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MADONNAS AND WHORES: THE DICHOTOMY OF WOMEN'S ROLES  
AS PORTRAYED IN WOMEN'S MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS.

By

KAREN CELESTE KIMBELL, B.A.

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Faculty of

University of the Incarnate Word

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

July 2002

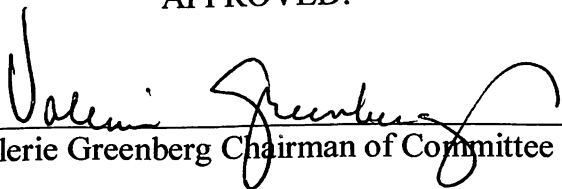
MADONNAS AND WHORES: THE DICHOTOMY OF WOMEN'S ROLES AS  
PORTRAYED IN WOMEN'S MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS.

A Thesis

by

KAREN CELESTE KIMBELL

APPROVED:

  
Valerie Greenberg Chairman of Committee

  
Dr. Pat Lonchar Member

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## ABSTRACT

### MADONNAS AND WHORES: THE DICHOTOMY OF WOMEN'S ROLES AS PORTRAYED IN WOMEN'S MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS.

Karen Celeste Kimbell, B.A. University of Texas at Austin

Advertising has played a vital role in the increase of the number and circulation of magazines. Women's magazines, in particular, are saturated with ads to the point where often the copy text and the advertisements are indistinguishable. Early in the history of women's magazines, advertisements focused on women's domestic role as mother and wife, offering products to improve the home and help with caring for the family. Soon, products for beauty enhancement began showing up in advertisements as well, and beauty products continue to be heavily marketed in women's magazines. With the women's sexual revolution, the notion of beauty changed into something more sexual. Depictions of women began to be more daring, often showing them scantily clad or in erotically suggestive positions. This research will study the existence of the trend that pits women as either sexless, domestic Madonnas, or trappy, provocative whores. The study explores the extent to which this trend continues to exist in the advertising of the top women's magazines in the new millennium, and if so, how?

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## INTRODUCTION

Magazines are an extremely powerful media for advertisers. They have proliferated the marketplace, with more and more titles debuting each year. As the number of magazines grows, so does the number of magazine readers. Due to this large audience, magazines are wide reaching; the top magazines reached more consumers than the top prime time television programs, making magazines a choice medium for advertisers (Magazine Handbook 14). Magazines are also highly cost effective. Magazine budgets are significantly smaller than television budgets, however they result in similar amounts of awareness. Dollar per dollar, magazine advertising is about 3 times as effective as magazine advertising in terms of advertising awareness (Magazine Handbook 7).

Most importantly, magazines build relationships with their readers. Consumers choose their specific magazines because the magazines are relevant to the readers' own interests. In this way consumers choose their own advertisements. Furthermore, because of the nature of magazines, the advertisements are more likely to be relevant to the reader, resulting in a higher likelihood of purchase. This bond between the reader, magazine, and advertiser makes magazines a highly trusted media (Magazine Handbook 40).

However, if advertisers betray their magazine readers by portraying the readers' own demographic as something contrary to what the readers perceive it to be, the results can be hazardous to the advertisers and magazines. Women's magazine advertisements are an example of this situation.

The roles of women as portrayed in women's magazine advertising have changed over time. The earliest role was that of the housewife, a woman whose only concerns in life were her home and family. Being a mother and caring for her home were her most important ambitions. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new role emerged as the women's movement progressed and women gained more social acceptance and became more socially active. This was the role of the "mannequin."<sup>1</sup> The mannequin was a social being who existed solely to look good. She was rarely depicted doing anything other than lounging, standing, or posing. The mannequin never completely supplanted the role of the housewife, rather the two roles coexisted, creating an early dichotomy. The mannequin role was the predecessor of the sexual role, as it is with the mannequin role that advertisers began to use women as objects to be looked at and desired.

As the sexual revolution came into being, the desire for beauty changed into sexual desire, and the mannequin transformed into the role of a sexual object. At first, women embraced this sexual role model as empowering: it was a sign of their personal and sexual freedom. But as more and more of the advertisements began showing women in more pornographic ways, the empowerment that the sexual revolution promised was nullified. The sexual role of women virtually replaced the mannequin role, as most mannequin models are highly sexualized. Thus the end result is a dichotomy between the housewife and the sex object.

The perception of a dichotomy between woman as a mother or lover is most commonly termed 'The Madonna/whore complex.'<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that women are

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<sup>1</sup> Millum describes the "mannequin" role in detail in chapter 6 of Images of Woman: Advertising in Women's Magazines, The World of Woman.

<sup>2</sup> Frosh, Stephen, Madonna/Whore Complex, Madonnas and Whores, and Ussher, Jane M. and Christine D. Baker.

either biblical figures capable of immaculate conception or prostitutes who solicit sex for money. However, the term is derived from these two meanings.

Originally, the term has been used to describe a complex in which men can only view women as one of these two extremes. In its original, psychological context, this complex has manifested itself in married men as impotence or lack of desire for their wives, while retaining sexual prowess and/or interest outside the marriage. The wife, being a woman who nurtures the children and takes care of the home is the figurative Madonna, while the man's extramarital interest is the whore, in severe cases not figuratively. Several psychoanalytical interpretations stemming from Sigmund Freud's Oedipal Complex have been proposed as the root of the problem. Another interpretation stems from the study of the reproductive rituals and habits of the animal world. This biological interpretation postulates that men's and women's reproductive needs run counter to each other, sometimes resulting in the man's lack of interest in his long term-partner, but continued interest in other partners.

More recently, the Madonna/whore complex has been shown to exist in females as well. After having a child, a woman may have conflicting feelings about using her body for both sex and nurturing. In addition, mothers typically don't teach sexuality to their daughters; daughters learn from their mothers how to be nurturing, but learn from outside sources how to be sexual, and that her mother is sexual. This leads to conflicting notions of womanhood for the daughter.

As the Madonna/whore complex has come to exist in a sociological context, the term has come to signify the portrayal of women in society and the media as either asexual mothers and homemakers or overtly sexual vixens. One theory as to the origin of

this dichotomy stems from deeply rooted cultural and religious beliefs. At the crux of this theory is the original Madonna herself, the Virgin Mary. Mary's virgin birth to Jesus and self-sacrificing devotion to Him are in sharp contrast to the other major female of The Bible, Eve, whose seduction by the serpent represents the fall of humanity. The Bible also portrays this dichotomy quite clearly in its depiction of the two Marys. The first, already mentioned, is the Virgin Mary. On the opposite end of the spectrum is Mary Magdalene, a prostitute.

This dichotomy in the media, particularly the media aimed at women, serves as the focus of this study. Women's magazine advertisements are highly trusted by their target audience, women, but how are women being depicted in these ads? In what roles are women being depicted? Are they being thrust into the predefined sexual or domestic roles that the anecdotal evidence suggests? Are women ever portrayed simultaneously as mothers and lovers?



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Importance of Magazine Advertising

Advertising in magazines has become an extremely effective way to reach a product's target audience. As readers choose their own magazines, they trust their magazines as well as the advertisements in them. As more and more magazines are introduced each year, the potential for magazine advertising continues to grow.

### Magazines as Relationships

Magazines are a highly powerful media because of their relationships with their readers. While both advertisers and readers continue to have more and more choices, magazine advertising remains effective because of magazines' ability to grow with their readers (Magazine Handbook 1). A magazine becomes a reader's friend, a "tangible and enduring companion," because the reading of magazines is an "intimate, involving experience that fulfills the personal needs and reflects the values of the reader" (5). The reader chooses the magazine because the content reflects his or her interests or lifestyle. Magazine readers develop a connection and a trust in the content of their favorite magazines, even the advertisements. "Magazines are like no other medium. Consumers have a bond with their favorite magazines, and it is this relationship with the editorial product that enhances the credibility of the advertising environment, causing consumers to take action" (19).

Because of the relationship-building capability of magazines, they are the most "personal" and "relevant" medium. Consumers are more likely to pay attention to advertisements in their favorite magazines than to their favorite television shows or

Websites. More consumers buy products as a result of advertising in their favorite magazines than in any other medium (Media Choices 1). Magazines are the trusted source of information to readers for both editorial information and information on advertised products. In addition, magazine advertising is considered the least annoying in comparison to network and cable television and the Internet (2). While consumers often find the advertising on television and radio intrusive and often change the channel to avoid these advertisements, they “willingly turn to magazine advertising” (Magazine Handbook 19).

As magazines target more specific audiences, this relationship has the potential to become even stronger. Special interest magazines allow advertisers to target their most likely customers efficiently. Advertisers can target consumers who have a high degree of interest in products which complement the magazine’s content (Magazine Handbook 20). Consumers should appreciate the relevant products advertised in these magazines, thus the relationship is symbiotic, working for the consumer, the advertiser, and the magazine simultaneously.

### Advertising Awareness

Advertising expenditures for magazines result in higher advertising awareness<sup>3</sup> levels than in other media (Magazine Handbook 43). The cost of magazine advertising is very low compared to other media. Magazine advertising budgets are typically  $\frac{3}{4}$  the size of that for television, yet they result in only slightly less advertising awareness than television (Documenting the Effectiveness 6). This may seem like a contradiction, but

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<sup>3</sup> Based on whether respondents indicated they remembered seeing an advertisement for brand X in various media.

when comparing awareness levels, dollar for dollar, magazine advertisement dollars return higher awareness levels. The awareness-to-cost index, an overall effectiveness measure, divides each medium's total percent of awareness by its percent of spending. In a study of magazines in 1996 to 1997, this number was 92 for television, compared to 278 for magazines (7). Magazines far outperformed television in this measurement. Because of the relationship-building potential and magazine advertising's cost-effectiveness, magazines outperform other media (Magazine Handbook 19).

Magazines outperform television in awareness levels regardless of budget. A Millward/Brown study of magazine effectiveness for various categories of advertised products, including Drugs and Remedies, Packaged Foods, Automotive, Household Goods, Durable Goods, and Personal Care Products, showed that in all categories, magazines' advertising awareness far outreached that of televisions'. In all categories except Drugs and Remedies, magazine advertising awareness almost tripled, and in the case of Durable Goods and Personal Care Products more than quadrupled, that of television. Even in the worst performing category, Drugs and Remedies, advertising awareness in magazines was nearly double that of television (Documenting the Effectiveness 12).

More people pay full attention to magazines than to other medium. In a study by MagNet, a continuing survey of Internet users who visit magazine Web sites, 28% of people gave magazines their full attention while engaged in the consumption of that media. Only 10% of respondents gave their full attention to television. The Internet scored similarly to magazines, however, in terms of advertising: 48% of respondents named magazines as the medium in which they pay attention to advertising, compared to

only 32% for television, and 4% for the Internet (Consumers par. 3). Magazines and their advertisements are apparently read thoroughly.

#### Other Reasons Magazines are So Effective

Magazines outperform other media for many reasons. They are very stable, maintaining their share of the media marketplace despite the addition of new media choices (Magazine Handbook 11). They reach a large number of the population. Magazine penetration is extensive in the United States. Approximately 60% of all households both subscribe to and purchase magazines, and each household purchases an average of six different magazines annually (14). This means advertisers can reach a wide range of readers, more so than even television. The top 25 broad-based magazines reached more consumers in all targets than the top 25 prime-time television shows (20). Considering that, on average, the ratio of advertising to editorial content is 1:1, there is ample opportunity for advertisers to get their message to those readers (9).

In addition, those who buy and read magazines are a choice demographic for magazine advertisers. The average magazine reader is “affluent, educated, and empowered”, earning \$75,000 a year or more. This is a highly desirable target for advertisers as members of this demographic tend to be heavy spenders (Magazine Handbook 22).

#### Women’s Magazine Advertisements

As suggested by the statistics listed above, women readers connect with their magazines. Unlike newspapers or television news programs, “women’s magazines are

the only products of popular culture that (unlike romances) change with women's reality, are mostly written by women for women about women's issues, and take women's concerns seriously" (Wolf 71). Women develop a close relationship with their favorite women's magazine, because these magazines are a source of validation for them. Women's magazines reinforce and teach what it is to be a woman.

Advertisements create an image that the consumer is supposed to fit, or wants to fit (Barthel 31). When women readers feel as though the images of women portrayed in their favorite magazines reflect their own image, or reflect what they desire to be like, they remain content with their magazines and their advertising. However, during the last century, this has not always been the case.

Naomi Wolf asserts that while women's magazines have long been a primary agent for changing the roles of women, they persisted in glamorizing whatever role the economy, advertisers, or even the government needed women to hold at that point in time (Wolf 64). Because of the prevailing limitation of women portrayed as either motherly housewives or sinful tramps, many women began to feel that magazines were a "social, cultural, and economic mechanism designed to control and tyrannize" them (Catterall 12). They felt that women's magazine advertising in particular was attempting to "seduce and mollify" them with their product offerings which were meant only for mothering and housekeeping or beautifying and sexualizing themselves. Feminists in America blamed women's magazine advertisements for "being almost single-handedly responsible for women's oppression" (Catterall 164). In a 1968 demonstration, women threw objects which they believed were oppressive into a "Freedom Trash Can." Among the trashed objects were not only pornographic magazines such as Playboy, but also

magazines which were targeted for women themselves, such as Cosmopolitan, Ladies' Home Journal, and Vogue (Catterall 164). Women's magazines had betrayed these women's sense of womanhood by presenting them with images that they did not feel represented the full picture of what it is to be woman.

## Conclusion

Magazines are a powerful medium. Consumers trust magazines over other media, and magazines were rated as the medium most highly trusted by consumers (Magazine Handbook 40). Readers of magazines develop a bond with their magazines because the editorial content, as well as the advertising, is of personal interest to them (20).

Magazines also create a high degree of advertising awareness. Because magazine readers are more likely to find the advertisements in their favorite magazines relevant, they are more likely to be aware of those ads (Magazine Handbook 20). Consumers are more likely to pay attention to an advertisement which appears in their favorite magazine than they are to an ad which appears on a television show or internet site (Consumers par. 2). In addition, magazine readers feel that the advertising in their magazines is not as intrusive as television, radio, or Internet advertising. Of those four media, consumers are least likely to ignore advertising messages which appeared in magazines (Magazine Handbook 40).

Magazine audiences represent a highly desirable target group which is continuing to grow. Magazine readers are educated adults who earn a high yearly salary (Magazine Handbook 22). As more and more magazines debut each year, magazine audiences grow,

resulting in advertisements in the top magazines reaching more consumers than advertisements in the top television shows (20).

When magazines' images of a demographic do not coincide with the image that that demographic has for itself, those readers may feel betrayed. Because of the bond that develops between a reader and her favorite magazine, advertisers who persistently portray the reader in a way which offends her, betray the reader. Such a result seems to be the case for many women in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who felt the magazine advertisements in their favorite magazines were doing them a disservice by portraying them as only housewives or sex objects (Catterall 164).

### Changing Roles: From Housewife to Sex Object

The role of women as depicted in magazine advertisements has changed over time. The first role was that of the homemaker or housewife. Gradually, another role emerged which was concerned mostly with beauty. This became the "mannequin" role. Women who were "mannequins" simply modeled the product while seeming to be involved in no other action. As the notion of beauty became synonymous with the idea of sexuality, the "mannequin" role transformed into the sexual role, resulting in a dichotomy of roles for women, that of the housewife and that of the sexual object.

### The Role of the Housewife

Women's magazines first made their appearance in Victorian times. These magazines subscribed to Victorian notions of the role of women, portraying women in the domestic realm as a housewife and primary caretaker of the family and home. Domesticity and family were staple contents of women's magazines in their earliest

history. Tending to her family, and improving the home was depicted as the “purpose of womanhood” (Tolstikova 162). This notion of womanhood was held in society, and reiterated and confirmed in women’s magazines. In the latter part of the 1800s, the magazine Woman held competitions where the readers would send in their ideas of femininity. One such contest polled readers as to what they considered most ‘unwomanly.’ The responses upheld domesticity as the female realm; neglect of the home was certainly unwomanly (Beetham 181). In other early magazines, such as Ladies’ Home Journal, the role of the housewife was upheld. In the 1910s and 1920s early advertisers in Ladies’ Home Journal based their advertising appeals on what was considered the average American women, the “*Journal*-reading woman” (Scanlon 197). The editors of Ladies’ Home Journal saw it as their duty, through both advertising and content, “to assist women in the management of their homes and lives, to provide a service of advice and instruction” (199). Readers were given instructions for proper living, including how to be good consumers of the advertised products. The first role depicted for women in advertising was the same as it was for the content of women’s magazines, that of housewife. In fact, Ladies’ Home Journal began a long tradition of magazine text mirroring its advertising. The copy of the magazine was integrated with that of the advertisements, often making the line between the two indiscernible (202). For example, the first ad for Crisco was written to appear like an article, complete with the headline, “A Scientific Discovery Which will Affect Every Kitchen in America” (201). See figure 2.1.



[illegible]

The role of woman as homemaker did not end in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however. More recent magazines continue to emphasize the role of women as housewife or home-caretaker (Tolstikova 162). For example in a 1993 advertisement for Liz Claiborne's perfume Realities, depicts a young couple trying to lure a toddler into the tub. The caption reads, "Reality is the best fantasy of all" (Schwartz). The caption suggests that the act of raising children is better than any fantasy life. Domesticity has been portrayed again and again as the "natural expression of the female self" (Beetham 180).

As a Victorian-based role model, the housewife is non-sexual, she is a Madonna, a virginal mother. Sex was reserved as a duty to country to be performed only in marriage. By Victorian standards which held fast far into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sex was never, ever to be talked about, much less used in advertisements.

Eventually, the repetition of the housewife role began to anger some women. The relentless depiction of women as “concerned with cleaner washes and shinier floors” eventually made women complain, through early feminist writings and demonstrations, about the “limited and condescending ‘images of women’ in advertisements” (Boddehn 28). In fact, as the women’s movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century gained footing, more and more women complained of being depicted only as housewives. Eventually a new role model came to exist in women’s magazines.

### The Addition of the Mannequin

Gradually, the role of housewife gave birth to the role of “mannequin”, a woman whose sole purpose was to be looked at by men as a an object to be desired and by women as an object to be envied and copied. In a 1922 advertisement appearing in Ladies’ Home Journal for Woodbury Skin Preparations, upscale men and women stare at the reader. The caption reads, “Strangers’ eyes, keen and critical. Can you meet them proudly-confidently-without fear” (Scanlon 210)? See figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2.



(Scanlon 210)

Rather than purchasing products to clean and beautify the home, the “mannequin” consumed products to clean and beautify herself. This new role was partly brought on by the women’s movement. These feminists “broke the stranglehold on the women’s popular press of advertisers for household products, who were promoting the feminine mystique” (Wolf 11). However, in the place of household products, “the diet and skin care industries became the new cultural censors of women’s intellectual space, and because of their pressure, the gaunt, youthful model supplanted the happy housewife as

the arbiter of successful womanhood" (11). Whereas advertisers at the turn of the century defined womanhood as confined to the realm of domestic servitude, more modern advertisers defined womanhood as confined to the relentless pursuit of personal beauty.

As early as 1956 Viola Klein and Alva Myrdal, authors of Women's Two Roles, pit the "cult of Homemaking and Motherhood" against the "mannequin" or "lady of leisure" (Millum 72). The mannequin is a woman dressed in the advertisers wares, whose job it is just to be looked at. She is on exhibition, "relying on others to reinforce her self-image" (153). Although the role of housewife never left the advertisements in women's magazines, advertisers increasingly marketed products "relating to personal adornment," including clothing and fashion, fragrance, jewelry and cosmetics, to women (Bartos 139).

The advertisements in Ladies' Home Journal tried to appeal to women's sensual side. Ads in the 1920's for Woodbury's facial cream had the caption, "A Skin You Love to Touch" (Scanlon 207). These advertisements depicted women as something to be admired, and shifted the concentration from the product to the user. The Woodbury's ads frequently featured beautiful women who used their soap. These women were more than just models, they were role models whom women magazine readers could aspire to. Even royalty were used to show the beauty enhancing capacity of Woodbury's (Scanlon 208). The image of the woman, rather than the product itself, became the important element of the ad. This "created not only artificial needs for new products, but also artificial relationships among women and artificial definitions of womanhood" (219). Although women still did the housework, "they could not dress the part, for that part had no worth" (226). In reality, women were still expected to do the housework, but

advertisers showed them a new role model who did not look like a homemaker, she was much more glamorous. Middle class women, especially, most of whom did do their own housework and did not have the active social life that was depicted in the advertisements, were being presented role models of women who were not like them: yet, they began to try to emulate the role models in the ads by using the advertised products. The advertisements helped women transcend their roles in life and to feel more like the women in the advertisements. Jennifer Scanlon writes, "Social status and approval, in the world of advertising, supposedly rested not on class or race or European standards of beauty but on one's choice of facial soap" (213).

Indeed, the dichotomy between woman as housewife and woman as an object to be admired was already clear early in the twentieth century, long before Klein and Myrdal addressed the issue. This dichotomy is the predecessor of the Madonna/whore polarity which is the basis of this study. As one writer for Ladies' Home Journal wrote in 1916, "Make yourself as attractive as possible; keep your house in perfect order; serve his meals as daintily as you can" (Scanlon 226). Both roles became prominent ideas of femininity in the advertising world, and later studies would show advertising in women's magazines continued to depict women most often in either the role of the housewife or the "mannequin" (Millum 72).

Gradually, the "mannequin" role changed as society did. During WWII, women grew ever more responsible, independent, and socially aware, leaving advertisers worried that there would no longer be a market for their products. The magazines and their advertisements devoted themselves to showing women how to keep their "feminine quotient" high, so that they would not "liberate themselves out of their interest in

women's magazines" (Wolf 63). Today, more advertisers sell products to the "mannequin" such as "diet products and 'specialized' cosmetics and anti-aging creams" than they do to the housewife. In 1989, advertisers offered the magazines \$650 million in ad revenue for ads of 'toiletries' and 'cosmetics' while "soaps, cleansers, and polishes" were only one tenth that amount. As Wolf posits, modern women's magazines center on beauty work rather than housework (65).

### The Transition to Sex Object

The shift from the "mannequin" to sex object began in the post-war era, and has been increasing in use in the past few decades. While the housewife remained a constant, although often overshadowed, role in women's magazine advertisements, the role of "mannequin" transformed into something more sexualized and resulted in the role of the whore. Again, this change was again brought on partly by women's liberation.

The movement to the notion of a female sexuality began with the recognition in the early twentieth century of women's entitlement to sexual pleasure within marriage (Macdonald 165). The idea of a woman's sexual desire and freedom began to gain acceptance and popularity in society. By the 1970s and 1980s, sex became a way for women to rebel, to break from the socially acceptable rules their mothers had (170). Young girls began associating sexuality with power (Baldwin par. 4). In her study of teenage girls, Baldwin found that young women often feel powerless to control their own lives and they will often emphasize their sexuality as resistance to this helplessness. These young girls associated models in advertisements with a higher degree of sexuality with having a higher degree of self-efficacy. Women who were sexualized were seen as

having more control or power (Baldwin par. 24). Women's magazines began giving sex top priority over domestic interests (Macdonald 171). In the 1960s and 1970s, monthly women's magazines such as She, Honey, and Cosmopolitan, included a "growing frankness" about sex in their editorial content including articles about contraception, childbirth and vibrators (Macdonald 171). The sex object became a prominent role for women in both the magazines and their advertisements. In 1965, the revamped Cosmopolitan began selling the new sexualized image to women. The idea of female sexuality which appealed to advertisers stressed "the young woman's aspiration to shine in the game of (hetero)sexual play as an index of her ability to handle all interpersonal and work relations with self-confidence and panache" (Macdonald 172). The new sexual woman relied on independence and "economic self sufficiency" in order to be an individual (172). The new Cosmopolitan heralded a can-do, individualist attitude, touting women's ambition as well as their sexual desires. These sexualized images of women were meant to show female sexual liberation, but with the content so heavily laden with advertisements and articles for cosmetic surgery, diet products and methods, skin care, and other beautification treatments, the liberatory potential fell flat (Wolf 69). The magazines hailed women's sexuality, but did not treat it the way many feminists hoped they would (Macdonald 171). Studies in the last decade have attacked advertisers for their use of violence in advertising, the use of objectification, or portraying parts of women rather than whole women, which many researchers have argued leads to violence toward women, and the prevalence of unhealthy, anorexic models (Hersch par. 9).

The 1987 Cambridge Documentaries film Still Killing us Softly accused the advertising industry of glorifying violence against women, promoting women's

inferiority to men, and depicting women more and more frequently as sex objects (Ford and LaTour 43). In the 1980's, advertisers began using an image of women that was much like pornography. A woman's face anticipating orgasm was, and still is, a powerful sales tool. This allusion can be seen in the recent television advertisements for Clairol's Herbal Essences Hair and Body products, in which word play with the products' organic theme causes the actress or model to scream and moan as if in an orgasmic state. Herbal Essences' print ads use this imagery as well. See figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3





The prevalence of this beauty pornography helped fuel the growing belief that women held that they too, must have that face and body in order to achieve sexual satisfaction (Wolf 135). In women's magazines as well as general interest magazines and men's magazines between 1964 and 1984, the "overtness of illustrations of women used as sex objects" had increased significantly (Ford and LaTour 45).

While women's new sexual revolution was spurred by the legalization of abortion and the spread of contraception, advertising began using images of beauty pornography and beauty sadomasochism to fuel new social forces which put shame, guilt, and pain back into women's sexual experience (Wolf 132). While the magazines promote sexual freedom, their "focus on sex as a source of pleasure for women never lets [their] readers forget that satisfying men is the central aim" (Macdonald 173). Sex began being less about women's new-found power and liberation and more about its placement as a way in which men control women.

Images that turn women into objects or eroticize the degradation of women have arisen to counterbalance women's recent self-assertion.

They are welcome and necessary because the sexes have come too close for the comfort of the powerful; they act to keep men and women apart, wherever the restraints of religion, law, and economics have grown too weak to continue their work of sustaining the sex war. (Wolf 142)

The advertising in these magazines was quick to pick up on women's sexuality as a way to get attention, but, as Macdonald notes, "As women in advertising were allowed sexual fantasies, the voice that spoke to these remained masculine" (177). The 1961 television advertisement for Cadbury's Flake Bars used a man's voice-over to instruct the woman

who was erotically lying on her back with the flake bar suggestively in her mouth, how to enjoy herself. "By yourself. Enjoy yourself. Sixpence worth of heaven" (177).

Magazine content also often utilized the male voice. Articles appearing in Cosmopolitan in June and July of 1992 included, "What MEN think we do wrong in bed" and "SEXUAL DEPRESSION. Handling his post-passion blues" (173). Perceiving women as sex objects and adornment strips women of their individual identities. They are viewed as 'things,' objects of male sexual desire, and/or part of the merchandise rather than people. They are often reduced to 'body parts' instead of a whole person (Hall 329).

The transition from "mannequin" to sex object revolved around the advertisers ability to turn sex into the notion of beauty. Sex became what was beautiful, and as advertisers had learned from the advertisements using the "mannequin" model, women would buy what they believed would make them beautiful. In The Beauty Myth, Naomi Wolf states:

Only recently, now that society is best served by a population of women who are sexually available and sexually insecure, "beauty" has been redefined as sex. Why? Because, unlike female sexuality, innate to all women, "beauty" is hard work, few women are born with it, and it is not free. (151)

Advertisers capitalized on women's new-found sexuality and turned it back into a controlling force, rather than a liberating one.

## Conclusion

The first role that both magazines and advertising depicted for women was the housewife and mother. The women's movement helped introduce a role that depicted a more socially active woman, the "mannequin". As the female sexual revolution matured, the "mannequin" was shown more and more frequently as highly sexualized. While the housewife role remained constant, the sex object role evolved, resulting in a dichotomy between two opposing roles. Despite the increasing roles of women in society, workforce, and politics, these roles were very rarely shown in women's magazine advertisements (Millum 158). Instead, the trend of advertisers into the 1990s was to show women as either domestic housewives or seductive sex objects, mothers or lovers, Madonnas or whores.

## The Madonna/Whore Complex

The existence of a dichotomy in which women occupy only two roles, mothers or lovers, has existed in a psychological context. Many interpretations of a syndrome in men in which he loses interest in his wife but retains sexual prowess with women outside the marriage have stemmed from Sigmund Freud's Oedipus Complex. (See <sup>2</sup> above) More recently, the complex has been shown to exist in females, with different manifestations. Within the Catholic Church also, women have also been depicted along this dichotomy, resulting in a larger sociological phenomenon in which women are most often depicted in society and the media as either figurative Madonnas or whores.

## The Complex in Men

While there is no universal definition of the Madonna/whore Complex, most frequently, “discussions of this complex revolve around the dichotomy of how some men can view women as two distinct and separate personas, that of saint and sinner, or of mother and whore” (Madonna/Whore Complex par. 1). Many psychologists also subscribe to the notion of the Madonna/whore complex. Typically, this condition is seen in men who reserve love for 'good' women, who they associate with their mother. Their lust, however, is available only to 'bad' women who are associated with their lovers. The problem may begin when a man marries, but most often it will occur when his wife becomes a mother, bringing about conflicting subconscious feelings towards his own mother (Madonnas and Whores par. 3). When a wife becomes a mother, her husband's unconscious memories of his "unmet needs of love from his mother" are triggered. Freud's Oedipus complex comes in as the husband searches for his mother in his wife. In battling against this Oedipal instinct, the husband may lose sexual interest in his wife. Both partners may seek gratification outside the marriage; the woman may seek someone who validates her emotionally as well as sexually, while the man may seek sexual gratification from someone he does not associate with being a mother type (Madonna/Whore Complex par. 3).

Another explanation within the traditional Freudian psychoanalytical framework holds that sexual perversion, such as the Madonna/whore complex, results again from an unresolved Oedipus complex. “When the Oedipal male reaches manhood, he is unable to reach genital primacy with a person of the opposite sex, since his mother is still in his unconscious mind, and he feels in extreme anxiety of being castrated by his father”

(Welldon 5). In other words, if a male does not resolve his subconscious desire to kill his father and take his mother, when he tries having a relationship with a woman, she comes into direct conflict with his desire for his mother. This conflict is further aggravated by the still-present father, who is out to castrate the son because of the man's lust for his own mother. In some instances, the result is the Madonna/whore complex, in which he can only view women as either virginal mothers or tramps.

In another psychoanalytical interpretation, the Madonna/whore complex can be seen in men as a re-enactment of his first relationship, that with his mother. This first relationship is one of total oneness, and, because of this, achieving masculinity is a struggle for something unknown—a state of separateness from the mother while still remaining rooted in her. However, as long as he is fused with the mother, he cannot master her, “cannot take on the vague but intensely felt promise of phallic mastery” (Beetham 51). This leads to “repudiation” of the mother. This is helped by the mother's own fantasy of the boy as apart from her and thus as a potential object of desire, and his Oedipal fantasy of masculine dominating feminine, whereby he can develop his own phallus, or complete manhood. However, the boy can never completely separate himself from the mother, thus he never can gain the same phallic mastery, or complete separate manhood, as his father. Thus, he repudiates the mother even more, turning his back especially against the sense of oneness, “against anything that smells maternal” (Beetham 52). Sexually, the man fears his desire because the feminine images of desire turn so easily into the mother who undermines all that masculinity he has struggled to achieve (52).

The repudiation of the mother is explained in another description of the Madonna/whore complex. An infant boy may feel in danger from his sexual desire for his mother, so he pushes those desires away and splits the mother into two beings, a supportive mother and a sexual mother. He can be close with both halves, but not at the same time; never as a whole. As the child matures, the idea of a split woman remains, and expresses itself in sexual impotence with the women he perceives as motherly, and sexual dominance over those he perceives as whores (Wellson 110).

Other analysts have cast the Madonna/whore complex as a defense mechanism for men who fear maturity and independence. These men may play games in order to be liked, especially in terms of their relation towards women. In order to avoid achieving autonomy and self-sufficiency, they may try behaving in a childlike manner towards women, underachieving, or acting dumb so that women will want to take care of them. Conversely, they may try overachieving, acting overly-smart, being a macho-man, or behaving as an omnipotent father in order to hide their fear. Seeking sex to prove self-worth or to show off, seeking sex to degrade women, or compulsive searching for the virgin, the Madonna, or the whore in women are also manifestations of this defense mechanism (Tanzer 493).

A biological theory has also been used to explain and even justify the Madonna/whore complex in men. This theory conceives of sex as merely instinct and bodily driven. As in animals, sex is a means to propagate the species, and the success of the species depends partly on how that procreative sex occurs. This “parental investment theory” has been used to explain why some males become impotent with their wives, but can perform sexually with other, less-familiar partners. The biological purpose of sex for

a male is to impregnate as many females as possible, while the female tendency is to protect her young, thus she seeks to build relationships in order to better protect them. Monogamous relationships such as marriage run counter to the biological purpose of the male, thus he loses interest and even becomes contemptuous towards his wife, and may seek outside satisfaction for his sexual, and biological, desires (Ussher 24-25).

### The Complex in Women

The Madonna/whore complex is not exclusive to men. The complex may also express itself in women after having a child. The new mother may have conflicting emotions concerning using her body for sexual pleasure as well as for nurturing. In some cases, women experience a sexual response when breastfeeding which results in feelings of shame and guilt. On the other hand, some women experience such pleasure from breastfeeding that they do not want anything else competing for their bodies (Welldon 122). In both men and women, the result is a loss of sexual desire for their long-term partner, or an inability to be intimate with new partners. The complex may have different origins within the male and female psyche, but the underlying problem in both is an unresolved dichotomy between the sexual and maternal aspects of a woman.

Nancy Friday discusses another origin of the Madonna/whore complex in women in My Mother, My Self. According to Friday, as a woman matures, her natural progression and personal growth lead her to explore her sexual possibilities. She develops relationships and learns new ideas about sex. In her relationships with men, the woman sees sex as a psychological source of danger because of the vulnerable state it puts women in, yet the promise of intimacy and pleasure is a stronger force than her fear

of sex. When she bears a daughter, this fear changes. The mother realizes that the girl is subject to all the same dangers in sex that she herself has faced, and thus the mother's sexual exploration ceases, and she entrenches herself in the position of 'mother protector,' defining herself no longer as a woman, but solely as a mother. Eventually the mother desexualizes herself, for sex can have no part here-the child can never learn of her mother as a sexual being lest she try to become one herself (Friday 21). The mother will deny the daughter her own sexuality partly because of the anger she feels in having to give up her own. In the case where the mother does not desexualize herself, she tells her daughter that "all erotic life must be tied up with motherhood" (Friday 5), the girl will sense the lie-that the mother is doing what she tells the daughter not to do.

In daughters, the distinction between the mothering role and the sexual role is enormous. Girls can talk freely to their mothers about housekeeping, taking care of people, or cooking, but are overwhelmed with anxiety when even a hint of the subject of sex arises (Friday 101). Friday states, "Unless we separate mother's love from her fear of sex, we will always see love and sex as opposites" (5). These women cannot pair sex and love; they often will reject one to become either the Madonna or the whore, or pretend to be one or the other because of fear that someone may not like them for their whole self.

The Madonna/whore complex may also work as a defense mechanism for women much as it does in males. The complex manifests itself in women who try to occupy only one of the opposing roles because they feel that they will be unliked if they do not. These women feel that in order to be significant their role or position must be in relation to someone else, for instance as a mother or child, or some relation where a hierarchy must be established (Tanzer 493). This defensive mechanism works against the fear of



becoming independent and competent. Being a strong woman, a competent woman, creates such a sense of anxiety that some women will, whether consciously or subconsciously, react against it by either exaggerating or repressing those aspects of their personality that they fear. By pretending to be dumb, playing innocent, or wanting to be taken care of as if a child, or conversely, being a self-denying, martyred mother, being overly-controlling, using sex to control, compulsively seeking younger or older men, and anything which is contrary to the strong, multifaceted individual she could be, the woman allays her anxiety (Tanzer 490-492).

### The Dichotomy as Faith

The Madonna/whore complex has roots in some of the earliest literature and some of our most deeply held beliefs. The Catholic church saw man's sexual desire as attributed to the seductive nature of the female. It was women who, though passive in the sexual acts themselves, were the active, evil stimulants of male arousal. Since women were seen as playing a prime role in arousing male desire, her sexuality was seen as "both fatal and flawed—paradoxically framed either as absent, within the archetype of the asexual pure Madonna, or as all-encompassing and dangerously omnipotent, an image represented most clearly by the witch or the whore" (Ussher 10-11).

Also within the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, the Madonna/whore polarity can be seen in the original Madonna, the Virgin Mary:

Impregnated without sexual contact, [Mary] teaches us that nurturing is a spiritual experience untouched by either the complications of physical passion or our own desires. Mary, significantly, has also been cast as the

'second Eve,' compensating through her virginal purity for the sins of the woman held responsible for the fall of humanity. In this polarity the whore/Madonna dichotomy that underlies so much of western culture's thinking about women takes root (Macdonald 133).

Mary represents all that is motherly and nurturing and, in her purity, she makes up for the impure actions of the other main female role in The Bible, Eve. Mary remains a virgin, while Eve's seduction, a sexual term, is completely impure, resulting in the fall of humanity. Advertisers are not blind to this notion. In an advertisement for Versace, the female model lies dead on the ground. In her hand is an apple. Biblical references, violence, and seduction can all fall together in advertisements. See figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4



(Sex in Advertising)

Another aspect of this dichotomy within the Christian religion centers around the existence of two well-known Marys in The Bible, the Virgin/Mother Mary, representing all that is good and nurturing in a mother, and Mary Magdalene, the whore who later bathes Jesus' feet. This is significant not only in the outright expression of the characteristics of the two women, but also because both are in direct contact with Jesus. The fact that Jesus seeks the company of beggars and whores comes in sharp contrast to his existence with the woman who has been his role model—his mother. This relationship gains significance when interpreted through the psychoanalytical interpretations explained previously.

#### Madonnas and Whores in the Media

Although women argue for more diverse images of women in the media, controversy ensues when these two opposing spheres of women's depicted lives are combined. In 1991, Demi Moore posed nude while pregnant for the cover of Vanity Fair, resulting in hostile response from its readers (Macdonald 133). In the 1977 film Looking for Mr. Goodbar, the two paradigms coexist in the character of Terry Dunn, played by Diane Keaton. A teacher of deaf children, Terry frequents singles bars at night. The good, nurturing mother figure and the bad, hedonistic whore figure seemingly co-exist, but in the end the film “follows in the tradition of films which punish the single sexual woman for her moral transgressions” (Macdonald 179-180).

The confusion that ensues when the two images are combined also exists in society's disapproval of public breastfeeding: “Happy with the frequent displays of female breasts in the popular tabloid press and on the cinema screen offered primarily for

their titillation, [men] become paradoxically prudish when confronted with the combination of sexuality and maternalism that the nursing breast implies” (Macdonald 133). When the breast ceases to be a male stimulant and takes on a more primal function, it becomes unacceptable in the public, much less in the media.

Betty Friedan wrote in The Feminine Mystique of the problems women face in seeking equality. One of the dominant struggles is the eternal struggle between the role of mother and lover. Friedan believed that society and the media created a value system for women in which "the highest value and only real commitment for women lies in the fulfillment of their own femininity” (43). The highest good is keeping house and raising children” (16). Friedan adds that women are trained from early on for marrying and motherhood (158), thus, sex becomes “the only frontier open to women” (261). Using their sexuality like their mothers never could, sex becomes a way for women to rebel (389). However, in either the sexual or maternal role, they are training to catch and serve a man (15), and the media is more than willing to give women directions in this area (36). The prevailing dichotomy of women's roles in the media that developed over the last half century, is that between woman as mother and woman as lover.

The dichotomy of women’s images in advertising in general has been noted in several studies. Rena Bartos studied the mother and lover roles as well as women’s reactions to them in her examination of advertising practices to women all over the world. She noted the high degree of marketing to women as homemakers in almost all the countries she studied. She notes, “traditionally, it was assumed that woman’s only role in life was to serve her husband and children and that her reward for being a good housewife was her family’s appreciation or approval” (Bartos 143). She also found that

marketing to women as sex objects has been growing around the world. Bartos noted that both the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the National Advertising Review Board found that women were depicted in the media as either housewives/primary home caretaker or glamour girls, increasingly obsessed with sex (263).

In the 1974 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the report noted that in women's images in the media and advertising, "Women are offered basically two roles, that of the beautiful but passive glamour girl and that of the housewife caring for the home and children" (Bartos 263). The National Advertising Review Board, in an attempt to create a policy for the American advertising industry, found again that, "Women for the most part are shown as either housewives or glamour girls... Alternatively, they are shown as sex objects" (Bartos, 264). Furthermore, the study concluded that, "there is almost no reflection of woman's role in life outside the kitchen or the bedroom, in the world of work or in community affairs" (Bartos, 264). Over time, the way that advertising reacted to the changing roles of women in society has been to develop "a sort of mediating or compromise model: a more sensual, overtly sexual woman" (Millum 181).

In general-interest magazine advertising, these opposing roles were again found to prevail. In Alice Courtney and Sarah W. Lockeretz's analysis of seven general interest magazines for portrayals of women's roles women were found to interact and relate mostly to men, and only rarely with other women, they were most frequently shown as passive and as objects to be seen, and they were rarely shown as workers and when they were, it was only in the most traditional female roles (Martz 7-8). Courtney and Lockertz

surmised that, according to the advertisements: "A woman's place is in the home," "women do not make important decisions or do important things," "women are dependent and need men's protection," and "men regard women as sexual objects (9). General-interest magazine advertising depicted women's place as either in the kitchen or in the bedroom. However, women's magazines were not studied because Courtney and Lockertz asserted that, "they are typically directed to women as housewives regardless of their other roles" (Martz 7).

## Conclusion

The mother/lover dichotomy, typically termed the Madonna/whore complex, has a number of origins and interpretations. The Madonna/whore complex predominantly manifests itself in males. One of the most common explanations involves Freud's Oedipus complex, yet is interpreted in several different ways. In one interpretation, an unresolved Oedipus complex results in men searching for their mothers in their wives. In another interpretation, this same unresolved complex will result in conflicting emotions because of the two women, his mother and his potential lover, that exist in his subconscious. Another interpretation states that the problem arises when men try to break the bond with their mothers. Since the men can never completely get over the oneness of that original relationship, he can never achieve a full sense of self, or phallic mastery. Another interpretation postulates that a young son will split the mother into two realms, the motherly realm, and the sexual realm because of his fear of his desire for her. By splitting her personality, the boy feels free to be with either persona, but never with both at the same time.

Another explanation for the Madonna/whore complex in men stems from biological studies. Because a male's procreative role is to impregnate as many females as possible, remaining with only one woman renders him impotent with her, although he can function sexually with other women.

In females, this dichotomy is developed because of conflicting emotions over using the body for sex and for nurturing. In addition, young girls are taught by their mothers to ignore their sexuality, but as the girl learns of sexuality, the lie that the mother has been trying to convince her of, namely that the mother herself is asexual, and so the daughter should be, is revealed and is a source of conflict for the girl. Women may also use a defense mechanism which leads them to act as either mothers or lovers. Women who fear being independent may act childish so as to be taken care of, but conversely, they may act as an omnipotent, self-sacrificing, all-consuming mother to compensate for their fear. Sex may also be used to hide a woman's fear of being either overly sexual or overly maternal.

Within the Christian religion, the Madonna/whore dichotomy stems from the two predominant women in The Bible—the Mother Mary, and her contrary, Eve. Mary is maternal and asexual, remaining a virgin even in childbirth. Eve is 'seduced;' her sin bringing about the fall of humanity. Also within the Christian faith, the only other Mary present in The Bible, is a whore. The two Marys represent directly opposing roles.

The media has built a long tradition of depicting women in these two roles. Even as women's roles increased and evolved, the media rarely showed women in these new roles. Anecdotal evidence and studies in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have shown that the Madonna/whore nexus exists for much of the media, including magazine

advertisements. Very rarely have the roles been combined, and when they are, the public objects. Media Expert Jean Kilbourne, known for her part in the documentary Killing us Softly, and its subsequent sequels, states that year after year, women are shown in the same roles, either sex objects or “demented housewives pathologically obsessed with cleanliness” (Hersch par. 3).

### Summary

Magazines help produce a strong relationship between advertisers and readers; readers turn to magazines for content as well as advertisements that are relevant to them. The relationship between magazine, advertiser, and reader can be unstable, however. When feminists began arguing that women’s magazines depicted women in demeaning ways, such as with violence, pornography, or sexism, many women protested the portrayals. Studies in the 70s revealed that women were portrayed in the media most often as housewives or sexual objects, despite their many other roles. This dichotomy of women’s roles has been termed the Madonna/whore complex. In the new millennium, has the dichotomy of mother/lover or Madonna/whore reigned true in the advertising of some of the most popular media aimed at women—women's magazines?



## METHODOLOGY

Several methods can be used to study the Madonna/Whore dichotomy in women's magazines. Focus groups, textual analyses, semiologic analysis, and content analysis are all valid and frequently used techniques for the analysis of advertisements. Each method has its advantages.

Several qualitative methods can be used to study advertisements. Qualitative research is "a form of long-term first-hand observation conducted in close proximity to the phenomena under study" (Jensen 44).

Focus groups are a popular qualitative method of advertisers to gauge the effectiveness of advertisements. Focus groups are a qualitative means of analysis that can be useful for soliciting the reactions of consumers to "concepts, campaigns, creative products, and images" (Poindexter & McCombs 241). Focus groups are small group discussions which rely on participants' responses to open-ended questions to provide deeper insight into participants' attitudes on anything from a cultural phenomenon to an idea for a television show (240). These groups are powerful tools for determining how consumers feel toward issues, products, and various forms of media (241). However, focus groups cannot accurately gauge the content of the media, rather they gauge consumers attitudes toward particular media. A focus group cannot determine whether the Madonna/whore dichotomy actually exists in any medium, but only whether it is perceived to exist. Surveys and interviews can only give the same type of results.

Semiology is another qualitative method which is used frequently to study advertisements. Semiology's focus is in the analysis of signs and their meanings (Jensen 24). Semiology attempts to uncover deeper, culturally held values within the medium,

through the interpretation of various elements. Semiology also examines the formal structure of the medium (Jensen 24). How meaningful elements are used becomes as important as the elements themselves. Semiology is concerned with the “science of sign systems and their social uses” (Jensen 123). Signs are broken down in order to investigate the latent systems which help create meaning (Jensen 124). Again, both the structure of the meaningful elements, or signs, and the signs themselves are studied in semiology.

Other methods used in the study of mass media are textual analyses. Textual analyses include, among other methods, discourse analysis, the grounded theory approach, and content analysis (Bernard 439). Texts that can be analyzed are not only written, published works, but diaries, correspondence, song lyrics, artifacts such as clothing and computer programs, behaviors such as gardening or teaching, events such as sporting events and ceremonies, and images such as films, photos and advertisements (Bernard 438). Textual analysis attempts to interpret various forms of media “from a literary point of view” (Poindexter & McCombs 291). Textual analysis endeavors to use this interpretation to make sense of the culture from which the communication content came (291).

Discourse analysis “offers a systematic, qualitative alternative to formal content analysis” (Jensen & Jankowski 9). Discourse analysis addresses the media as a cultural practice and takes into consideration those who create it and their agendas on “power, identity, and social structure” (18). Discourse analysis is concerned with the social construction of reality through the analysis of language, interaction, and categories of consciousness (19). However, discourse analysis studies “naturally occurring

interactions” (Bernard 442), which magazine advertisements are not. Thus discourse analyses are not appropriate for studying the Madonna/whore nexus in magazine advertisements.

Grounded theory examines broader cultural phenomena by identifying concepts which emerge during study and then linking them to more formal theories (Bernard 443). A grounded theory is “inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents” (Strauss and Corbin 23). In other words, grounded theory works in reverse of most research methods. Studies in grounded theory begin as a broad study and through analysis of the data collected, a theory emerges (23). However, as this study is working from a predefined theory, the Madonna/whore syndrome, grounded theory does not apply.

Both semiological studies and the previous textual analyses are most interested in the meaning of the medium being studied (Jensen 111). Both are concerned with the importance of language and signs (Jensen 76). This study is only interested in the existence of a phenomenon, not its meaning or the attitudes of those who created the advertisements.

While each of the above methods offer insights, content analysis provides a way to study the actual content, not signs and meanings, of women’s magazine advertisements, a content analysis must be conducted. In content analysis, the content is analyzed independent of its producers, or the meanings that they may have intended (Poindexter & McCombs 188). Content analysis is the favored quantitative method for studying the content of texts such as newspaper articles, television programs, and magazine advertisements (Barthel 31-32). Quantitative analysis uses “methods allowing

for the measurement of variables within a collection of people or groups and resulting in numerical data subjected to statistical analysis” (Drislane and Parkinson). In particular, content analysis is a “research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Poindexter and McCombs 199).

Content analyses have been used often in the analysis of communication literature. In 1994, commercials targeted at generation X were content analyzed to identify the elements being used to market to this group of people. The three main elements were slang, Generation X music, and cynicism. A 1991 content analysis studied the use of nostalgia in commercials. Nostalgia was defined as 1930s to 1960s imagery and music. It was determined that food commercials used nostalgia the most often (Poindexter and McCombs 187). Betty Ann Ellis used content analysis in her study of women as fetish objects in printed perfume advertisements (Ellis 26).

Content analysis does not take into consideration the ideas behind the images. Many images are representative of other images within a society’s vast lexicon of images and meanings. The strength in qualitative analysis lies in the proverb, “The sum of such advertisements is of greater significance and impact than the parts” (Barthel 32). Content analysis ignores this fact. The individual advertisement is relevant in content analysis, not the latent meanings behind the images (Barthel 32). Content analysis studies the apparent, not latent content. This type of analysis can also be described as a “multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating any problem in which the content of communications serves as the basis of inference” (Poindexter and McCombs 188). Because of its ability to isolate content, this is the type of research that can answer the question at hand; whether or not the Madonna/whore dichotomy exists in

women's magazine advertisements, as it is the content of the ads which is under scrutiny, not the meaning of the content.

Admittedly, some interpretation is needed to determine which elements of the advertisements are considered sexualized and which are domesticated. Coders were given detailed criteria to follow for each question. These criteria have been derived from studies in which meaning is the focus;<sup>4</sup> however, left undefined, the content analysis would lose validity and be simply a reflection of the content analysis coders' own beliefs. Defining criteria beforehand assures that the validity of the study is upheld and the coders' own influences are limited. A list of those criteria is given in the details of the analysis which follows.

For this study, a content analysis of the print advertisements in Better Homes and Gardens, Cosmopolitan, Family Circle, Glamour, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, Martha Stewart Living, Redbook, Rosie, and Woman's Day was conducted. The magazines were chosen based on their position as the top ten magazines in regard to overall yearly circulation and their targeting of women as primary readers (FIPP). Due to the buyout of McCalls by Rosie, Rosie was used instead, and Rosie's own circulation kept it in the top ten women's magazines. The magazines were studied for a three month period, or for those magazines with more than or fewer than 12 issues per year, a three issue period beginning with the first issue available in March, 2002, in order to represent a typical season of magazines.

Only full-page or larger ads were used, and only ads containing a female in at least a quarter of the page were studied. Ads in which the woman was out of focus, significantly faded behind text, or that were sketches or drawings were not used. Double

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<sup>4</sup> See Millum 53-79 and Berger 45-64 for information on how these scales were determined.

page or more spreads for the same company, but for different products were considered as separate ads. Copy articles featuring, and in fact, advertising, specific products were not included.

In order to limit the large number of qualifying ads, systematic sampling using ad placement was used. Four advertisements were chosen from each magazine, yielding a total of 120 advertisements. Advertisements falling on the three cover positions, the second, third, and fourth cover, or the inside front cover, inside back cover, and back cover, consecutively, have the highest recall rates. In addition, inside front cover spreads have significantly more recall than the other positions (Magazine Handbook 21).

Advertisements falling in the first quadrant of the magazine have somewhat higher recall rates than advertisements falling in other quadrants (Almost). Advertisements from the three coveted cover positions were chosen if they were qualifying according to the criteria mentioned previously. Then, the nearest qualifying advertisements to these positions were chosen until four advertisements from each magazine emerged.

Three coders conducted the analysis in order to reduce bias and increase validity. When differences in answers occurred, the average of the answers was used in the analysis. Demographics for the coders will not be divulged, as this would place the focus of the study onto the coder, rather than the content of the advertisements.

The advertisements were analyzed along the following variables: the magazine in which the ad was published, the month in which the ad appeared, the position of the advertisement, the number of times the ad was repeated within the random sample, and the product being advertised. Using two five-point semantic differential scales in which

'highly sexualized and non-sexualized' and 'highly domestic and non-domestic' represented opposing ends, the ad was also analyzed along the variables of the makeup and hair of the woman, the clothing of the woman, the apparent action of the woman, the position of the woman, the expression of the woman, the props in the ad, the general setting of the ad, the focus of the ad (i.e. face, legs, breasts), the text of the ad, and the general impression of the ad.<sup>5</sup> In questions involving the woman in the ad, if more than one woman was pictured, the woman studied was either the most dominant woman in the picture, identified by any number of visual cues such as being the most in focus, the most brightly lit, or the largest (taking more page space) woman in the ad. If no dominant woman could be found, the most centrally located woman was used. If no most centrally located woman was available, the women in the ad were considered together as a whole. When the same woman was photographed in two ways in the same ad, the picture which revealed the most information for each individual question was used. For instance in an ad with one close up picture of a woman's face and one long shot, where the head was cut out of the picture, the head shot was used to determine hair, makeup, and expression, while the body shot was used to determine clothing and position.

In order to limit the coders' own ideological influences from playing a role in the coding decisions, the criteria for analyzing the semantic differential scales were detailed and available to coders at all times. The scales for each semantic differential scale follows. Each block represents a point along the semantic differential scale.

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<sup>5</sup> See Bowers and Courtright 97 for information concerning semantic differential scales.

For hair and makeup, the following scales were used. Makeup which was highly extravagant was considered highly sexualized and non-domesticated, while minimal or no makeup was considered highly domesticated and non-sexualized.

<b><u>Highly Sexualized</u></b>	Makeup- Extravagant, vivid, unnatural colors, highly stylized Hair- disheveled, hanging in front of face, wet	Makeup- dark, dramatic evening colors Hair- Moulded, extreme styling, requiring high degree of work	Makeup- soft, neutral, earthy tones Hair- Styled, requiring some degree of work	Makeup- natural- looking, everyday Hair- modestly styled, requiring very little work	Makeup- no visible makeup Hair- natural free-flowing, ponytail, carefree, short	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly Domesticated</u></b>	Makeup- no visible makeup Hair- natural free-flowing, ponytail, carefree, short	Makeup- natural- looking, everyday Hair- modestly styled, requiring very little work	Makeup- soft, neutral, earthy tones air- Styled, requiring some degree of work	Makeup- dark, dramatic evening colors Hair- Moulded, extreme styling, requiring high degree of work	Makeup- Extravagant, vivid, unnatural colors, highly stylized Hair- disheveled, hanging in front of face, wet	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

For clothing, the following scales were used. When only the face was showing or the clothing was otherwise indeterminate, the question was to be left blank. Very revealing or nor clothing were seen as highly sexualized , while baggy concealing clothing were considered non-sexualized. Bridal wear, maternity clothing, and clothing such as aprons or kitchen dresses were considered highly domestic while revealing clothing, athletic wear, and business attire were considered non-domestic.

<b><u>Highly Sexualized</u></b>	Naked, visible breasts, nipples, buttocks, genital area, lingerie	Revealing cleavage, upper thighs, midrift, back, tight fitting, swimwear. Stiletto heels, visible underarm, bare shoulders	Fitted, can have plunging neckline but w/little cleavage, legs covered at least to mid thigh, fitted athletic wear, bridal wear	Well-fitting, no visible cleavage, very little or no thigh showing, upper arms showing, but not shoulders, loose athletic wear	Baggy or loose, very casual, or fitted, but with most of the body concealed	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Apron or smock, waitress uniform, maternity clothing, bridal wear	Conservative, loose fitting or fitted, casual wear	formal wear, some or little cleavage, legs covered to mid thigh, visible shoulders	Club wear, dramatic cleavage, naked, but with no visible breasts, buttocks or genitals, swimwear, tight fitting, visible midrift, visible underarm	Athletic wear, business attire, uniform, breasts, genitals, or buttocks, lingerie	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>



For the action of the model, the following scales were used. Lying down, bathing and kissing were considered highly sexualized while caring for children or pets and working were considered non-sexualized. Cooking, cleaning, and caring for children or pets was considered highly domesticated while working or posing was considered non-domesticated.

<b><u>Highly sexualized</u></b>	Bathing, showering, lying down, crawling, kissing	Sleeping, socializing, Dancing, dressing	Driving, working out, eating, drinking, hugging, playing, no action/posing, washing face, applying makeup	Reading, walking or hiking, shopping, gardening	Carrying heavy objects, cooking, serving, caring for children or pets, decorating, cleaning, working	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Cooking, caring for children or pets, serving food or drinks, cleaning	Gardening, crafts, decorating, socializing, Shopping, hugging	Sleeping, driving, reading, carrying heavy objects, bathing or showering, eating, drinking, kissing, dressing	Walking or hiking, dancing, exercising, lying down, crawling, playing, washing face, applying makeup	Working, no action, posing	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

For the position of the model, the following scales were used. The position of the legs were given top priority. For example a woman who was sitting on a chair or prop with her legs spread would be coded for legs spread rather than sitting on the chair or prop.

<b><u>Highly sexualized</u></b>	Lying on back, kneeling on all fours, contorted	Legs spread, bending over, legs lifted above torso, fingers or other objects to mouth, embrace, head tilted back and up, squatting, reclining	Lying on side or stomach, standing with legs apart or one leg up, arms up, sitting on floor	Sitting (on chair or prop) with legs crossed Engagement (socializing) Hug, hold, head tilting down or to the side	Sitting with legs together, sitting on floor, standing, head facing straight	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Hug, hold	head tilted down and to the side	Sitting with legs together or crossed, sitting on floor, standing, head straight	Lying on side or stomach, standing with legs apart or one leg up, head tilted up and back, squatting, standing with arms up, reclining	Lying on back, kneeling on all fours, legs spread, bending over, legs lifted above torso, fingers or other objects to mouth, embrace	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

For the expression, the following scales were used. A 'come hither stare' or gaze directly into the camera and an open mouth were considered highly sexualized. No expression or surprised were considered non-sexualized. Worry or concern was considered a highly domestic expression, while lust, surprise, and no expression were considered non-domesticated expressions.

<b><u>Highly sexualized</u></b>	Come hither stare, gaze directly into camera, mouth open, head tilted up, lustful, intense stare	Pronounced puckering, pouting, licking lips or holding object to lips, head tilted down with eyes facing camera	Laughing, Smiling, thoughtful, proud, soft puckering, peaceful	Sad, angry, concern, soft gaze, determined	No expression, surprised	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Worried, thoughtful, proud, nurturing, Concern, softer gaze, peaceful	Soft puckering, gaze to the side or down	Laughing, smiling	Pouting, licking lips, holding objects to lips, sad, angry, intense stare, determined	No expression, lustful, surprised	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

For the props, the following scales were used. When more than one prop was used, the predominant prop was the one analyzed. Beds, fetish objects, men, and phallic objects were all considered highly sexualized and non-domestic. Floors, kitchen accessories, toys, and wedding accessories were considered non-sexualized and highly domesticated.

<b><u>Highly sexualized</u></b>	Bed, fetish objects, phallic objects, men	Exotic animals, animal prints, cloth/linens, couch/sofa, chair/seat, cushion, apple, berry, peach, wet fruit or greenery, water, red flowers	Cosmetics, mirror, phone, food/drinks, pear, music, electronics, exercise equipment	Books, reading material, decorating supplies, domestic animals, casual flowers/plants, purse, bags	No props, floor, baby animals, wedding accessories, kitchen or household appliances, toys, laundry	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Kitchen utensils, household appliances, children or children's toys/objects, laundry, wedding accessories	Domestic animals, baby animals, decorating supplies, floor, cloth/linens, pear, casual flowers/plants, purse, bags	Couch/sofa, chair/seat, phone, cosmetics, food/drinks, music, electronics, men	No props, apple, berry, peach wet fruit or greenery, exercise equipment, water, red flowers, reading material	Exotic animals, animal prints, bed, fetish objects, mirror	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

For the setting, the following scales were used. The bedroom or a background with dim mood lighting was considered highly sexualized and non-domesticated. The kitchen was considered highly domesticated. Simple, unknown settings were seen as non-sexualized and non-domesticated. Background colors such as red or black were considered more sexualized, while light backgrounds were more domesticated.

<b><u>Highly sexualized</u></b>	Bedroom, mood lighting	Water, wet, jungle-like, one color dark, red-black	Natural, outdoors, well-lit, city, car	Garden, living room, one color light-bright	Simple, unknown, kitchen	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Kitchen, airy, clean, well lit	Garden, living room, one color light-bright	Bedroom, natural, outdoors, car	Water, wet, jungle-like, city, bedroom, one color dark, red-black	Simple, unknown, dark, mood lighting, black	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

For the camera's focus, the following scales were used. Close ups or shots deliberately of sexual anatomy were considered highly sexualized and non-domesticated, while long shots were considered non-sexualized and highly domesticated.

<b><u>Highly sexualized</u></b>	Extreme close up, crotch shot, breast shot	Lips, mouth, buttocks, extreme silhouette, torso.	Back, legs, shoulders	Hands, feet, arms	Long shot, whole body, face (not closeup)	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Long shot, whole body	Hands, arms, face (not closeup)	Shoulders, feet, back	Lips, mouth, legs, buttocks, torso, navel	Extreme close up, breasts, crotch	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

For the text, the following scales were used. Text including sexually explicit words or that alluded to sexual pleasure was considered highly sexual and non-domesticated. Text which concerned cleaning, motherhood, or family was considered non-sexualized and highly domesticated. Neutral text was considered both non-sexualized and non-domesticated.

<b><u>Highly sexualized</u></b>	Sexually explicit or alludes to sexual acts or pleasure	Uses words concerning sensuality	Uses words concerning tactile feeling in a non sensual manner (smooth, dry)	Uses words eluding to power or strength, relaxation, health, control	Uses words concerning cleaning or nurturing, family, motherhood, marriage, no text, neutral text	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Specific words of cleaning, (mopping, scrubbing) Specific words of Nurturing, (family, care) motherhood	Words or phrases elude to cleaning or nurturing, marriage	Words elude to power or strength, relaxation, health, control	Uses words concerning tactile feeling or sensuality	Uses words or phrases to allude to sexual acts or pleasure, or uses sexually explicit words, no text or neutral text	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

For the general impressions, the following scales were used. Coders were to use their own judgment as to what was considered very exaggerated sexual or domestic imagery and what was considered little or no sexual or domestic imagery. This category was included so that imagery which perhaps does not fall into any of the above categories would not be left out.

<b><u>Highly sexualized</u></b>	Very exaggerated sexual attention	Some exaggerated sexual attention	Some sexual attention	Little sexual attention	No sexual attention	<b><u>Non-sexualized</u></b>
<b><u>Highly domesticated</u></b>	Very exaggerated domestic imagery	Some exaggerated domestic imagery	Some domestic imagery	Little domestic imagery	No Domestic Imagery	<b><u>Non-domesticated</u></b>

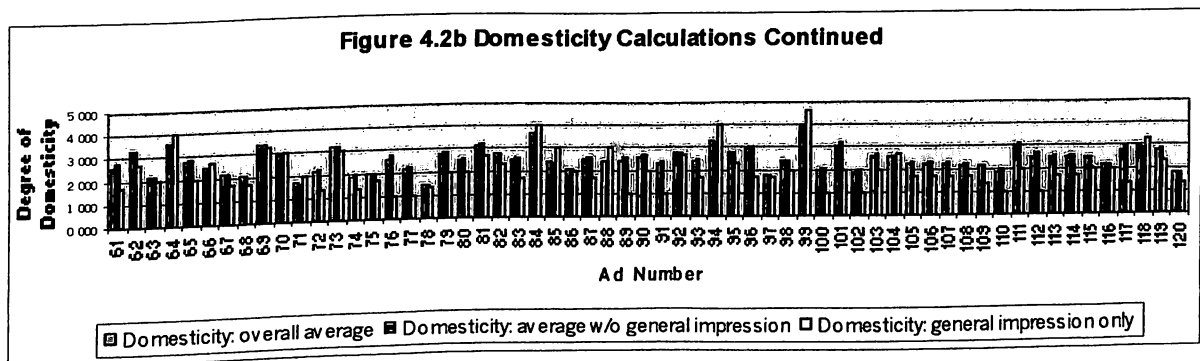
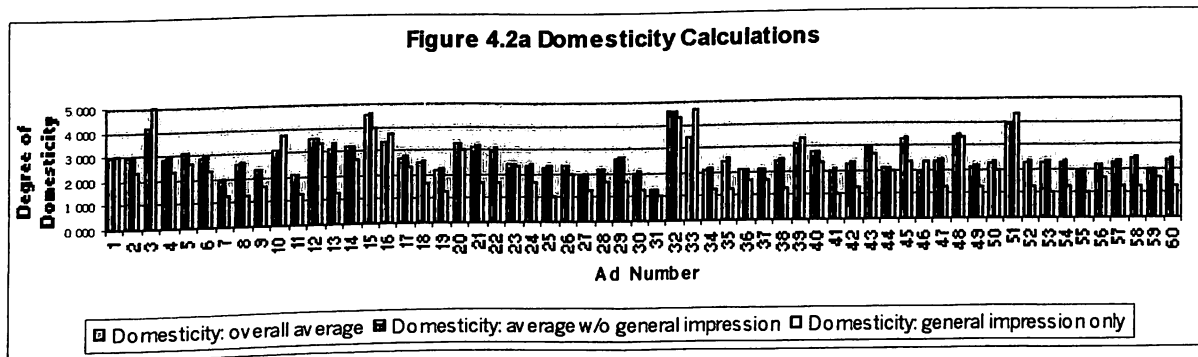
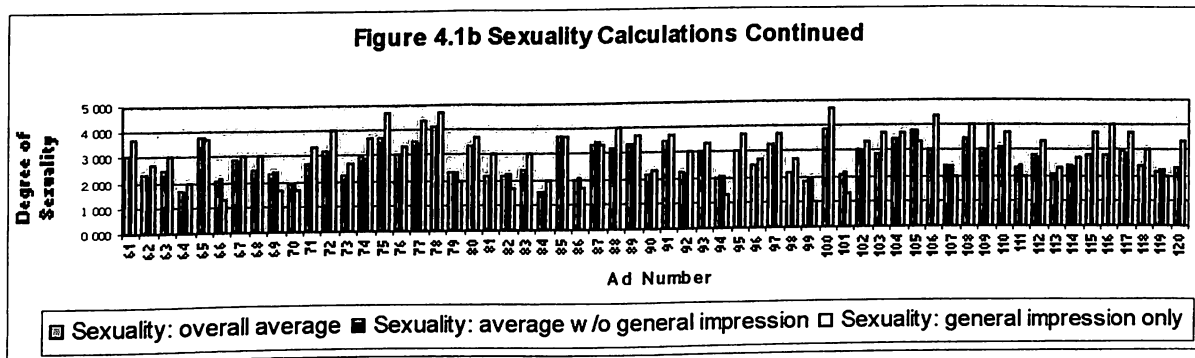
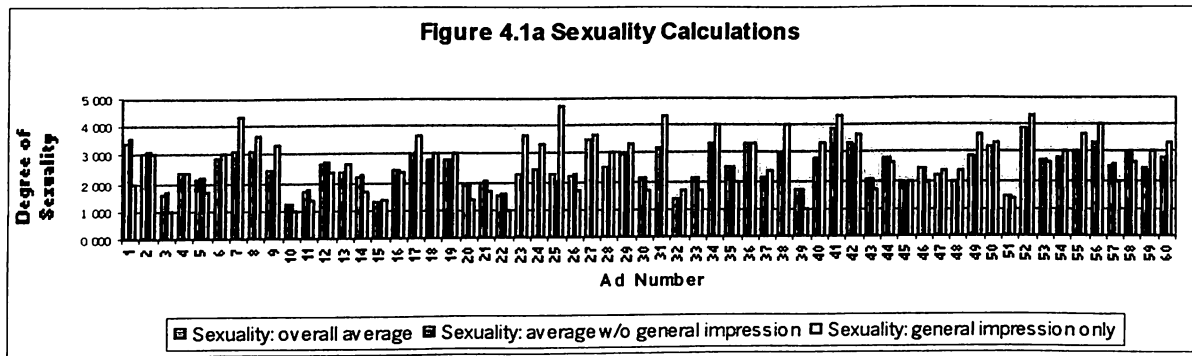
Using the above criteria with the selected advertisements, coders for this study performed a content analysis.

## RESULTS

### Analysis

The degrees of sexuality and domesticity were determined by assigning a numeric value 1 to 5 to each space in the semantic differential scale. The space which was most “non-sexual” or “non-domestic” was numbered 1, and the space which was most “highly sexual” or “highly domestic” was numbered 5, with the spaces in between numbered 2,3,and 4, consecutively. The three coders’ answers were then averaged to give the final degree of sexuality or domesticity for each advertisement and each of the variables which used the semantic differential scale. Overall inter-coder reliability was determined to be over 80% among each pair of the three coders.

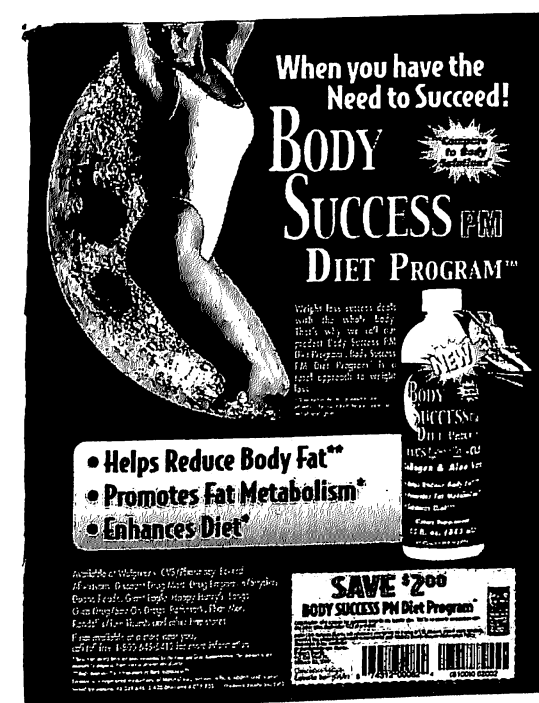
One variable, the general impression, did not have a reliable inter-coder reliability. Therefore, the overall sexuality and domesticity for each advertisement was first calculated in three different ways. First, the average of all variables using the semantic differential scale was totaled for both sexuality and domesticity. The second calculation averaged all but the questionable variable of general impression. The third calculation used only the general impression. In most cases, the three averages were fairly similar. The general impression rating tended to rate the sexuality more highly, while rating the domesticity lower. 78 of the advertisements were rated more highly sexual in the calculation using only the general impression rating than the other two ratings. 101 of the ads were rated lower in terms of domesticity in the general impression calculation than in the other calculations. See Figures 4.1a, 4.1b, 4.2a, and 4.2b.



In some instances the measurement of general impression was much different than the other measurements. For instance ad number 25 (Figure 4.3), was rated 2.400 in

overall sexuality, 2.0 in sexuality without the general interest category, and 4.333 in the general impression category. This was by far the largest difference in the calculations.

Figure 4.3



Since most of the advertisements had similar calculations for all, the differences in coder answer for general impression was determined to generally average out. Because of this, and to include any imagery of sexuality or domesticity which was perhaps perceived by the coder, but not studied under one of the other variables, the general impression variable was included in the overall sexuality and overall domesticity calculations that followed.

For variables 1 through 6, pertaining to the advertisement number and the product advertised, as well as the pre-coded variables pertaining to advertisement size, the specific magazine and number of repetitions, inter-coder reliability was 100%, so no calculations were necessary to obtain a workable number.



## Statistics

### Overall Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity

Using the calculated overall degree of sexuality and domesticity mentioned before, and keeping in mind that 5 rates highly, and 1 rates a lack of the aspect, the average overall sexuality of all 120 advertisements was 2.632. The average overall domesticity was 2.562. Thus, overall, the advertisements were only slightly more sexualized than domesticated. Ads with the highest degree of sexuality included advertisement number 78 (Figure 4.4) with a degree of sexuality of 4.067, advertisement 41 (Figure 4.5) with a degree of sexuality of 3.900, number 100 (Figure 4.6) with a degree of sexuality of 3.867, and number 52 (Figure 4.7) with a degree of sexuality of 3.833.

Figure 4.4

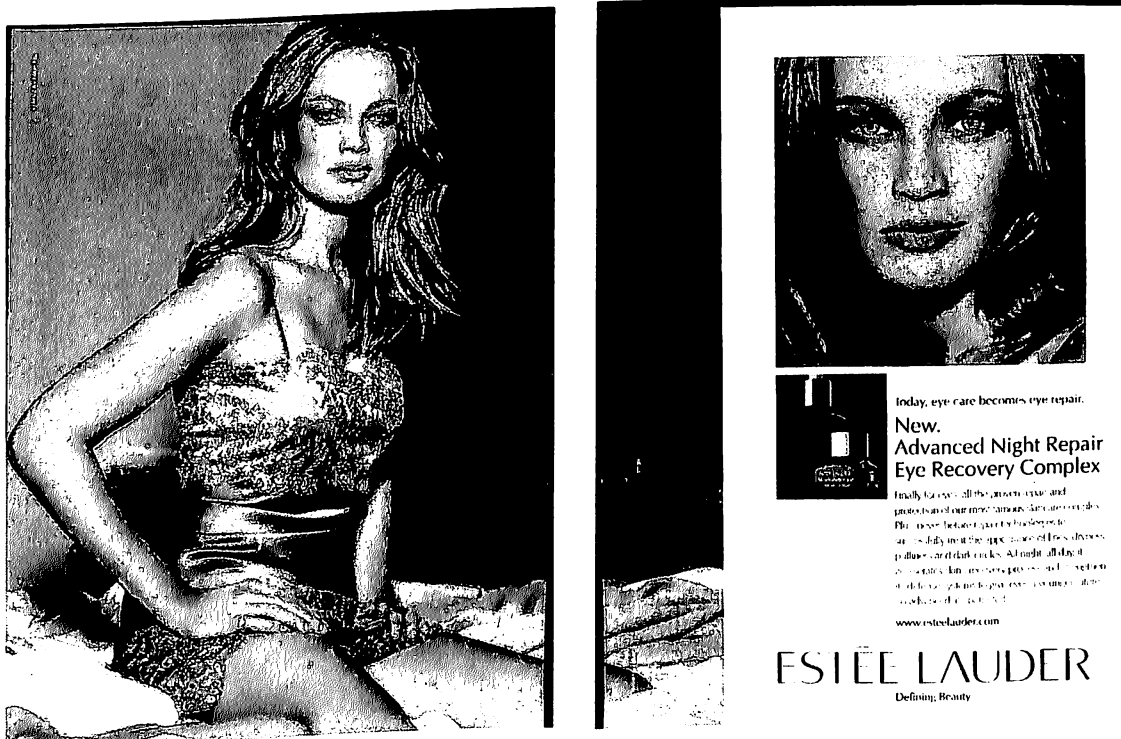


Figure 4.5



Figure 4.6



Figure 4.7



The advertisements with the highest degree of domesticity included advertisement number 32 (Figure 4.8) with an overall domesticity rating of 4.533, 15 (Same as Figure 4.8) with an overall domesticity rating of 4.500, number 3 (Figure 4.9) with an overall domesticity rating of 4.100, advertisement 99 (Figure 4.10) with an overall domesticity rating of 3.933, and 51 (Figure 4.11) with an overall domesticity rating of 3.900.

Figure 4.8

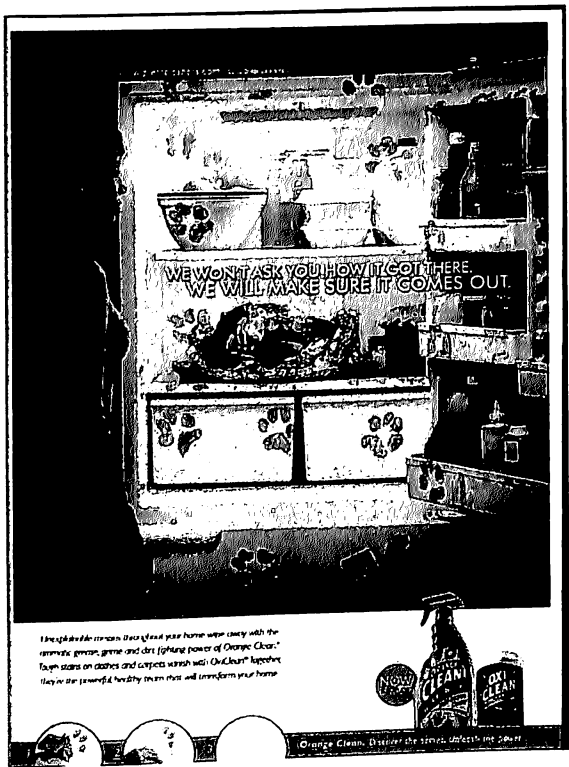


Figure 4.9



[illegible]

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a man sitting on a stool at a desk. The man is wearing a dark, patterned shirt and dark pants. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The desk is cluttered with various items, including books, papers, and what appears to be a small lamp or container. The background is very bright and overexposed, making it difficult to discern specific details. The overall style is graphic and minimalist, focusing on the subject and the immediate environment.



Ads tended to be rated more sexual than domestic. 73 advertisements were rated more highly sexual than domestic, and only 47 were more domestic than sexual.

However, the degree of sexuality in highly sexualized advertisements was lower than the degree of domesticity in ads rating highly domestic. Only one advertisement rated higher than a 4 in terms of overall sexuality, (ad number 78-see figure 4.4) while three advertisements rated over 4 in terms of overall domesticity (ad 3-see figure 4.9, and ads 15 and 32, which are the same ad-see figure 4.8)

When looking at the differences in sexuality or domesticity, the heart of this study, as a true dichotomy will show to have very different rates for sexuality and domesticity, only two advertisements had a difference of 3 points or more. Number 32 (Figure 4.8) rated 1.367 for overall sexuality and 4.533 for overall domesticity. Advertisement number 15 (Figure 4.8), the same advertisement, also rated 1.300 overall sexuality and 4.500 for overall domesticity. Just under half of the advertisements, 55 or 45.83%, had differences between sexuality and domesticity at under 1 point. 41 of the ads had differences between 1 and 1.5 points. Thus, only 15 advertisements, or 12.5% of the advertisements, had significant differences of 1.5 points or greater. Of these, 8 were rated as more domestic and 7 were rated more sexual. Of these 15 ads, only 7 had a difference of 2 or more points. Of these, 6 were rated more highly domestic, and 1 was rated more highly sexual. However, it is in these ads, where the notions of sexuality and domesticity do not coexist, that a Madonna/whore nexus might be said to exist. Ads in which the nexus exists were for cleaning products, flooring, and children's toys. OxiClean had 3 of the more domestic ads, 2 of which were duplicates of the same ad.<sup>6</sup> Armstrong flooring counted for 2 of the more domestic advertisements, though the two

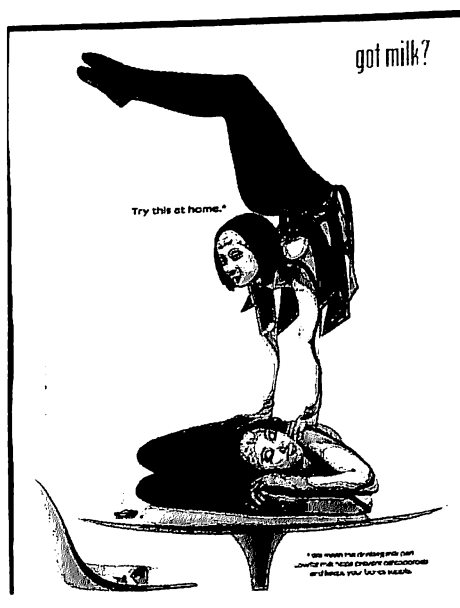
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<sup>6</sup> See Repetitions, page 79.

were duplicates. An advertisement for Fisher Price toys was the last of the 6 ads which were rated 2 or more points more domestic than sexual. The 1 ad which was more than 2 points more sexual than domestic was for Estee Lauder's Advanced Night Repair Eye Recovery Complex. Indeed, advertisements for facial products other than makeup rated higher in overall sexuality than in overall domesticity<sup>7</sup>-one of only 2 product categories with more than 5 ads which rated higher sexually than domestically.

Few ads were rated as both highly sexual and highly domestic. Ads number 2 (Figure 4.12) with an overall sexuality of 3.067 and an overall domesticity of 2.900, with a difference of only 0.167, advertisement number 40 (Figure 4.13) with an overall sexuality of 2.833 and an overall domesticity of 2.733, with a difference of only 0.100, and number 117 (Figure 4.14) with an overall sexuality of 2.967 and an overall domesticity of 2.767, with a difference of only 0.200, had similar somewhat high ratings for both overall sexuality and overall domesticity.

Figure 4.12



<sup>7</sup> See Products , page 74.

Figure 4.13

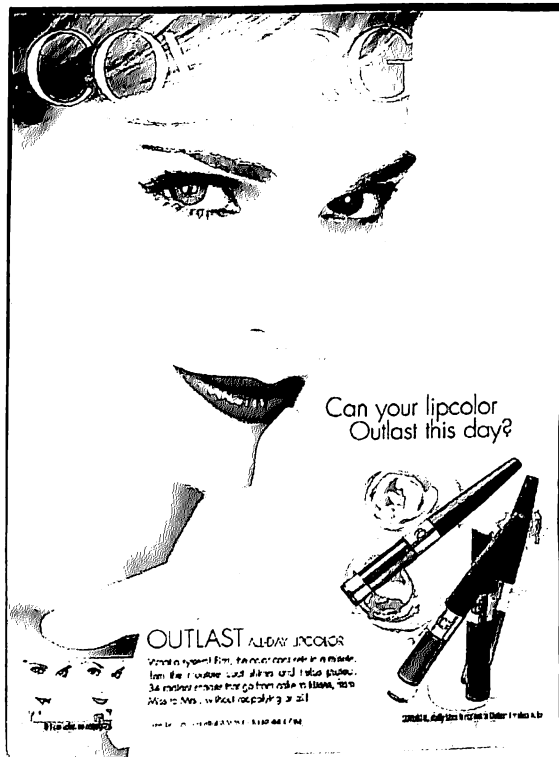


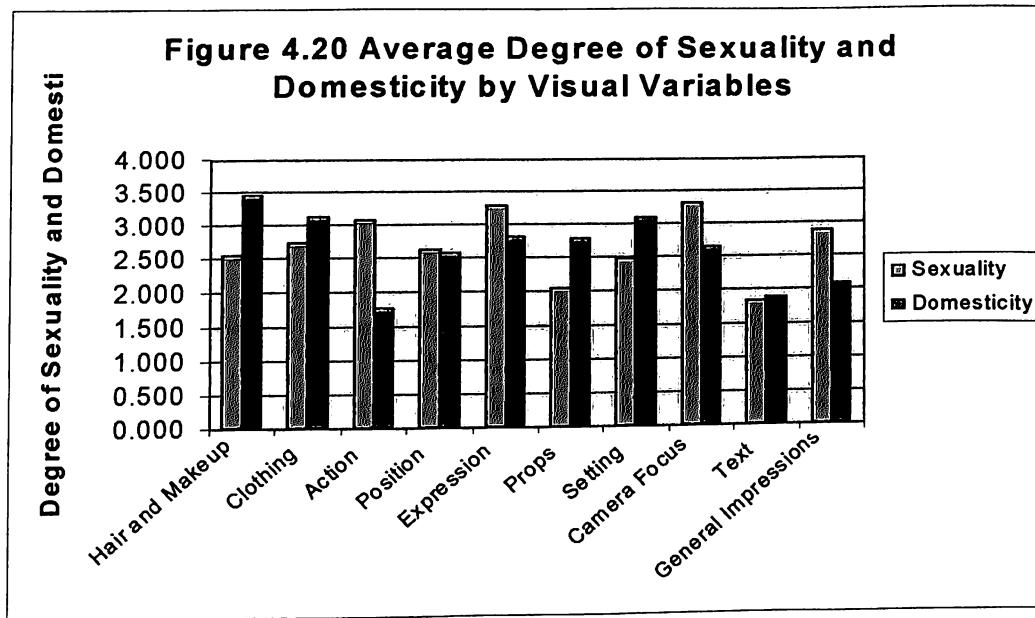
Figure 4.14





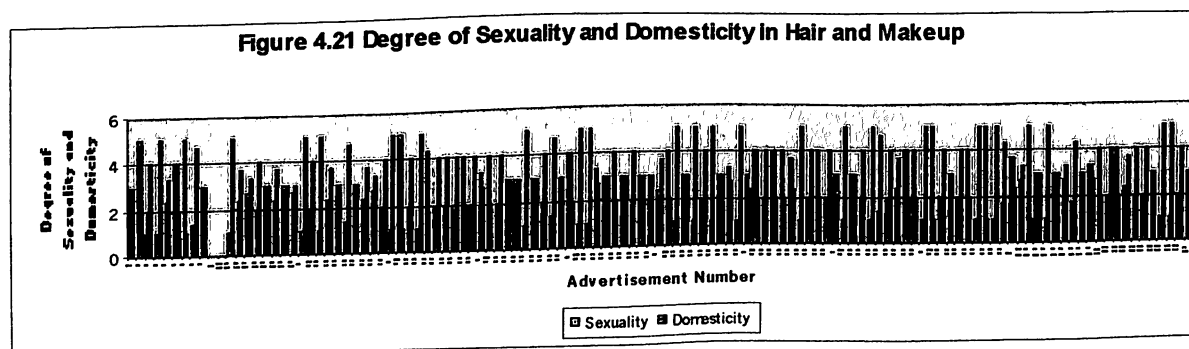
## Variables

Some image variables rated more sexual or more domestic. See figure 4.20.



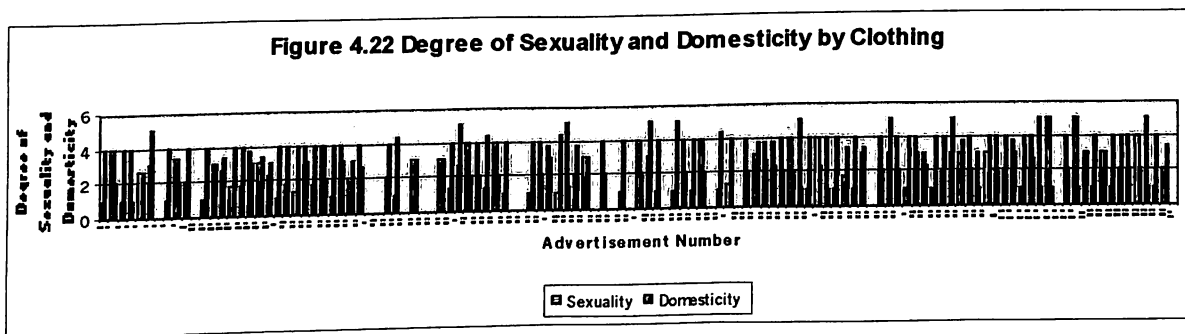
Hair and makeup, clothing, props, and setting averaged higher in terms of sexuality than domesticity. Action, position, expression, camera focus and general impressions averaged a higher degree of domesticity than sexuality, with action having a significant difference of 1.319 points. Position and text rated nearly equally sexual and domestic with differences of only 0.047 and 0.055 points consecutively.

In looking at the ratings for each ad, hair and makeup tended to rate higher domestically than sexually with an average sexuality of 2.548 points and an average domesticity of 3.441 points.



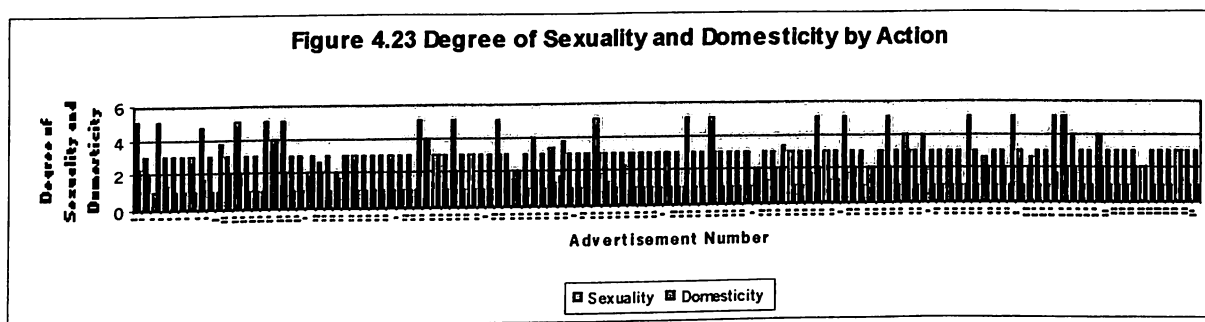
22 advertisements rated 5 points on the domesticity scale, the highest possible rating, while on the sexuality scale, only 6 ads rated 5. All of the ads that rated 5 in either scale, rated 1, the lowest possible rating, for the opposite scale, in other words, ads that rated 5 points on the domesticity scale rated only 1 point on the sexuality scale giving the highest possible difference of 4 points. This can be attributed, however to the nature of the characteristics which were used to determine the rating, which are listed in the methodology. 28 ads had a difference of 2 points or more with more domesticity, while only 7 ads had a difference of 2 points or more with more sexuality. 23 ads rated 3, the middle rating, for both sexuality and domesticity. 2 ads had no rating.

Clothing rated somewhat similar on both the sexuality and domesticity scales, with average ratings of 2.732 and 3.118 points consecutively.



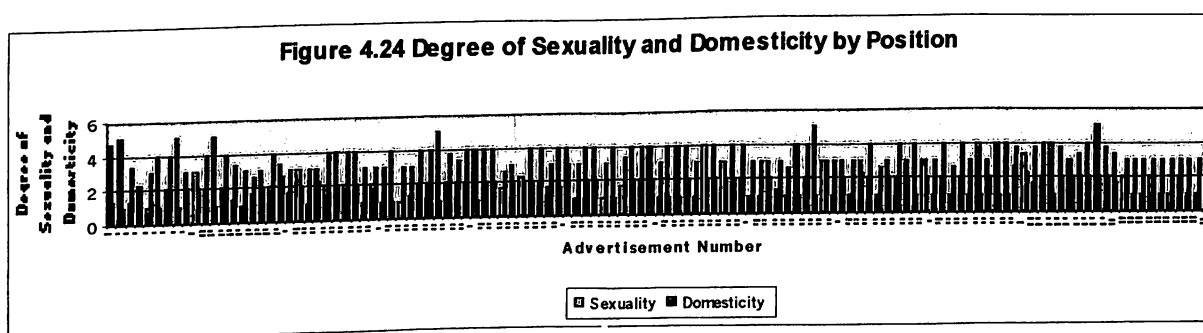
6 ads were rated 5 on the domesticity scale, and 6 ads were rated 5 on the sexuality scale. All but one of the ads which rated 5 for sexuality rated only 1 for domesticity. 33 advertisements rated 4 points and 3 ads rated between 4 and 5 on the domesticity scale. 27 ads rated 4 on the sexuality scale. Only 5 ads rated highly and equally at 3 points for both sexuality and domesticity. 18 advertisements were not rated.

Action rated lower on both the domesticity and sexuality scales than the other variables. 90 advertisements had both sexuality and domesticity ratings 3 points or lower.



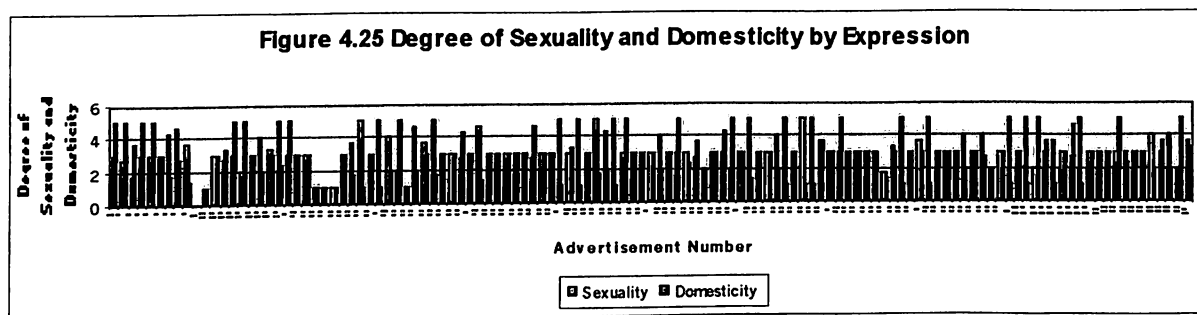
Most ratings (91%) were rated more highly sexual. The most common rating for the advertisements was 3 points for sexuality and 1 point for domesticity, with 62 advertisements with that rating. 12 advertisements rated 5 for sexuality. 6 ads rated 5 for domesticity. 2 advertisements scored 4 points for both sexuality and domesticity.

Position rated similarly for both sexuality and domesticity with average ratings of 2.608 and 2.561 points consecutively.



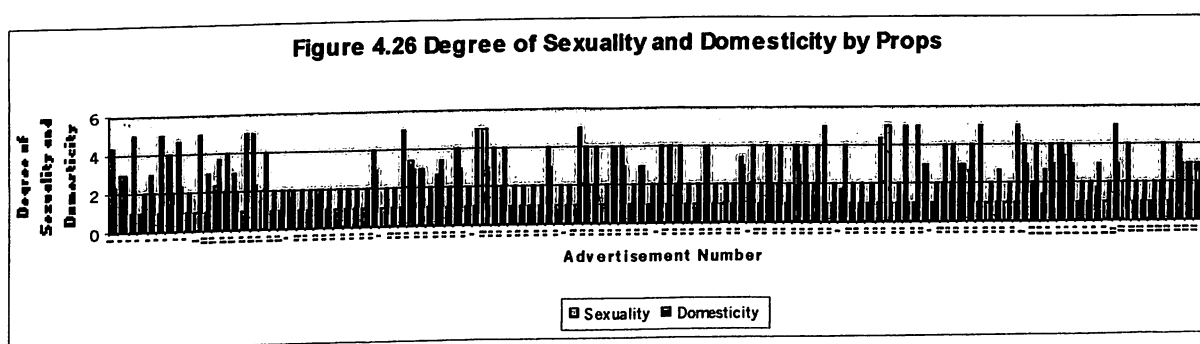
However, 6 ads rated 5 points for sexuality while no advertisements rated 5 points for domesticity. 5 of the advertisements with 5 point sexuality ratings had only 1 point domesticity ratings.

Expression was rated slightly more sexual than domestic, with average ratings of 3.280 for sexuality and 2.804 for domesticity.



41 of the ads scored more sexual than domestic. 25 rated more domestic. However, 53 of the ads had the same ratings for sexuality and domesticity. 45 ads rated 3 points for both domesticity and sexuality. 2 ads rated 2 points for both scales, and 5 ads rated 1 point on both scales. 1 ad rated 3.667 for both scales. 15 ads rated 5 for domesticity, with another 4 rating over 4 but below 5. 17 ads rated 5 for sexuality, with another 5 rating above 4 but below 5. 9 of the ads scoring 5 points for sexuality scored 1 point for domesticity.

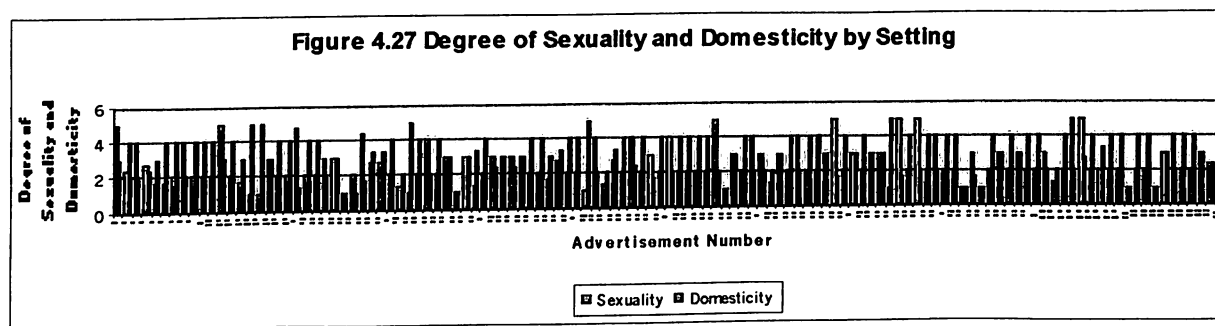
Props had somewhat lower ratings overall on the continuum than other variables, with somewhat higher domesticity than sexuality with average ratings of 2.058 for sexuality and 2.792 for domesticity.



82 ads rated more highly domestic than sexual. The most common rating for the ads (48 ads) was 2 points for domesticity with 1 point for sexuality. 10 ads were rated 5 points for domesticity and 6 ads were rated 5 for sexuality. All of the ads rated 5 for

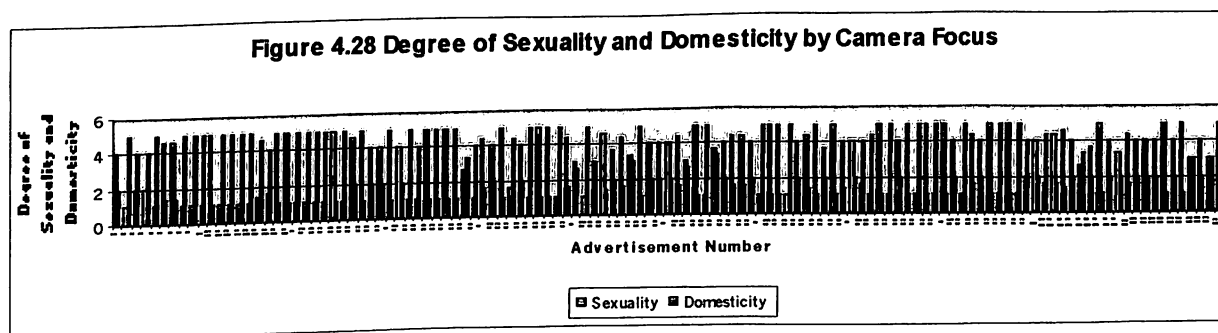
domesticity also rated 1 for sexuality. 2 ads rated 4 points for both domesticity and sexuality.

Setting rated 0.606 points higher for domesticity than sexuality.



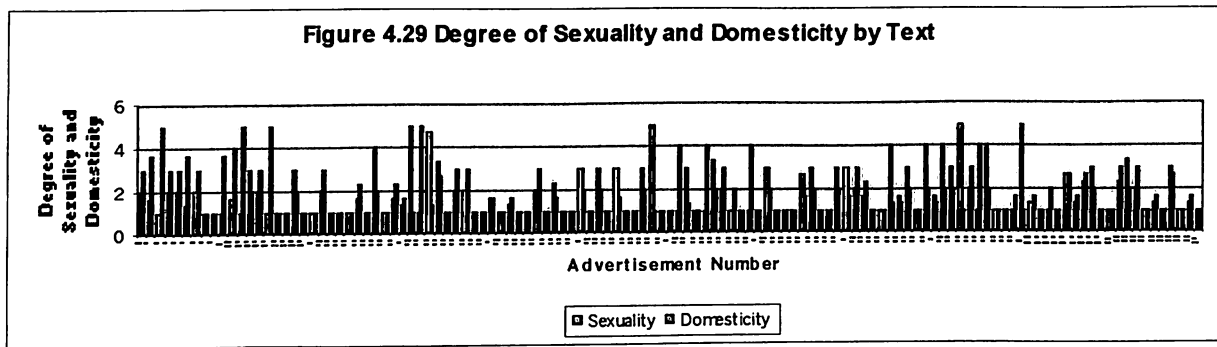
66 advertisements were rated more highly domestic than sexual. 29 rated more highly sexual, and 25 rated equally domestic and sexual. 16 rated 3 points for both scales and 8 ads rated 1 point for each scale. 1 ad rated 2.333 for both scales. 8 ads rated 5 points on the sexuality scale, while 5 ads rated 5 points on the domestic scale. Each of the ads that rated 5 points for domesticity rated only 1 point for sexuality.

Camera focus had the most high rating advertisements.



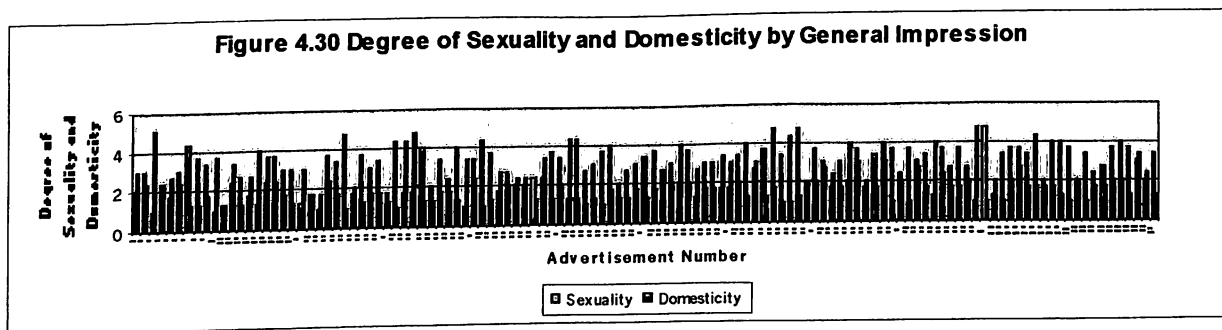
29 advertisements rated 5 points for sexuality and 27 ads rated 5 points for domesticity. All of those ads had ratings of only point for their opposite scale, scoring 5 for sexuality and 1 for domesticity or vice versa. 80 ads had differences of more than 2 points, 45 of them more sexual and 35 more domestic.

Text had several low ratings with 48 ads rating 1 for both scales.



Only 5 ads rated 5 points for sexuality and only 4 ads rated 5 points for domesticity. Again, each of these ads had the lowest rating, 1, for their opposite scale. However, the overall averages for text were low with sexuality averaging 1.831 points and domesticity averaging 1.886 points.

General Impression rated more highly sexual than domestic with ratings of 2.872 for sexuality and 2.069 for domesticity for a difference of 0.803.

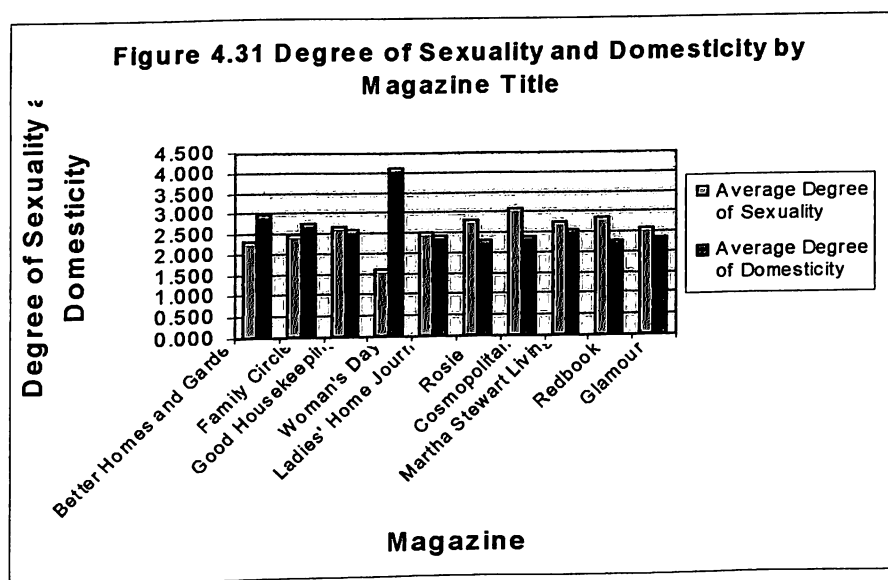


82 ads were rated more highly sexual than domestic. 32 were rated more highly domestic, and 6 ads rated the same for both scales. While so many of the ads were rated more sexual, no ads rated 5 points on the sexual scale, yet 10 rated more than 4 points. 1 ad rated 5 points on the domesticity scale. 4 more ads rated above 4 points. While only 1 ad had a difference between sexuality and domesticity of 4 points (domesticity being

higher), 38 advertisements had differences of more than 2 points, 29 being more sexual, and 9 being more domestic.

## Magazines

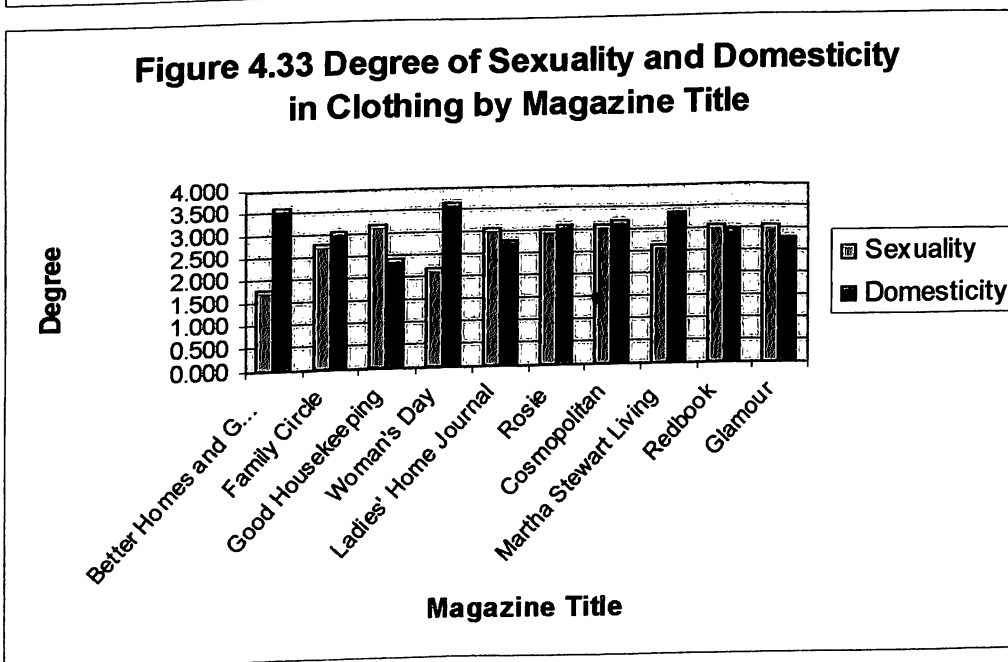
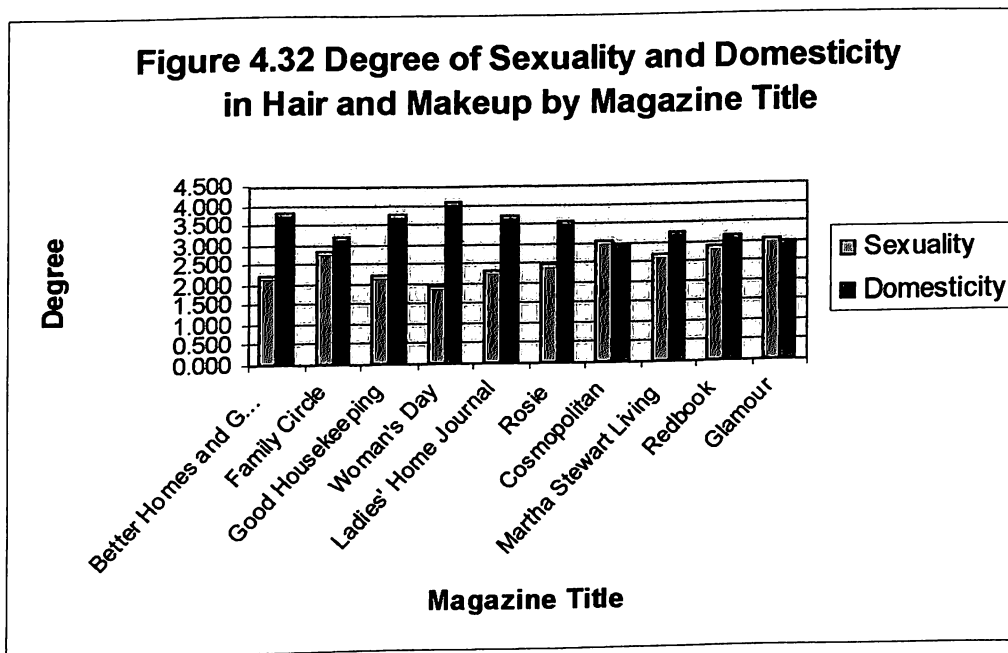
Some of the magazines studied tended to have more sexual or more domestic advertisements. See Figure 4.31.



Only three, Better Homes and Gardens, Family Circle, and Woman's Day had advertisements rated as more highly domestic than sexual. Woman's Day had a significant difference in overall domesticity with 2.500 points more highly domestic than sexual. The other magazines, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, Rosie, Cosmopolitan, Martha Stewart Living, Redbook, and Glamour had advertisements averaging more sexual than domestic, which is surprising for Good Housekeeping and Ladies' Home Journal, which are more family oriented. However, the biggest difference of those was only 0.790 points more sexual than domestic. Half of the magazines had differences in sexuality and domesticity that were less than 0.500, or half of a point.

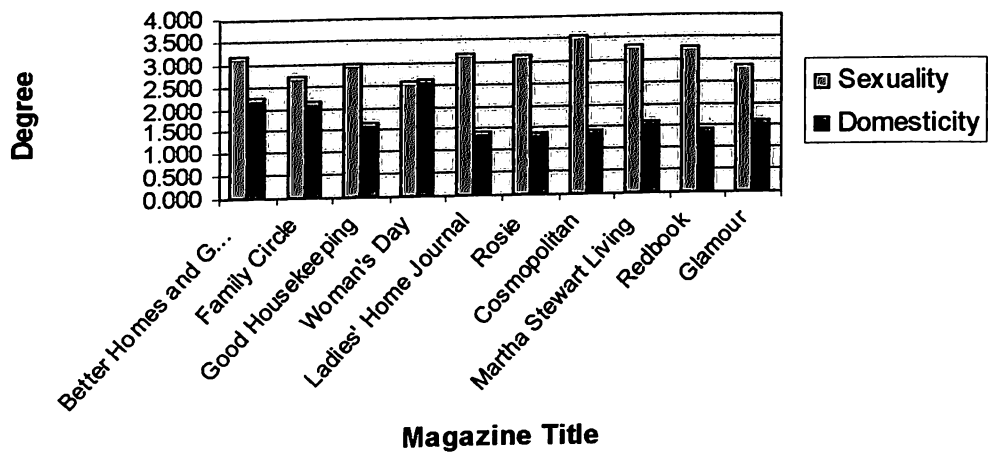
These were Family Circle with a difference (D) of 0.253 points, Good Housekeeping (D=0.100), Ladies' Home Journal (D=0.097), Martha Stewart Living (D=0.178), and Glamour (D=.266). Rosie's difference was 0.500.

Some magazine titles had large differences in sexuality and domesticity in terms of the different variables which make up the overall degree calculation. See Figures 4.32 through 4.41.

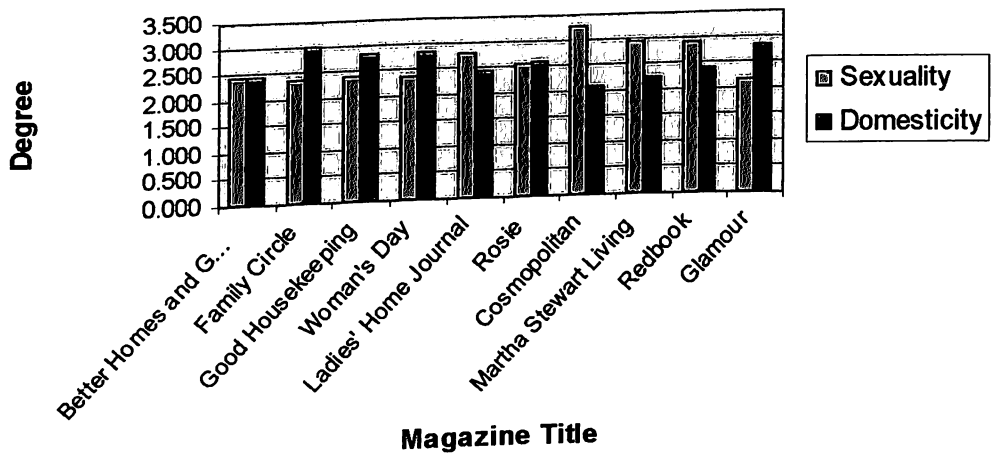




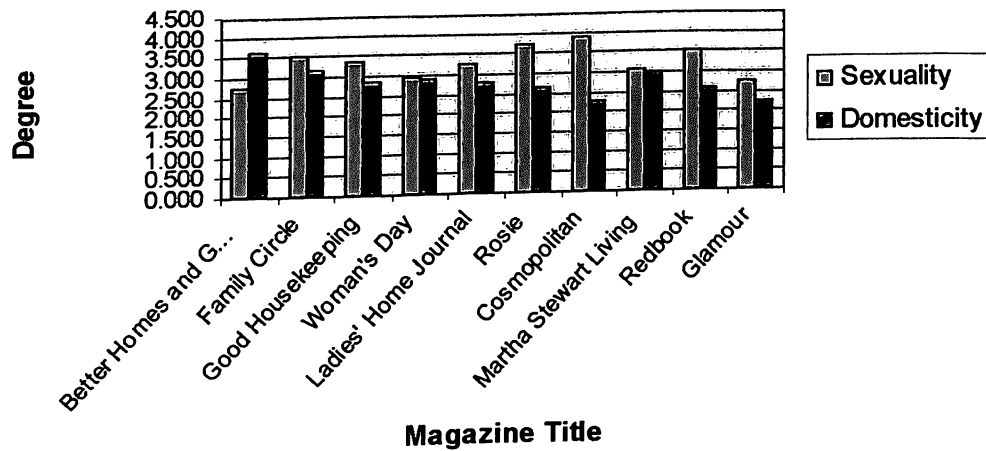
**Figure 4.34 Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity  
in Action by Magazine Title**



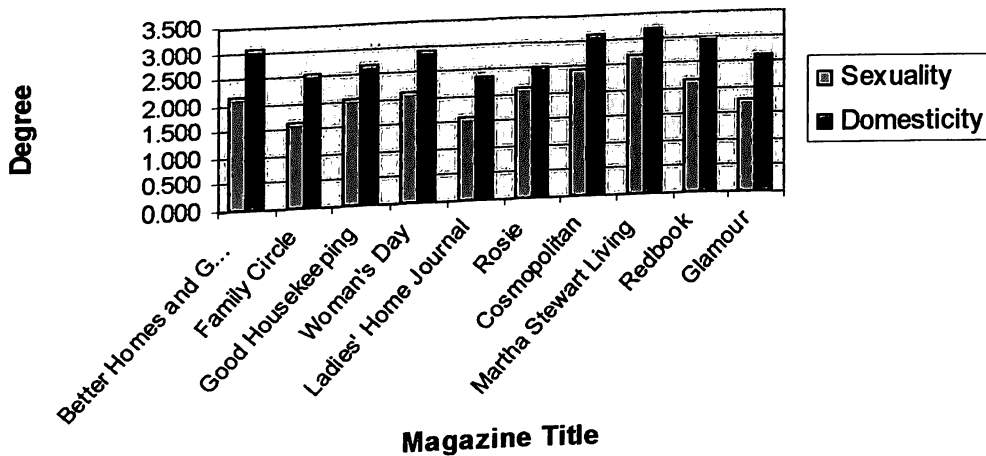
**Figure 4.35 Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity  
in Position by Magazine Title**



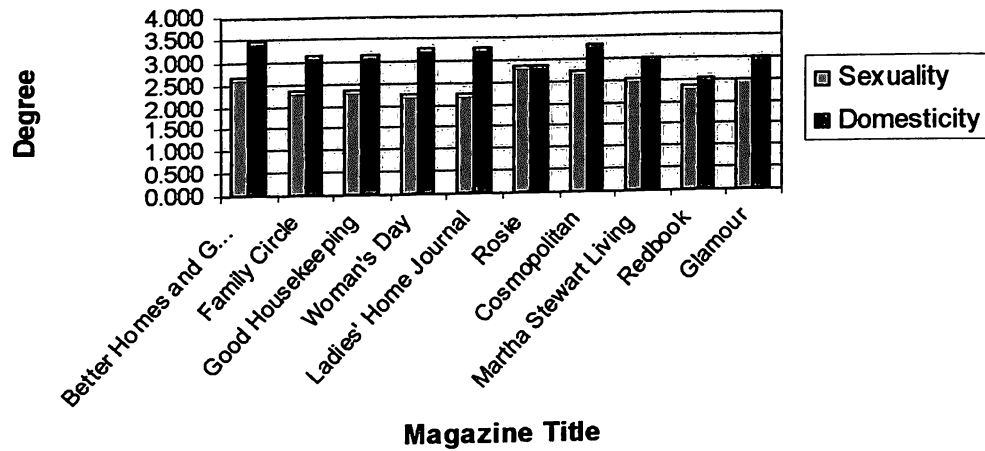
**Figure 4.36 Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity in Expression by Magazine Title**



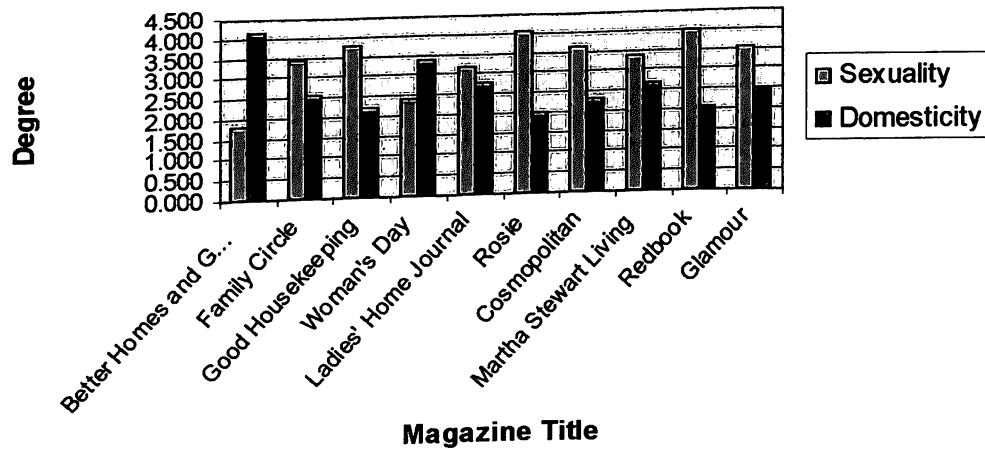
**Figure 4.37 Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity in Props by Magazine Title**



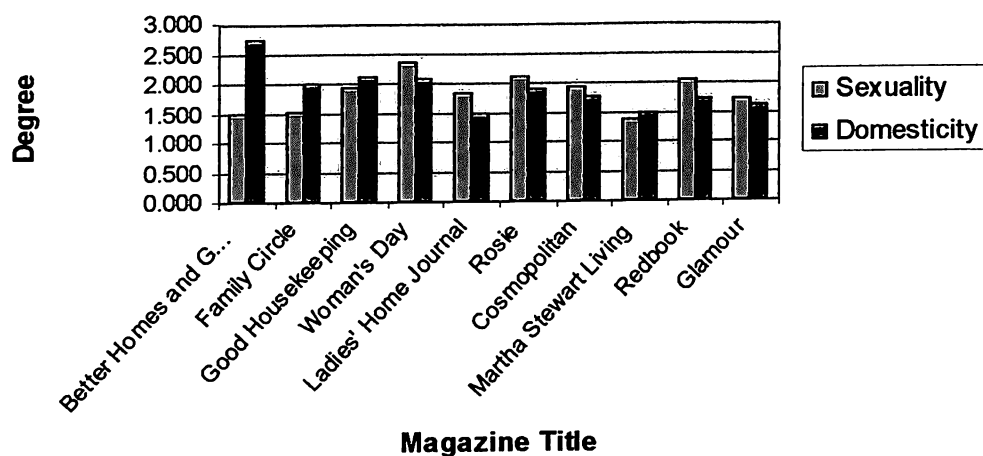
**Figure 4.38 Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity in Setting by Magazine Title**



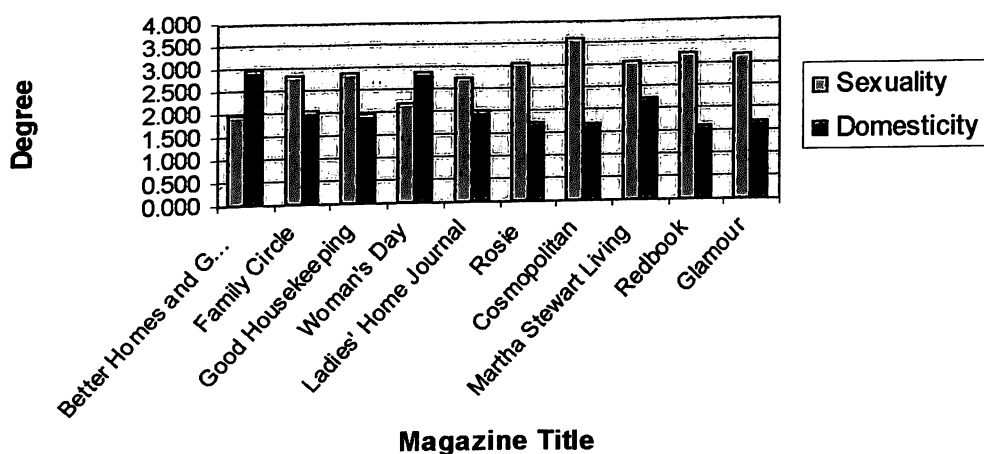
**Figure 4.39 Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity in Camera Focus by Magazine Title**



**Figure 4.40 Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity in Text by Magazine Title**



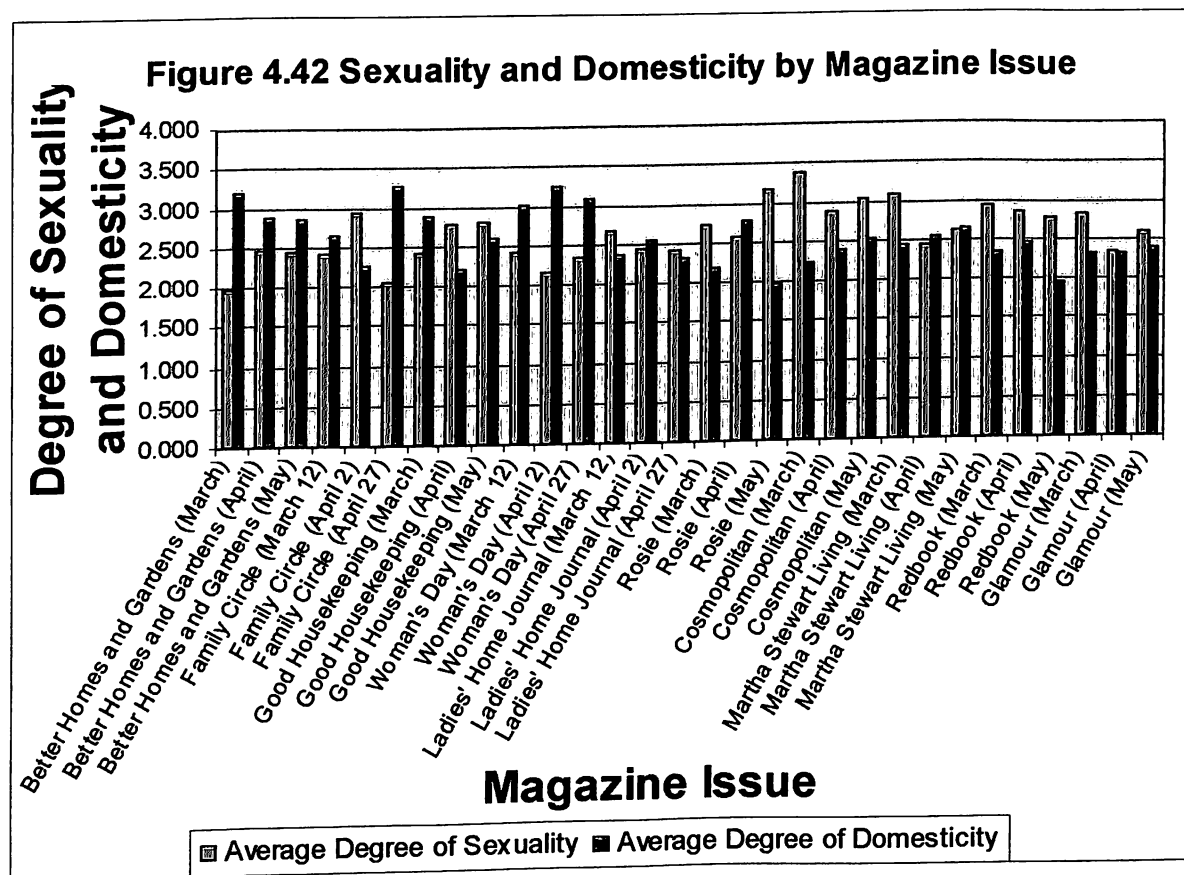
**Figure 4.41 Degree of Sexuality and Domesticity in General Impression by Magazine Title**



In the general impression category, Cosmopolitan rated much more sexual, almost 2 points, than domestic. Camera focus also had large differences. For that variable, Better Homes and Gardens rated more than 2 points (2.333) more domestic than sexual, while Rosie rated 2.084 points more sexual. Woman's Day rated much more domestic in terms of hair and makeup, with a difference of 2.112 points. Several of the magazines

differences of more than 1.5 in relation to the variable action. Ladies' Home Journal, Rosie, Cosmopolitan, Martha Stewart Living, and Redbook were all rated over 1.5 points more sexual than domestic, with Cosmopolitan having a difference of 2.139 points.

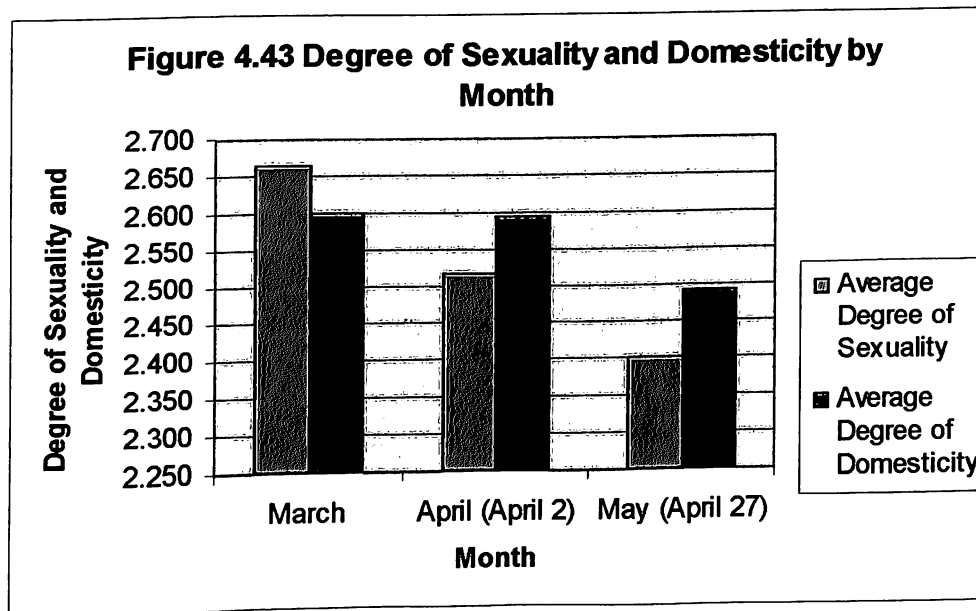
Individual issues of these magazines rated somewhat differently than their combined titles did. See Figure 4.42.



The highest rated magazine in terms of sexuality was Cosmopolitan for March with an average overall sexuality rating of 3.367. The highest rated magazine for domesticity was Family Circle for April 27 with an average overall domesticity rating of 3.267. 13 of the 30 magazines (43.3%) had an average advertisement rating with higher domesticity than sexuality. The biggest differences in sexuality and domesticity occurred in the March issue of Better Homes and Gardens with a difference of 1.225 more highly

domestic, Family Circle for April 27 (D=0.683 domestic), Woman's Day for April 2 (D=0.591 domestic), the May issue of Rosie (D=1.175 sexual), and Cosmopolitan for March (D=1.134 sexual). Thus even the biggest differences in magazines were only just over one point. The most similarly scoring high scoring magazines were Martha Stewart Living for May (D=0.025), Ladies' Home Journal for April 2 (D=0.108), as well as Martha Stewart Living for April (D=0.083).

In comparing the advertisements month by month, there is a slight decrease in both sexuality and domesticity from March to April. See Figure 4.43.

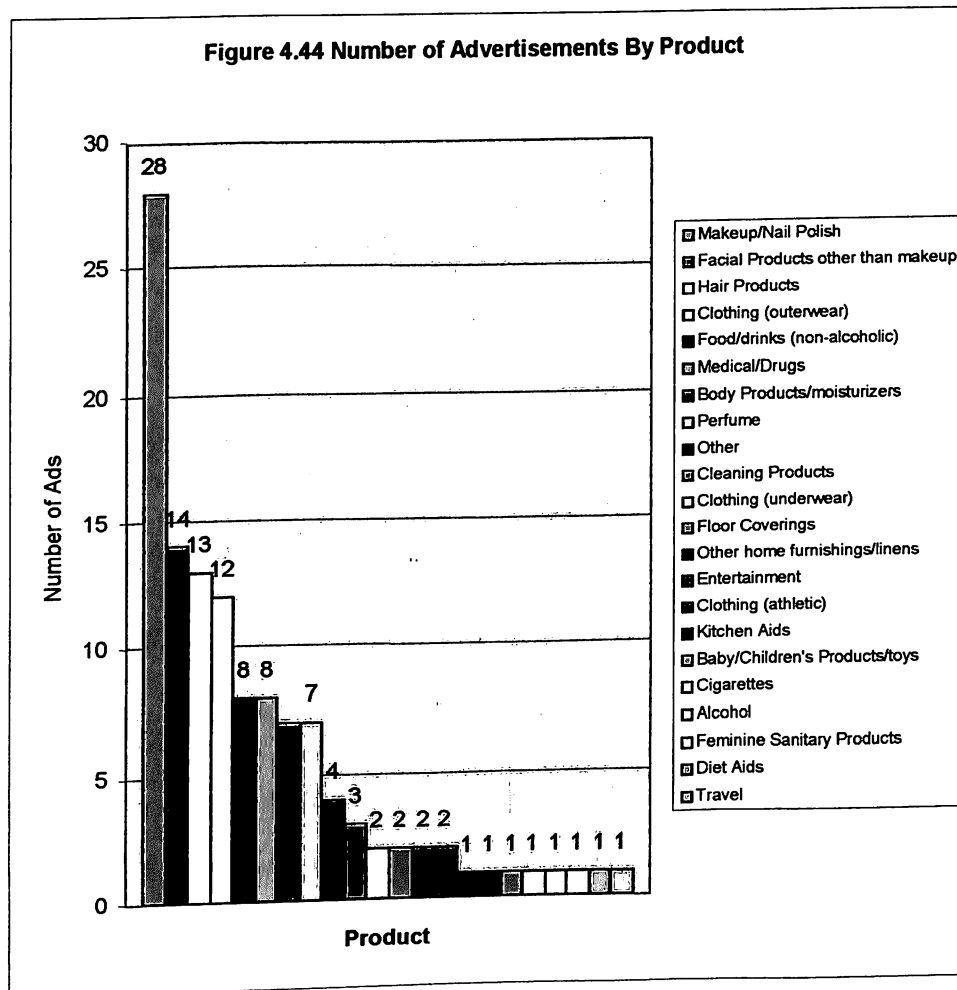


The ads averaged a more sexual rating in March and a more domestic rating in April and May. However, the differences between the highest and lowest rated months, was only 0.265 for sexuality and 0.107 for domesticity.

## Products

In the analysis, 22 product types were advertised including makeup and nail polish, facial products other than makeup, hair products, clothing (outerwear), clothing

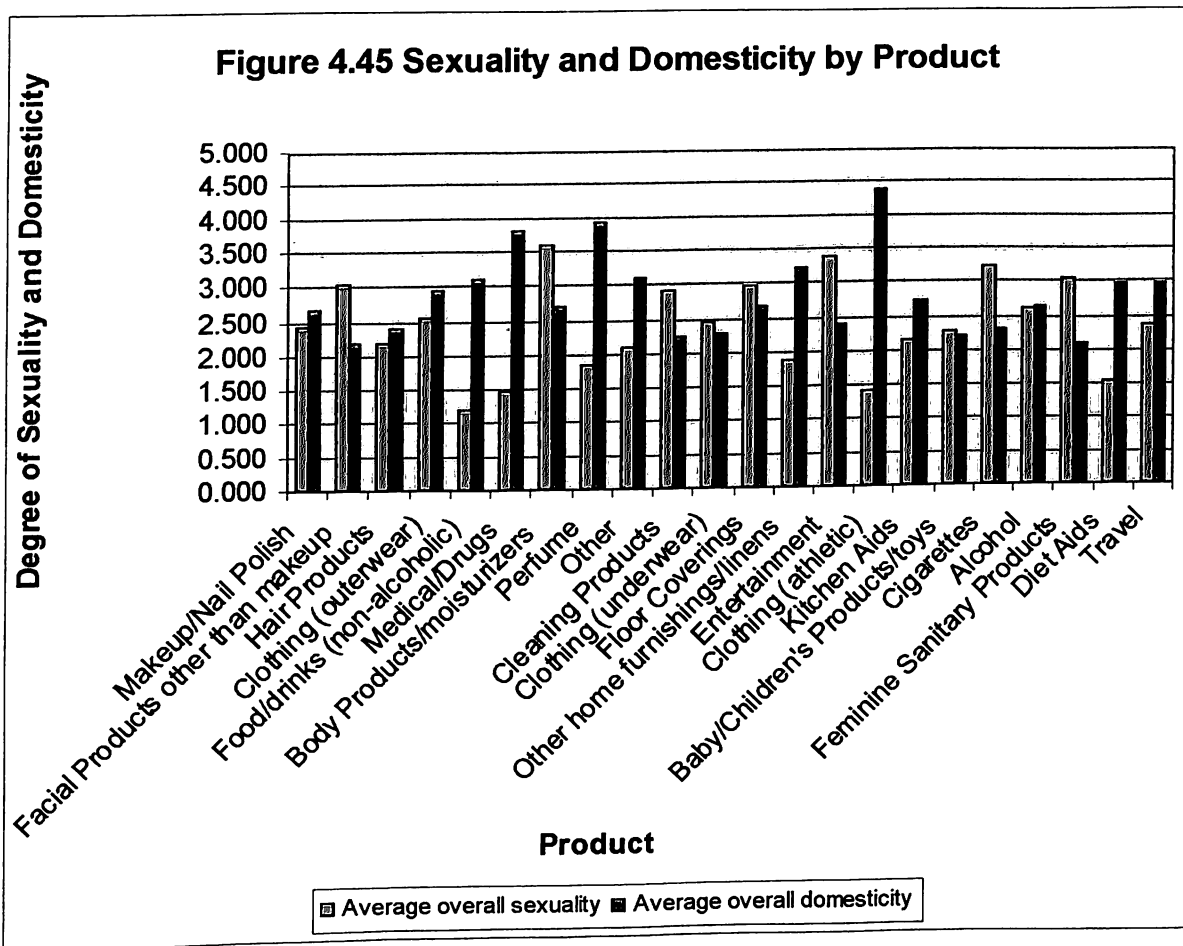
(underwear), clothing (athletic), food and drinks (non-alcoholic), alcoholic beverages, medicine and drugs, body products or moisturizers, perfume, cleaning products, floor coverings, kitchen aids, linens and other home furnishings, entertainment, baby and children's products or toys, cigarettes, feminine sanitary products, diet aids, travel, and other. See figure 4.44.



28 of the ads or 23.3% were for makeup and nail polish. The next most numerous products advertised was facial products other than makeup with 14 advertisements or 11.7%.

Some products were advertised more sexually or more domestically than others.

See figure 4.45.



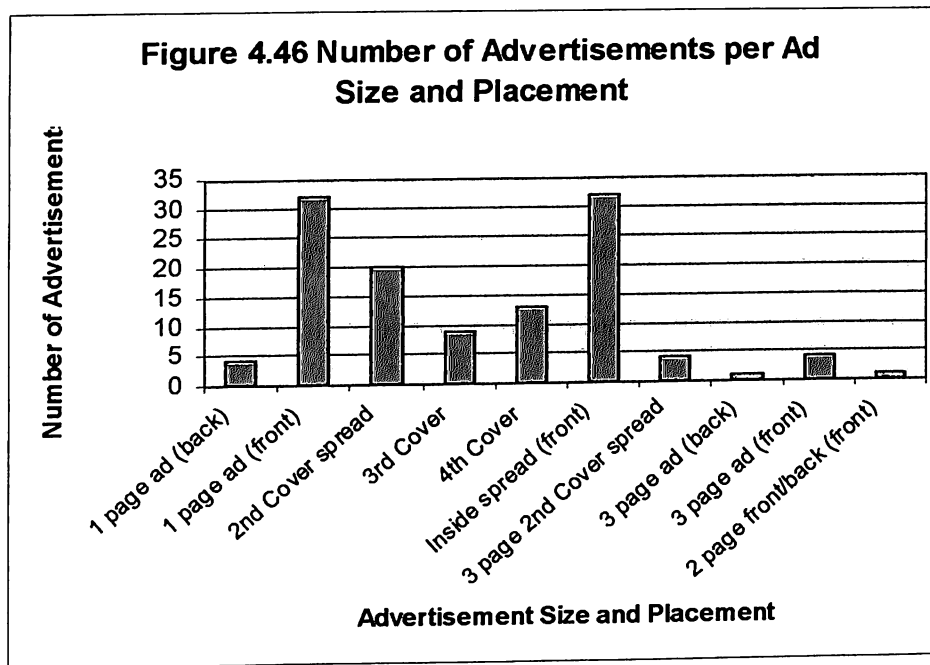
13 of the 22 product types were rated more domestic than sexual, including travel, diet aids, athletic clothing, kitchen aids, other home furnishings, perfume, medicine and drugs, hair products, makeup and nail polish, and other. 9 were rated more sexually than domestic. Alcoholic beverages were rated the most similar with almost equal ratings for both scores, an overall sexuality averaging 2.617 and an overall domesticity rating averaging 2.633 (with a difference of only 0.016 points). The most highly rated in terms of overall sexuality was body products/moisturizers with an overall sexuality average of 3.583. The most highly rated in terms of overall domesticity was athletic clothing with



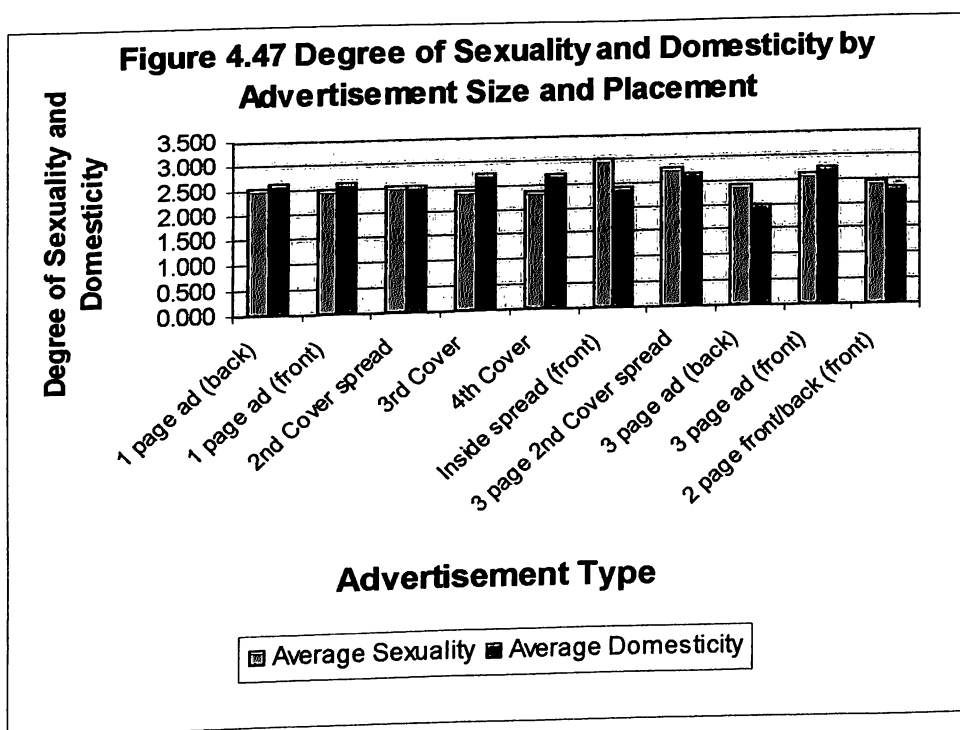
an overall domesticity rating averaging 4.378. However, this figure is based on only 1 advertisement for athletic clothing, and is thus not a valid rating. In looking at products for which there were 5 or more advertisements, the highest rated product for domesticity was perfume with an overall domesticity rating average of 3.933. The biggest difference of those products for which five or more advertisements were coded occurred for medicine and drugs with a difference of 2.333 with more domesticity than sexuality.

#### Size and Placement of the Advertisement

Ten various types of ad and ad placement were studied. 1 page ads located in the back of the magazine, 1 page ads located in the front of the magazine, 2<sup>nd</sup> cover spreads, 3<sup>rd</sup> covers, 4<sup>th</sup> covers, 2 page inside spread located in the front (none were pulled from the back in the selection process), 3 page ads located in the front of the magazine, 3 page spreads in the back of the magazine, 3 page ads located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> cover spread, and 2 page front and back ads located in the front of the magazine (none were pulled from the back of the magazine during the selection process). Most of the advertisements were from the inside spread located in the front as well as 1 page ads located in the front. See Figure 4.46.



The degree of sexuality and domesticity for the various page sizes and locations varied only slightly over 1 point overall. See Figure 4.47.



The highest overall sexuality average occurred for inside spreads near the front of the magazine with an overall sexuality average rating of 3.005. The highest rated ad type in

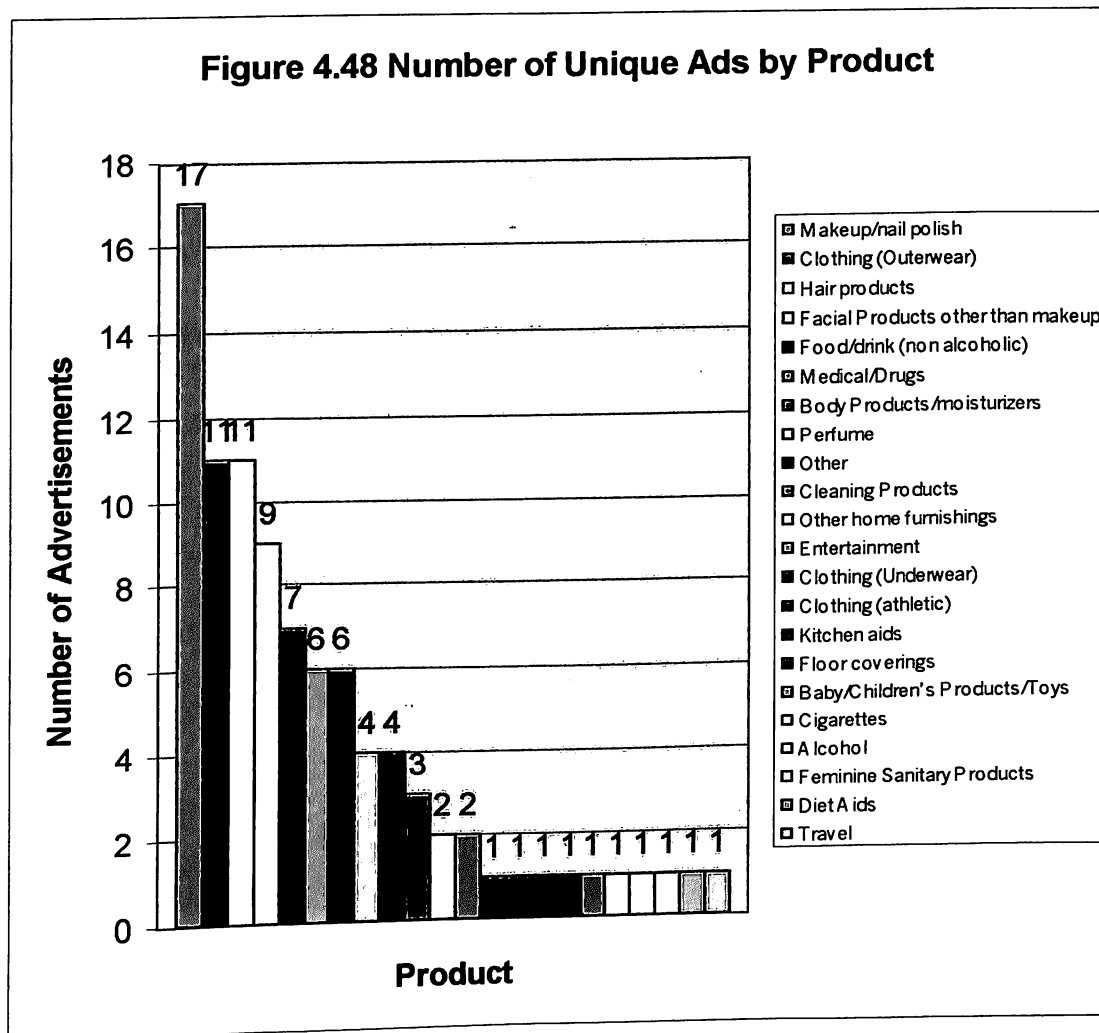
terms of domesticity was for the 3<sup>rd</sup> page ad in the front of the magazine with an overall domestic average rating of 2.756. The biggest difference occurred in the inside spreads near the front with a difference of 0.594. This might suggest that sex still sells. With more sexual advertisements located in the front of the magazine, occupying 2 pages, perhaps advertisers still use sex to pull in readers in the crucial first pages of the magazine.

### Repetitions

Some advertisements were selected more than once. Of the 120 advertisements, there were 93 unique ads. 20 advertisements were duplicated one or more times. Of the 20 repeated ads, 16 were duplicated once, 2 were duplicated twice, one was duplicated 3 times, and 1 was duplicated 4 times. Because the advertisements were each coded separately, each duplicated ad was treated as a new ad, sometimes resulting in slight differences in overall sexuality and domesticity for the same ad on different occurrences. The largest occurring difference in overall sexuality occurred with ads number 91 and 102, where the difference was 0.467, with the ad being rated more sexual in the first occurrence. The largest difference in overall domesticity occurred with ads 30 and 90, with a difference in overall domesticity of 0.633, with the domesticity being rated higher in the first occurrence. Most differences were less than 0.200. There was no correlation between the order in which the ad was rated and which ad rated higher or lower overall.

In the case of the products advertised, when eliminating duplicated ads, makeup and nail polish still had the highest number of ads, but there were only 17, rather than 28. The second most advertised category became outerwear clothing rather than facial

products, which were the fourth most advertised product in consideration without duplicates. See Figure 4.48.



For the rest of the analysis, the repetitions were left in the calculations because more repetition leads to more consumer awareness. Repeated ads should be given more emphasis than single occurring ads as these are seen more and remembered more by magazine readers. This extra emphasis is calculated by leaving the repeated ads in the analysis and counting each as an individual, and weighing its message proportionately to the number of times it appears. In addition, accurate calculations could not be made without the repetitions as they occur in different magazine titles and issues, occur in

different magazine locations, and occasionally even take up more or fewer pages. The only identifying variable which can be accurately gauged without repetitions is product. Differences in the variables of hair and makeup, clothing, action, position, expression, props, setting, and focus could be measured by averaging the sexual and domestic rating for duplicating ads. However, this did not create any significant difference as the differences in the sexual and domestic ratings for each of these variables was very low, and thus the average rating remained near the same to the original rating.

## DISCUSSION

### Results

The results indicate only a slight propensity toward the Madonna/whore dichotomy in the ads studied. Certainly, advertisements in Cosmopolitan and Redbook were more sexually oriented, while advertisements in Woman's Day and Good Housekeeping tended to be more domestically oriented. Indeed, Woman's Day yielded ads which were rated much more domestic than sexual, and while Cosmopolitan's advertisements were rated as being more sexual, they were not much more sexual than they were domestic. Family Circle's advertisements changed from month to month, with the April 2 issue being rated much more highly sexual and the April 27 issue being rated much more highly domestic.

The products advertised also slightly perpetuate the Madonna/whore dichotomy. Advertisements for moisturizers and creams for the face as well as for the body were rated much more sexual, while food and drugs were rated much more domestic.

Specific visual variables support the Madonna/whore nexus. The action of the model rated more sexual than domestic for over 90% of the ads studied. The camera angle resulted in mostly high scores for domesticity and for sexuality.

15 ads were rated 1.5 points or more more sexual or domestic. These one-sided ads all uphold the Madonna/whore dichotomy.

Yet, considering that only 15 of the ads can be said to definitively exhibit and uphold the Madonna/whore dichotomy, the results do not indicate as strong of an inclination toward the Madonna/whore dichotomy as would have been expected. Certainly, some of the magazines show a greater propensity for depicting women more

sexually or more domestically, but within the top selling women's magazines, the differences were not so significant as to conclude that women are portrayed as only "Madonnas" or "whores." Most often, the ads were rated as neutral. Ads for facial cleansers tended to show just the bare face of the woman, sometimes in the act of washing her face. This is neither sexual or domestic. Several ads also had women who were photographed close up, with neutral makeup and a neutral expression—simply modeling. Most ads fell in to this neutral category, suggesting, perhaps, that the "mannequin" role model is still alive and well today.

On the other hand, a few ads were both highly sexual and domestic, such as the Milk ad (figure 4.12) and the Cover Girl Outlast Lip Color ad (figure 4.13). In the Milk ad, the women are extremely flexible and in sexual positions. However, they are located in what seems to be a kitchen or dining room, and they are advertising milk, which can also be viewed as sexual or domestic. In the Cover Girl ad, the girl is wearing fairly dark makeup, with her finger to her mouth, yet she is wearing a wedding veil and the text refers to her wedding day. Ads such as these discard the Madonna/whore syndrome, combining the two images rather than separating them. Other advertisers, such as Estee Lauder, may use sexuality for some ads and domesticity for others. The ad for Advanced Night Repair Eye Cream (figure 4.4) was rated the most highly sexual, and had the highest difference between sexuality and domesticity, but Estee Lauder's other ads are not necessarily so sexual. Their advertisement for Pleasures perfume combines the sexual imagery of a beautiful woman lying on the ground, staring directly at the camera, and the domestic imagery of a small puppy nestled in her arm (figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1



In an ad for Calvin Klein's Eternity fragrances, the woman stares lustfully at the man with whom she is in bed. In the next picture, she is still in bed with the man, but now she stares lovingly at a young girl and her bunny, who have joined them (figure 5.2).


Figure 5.2





Another advertisement sells birth control for mothers (figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3



**Motherhood changes everything.  
Happily, that includes your birth control options.**

**Meet Mirena: Birth control for moms.**

You know how it is. You wake up one morning and—wham! You've gone from being "just the two of us" to being a family. The new part is that motherhood changes how you experience love. Love for your child is unlike anything you've ever felt before. And love for your partner takes on a whole new meaning. When the two of you finally find some time for intimacy, nothing should stand in your way. That's precisely why you should ask your doctor about a birth control option that's especially great for moms—Mirena.

Innovative and over 99% effective, Mirena from you from working about birth control for up to 5 years. There are no pills to remember. Nothing to fuss with. Nothing to break the mood. (Whisper!) Easily inserted by your doctor in a routine office visit, Mirena is perfect for family planning as well. If you decide you want to have more children, just have Mirena removed. Studies show your chance of getting pregnant after Mirena are the same as for women who have not been using any method of birth control. Plus, Mirena may give you shorter, lighter periods and is estrogen-free.

You'll also be pleased to know that Mirena is an intrauterine system with a proven track record. It's FDA approved and has been successfully used by 2 million women in Europe over the past ten years. They already know that with all you have to think about as a new mom, not having to worry about birth control is really nice for a change.

Ask your doctor about Mirena—Birth control for moms. For more information, you can visit [www.mirena.com/tb](http://www.mirena.com/tb) or call 1-800-986-1515 for a free brochure.

You may have some questions we can answer right now. For instance, "Is intrauterine contraception right for me?" Only your doctor can determine that, but women with a history of or at risk for pelvic inflammatory disease or ectopic pregnancy should not use Mirena. Otherwise, most women are typically good candidates for Mirena. "What about side effects?" you ask. Well, they're uncommon and may include a cramp on the ovary, mild menstrual periods, irregular bleeding or spotting for the first 3-6 months or lighter, shorter periods thereafter. Mirena does not protect against HIV (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted diseases. Please see back summary of Prescribing Information on the reverse side.

**Mirena**  
single-rod intrauterine system  
Birth control for Moms.

Perhaps what is happening here is that advertisers are leaning toward targeting a more holistic woman: a multi-faceted woman who more accurately reflects the many roles of women in the real world. While certainly some advertisers still lean toward the domestic housewife image to sell their wares, such as the ads for OxiClean and Armstrong Flooring do, other advertisers are realizing that to reach the woman of today, they must portray women in more than just sexual or motherly roles. Advertisers are beginning to realize that the two roles can coexist. In addition to the print advertisements mentioned above, a recent television advertisement for Yoplait's Le Crème Yogurt, features a seductive woman wearing a French maid's outfit, sitting on a man's lap,

erotically feeding him the yogurt. Suddenly, the couple is interrupted by the entrance of a teen-aged girl and her friend. "My parents are so weird," says the teen. The woman in the ad is both a sexual being, a mother and wife, and, as her costume suggests, a servant. The tone of the teen-ager suggests that this is not a rare occurrence; the girl is accustomed to, and is not outraged or frightened that her mother is both sexual and domestic.

### Suggestions for further research

The results of this study are limited to only the advertisements and magazines selected. Future studies may show different results as advertisements evolve. A study of advertisements in the top women's magazines during different time frames might show a change in attitude towards women. A study involving a more randomized sample, or all of the advertisements from the specific magazines, rather than only the most prominent, may also yield different results. In addition, a study of the images of women in the copy text may prove to be more or less fitting of the dichotomy.

Other magazines with a different focus, even those whose target audience is still women, may also be more or less likely to exhibit the Madonna/whore nexus. For example, the depiction of women in women's fitness magazines would surely differ from the depictions of women in fashion magazines or parenting magazines.

Different media may also be more or less inclined to follow the Madonna/whore dichotomy. An analysis of television may yield much different results than this study. More and more cable channels such as Lifetime and Oxygen focus on women as their audience, but how do they portray women; which women do they target-stay at home

moms, working women, lesbians? How do the depictions of women on these channels differ from the depictions of women on other channels, or even other media?

The cinema, as well, portrays women in certain roles. Is the Madonna/whore nexus present in the popular cinema? Do films aimed at men or women differ in their depictions of women?

The Internet, as well, cannot be ignored. Does the Madonna/whore nexus exist in the depictions of women on the Internet? As in television and magazines, the internet has specific sites aimed at women. How are women portrayed in these sites? How are they portrayed in sites for men, teens, and other specific audiences?

Other studies might ask if women are depicted as Madonnas or whores in men's magazines? Men were the original sufferers of the Madonna/whore syndrome, so such an inquiry would be instructive and might even provide some insight on the media's role in sustaining this syndrome. How are women portrayed in the top 10 men's magazines? Pornographic magazines are likely to show women more as "whores," but are they depicted in domestic roles as well? Going further, how are men depicted in men's magazines? Is there a dichotomy of men's images such as the "macho man" and the "nerd."

General readership magazines may also depict women more or less in the dichotomy of the Madonna or whore. How do these magazines differ from other magazines?

The content of the ads is not the only area that can be studied for the Madonna/whore dichotomy. Shift the focus onto the reader and a whole new set of questions emerges. How do the readers of these magazines feel that women are being

depicted? Do readers sense the Madonna/whore dichotomy? Does perception of the dichotomy differ by educational level, the number or lack of children, the gender, or even the sexual orientation of the readers? Do readers have preconceived notions of the images present in specific magazines; are they expecting Vogue to be more sexual than Good Housekeeping? How do men and women differ in their perceptions of women in the advertisements? How does the perception of the Madonna/whore nexus change over time?

The creators of the advertisements also affect whether the Madonna/whore dichotomy exists in the magazine or other medium. How do the creators of the ads decide how a woman is depicted for specific products? What preconceived notions about women do the creators have? How do ads created by men and women differ? Are those ads created by men more likely to exhibit the Madonna/whore dichotomy? The questions are endless.

### Conclusion

A strong Madonna/whore dichotomy was not found in the study of the chosen advertisements. Only a handful of advertisements truly depicted females as only domestic or only sexual, rather, most ads were neither sexual or domestic, or they were a combination of the two. The results would indicate that advertisers may be softening the Madonna/whore dichotomy, or portraying women in other roles altogether, such as in athletics or careers, although the scope of this study cannot confirm those roles. What the study did find, was that some advertisers have begun combining the roles and portraying women simultaneously as domestic and sexual. While this synthesis only accounted for a

small number of advertisements, it is a trend that I believe will continue to grow. While these ads may be somewhat shocking, they are also refreshing to a female audience who is tired of being depicted as only mothers OR lovers, Madonnas OR whores.

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## VITA

Karen Celeste Kimbell was born in Great Falls, Montana on December 29, 1977, the daughter of James Ronald Kimbell and Brigitte Kimbell. After traveling the world as a military brat, she graduated from East Central High School in San Antonio, Texas. She then began attending the University of Texas at Austin, earning Bachelors degrees in both English and German in 1999. That same year she began her graduate studies in Communication Arts at the University of the Incarnate Word. She is currently the Associate Director of Admissions in charge of Operations at University of the Incarnate Word. She would eventually like to earn a Ph.D. and teach Communication Arts at the University level. She would also like to start a magazine focusing on issues pertaining to the "quarter-life crisis," to be targeted at newly graduated students entering the work force.

Permanent address: 5910 Sinclair Road  
San Antonio, TX 78222

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