of a muzzle-clause. This is a clause which would prohibit newspapers from printing information detrimental to the patent medicine industry. Called the "red clause," Sullivan describes its origination, offered in an address to the PAA by its president, Mr. F. J. Cheney:

We have had a good deal of difficulty in the last few years with the different legislatures of the different States . . . I believe I have a plan whereby we will have no difficulty whatever with these people. I have used it in my business for two years, and I know it is a practical thing . . . There has been a constant fear that something would come up, so I had this clause in my contract added. This is what I have in every contract I make: 'It is hereby agreed that should your State, or the United States Government, pass any law that would interfere with or restrict the sale of proprietary medicines, this contract shall become void . . . ' (15).

The "red clause" was developed and promoted by the president of the PAA. Its sole purpose was to muzzle the press and even have some papers lobbying the government for their cause. Whereas the PAA presents itself as an innocent organization of business men, Sullivan exposes its true nature. The alliance between the media and the proprietors was devastating because it controlled the fundamental source of information for the majority of society, the newspapers. A major purpose of *Collier's* was to expose this alliance. Through Sullivan's use of refutation, the true spirit of the patent medicine men was brought to light.

Refutation offers the renegade an opportunity to respond to the arguments and reality of the conspirator.

Collier's used this strategy to prove the proprietary industry lies about advertising, contents of nostrums, testimonials, and business practices. In exposing the truth about these factors of the conspiracy, they discredited the proprietors' view of reality and thus *Collier's* side of the battle became more real. The renegade's reality also was strengthened by another strategy of proof.

Enumeration "is a bill of particulars, a list of examples" (Campbell 266). If the list is powerful, a reader will be "swamped with a mass of details, and each particular or example gains force from those that have preceded it" (266). Strategic use of enumeration helps prove a point; in this case, it functions to expose the conspiracy of the enemy's view of reality. Because there were so many patent medicines, many examples in the series enumerate nostrums and their flaws. For example, when Adams exposes the alcohol percentages of popular nostrums, he simply lists the facts:

Hostetter's Bitters contain, according to an official State analysis, 44 per cent of alcohol; Lydia Pinkham appeals to suffering womanhood with 20 per cent alcohol; Hood's Sarsaparilla cures 'that tired feeling' with 18 per cent; Burdock's Blood Bitters with 25 per cent; Ayer's Sarsaparilla with 26 per cent; and Paine's Celery Compound with 21 per cent. ("Peruna" 19)

The enumeration here emphasizes that the most popular nostrums contain significant amounts of alcohol. Adams also enumerates false claims in advertising when he asks a newspaper:

if the advertising department is genuinely interested in declining "fraudulent and misleading" copy, I would direct their attention to the ridiculous claims of Dr. Shoop's medicines, which "cure" almost every disease; to two hair removers, one an "Indian Secret," the other an "Accidental discovery," both either fakes or dangerous; to the lying claims of Hall's Catarrh Cure, that it is "a positive cure for catarrh" in all its stage; to "Syrup of Figs," which is not a fig syrup, but a preparation of senna; to Dr. Kilmer's Swamp Root, of which the principal medicinal constituent is alcohol; and, finally, to Dr. Bye's Oil Cure for Cancer, a particularly cruel swindle on unfortunates suffering from an incurable malady. ("Fundamental Fakes" 22)

The enumeration of the nostrums and false claims strengthens Adams' position as a renegade because it acts as evidence for the view of reality he is supporting. The vastness of the problem, illustrated by the variety of nostrums and their ads in one newspaper, also strengthens the conspiracy argument.

The exposure of multiple realities involves giving information about the entire situation. The writers at *Collier's* offered information as given by the conspirators and refuted it with information of their own. The shocking information was strengthened by enumeration, which proved the vastness of problems associated with the proprietors' view of reality. As the renegade informed the readers about the "true reality," they discredited the conspirator's arguments. While discrediting their arguments, *Collier's* also destroyed their character.

Exposure of the Evil Conspirator. Conspiracy rhetoric always includes a good side and a bad side. The bad side

consists of the people acting out the conspiracy. The good side consists of the people exposing the conspiracy. As the good side attempts to make the bad side appear evil, language often aids its arguments.

Language helps strengthen the tone of discourse. When discourse is light and happy, upbeat language is used. When discourse is darker and evil, more negative language is used. Richard Weaver refers to this strategic language as "god"/"devil" terms. Weaver defines "devil terms" as terms of repulsion (222). Furthermore, there is usually public agreement that certain terms are morally bad (223). The writers at *Collier's*, in their attempt to expose a conspiracy, wanted to make the proprietary industry look evil. One way they did this was through the use of negative language.

Several terms emerge throughout the series that label the proprietary industry as bad. The title of the series, "The Great American Fraud," labels the subject as not only bad, but emphasizes its vastness. Hofstadter noted that conspiracies are large movements that shape societal events. The title of this series attempts to illustrate a vast, national problem caused by the proprietary industry.

In addition to the title, the word "fraud" is used in every article of the series. Denotatively, fraud means "A deception deliberately practiced in order to secure unfair or unlawful gain" (American Heritage 722). It is used as a

verb when discussing what proprietors practice, a noun when revealing the result of that practice and as an adjective to describe how they do it. The term itself implies a sense of wrongdoing. This wrongdoing, or evilness, permeates the series.

Norman Hapgood uses the term in his introductory article by titling it, "Criminal Newspaper Alliances with Fraud and Poison" (12). As he questions other newspapers that publish patent medicine advertisements, he asks, "Is there something more immoral in organizing trusts than in helping to fool the people into becoming victims of fraud and poison?" (12). Samuel Hopkins Adams argues that circulars mailed to homes and businesses are sent "with the result of cheating and defrauding those into whose hands the statements came" ("Introduction" 15). In addition to classifying circulars as frauds, Adams also labels patent medicine advertisements and nostrums as fraudulent. He states, "From its very name, one would naturally absolve Duffy's Malt Whiskey from fraudulent pretense. But Duffy's Malt Whiskey is a fraud" ("Peruna" 19). Adams goes on to explain that the fraud lies with advertisements for the medicine. Likewise, he attacks Orangeine:

The wickedness of the fraud lies in this: that whereas the nostrum, by virtue of its acetanilid content, thins the blood, depresses the heart, and finally undermines the whole system, it claims to *strengthen the heart and to produce better blood.* ("Subtle Poisons" 16)

This refutation of an advertisement also illustrates why the

negative term "poison" is used throughout the series.

Many patent medicines discussed in the series were detrimental to health. One of the purposes of the series was to inform the public about the contents of popular nostrums. While many examples of this will be noted later, the first goal of the series was to incite the public into seeing nostrums as evil, fraudulent, and poisonous. Adams' first article of the series begins with an abstract which states: "This is the introductory article to a series which will contain a full explanation and exposure of patent medicine methods, and the harm done to the public by this industry, founded mainly on fraud and poison" ("Introduction" 14). Elsewhere in the series, Adams states: "The Health Commissioner . . . shall check the trade in public poisons more or less concealed behind proprietary names" ("Introduction" 29). Piso's Cure for Consumption is disregarded as "another of the remedies which can not possibly cure consumption, but, on the contrary, tend by their poisonous and debilitating drugs to undermine the victim's stamina" ("Preying" 19).

While "fraud" and "poison" are two terms used in every article, additional negative language pervades the series. Hapgood refers to newspapers as a "class of swindle" and the nostrums as "bunco cures" (12,22). Adams uses the terms "bunco" and "bugaboo" when referring to proprietors and refers to their actions as "ghoulish" ("Introduction" 14).

Medicines, "reeking of terrorization and blackmail,"
 "fatally enslave" the "victims" who take them
 ("Introduction" 29,14).

As Adams previews the exposé, his use of negative language is heightened to a level that leaves no doubt as to the evilness of the proprietary industry:

I can touch upon only a few of those which may be regarded as typical: the alcohol stimulators; . . . the catarrh powders, which breed cocaine slaves, and the opium-containing soothing syrups, which stunt or kill helpless infants; the consumption cures, perhaps the most devilish of all, in that they destroy hope where hope is struggling against bitter odds for existence; the headache powders, which enslave so insidiously that the victim is ignorant of his own fate . . . ("Introduction" 29)

Following each cure-all is a negative reaction to the nostrum. As a result, the medicines become creators of cocaine slaves, dead or stunted "helpless" infants, hope destroyers and enslavers of ignorant victims. This negative language targets readers' emotions regarding habitual users, children and people unaware of the medications. It resounds with negative reactions against the evil that caused all this strife, the patent medicines.

In the last article of the series, Adams derides the media for printing false advertisements. He states:

Study the medicine advertising in your morning paper, and you will find yourself in a veritable goblin-realm of fakery, peopled with monstrous myths . . . Ponce de Leon, groping toward that dim fountain whence youth springs eternal, might believe that he had found his goal in the Peruna factory, the Liquizone 'laboratory' or the Vitae-Ore plant; his thousands of descendants in this century of enlightenment painfully drag themselves along poisoned trails, following a will-o'-the-wisp that dance above the open graves.
("Fundamental Fakes" 22)

The trickery of the advertisements and media are emphasized in this passage. Words such as "fakery," "myths," and "poisoned trails" connote the evilness of the route to health using patent medicines. The analogy of Ponce de Leon further illustrates the horrific patent medicine men who "dance above the open graves" they have created with deaths from nostrum cures. The negative language in these two passages typifies the tone set throughout the series. While several "devil terms" like "fraud" and "poison" appear consistently in every article, other words help convince the reader that the proprietary industry is morally bad.

The use of "devil terms" did two things strategically for the writers at *Collier's*. First, "devil terms" made the proprietary industry appear evil. Through references to "poison" and "victims," in addition to numerous other negative words, the overwhelming feeling after reading these articles is that there is a link between the medicines and harm done to people. Whether it is habitual use or death, the use of negative language strengthens the notion that patent medicines cause terrible results. Furthermore, these

results make the proprietors appear like sources of unwarranted pain and death. Through negative language, the conspiracy of the proprietors takes on enormous proportions and their image becomes more and more evil.

Other language strategies in this series include alliteration and repetition. Alliteration "is the repetition of initial consonants" (Campbell 273). This strategy makes points memorable and stylistic in their flow. For example, Hapgood tells of a "sad story . . . without effort at sensation" and a testimonial in which one has the "difficulty of disentangling fact from exaggeration" (22). Adams uses this strategy frequently. He writes of a "clamorous cure-all," "proprietary medicines proper" and "deleterious drugs" ("Introduction" 14). Furthermore, there are "dangerous and damnable frauds" which are "favored by temperance folk" ("Peruna" 17,19). Adams argues that the object of many patent medicine companies is "to succor the sick and suffering" ("Liquizone" 20). In addition, "it is the careless or consciousnessless physician who gets the customer" often through "cough and consumption cures" and "soothing syrups" ("Subtle Poisons" 18). The use of alliteration is most apparent with negative language. The sound of the words drives home the negative overtones of the messages which reinforces the evilness of the proprietors and the harm they cause.

Another language strategy which strengthens messages is

repetition. Repetition "of key words and phrases (will) emphasize major ideas and carry the thought from sentence to sentence" (Leggett 365). There are several examples of this strategy in the exposé. One occurs as Adams attempts to define catarrh:

What is catarrh? Whatever ails you . . .
 Pneumonia is catarrh of the lungs; so is
 consumption. Dyspepsia is catarrh of the stomach.
 Entiritis is catarrh of the intestines.
 Appendicitis-surgeons, please note before
 operating-is catarrh of the appendix. Bright's
 disease is catarrh of the kidneys. Heart disease
 is catarrh of the heart. Canker sores are catarrh
 of the mouth. Measles is, perhaps, catarrh of the
 skin . . . Similarly, malaria, one may guess, is
 catarrh of the mosquito that bit you. ("Peruna"
 17)

The repetition of "catarrh" matches the repetition of illnesses "cured" by the nostrum. While the advertisements merely list the diseases cured by the nostrum, Adams illustrates the absurdity of the claim. Through repetition of catarrh causing ailments right down to mosquitos, "catarrh" comes to represent an absurd unwarranted claim used by proprietors to trick innocent people into buying their medicines.

Sullivan also uses repetition as he discusses the importance of silence to the proprietary industry and its contracts with the media:

But silence is too important a part of the patent medicine man's business to be left to the capricious chance of favor. Silence is the most important thing in his business . . . silence is the fixed quantity--silence as to the frauds he practices; silence as to the abominable stewings and brewings that enter into his nostrum; silence as to the deaths and sicknesses he causes; silence as to the drug fiends he makes, the inebriate asylums he fills. Silence he must have. So he makes silence a part of the contract. (13)

The word "silence" becomes an evil deception of the patent medicine men in this passage. It applies to all proprietors and again they are linked to terrible results: death, sickness and drug fiends.

Still another example of repetition is in Adams' discussion of how the proprietary industry attains testimonials. He states:

Many . . . of the testimonials are obtained at an expense to the firm. Agents are employed to secure them. This costs money. Druggists get a discount for forwarding letters from their customers. This costs money. Persons willing to have their picture printed get a dozen photographs for themselves. This costs money. ("Fundamental Fakes" 24)

Not only does the proprietary industry cause havoc in society through deaths, sickness and trickery, but they willingly spend money doing so. And in their effort to trick the public, they employ agents, druggists and innocent people. In this light, the conspirators are evil people with enough money to secure their power. Not only do they spend money to procure false testimonials, but they buy advertising space which sells more nostrums thus making the enemy even richer.

While each of these examples explains a separate facet of the proprietary industry, they all illuminate fraud within the system. They expose the conspiracy that *Collier's* is rebelling against. Whether the authors use "devil terms," alliteration or repetition, one thing is clear: the proprietary industry is sinister. While language strategies support this aspect of the *Collier's* crusade, they are not the only strategies at work. Strategies of proof and styles of evidence are used to expose conspiracy and further change society's perception of the evil-doer.

In addition to language strategies which make the conspirators appear evil, the use of visual appeals offers readers an image of the evil conspirator. Patent medicine advertisements were at the core of the proprietary conspiracy. Many strategies used by *Collier's* paralleled strategies of the ad men. As evidenced earlier, alliteration was not only used by Adams to make a message memorable, but many medications had alliterative names (Burdock's Blood Bitters, Radium Radia) for the same reason. Nostrum ads also use visual appeals to attract readers. Patent medicine ads are those ads which promise cures of virtually any ailment following consumption of a pill, tonic, whiskey, or application of a coal tar, salve or lotion that has been untested and is believed to contain harmful amounts of alcohol or narcotics. Anti-patent medicine ads and illustrations, like those used in the

Collier's series, attempt to disclose the true properties of medicines, the poison within the bottle, and the harmful nature of patent medicines.

This disclosure usually is revealed with numerous fear appeals. These appeals, through copy or illustrations, provoke fear or anxiety in order to persuade an individual to heed the warning signs presented. The written messages, whether in the form of language strategies, evidence, or irony, refute ads or offer shocking information about a patent medicine. In addition, fear appeals use negative images, such as icons, symbols, and illustrations which speak without words, through feelings, to an audience.

Negative images induce fear or anxiety when audiences glance at the photo and comprehend the danger it is expressing. In other words, an audience may read about a negative situation and each person will have a different negative view of that situation. However, if a negative image is provided for the audience, readers are forced to accept that view presented by the source. After examining the illustration, a reader then makes a judgment about it, either discounting it as false, or accepting it as true and thus changing their previous view of reality.

Of the ten parts in the 1905 "Great American Fraud" series, eight were articles and two were illustrations. The articles also had illustrations and cartoons which supported the arguments made. Fear appeals, negative images and

shocking information run throughout all of these illustrations. The most powerful illustration is "Death's Laboratory" by E. W. Kemble (Figure I). This illustration was used in advertisements for *Collier's* magazine, for the series, and has been widely reproduced in advertising and drug history books. The illustration covers nearly the entire page. It is in black and white, blackness being the dominant color.

The subject is a skull, with the cranium hosting the statement, "The Patent Medicine Trust, Palatable Poison for the Poor." The eye sockets house the hazy words "Laudanum" and "Cheap Poisonous Alcohol." A second skull is visible in the nose socket, on a small skeleton with hands outreached, dependent on the supply of medicines that stand in front of the mouth. Nine bottles, which look eerily like teeth at a glance, have labels which parody names of medicines. For example, one is marked "Spuruna" in place of Peruna. Another is called "Stutters Stomach Bitters" rather than Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. "Aunt Lucy's Nerve Bitters" may represent Lydia E. Pinkham's medicines. In front of the bottles are several flyers advertising other medicines. These give the illness cured and the drugs contained. For example, "Baby's Soothing Syrup--Opium and Laudanum; Doctor Skin's Great Blood Purifier--Poisonous Pellets; and Doctor Vice's Great Lung Cure-Palatable Poison for Consumptives." Two stuffed money bags sit under the cheekbones while coins

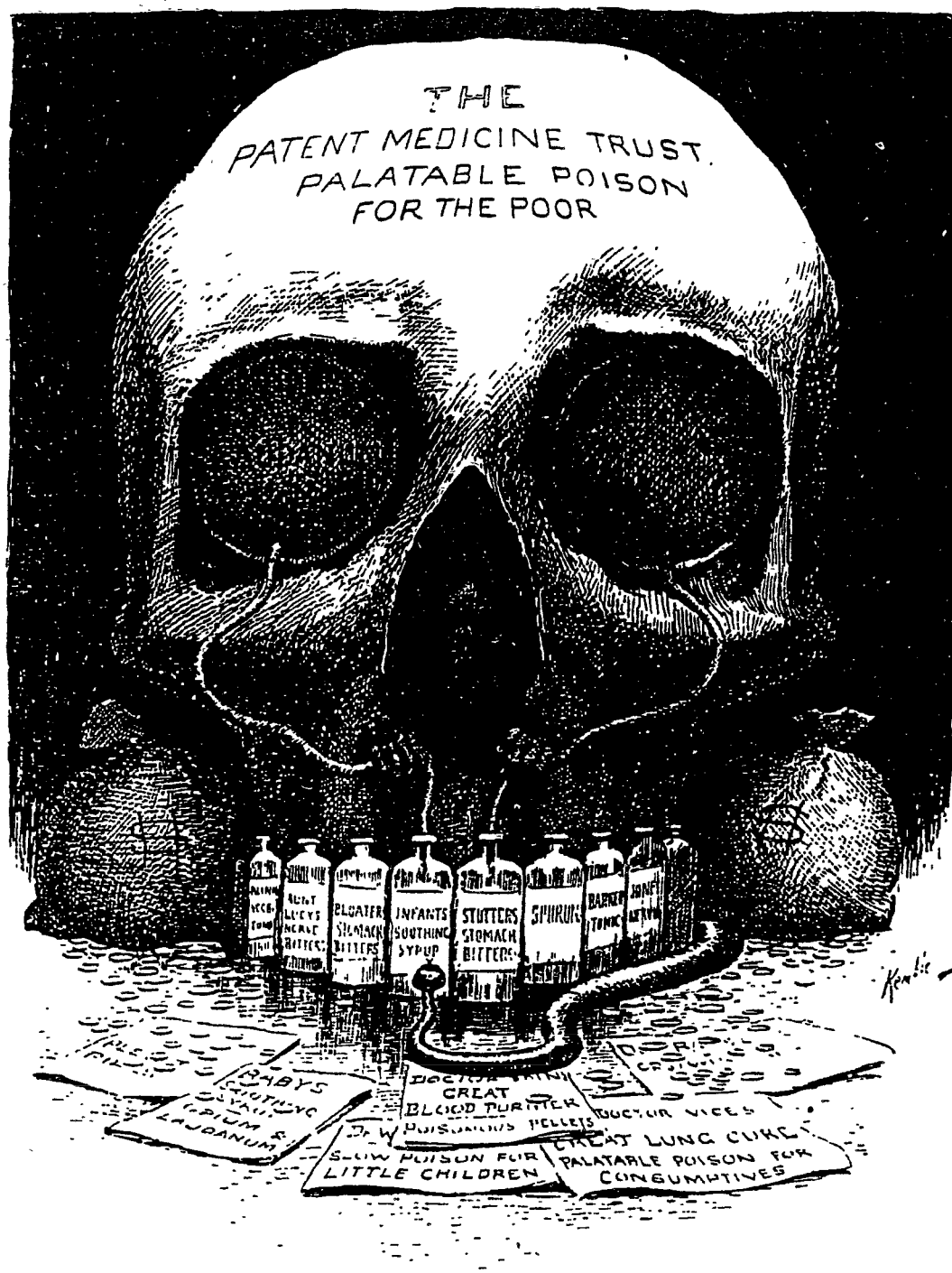


Fig. I. E. W. Remble. Death's Laboratory. Collier's 3
June 1905: 5.

are scattered amongst the flyers. From somewhere behind the skull, a snake has slithered out and is facing the skull.

Several negative images are presented in this illustration. The skull symbolizes death. The second skull probably represents being trapped into a habit of using the medicines. The bottles and flyers parody medicines that were widely used. They also reveal narcotics used in the medicines. The money represents the great amount spent on medicines as well as the greed of druggists. This may also be represented by the slithering snake. As it makes its way through the coins strewn across the ads, it could be symbolic of the druggists selling the medicines.

Negative images of skulls, snakes and nostrun bottles fuel the fear appeals of this illustration. It appeared in *Collier's* before the series began, thus setting the mood for upcoming articles and illustrations. Ironically, the artist, E. W. Kemble, once stated that he wanted to be "identified with legitimate illustrations and especially in the portrayal of various types of character" (Armstrong 336). "Death's Laboratory" represents the character of the druggist and victim. It previews every negative argument to be made in the campaign. Furthermore, as Adams seeks to make the enemy appear evil, this cartoon offers a visual image of the conspirator; it is an image that Adams hopes readers will remember every time they see a patent medicine advertisement.

The introductory article in this series was written by Norman Hapgood, Editor of *Collier's*. The article is surrounded by a border of advertisements. Ten ads and ten newspapers represent a variety of ailments, medicines and cures. The illnesses include catarrhal, kidneys, eyes, women's problems, cancer, teething and rheumatism; the medicines include Peruna, Warner's Safe Cure, Doss's Kidney Pills, Cardui, Nasaki's Eye Tonic, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, Swamp-Root, Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, and Radium Radia. These were just a fraction of the patent medicine ads on the market. By placing them in a border, the notion of "quack cures" was reinforced because they illustrated the magnitude of nostrums and ailments targeted by ads. A reader would surely question the credibility of these cure-alls because the ads contain outrageous claims, testimonials and illustrations that informed the readers of a multitude of possible fraudulent ads.

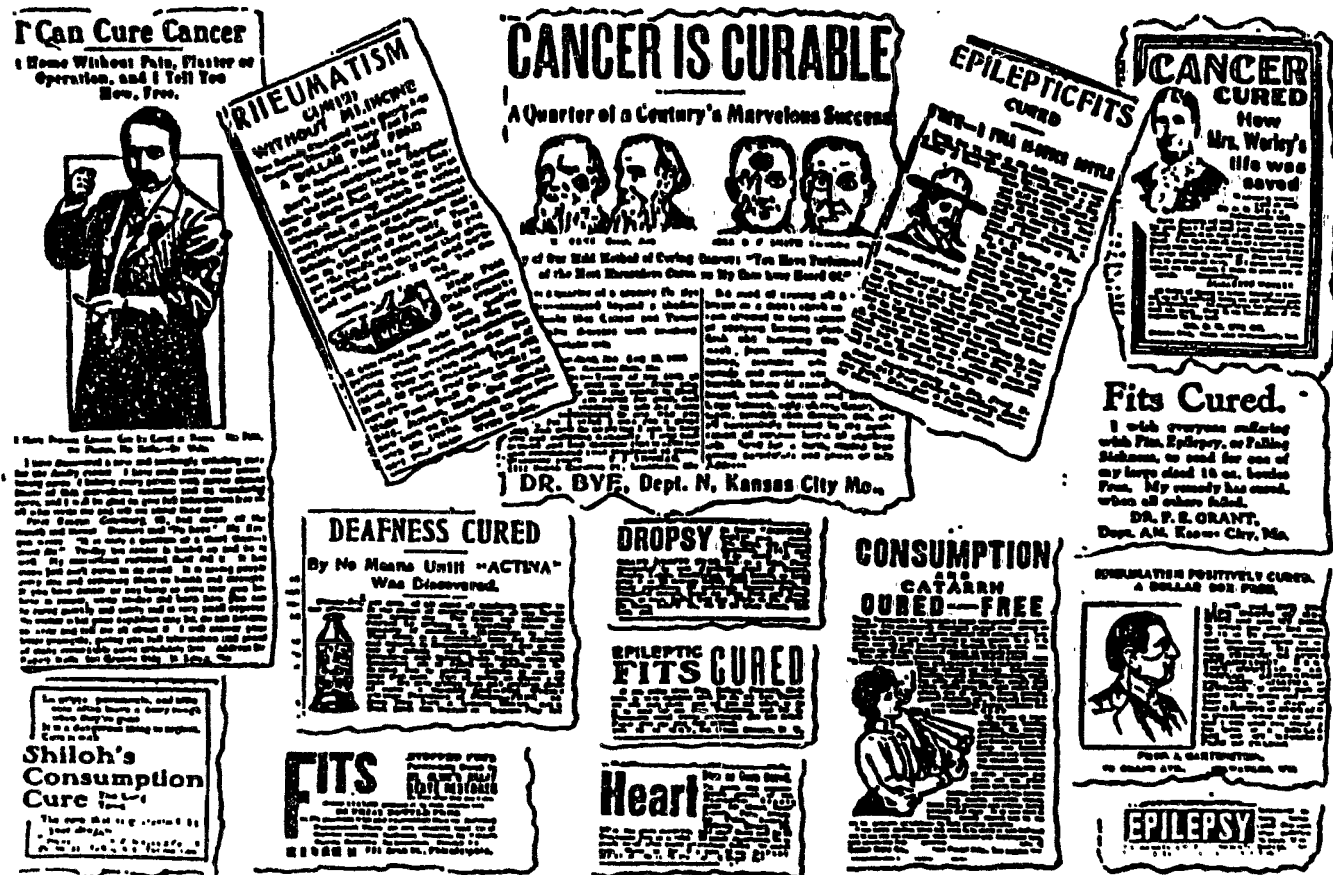
A similar compilation is found in the fifth article of the series by Adams, "Preying on the Incurables." Rather than a border, half the page contains a mosaic of fraudulent advertisements (Figure II). Fifteen advertisements claim to cure cancer, consumption, deafness, rheumatism, epilepsy and epileptic fits. Below the samples is the caption "A Fraud's Gallery From Two New York Sunday Papers of a Single Date. Every one of the advertisements represents a bunco game upon

the sick and suffering." The use of samples of fraudulent ads bolsters the written arguments made by Adams. As he proves that some patent medicines claim to cure incurable diseases, the sample advertisements specifically illustrate what he is refuting.

While fear appeals are not present in the advertisements represented in the border and "Fraud's Gallery," the abundance of typical ads run everyday in newspapers across the nation is shocking and informs readers that the problem is great and is serious. Because this was the introductory article to the series, the use of the illustrations reaffirmed *Collier's* role as renegade, preparing a battle against the makers of these fraudulent advertisements. The renegade fights the enemy by exposing information. In this case, *Collier's* illustrated the magnitude of advertisements, nostrums, and illnesses targeted by the proprietary industry. In doing so, they used visual examples of advertisements to strengthen all the written examples given elsewhere in the series.

Adams' first article was introduced by the headline banner "The Great American Fraud" (Figure III). This illustration contains two brick pillars which appear to contain a mass of patent medicine bottles and their fumes. A skull is the focal point, draped in a black cloth of death. Snakes lurk throughout, circling the bottles and hissing. Snakes have traditionally symbolized Satan and

Fig. II. Collage of Advertisements. A Fraud's Gallery.
 Collier's 15 January 1906: 19.



A FRAUD'S GALLERY
 FROM TWO NEW YORK SUNDAY PAPERS OF A SINGLE DATE.
 Every one of these advertisements represents a bunco game on the sick and
 suffering.

evil. Ever since the devil approached Eve in the Garden of Eden in the form of a snake, serpents have represented sin and death. In the case of *Collier's*, the snakes used in negative images may embody the evil proprietor bringing death to the masses through nostrum cures.

This banner begins the other articles in the series by Samuel Hopkins Adams. Presbrey notes, the "cartoons showing skulls and snakes in association with the nostrum bottle exerted a force more powerful than (other articles)" (352). The negative images of the skull and snakes are repeated from Kemble's illustration. The evilness portrayed in this banner begins each article by Adams, and thereby sets the tone that the conspirator being fought is evil.

Another illustration, "'Patent' Nostrum," is in Adams' first article (Figure IV). This image is an ironic before and after situation of a patent medicine user. The headline states, "The usual result from taking Hoodwink's Sarsaparilla or any other old patent nostrum." The "before using" image is of a healthy, robust, grinning plump man. The "after using" image is a skeleton. The caption below the image states,

Moral: Don't dose yourself with secret 'patent medicines,' almost all of which are frauds and humbugs. When sick consult a doctor and take his prescription: it is the only sensible way and you'll find it cheaper in the end. ("Introduction" 15)

The negative image of the skeleton is present yet again. Rather than depending on a verbal warning about what could



Fig. III. Headline Banner. The Great American Fraud.
Collier's 7 October 1905: 14.



▲ WINDOW EXHIBIT IN A CHICAGO DRUG STORE.

Fig. IV. Window Exhibit. "Patent" Nostrum. Collier's 7
October 1905: 15.

happen after consuming a patent medicine, a negative image of death is presented which illustrates that patent medicines may result in death. The fear appeal is physical, thus employing the notion of therapeutic ethos. The illustration implies that sickness and death will result if patent medicines are used. The before and after photos emphasize the physical harm caused by patent medicines. Furthermore, the illustration reinforces Adams' arguments and evidence that nostrums are dangerous to health and life.

Part of the fear appeals used in this campaign included informing people about what was really in patent medicines. One illustration, "Alcohol in 'Medicines' and in Liquors" attempts to show levels of alcohol in an assortment of drinks (Figure V). The alcohol levels in three patent medicines (Peruna, Paine's Celery Compound, and Hostetter's Stomach Bitters) are compared to alcohol levels in whiskey, champagne, claret, and beer. The illustration shows that Hostetter's Stomach Bitters contains the most alcohol, nearly the same amount of alcohol in ten bottles of beer. This shocking information adds to fear appeals which come with the realization that these medicines contain high levels of alcohol and cause physical harms. In addition, this visual evidence makes the alcohol percentages easier to understand.

This series also attempted to discredit patent medicine advertisements through refutation and shocking information.



ALCOHOL IN "MEDICINES" AND IN LIQUORS.

Fig. V. Diagrams. Alcohol in "Medicines." Collier's 28
October 1905: 17.

In the border of ads, the sheer number and variety reduced the credibility of the ads. In "Peruna and the Bracers," Adams published an ad for Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey. The ad stated, "Clergymen endorse Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey; Distinguished Divines and Temperance Workers (Figure VI)." The ad includes photos and testimonials of three "holy" men. Adams takes the opportunity to refute and discredit the men. A caption under the ad explains that one of the men, Rev. Dunham "runs a Get-Married-Quick Matrimonial Service" ("Peruna" 19). Another, "Rev." Houghton actually works as a tax collector. The third, Rev. McLeod, was asked to resign because of his pro-whiskey beliefs. By discrediting each of the divine testimonials, Adams further reduces the credibility of the patent medicine industry.

While the refutation of the clergymen aims to discredit the advertisement, it also bolsters the notion of the enemy as evil. Religious weeklies and newspapers were the most popular reading materials in the early 1900's. With the rise in literacy, more people began reading together, for example, as a family. Businessmen recognized this, and used "proper" religious media as an avenue for targeting the common public through advertisements. And who better to tout their products than the trusted and honest clergymen? Because so many of these religious testimonials were false, Adam's refutation of them furthers the notion of the proprietor as being evil. If those patent medicine men



REV. W. N. DUNHAM

Born in Vermont eighty-two years ago, Mr. Lamham was graduated from the Boston Medical College and practiced medicine until about thirty years ago when he moved West. There he became a teacher. He occupied the pulpit of the South Cheyenne, Wyoming, Congregational Church for ten years. Two years ago he retired from the pulpit and established a marriage bureau for the accommodation of couples who come over from Colorado to be married. No money was paid by the Duffy's. Matt Whitney, people for Dunham's testimonial but he received about \$100 "to have his picture taken".

local supply of liquor
absolutely is consumed
purchased in a legal way u.
sirs and beer.

GUERGYMEN ENDORSE

Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey.

Distinguished Divines and Temperance Workers

We have spent their lives in suffering their fellow brethren and placing their, but upon the cold rock we and remembered
Cuffy's Pure Malt Whiskey. These great grandmothers have been
cared of dyspepsia, stomach trouble and rheumatic troubles
by this wonderful medicine whose virtues they trust.
Flavored and regulated granules of the largest and
advantage of temperature without regard to cold
or tropical or ocean travel, and unbroken management
of child health. 4400 W. Baker St. Chicago, Ill.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

[illegible]

THREE DISTINGUISHED TEMPERANCE WORKERS" WHO ADVOCATE THE USE OF WHISKY

business and temperance workers" the Rev. Duham runs a Get Married-Quick Matrimonial Bureau, while the income from his salary as Deputy Internal Revenue Collector, his business being to collect Uncle Sam's liquor tax. The entirely imaginary; a genuine photograph of the "temperance worker" and whiskey inducer is shown above. Greenleaf, Michigan - a township of 333 inhabitants, in Washtenaw County, north of Port Huron, and off the railway to trial by his probrary for inducing Duffy's whiskey and was allowed to "resign" from the "fellowship



"REV." M. N. HOUGHTON

This is the actual likeness of the "distinguished divine" with the side whiskers in the Duffy whiskey advertisement. Mr. Houghton was for a number of years pastor of the Church of Eternal Hope, of Bradford, Pa. He retired six years ago to enter politics, and is now a deputy Internal Revenue collector. Although a member of the Universalist Church, Mr. Houghton is a "spiritualist" and delivered orations last summer at the Lily Dale assembly, the spiritualist "City of Light" located near Tonawanda, N. Y. Mr. Houghton owned racehorses and was a patron of the turf.

could sway religious men into speaking untruths, then they were all the more sinful.

The last noteworthy illustration is a two-page drawing by E. B. Frost, printed on December 2, 1905. The illustration is of a drugstore. A woman is there with two children. She looks old, her head wrapped in a black shawl, while the youthful children look too young to be hers. One wall is lined with patent medicines. An older salesman eagerly awaits the sale. Her face, bowed down, is frowning. The caption beneath the drawing says, "Her last dollar for a bottle of patent medicine." While skeletons and snakes are not in this image, there is still an overwhelming sense of dread. The woman, in contrast to the children, seems very resigned and sickly. The message about money emphasizes her despair and willingness to trust patent medicines. The message is negative, representing an unhealthy, unhappy woman who relies on a medicine that probably will not cure her ills.

This picture captures the essence of the *Collier's* campaign. Women were targets for nostrum advertisements. As Erenreich and English note:

Women were decidedly sickly . . . In the mid- and late nineteenth century a curious epidemic seemed to be sweeping through the middle- and upper-class female population both in the United States and England . . . Doctors found a variety of diagnostic labels for the wave of invalidism gripping the female population: 'neurasthenia,' 'nervous prostration,' 'hyperesthesia,' 'cardiac inadequacy,' 'dyspepsia,' 'rheumatism,' and 'hysteria,' . . . For less well-off women there were patent medicines. (103,108)

In addition to their "sicknesses" making them targets for advertisements, women also made their children victims of death, habitual use, and ignorance when they passed the poison to the next generation. The written arguments of Adams contain numerous examples of females being harmed by nostrums. The two-page illustration portrays a woman in the jaws, so to speak, of the nostrum vendor. As she stands before the rows of medicines and the eager salesman, she is forced to make a decision. Will she spend her last dollar on the dangerous drug? Or will she heed the warnings of Adams and his cohorts? The choice is hers to make. Maybe she has read the *Collier's* series and can make the decision on her own. Probably, a more typical *Collier's* reader, a male, will help her make the decision. At any rate, *Collier's* presents a view of reality in this illustration which promotes the idea that the average woman *should* be in a quandry when she prepares to buy a nostrum cure.

Language strategies and visual appeals work together to leave a lasting impression of an issue. *Collier's* used these strategies to convince their audience that the

conspirator they were fighting against was evil. Language strategies such as "devil terms," alliteration and repetition made the topics sinister and reinforced the evilness by making arguments memorable. Negative illustrations provided specific images for readers to remember.

Reaffirmation of the Renegade. After illustrating both sides of an issue and making the enemy appear evil, a renegade must reaffirm the credibility of its message. Credibility is reinforced and strengthened through a massive amount of evidence. The writers at *Collier's* used resources of evidence, including examples, statistics and authority. Evidence for a claim should be logically, empirically, and psychologically strong. Campbell states: "Ideally, good supporting materials show the truth of a claim; they are clear, vivid, and concrete; and they present the rhetor as competent and trustworthy" (174). The resources of examples, statistics and authority function as proof of the proprietors' conspiracy and *Collier's* credibility.

Examples constitute the bulk of evidence found in this series. They are defined as cases or instances "used to illustrate an idea or to prove that a particular kind of event has happened or could happen" (Campbell 174). Adams uses examples of deaths, illnesses, and habitual use caused by nostrums to prove his argument that they are harmful. In "The Subtle Poisons," there are no less than 19 examples of

death and habitual use caused by nostrums. Deaths of citizens include: a Mrs. Francis Robson, whose "Death was from the effect of an overdose of Orangeine powders administered by her own hand, whether accidentally or otherwise" ("Subtle Poisons" 16); an 18-year-old Philadelphia girl, "Following the printed advice, she took two powders. In three hours she was dead" ("Subtle Poisons" 16); a Mrs. Thomas Patterson who, while preparing supper, "was stricken with a violent headache and took a headache powder that had been thrown in at her door the day before. Immediately she was seized with spasms and in an hour she was dead" ("Subtle Poisons" 17); W. H. Hawkins, "a man of powerful physique and apparently in good health . . . (who) took a dose of Dr. Davis' Headache Powders . . . and shortly after fell to the floor, dead ("Subtle Poisons" 17); and Mrs. Hattie Kick:

one of the best and most prominent ladies of Farmington died rather suddenly Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock from an overdose of Antikamnia, which she took subject to severe headaches and was a frequent user of Antikamnia, her favorite remedy for this ailment. ("Subtle Poisons" 18)

Many of these examples were taken from local newspapers or the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. With them, Adams specifically touched several communities, types of citizens and different professions.

In addition to examples of death, Adams also uses many examples of habitual users hooked on nostrums. For instance: when acetanilid was withheld from a young lady

addicted to it "the patient soon began to exhibit all the traits peculiar to the confirmed morphino-maniac--moral depravity and the like. She employed every possible means to obtain the drug, attempting even to bribe the nurse, and, this failing, even members of the family" ("Subtle Poisons" 17); another young woman "denied that she had been using acetanilid, but it was discovered that for a year she had been obtaining it in the form of a proprietary remedy and had contracted a regular 'habit'" ("Subtle Poisons" 17); the wife of a prominent Chicago physician "buys Megrimine . . . by the half-dozen lots secretly. She has the habit" ("Subtle Poisons" 17); a 14-year-old Illinois boy "was a slave to the Birney brand of cocain (sic). He had run his father \$300 in debt, so heavy were his purchases of the poison" ("Subtle Poisons" 18). Many examples of habitual use were of women and children. Because many advertisements were aimed at these members of society, Adams uses examples of them in his arguments.

Examples with children were perhaps the most persuasive. Hapgood states: "Babies who cry are fed with laudanum under the name of syrup" (13). Several examples of nostrum effects on children are offered by Adams. He states a doctor's report:

"Kopp's Baby Friend" . . . is made of sweetened water and morphin (sic) . . . The child (after taking four drops) went into a stupor at once, the pupils were pin-pointed, skin cool and clammy, heart and respiration slow. I treated the case as one of opium poisoning, but it took twelve hours before my little patient was out of danger. ("Subtle Poisons" 18)

Another example questions the newspaper report of "a baby's death from the Dr. Bull opium mixture (in which) there was no mention of the name of the cough syrup" ("Subtle Poisons" 18). Furthermore, there is the case of a 2-year-old victim:

In an hour, when first seen, symptoms of opium poisoning were present. In about twelve hours the child had several convulsions, and spasms followed for another twelve hours at intervals. It then sank into a coma and died in the seventy-two hours with cardiac failure. The case was clearly one of death from overdose of the remedy. ("Subtle Poisons" 18)

Examples dealing with the deaths of children were both shocking and informative. Mothers needed to read about these instances so they would know not to use the medications on their own children.

The evidence provided by examples of deaths and habitual use of all types of people proved the notion that the conspiracy of the proprietary industry is far-reaching and dangerous. This evidence not only bolsters arguments of the enemy being evil, but because of the sheer amount of examples, the credibility of the source is heightened. As *Collier's* presents a mountain of examples to support its arguments, credibility is raised and thus, the reality created by *Collier's* is also raised. The conspiracy takes

on larger proportions with each example that touches various aspects of society. Because *Collier's* is aware of how everyone is effected by the conspiracy, the renegade role is reaffirmed and strengthened to fight the battle to its end.

Statistics are another resource of evidence. Campbell defines statistics as a "numerical or quantitative measure of scope or frequency of occurrence" (178). They are used throughout this series to illustrate the popularity of patent medicines, scope of the industry and money spent on nostrums. In Adams' first article, the introduction to the series, he states in the first sentence: "Gullible America will spend this year some seventy-five million dollars in the purchase of patent medicines" ("Introduction" 14). In the average drug store of 1905, two-thirds of the business was from patent medicines ("Introduction" 15). Adams states in this article that legislation is needed, but recognizes:

legislation proceeds slowly and always against opposition, which may be measured in practical terms as \$250,000,000 at stake on the other side. I note in the last report of the Proprietary Associations annual meeting the significant statement that "the heaviest expenses were incurred in legislative work" ("Introduction" 15).

The money spent on patent medicines, druggists' reliance on nostrum profits, and money spent by the patent medicine men are all reiterated by Sullivan.

Sullivan's article, "The Patent Medicine Conspiracy Against the Freedom of the Press," contains numerous statistics about the proprietary industry. He begins by

noting:

The census of 1900 placed the value of the annual product (nostrums) at \$59,611,355. Allowing for the increase of half a decade of rapid growth, it must be to-day (sic) not less than seventy-five millions. That is the wholesale price. The retail price of all the patent medicines sold in the United States in one year may be very conservatively placed at one hundred million dollars. (13)

In addition to figures of the amount of money spent on patent medicines, Sullivan also exposes amounts of money traded between the proprietary industry and the media. He states: "And of this one hundred millions which the people of the United States pay for patent medicines yearly, fully forty millions goes to the newspapers" (13). Sullivan follows this disclosure with several examples of specific nostrums. For instance, the Lydia E. Pinkham Company had an advertising expenditure of "\$100,000 a month, \$1,200,000 a year" (13). Likewise:

When the Dr. Greene Nervura Company of Boston went into bankruptcy, its debts to newspapers for advertising amounted to \$535,000. To the Boston 'Herald' alone it owed \$5,000, and to so small a paper, comparatively, as the Atlanta 'Constitution' it owed \$1,500. One obscure quack doctor in New York . . . was raided by authorities, and among the papers seized there were contracts showing that within a year he had paid to one paper for advertising \$5,856.80; to another \$20,000. (13)

It is clear that hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent by the proprietary industry to the media for advertising.

The *Collier's* campaign reports financial figures to the public as a means for strengthening their argument that the

conspiracy is enormous and has financial backing. Furthermore, by offering specific dollar amounts, the public is made more aware of the stronghold the proprietary industry has on the media. With so much money at stake, it becomes more apparent why more people in the media did not adopt the role of renegade against the conspiracy. This, in turn, reaffirms the noble actions of *Collier's* as it continues the battle.

Authority is another resource of evidence. Campbell defines authority as "a way of translating complex material into a more intelligible form for nonexpert audiences" (187). Furthermore, examples from authorities strengthen arguments and increase credibility. In their effort to illustrate credibility and proof of certain information, the authors at *Collier's* used several sources from authority. Hapgood quotes counsel for the New York Medical Society, Mr. Champe S. Andrews, who says about the media: "as there seems to be no hope that newspapers will voluntarily give up such iniquitous sources of revenue, the time has come for an appeal to the legislature" (13). In addition to calls for legislative action, Adams notes that the American Medical Association's Council of Pharmacy and Chemistry, organized "to investigate and pass upon the 'ethical' preparations advertised to physicians . . . has issued some painfully frank reports upon products of imposingly scientific nomenclature" ("Introduction" 15). While medical leaders

are quoted, so too are people in the business and practicing physicians.

Authority of people in-the-know often is used to support arguments. For example, while Adams discusses the trickery proprietors employ to attain testimonials, he states:

A man with inside knowledge of the patent medicine business made some investigations into this phase of the matter, and he declares that such procurement of testimonials became so established as to have the force of a system, only two of the Chicago papers being free from it ("Introduction" 15).

Because this man has "inside knowledge," the information is more credible than would be a vague assertion. Doctors also are quoted with regularity. For example, Adams states in a footnote:

Dr. Ashbel P. Grinnell, of New York City, who has made a statistical study of patent medicines, asserts as a provable fact that more alcohol is consumed in this country in patent medicines than is dispensed in a legal way by licensed liquor vendors, barring the sale of ales and beer. ("Peruna" 17)

While this doctor and study help convince readers that alcohol in medicines is rampant, another quote from a doctor informs of the danger of drinking alcohol in patent medicines. Adams notes:

A well-known authority on drug addiction writes me: "A number of physicians have called my attention to the use of Peruna, both preceding and following alcohol and drug addictions . . . I have, in the last two years, met four cases of persons who drank Peruna in large quantities to intoxication. This was given to them originally as a tonic. They were treated under my care simply as alcoholics. ("Peruna" 17)

Because Peruna had a high alcohol content, it was often used by habitual drinkers. While many people were merely treated for alcoholism and consumption, one group was targeted and not allowed to purchase the nostrum. Adams states:

Expert opinion on the non-medical side is represented in the Government order to the Indian Department . . . the kernel of which is . . . "please give particular attention to the proprietary medicines and other compounds which traders keep in stock, with special reference to the liability of their misuse by Indians on account of the alcohol which they contain."
("Peruna" 17)

Experts from the government, medical field, and proprietary businesses were used as authority evidence in the *Collier's* crusade. Their authority made ideas easier to understand while lending credibility to the arguments and to *Collier's*. They also bolstered the notion of the vast scope of conspiracy created by the patent medicine industry. Effects of nostrums were recognized by people in-the-know as well as the medical profession and government, yet, no action against the industry was taken.

Gradually, the resources of evidence, including examples, statistics, and authority informed the public about patent medicines while at the same time, strengthened

the credibility of *Collier's*. These examples and evidence also provided information very different than that provided by proprietors, thus illustrating multiple views of reality. These strategies, coupled with clever use of language and visual appeals, provided the audience with a specific view of reality. A final strategy used by *Collier's* was designed specifically to help readers change their world view. The audience had the information, yet the writers still had to employ strategies to pull people into their reality. For this, they used a fortiori and irony.

Reconstruction of Reality. The final facet of exposing a conspiracy is reconstructing reality. Strategies of a fortiori convince readers that if something is believed in one case, it is also likely it will be believed in another. Irony forces readers to make a judgment about a statement followed by restructuring their beliefs. These strategies help *Collier's* give a final push for its side of the battle.

A fortiori is a strategy that "connects two claims so that if we accept the first, it becomes more likely we will accept the second" (Campbell 266). Adams uses a fortiori in an effort to convince his audience that if a certain type of person; i.e. doctors, lawyers, and public officials, fall prey to nostrum wiles, then so will the common public. This strategy strengthens the notion that conspiracy permeates society through its all encompassing behavior. The responsibility of social problems is once again put on the

conspirators.

Hapgood lays responsibility with the newspaper men in his introduction to the series. He states:

Mr. Bryan . . . holds up very high business standards . . . while it (his paper) advertises obviously fraudulent and dangerous medicines for profit, and what is true of him is true also of many of the fairest and most enlightened leaders of opinion. (Hapgood 12)

With this a fortiori, readers are persuaded to believe that since Mr. Bryan, an editor of a popular weekly newspaper, prints fraudulent ads for profit, so also do other fair and enlightened editors, or "leaders of opinion," as Hapgood refers to them. The message here is that even though editors may be the noblest of men, they still fall prey to the trickery and profit from the proprietary industry.

The strategy of a fortiori often is implied in a message. For example, Adams discusses a group of lawyers who, after reading "a bulk of testimonials," willingly supported the development of a Liquizone factory. He states:

This apparently satisfied them; they did not investigate the testimonials, but accepted them at their face value. They did not look into the advertising methods of the company; as nearly as I can find out, they never saw an advertisement of Liquizone in the papers until long afterward. They just became stockholders and directors, that is all. They did as hundreds of other upright and well-meaning men had done in lending themselves to a business of which they knew practically nothing. ("Liquizone" 20)

Adams implies that if lawyers and hundreds of businessmen fall prey to proprietary wiles and testimonials, so too will

average citizens. This passage also illustrates an unwillingness of businessmen to look beyond the testimonials and advertisements and examine the nostrum. *Collier's* again presents itself as the renegade willing to expose the conspiracy and tell the truth.

Another example of a fortiori explores different medicines. Adams writes of a friend who takes five or six Orangeine powders a day:

Because of her growing paleness her husband called in their physician, but neither of them had mentioned the little matter of the nostrum, having accepted with a childlike faith the asseverations of its beneficent qualities. Yet they were of an order of intelligence that would scoff at the idea of drinking Swamp-Root or Peruna. ("Subtle Poisons" 17)

While these people were smart enough not to use syrup nostrums, they still believed in the headache powders. A fortiori is used strategically to reach the common reader. Many examples, like the one just given, are attempts to illustrate that intelligent, professional people believe patent medicine advertisements and so too do average citizens.

As a strategy of proof, a fortiori strengthens arguments following an assertion. The writers at *Collier's* used a fortiori to convince the average citizen that they were just like intelligent leaders in their acceptance of nostrum cures. Because editors, lawyers, and "smart" citizens believe ads and testimonials, it is understandable that common men would too. Even so, other strategies like

refutation and enumeration help convince society that this acceptance is wrong. Armed with proof from refutation, negative images from language strategies and empowered with the knowledge that they are not the only victims of false advertising, a fortiori arguments took the average reader one step further into *Collier's* reality. The writers at *Collier's* challenged their readers to be better than the intellectuals and businessmen who were victims of the proprietors.

Another strategy that specifically attempts to lure a reader from one side of an issue to the other is irony. In A Rhetoric of Irony, Wayne C. Booth refers to irony as statements that a reader can not understand "without rejecting what they [the statements] seem to say" (1). Stable irony includes messages with four traits: (1) ironic messages are intended; (2) ironic messages are covert, "intended to be reconstructed with meanings different than those on the surface" (6); (3) ironic messages are "stable or fixed, in the sense that once a reconstruction has been made, the reader is not then invited to undermine it with further demolitions or reconstructions"; and (4) ironic messages are "finite in application . . . meanings are in some sense local, limited" (5-6).

Irony is used by rhetors to provoke people to change their minds and opinions about a given subject. After reading an ironic message, a reader reconstructs the reality

of the message. Following the recognition of alternate messages, the reader then makes a judgment about the message.

Irony helps to reconstruct reality. In addition, irony creates a bond between the sender of a message and the audience. When a source uses humor and irony to criticize a subject, the audience is "let in" on the condemnation. In the case of *Collier's*, the audience has been bombarded with evidence about the evils of the proprietary industry. When an ironic statement is made, they have the knowledge to recognize its falsity and respond appropriately. As such, it is no surprise that the writers at *Collier's* used this strategy in their crusade to change opinions about the patent medicine industry.

Irony is used frequently to demean popular nostrums. Adams attacks Pond's Extract, a nostrum that took advantage of an epidemic scare in New York by using "advertisements headed in heavy black type, 'Meningitis,' a disease in which witch-hazel is about as effective as molasses" ("Introduction" 14). While many people purchased the nostrum hoping to avoid and cure meningitis, Adams ironically compares its effectiveness with a food product. The implication is that the nostrum is no more a medicine than something the average person would eat. An audience would recognize this comparison and begin to reformulate ideas about nostrums based on the assumption that they are

no better than condiments.

Another nostrum attacked by Adams is Liquizone. Advertisements for the nostrum claim "nothing enters into the production of Liquizone but gases, water, and a little harmless coloring matter, and that the process requires large apparatus and from eight to fourteen days' time" ("Liquizone" 21). Though Adams was assured by several workers that the process does indeed take fourteen days, he states: "The result, so far as can be determined chemically or medicinally, is precisely the same as could be achieved in fourteen seconds by mixing the acids with water" (21). Furthermore, the nostrum's advertisements claim: "Liquizone is liquid oxygen--that is all" (20). Adams' response:

It is enough. That is, it would be enough if it were true. Liquid oxygen doesn't exist above a temperature of 229 degrees below zero. One spoonful would freeze a man's tongue, teeth, and throat to equal solidity before he ever had time to swallow. If he could, by any miracle, manage to get it down, the undertaker would have to put him on the stove to thaw him out sufficiently for a respectable burial. Unquestionably Liquizone, if it were liquid oxygen, would kill germs, but that wouldn't do the owner of the germs much good, because he'd be dead before they had time to realize that the temperature was falling. (20)

The irony in this passage is humorous, but focussed. It refutes the Liquizone advertisement with scientific proof that a human could not ingest liquid oxygen and live. This fraudulent claim makes the nostrum maker appear both foolish and deceptive. Since the advertisement, nostrum, and

nostrum maker are each discredited in this ironic fashion, a reconstruction of belief about this product must have been obvious to the average reader. Because the ad is so obviously ignorant of what liquid oxygen could really do to a human being, the makers appear all the more foolish and deceitful.

Irony also is used to make the proprietors, druggists and government officials appear evil and dishonest. For example, Adams states:

Should any citizen of New York, going to the Health Department, have asked: "My wife is taking Birney's Catarrh Powder; is it true that it's a bad thing?" the officials, with the knowledge at hand that the drug in question is a maker of cocaine fiends, would have blandly emulated the Sphinx. ("Introduction" 15)

In Greek Mythology, the sphinx is "a winged creature having the head of a woman and the body of a lion, noted for killing those who could not answer its riddle" (American Heritage 1734). Perhaps the implication with this statement is that the official/sphinx will kill those who solve the riddle of what really is in patent medicines. A reader who knows the story of the sphinx would probably change his or her opinion about the official and the medication. "Bland emulation" becomes a negative message that reveals the character of the official who refuses to tell the truth.

Another nostrum attacked with irony is Dr. King's New Discovery for Consumption. Advertisements for this drug claim: "strikes terror to the doctors," ("Preying" 18)

presumably because it threatens their reign at fighting consumption. However, as Adams states of the morphine and chloroform mixture: "Dr. King's New Discovery for Consumption is well calculated to strike terror to the doctors or to any other class or profession, except, perhaps, the undertakers" ("Preying" 18). The narcotics in the nostrum cause death and habitual use. Adams' use of irony implies the undertakers will not be terror struck because they are used to death, and will profit from it.

The use of irony as a means of reality reconstruction utilizes concrete images. Be they undertakers or the sphinx, a liquid oxygen freeze or molasses, Adams implores his audience to see the proprietary industry in a new light. The audience has the background information to enable them to recognize ironic messages. Furthermore, *Collier's* invites the audience to join in on the condemnation. This bond allies the audience with the "good and just" renegade and strengthens the bond created throughout the series. Because Adams' use of irony is almost always negative, the readers are supposed to dislike the subject in the reconstruction of their thoughts. Coupled with negative language strategies discussed earlier, the use of irony leaves a vivid, negative image in the minds of readers.

In its effort to expose the conspiracy of the proprietary industry, *Collier's* had three main purposes: (1)

to inform the public about dangerous patent medicines; (2) to reveal false advertisements and testimonials; and (3) to expose an alliance between the patent medicine industry and the media. They exposed the conspiracy and accomplished their three purposes through means identified in traditional conspiracy rhetoric theories. Their campaign was different from other conspiracy campaigns, however, because it was not strictly political, it was not between politicians or parties, it was a mediated campaign and it was a social reform movement. The four criteria of a mediated campaign which exposes conspiracy are: (1) exposure of multiple realities; (2) exposure of the evil conspirator; (3) reaffirmation of the renegade; and (4) reconstruction of reality. The significance of the series is evident considering a heightened public awareness of fraudulent proprietors following the campaign. In addition, the years following the exposé were filled with legislative measures, heightened awareness and the downfall of the patent medicine industry.

CHAPTER IV

A NEW WORLD VIEW

Consumerism was the dominant mode of thought in the early 1900's. People believed they had to purchase new products to maintain their status, jobs, and relationships. Due to the decline in victorian values in the 1800's, social hierarchies were levelled. New products promised to help people regain power and status: if they wore a certain type of clothing, washed with a particular soap, cleaned with the right detergent and ate the appropriate food, these products promised that they would be successful in their endeavors. Consumerism drove people to rely upon and trust what advertisers proclaimed.

In the midst of the public's trust in advertising and willingness to purchase the "right" product lurked a type of businessman with savvy and smarts to attract the hypochondria which, to some extent, exists in us all. James Harvey Young states:

An ancient superstition still strongly influenced the popular mind, 'that disease is a malignant agency, or entity, to be driven out of the body by offensive substances.' Medicine taking was a habit deeply implanted in the human psyche. To fulfill the patient's expectations and bolster his confidence, even cautious physicians prescribed medicines liberally. (Pure Food 20)

The businessmen were aided by a floundering medical profession that was full of discontent and disrepute. Adopting potions from their English ancestors who provided medicines for any ailment, they developed their own nostrums to sell to the American public. These medicines, sold over the counter without a prescription, became the backbone of the patent medicine industry. While hundreds of medicines were developed by hundreds of businessmen, they had to be introduced to the public. With consumerism at its height, the natural introduction was done through the pages of newspapers and magazines in the form of advertisements.

By the 1900's, advertising was a social phenomenon. With a newfound dependence on advertising contracts, the media often was influenced by advertisers. Furthermore, by advertising medicines which promised health, proprietors seized the moment as democratization reduced levels of society and consumerism urged everyone to be the best they could be. When it became apparent that good health was not always the result of nostrum usage, people questioned the industry. The most notable questions were raised by Samuel Hopkins Adams in the *Collier's* exposé.

"The Great American Fraud" had implications at several levels of society. As a mediated persuasive campaign which exposed conspiracy, *Collier's* reformed social and historical factors of the day. More importantly, the rhetorical strategies employed in the series greatly influenced the

world view of America in 1905 and 1906.

Rhetorical Implications

Redefining Conspiracy. "The Great American Fraud" as a rhetorical artifact has several implications for the study of rhetoric. The most significant rhetorical implication is a redefinition of conspiracy. A conspiracy effecting all of society, such as the crusade of the Proprietary Association of America, may be attacked by a mediated campaign, as did Adams' series in *Collier's*. Previously, the study of conspiracy rhetoric has been limited to political events. Hofstadter analyzed the right-wing politics of McCarthyism. Goodnight and Poulakos studied mainstream political life. This analysis is of mainstream, every day life influenced by advertising.

The conspiracy consisted of false advertisements used to entice people into buying harmful products. The conspirator was not one recognizable man, like Nixon, but many men who made patent medicines. The conspiracy was enacted through the media in the form of advertisements. There was not an isolated incident which occurred behind closed doors, like Watergate. With the exception of the red clause, this was an open conspiracy, readily seen by anyone who read advertisements. Furthermore, it stretched nationwide, effecting all types of people at all levels of

society.

Conspiracy previously has not been studied nationally, but as isolated, political incidents. Political affiliation was not a concern of proprietors, nor of the writers at *Collier's*. These writers adopted the role of renegade in an effort to expose the evils of the proprietary industry and fight for legislative action. Because of *Collier's* success, it is clear that conspiracy rhetoric can be studied outside of the political realm. In addition, several traditional rhetorical strategies are very effective in exposing a national conspiracy through mediated avenues.

Strategies. Traditional rhetorical strategies and themes were used by *Collier's* to expose conspiracy and change reality. While the strategies used were traditional in the rhetorical sense, they were much more effective at the turn of the century because of growing progressive sentiments. Pope states: "Heightened attention to advertising's credibility in the first decade of the century foreshadowed the appearance around 1911 of an energetic 'Truth in Advertising' movement" (45). "The Great American Fraud" specifically attacked the credibility of advertisements of the proprietary industry. Armed with a quantum of evidence to support his arguments, Adams defaced proprietary advertisements and gained further support for a progressive movement against advertising. In particular, strategies of proof, visual appeals, and an alternative view

of reality strengthened the *Collier's* series.

Strategies of proof were used to expose multiple realities, a vital component in the process of reality reformation. Samuel Hopkins Adams drew on the scientific tests of lab technicians to prove information in some advertisements was wrong. He interviewed hundreds of people who sent in testimonials to companies and proved their letters were published incorrectly. He examined effects of "expedient" and "easy to use" nostrums and found that many were detrimental to health. Adams called into question the very statements made with therapeutic ethos as a basis and found many products were not only fraudulent but could result in death. Through refutation, which discredited proprietary arguments, and enumeration, which emphasized the scope of the patent medicine evil, Adams proved his position as a viable alternative to the accepted view of reality.

Another view of reality was offered in visual illustrations which provided the audience with negative images of the proprietary industry. This was an especially effective tool to a visual society just becoming literate. Because advertising became more visual, *Collier's* used its own illustrations to send a message about the proprietary industry. Portraying proprietors as evil was the goal of numerous language strategies employed as well. Adams' use of devil terms, alliteration, and repetition bombarded the audience with negative connotations of everything associated

with the proprietary industry.

A enormous amount of evidence helped Adams argue his side and reaffirm his role as the renegade. Hundreds of examples, statistics and authority strengthened *Collier's* position thus transforming the public's view of reality. Reconstruction of reality was affirmed with a fortiori and irony, two appeals which heightened awareness of the problem and reaffirmed a necessary change of heart.

Rhetorically, these strategies may be used in any artifact. Adams used them in a unique combination to help expose a conspiracy. In doing so, he informed the public about harmful medications, fraudulent advertising and the stronghold of the proprietors on the media. This alternative view of reality was accepted by a society moving towards a progressive era. Patent medicines, particularly those containing alcohol and narcotics, became unwanted products. They were labelled as undesirable and evil by the media, doctors, druggists, and finally by average citizens. The overwhelming notion that nostrum drugs were detrimental to society was echoed by the legislature with the passage of the Wiley laws, the Pure Food and Drug Act, 1906, and the Harrison Narcotic Drug Act in 1914.

"The Great American Fraud" was a series that changed reality in 1905 and 1906. As Young notes:

Adams did not say much that had not been said before in the long decades during which patent medicines had been criticized. But in the *Collier's* series he made a major campaign out of what had been an occasional skirmish, and he reached an audience not only vastly larger than had ever before heard nostrums castigated, but one enthusiastic about supporting reform. (Toadstool Millionaires 205)

In addition to redefining conspiracy and using traditional rhetorical strategies, "The Great American Fraud" is an exemplar of a campaign striving for reality reconstruction. Anyone reading the series was aware of its implications.

Young notes:

The over-all effect on the public was staggering. Adams had attacked 264 concerns and individuals by name. The cries of the wounded were terrible and were reported in hundreds of small and several large newspapers. One could read this or that medicine company had "instructed its legal counsel" to sue Adams and *Collier's* for damaging remarks on an "old established business." (Holbrook 26).

Both the proprietors and average citizens were touched by the series. The media rallied around *Collier's*, as eventually did the legislature.

People grounded in the notion of consumerism began doubting the truthfulness and integrity of advertising. Recall, consumerism and therapeutic ethos, the dominant advertising strategy at the turn of the century, went hand in hand. Lears states that between 1880 and 1930: "With the spread of a national market and urban conditions of life, advertisers began to imagine a buying public that was increasingly remote and on the run" (17). This meant that

advertisements had to prove a product was expedient, easy to use and effective. In addition, the message had to convince a reader that if he or she did not use the product, death could result. People's frames of reference told them to believe in the advertisements, yet a myriad of evidence supported Adams' argument that advertisements were false. The respect of the audience shifted to his side as he continually exposed conspiracy.

The purpose of the campaign was threefold: (1) to inform the public about dangerous patent medicines; (2) to reveal false advertisements and testimonials; and (3) to expose an alliance between the patent medicine industry and the media. As the campaign gained momentum, the purpose did as well. Legislative measures and reform became a goal of Adams; he met this goal with the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act.

Reform. The series rhetorically influenced reform on several levels. One was at a journalistic level, another was legislative, and a third was reform at a social level. Journalism was changed greatly with the rise of muckraking. Muckraking journalism occurred when "writers investigated and attacked social, economic and political wrongs" (Norton 356). Furthermore, "Muckrakers exemplified (any given movement's) faith in the power of exposure to shock consciences and motivate change" (Pope 44). Samuel Hopkins Adams was more than a muckraker, however. He may have been

one of this country's first investigative journalists.

Adams "shared a dedication (with other muckrakers) to factual accuracy and a zeal for improving the lot of mankind, both of which marked his discussions of certain aspects of the public health" (Toadstool Millionaires 216). He spent years studying medical practices, and in the months preceding the *Collier's* series, Adams spent time studying advertisements; interviewing proprietors, advertisers, victims and testimonial givers; going into factories under cover and in disguise; doing lab tests on nostrums; purchasing and testing product after product, and everything else he could humanly do to uncover information about the proprietary industry. The resulting series bolstered efforts of other muckrakers and acted as a model for investigative journalism.

Part of the muckraking movement was the fight for legislative reform. The *Collier's* articles were influential in the passage of several laws in the years following their publication. Young notes: "No doubt existed that Adam's muckraking had expanded awareness of the nostrum evil and of the need for legislation to control it" (203). Another prominent figure fighting for food and drug legislation at this time was Dr. Harvey Wiley, who campaigned successfully for state laws regulating food and drugs. After their passage, many were known as "Wiley Laws."

As more state governments passed laws regulating food

and drug production and "The Great American Fraud" became known across the country, Adams and Wiley worked together to lobby the Congress. Even so, it took the work of influential representatives to get a national measure passed. Young states of Edwin Y. Webb, a representative from North Carolina:

Before the committee Webb praised *Collier's* for its 'great service in exposing medicine frauds' and . . . recited some of Adams's horror stories and described the devious methods by which proprietors were fighting legislation to control them. The pressure of publicity, especially the Adams series, however, was making its weight felt in proprietary ranks. (Pure Food 219)

The *Collier's* series was acknowledged publicly in congressional committees as being influential and essential for passage of food and drug legislation.

The Pure Food and Drug Act was passed on June 20, 1906. History books often cite Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* as being the source which influenced President Theodore Roosevelt's determination for pure food laws. Even though the history books do not always remember Adams, many sources of the day and progressive literature do recognize him. Adams was praised following the bill's passage. Young states: "Samuel Hopkins Adams' patent medicine exposure struck some house members as especially influential. (One House Member) asserted that Adams deserved more credit than 'any other single man in this country'" (Pure Food 254). Furthermore, it has been noted widely that "The Pure Food and Drug Act, which restricted the use of addictive drugs

and required labeling on ingredients, undercut the patent medicine business" (Conlon 639).

In the years following the Pure Food measure, numerous other bills were passed which regulated aspects of the patent medicine industry. The biggest blow came in 1914 with the Harrison Anti-Narcotic Act. Inciardi states:

The Harrison Act required all people who imported, manufactured, produced, compounded, sold, dispensed, or otherwise distributed cocaine and opiate drugs to register with the Treasury Department, pay special taxes, and keep records of all transactions. (15)

The patent medicines were targeted again. Druggists could not sell nostrums which contained any amount of narcotics. As a result, the nostrum business fizzled away shortly after the passage of the measure. Noted as the first law against drug abuse, it sought to stop the sale of narcotics over the counter and thus stop the habitual and harmful use of patent medicines.

Another social reform that was perpetuated by the rhetorical strength of the series was what resulted from all the measures and laws passed against narcotics. The nostrums had for decades been used to stop pain and make people feel better. However, due to alcohol and narcotics, people often became sicker, habitual users, and sometimes, died after using the nostrums. With heightened awareness of the narcotic ingredients, due largely to *Collier's*, and numerous laws prohibiting the sale of nostrums containing narcotics, society's perception of drugs changed. Conlon

notes:

Proportionately, there may have been more drug addicts in the United States at the turn of the century than in the 1980's. Some were frankly hooked on opium or morphine and had minimal difficulty meeting their needs at unregulated pharmacies. Others were addicted to various patent medicines advertising themselves as cure-alls. (639)

Whereas before patent medicines were essential to staying healthy, they suddenly became illegal.

The first two decades of the new century saw a shift in thought about drugs. Once good and necessary for health, they became evil and harmful. For the first time, American society, as a whole, viewed drugs as a public enemy. Samuel Hopkins Adams, through the pages of *Collier's*, waged the first war on drugs. His fight to change society's perception of patent medicines clearly was won. "The Great American Fraud" touched every level of society, especially with the passage of laws prohibiting the sale of narcotics.

Persuasive Campaigns. The study of persuasive campaigns is widespread; however, the study of persuasive mediated campaigns at the turn of the century is not. *Collier's* did not stop its discussion of patent medicines following "The Great American Fraud." It offered two additional campaigns deriding the patent medicine industry in 1906 and 1912 (two years before passage of the Harrison Anti-Narcotic Act). There are three campaigns which could be rhetorically analyzed. That the two campaigns following "The Great American Fraud" were published a year or two

preceding the passage of major laws is not coincidental. In 1906, following "The Great American Fraud:"

(Adams) set to work immediately on another series, directing detailed facts, his wit, and his scorn against the doctors with their fake clinics and institutes. Editor Hapgood, in the meantime, kept up the pressure in his editorial columns, through his own barbed words, letters from grateful readers, and promises from newspapers which, with blinders removed, were joining the anti-nostrum crusade. (Toadstool Millionaires 223)

The other series, "Quacks and Quackery," was published in 1906. Then, six years later, "Tricks of the Trade" was published, which exposed fraudulent business practices of proprietors.

Before the second series was published by *Collier's*, the American Medical Association reprinted "The Great American Fraud" series "in a little book. Sales to the disturbed public mounted rapidly" (Pure Food 203). Young notes:

As proof of their wider concern with quackery, the American Medical Association reprinted Adams' vigorous articles in a booklet which was sold for a nominal price. In time nearly 500,000 copies of "The Great American Fraud" were bought by disturbed Americans. (Toadstool Millionaires 224)

That the series was republished by the American Medical Association further emphasizes its significance. The *Collier's* campaigns impacted societal journalism, laws, and thinking, and as such, rhetorically influenced society. At the heart of this influence was a new view of reality--one in which patent medicine men were evil and nostrums were dangerous.

Because this study changes the notion of conspiracy rhetoric, it is important to note how a redefinition of conspiracy, strategies, reform, and persuasive campaigns effect the nature of conspiracy. By expanding the definition of conspiracy rhetoric, a critic is able to look beyond traditional political events and circumstances and examine a wider view of American society. While political activities helped shape our nation, many other events were also influencing daily life. In a nation where debate and argument through freedoms of speech are fundamental rights, there has always been a good side and bad side. A broadened definition of conspiracy allows a critic to look back at historical debates through a lens modeled after reality reconstruction.

Persuasive strategies are part of virtually all rhetorical artifacts. In a conspiracy framework, they argue against a certain view of reality and in favor of another. The strategies employed by Adams were especially effective because they occurred at a time when people began distrusting the status quo. While the evidence used by Adams shocked many people, they wanted the truth, not lies. In addition, as advertising became more visual, illustrations were an effective tool for immediately changing one's perception of a situation.

The faint glimpses of reform evident in 1905 also were essential to the *Collier's* series. This series influenced

and reformed several factors of society. Adams provided an alternative view of reality which was accepted by all levels of society. The change was not easy, however.

Adams had to convince people that his view of reality was correct. Through his mediated persuasive campaign, he succeeded. In his effort to expose conspiracy, Adams (1) exposed multiple realities; (2) exposed an evil conspirator; (3) reaffirmed his role as a renegade; and (4) reconstructed reality. These categories are similar to earlier conspiracy scholars, however, they examine conspiracy as part of a larger, far-reaching event. In fact, this interpretation fits more with Hofstadter's notion of conspiracy. He stated the person fighting conspiracy ". . . finds it directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others" (4). Even so, he analyzed conspiracies on a political level, not social. It is the social debates which have occurred throughout history that can now be reexamined with a new framework, one grounded in conspiracy rhetoric and reality reconstruction.

Directions for Future Research

I have analyzed "The Great American Fraud" as a mediated, persuasive campaign aimed at exposing conspiracy and changing reality. There are many other ways the series

could be examined. I examined only the traditional persuasive strategies, but many more exist within the series. One that would offer insight would be an examination of the religious allusions throughout the series. *Collier's* was a religious weekly magazine before it became a progressive social reformer. There are several examples and illustrations used by Adams which echo biblical language. For example, his references to the patent medicines as more goats than sheep and the sheepfold refer to the good and bad followers of Christ. There is also the repetitive visual appeal of the serpent, which refers to the devil in the Garden of Eden. A further examination of the series may indicate a popular strategy of religious allusion at the turn of the century.

Another aspect of this campaign which could be studied was the advertising used for the series of articles. Build-up for the series lasted for several months before the first article. Through advertisements in other media and illustrations and editorials in the pages of *Collier's*, there was a huge public advertising campaign for the series. In addition, there was constant information given in between articles which bolstered the messages of Adams and Sullivan. This advertising campaign behind the scenes of the major "Great American Fraud" series may offer further insight into the social implications of the series.

As the Progressive movement gained momentum, more and

more social campaigns were promoted in the media. While we know that Adams was not the first to reprehend patent medicines, his campaign was the most successful. What other sources spoke out against the patent medicine industry? Why were they not successful? In addition, what other social and health issue-oriented campaigns were prominent during this time period. With the publication of Sinclair's The Jungle, meat packaging became an enormous concern. I have examined "The Great American Fraud" as a persuasive mediated campaign. It was surely not the only one. An examination of other mediated campaigns of the day may illustrate how innovative and original Adams' series really was.

One of the earliest progressive movements was the Truth in Advertising campaign. While this did not gain momentum until the 1920's, its roots can be found in the *Collier's* series. How closely does Truth in Advertising literature follow the demands for truth made by Adams? An examination of the strategies used by Adams to expose conspiracy may be similar to those used by progressives seeking the truth from advertisements.

There are many different angles and directions for research stemming from this series of articles. Rhetorically, it may be worthwhile for conspiracy scholars to look back at major social issues and movements to see if there is evidence of conspiracy rhetoric. When there is an evil-doer and a renegade, strategies employed often fit the

conspiracy mold. Since this study has reshaped that mold to accept incidents removed from the political realm, it may be possible to see conspiracy arguments at many different levels of society.

"The Great American Fraud" changed the culture in which it first appeared. Adams wrote a story that exposed an evil conspirator lurking within the patent medicine industry. He may have been one of the first investigative journalists, taking the job of muckraking to a new height. His articles startled and terrified a society in which people had been using mystical potions for centuries. The difference in the early 1900's was that rather than old-great-aunt-May providing the potions, proprietors, advertisements, and consumerism pushed people towards the druggist's door. Adams saw the lies. He saw the death and habitual usage. He saw the evil potion maker. And he exposed him. Adams' success was duly noted by *Collier's*, the American Medical Association, and the American Legislature when they passed the Pure Food and Drug Act. Adams' view of reality was accepted by the public, when they joined him in the belief that drugs were evil. So began a nation's fight that still wages on today.

Works Cited

- Adams, Samuel Hopkins. The Great American Fraud. Chicago: American Medical Association, 1907.
- . "The Great American Fraud, I - Introduction." Collier's 7 October 1905: 14-15,29.
- . "The Great American Fraud, II - Peruna and the 'Bracers.'" Collier's 28 October 1905: 17-19.
- . "The Great American Fraud, III - Liquizone" Collier's 18 November 1905: 20-21.
- . "The Great American Fraud, IV - The Subtle Poisons." Collier's 2 December 1905: 16-18.
- . "The Great American Fraud, V - Preying on the Incurables." Collier's 13 January 1906: 18-20.
- . "The Great American Fraud, VI - The Fundamental Fakes" Collier's 17 February 1906: 22-24,26,28.
- American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.
- Armstrong, Regina. "The New Leaders in American Illustration." The Bookman June 1900: 334-341.
- Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. The Social Construction of Reality. New York: Anchor, 1989.
- Boorstin, Daniel J. The Americans: The Democratic Experience. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- . The Image, A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America. New York: Atheneum, 1977.
- Booth, Wayne C. A Rhetoric of Irony. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Burrow, James G. AMA, Voice of American Medicine. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963.
- Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs. The Rhetorical Act. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1982.
- "Collier, Peter Fenelon." Collier's Encyclopedia. 1992 ed.
- "Collier, Robert Joseph." The National Cyclopædia of American Biography. 21 vols. New York: James T. White & Company, 1931.

- Conlin, Joseph R. The American Past; A Survey of American History. 3 Ed. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.
- Dyer, Gillian. Advertising as Communication. New York: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1982.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara and Deirdre English. For Her Own Good, 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women. New York: Anchor, 1978.
- Eldridge, William Butler. Narcotics and the Law. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1967.
- Ewen, Stuart. Captains of Consciousness. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976.
- Goodnight, G. Thomas and John Poulakos. "Conspiracy Rhetoric: From Pragmatism to Fantasy in Public Discourse." The Western Journal of Speech Communication. 1981, 299-316.
- Goodrum, Charles and Helen Dalrymple. Advertising in America; the First 200 Years. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990.
- Hapgood, Norman. "Criminal Newspaper Alliances with Fraud and Poison." Collier's 8 July 1905: 12-13, 22.
- "Hapgood, Norman." The National Cyclopædia of American Biography. 27 vols. New York: James T. White & Company, 1939.
- Hofstadter, Richard. The Paranoid Style in American Politics. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965.
- Holbrook, Stewart H. The Golden Age of Quackery. New York: Macmillan Company, 1959.
- Inciardi, James A. The War on Drugs II. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1992.
- Kern, Stephen. The Culture of Time and Space. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Kneupper, Charles W. "Argument: A Social Constructivist Perspective." Journal of American Forensic Association 1981, 183-189.
- Lears, T. J. Jackson. "From Salvation to Self-Realization" The Culture of Consumption Ed. Richard W. Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.

Leggett, Glenn, et al., eds. Handbook for Writers. 9th ed.
New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985.

Nimmo, Dan and James E. Woods. Mediated Political Realities. New York: Longman, Inc., 1983.

Norton, Mary Beth, et al. A People and a Nation. Boston:
Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988.

Orr, C. Jack. "How Shall We Say: 'Reality is Socially
Constructed Through Communication?'" Central States
Speech Journal 1978, 263-274.

Perlongo, Bob. Early American Advertising. New York: Art
Direction Book Company, 1985.

Pope, Daniel. "Advertising as a Consumer Issue." Journal
of Social Issues 1991, 41-56.

Presbrey, Frank. The History and Development of
Advertising. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.

Rowsome, Frank Jr. They Laughed When I Sat Down. New York:
McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959.

Schudson, Michael. "The Historical Roots of Consumer
Culture." Advertising in Society Ed. Roxanne Hovland
and Gary B. Wilcox. Lincolnwood: NTC Business Books,
1989.

Sullivan, Michael. "The Patent Medicine Conspiracy Against
the Freedom of the Press." Collier's 4 November 1905:
13-16, 25.

Weaver, Richard M. The Ethics of Rhetoric. Davis, Ca:
Hermagoras Press, 1985.

Wood, James Playsted. The Story of Advertising. New York:
Ronald Press Company, 1958.

Young, James Harvey. Pure Food. New Jersey: Princeton
University Press, 1989.

---. The Medical Messiahs. New Jersey: Princeton
University Press, 1967.

---. The Toadstool Millionaires. New Jersey: Princeton
University Press, 1961.