

LOVE CULTURE IN AMERICAN *COSMOPOLITAN*  
MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS: THE WAYS SEX AND  
BEAUTY PORTRAY LOVE

by

MOLLY HOVER

A THESIS

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and the Robert D. Clark Honors College  
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Bachelor of Arts

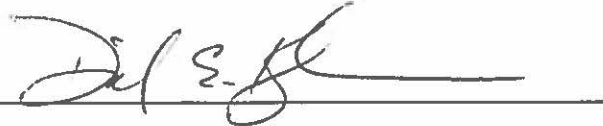
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## **An Abstract of the Thesis of**

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Title: Love Culture in American *Cosmopolitan* Magazine Advertisements: The Ways  
Sex and Beauty Portray Love

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



Professor David Koranda

This Thesis seeks to prove that a love culture exists in American magazine advertisements by analyzing hundreds of ads from *Cosmopolitan* over the last fifty plus years. Data from the ads was collected from every decade from the 1950s to 2015, examined, and placed into categories based on the findings. These categories along with the cultural context of surrounding article titles, social climate, and examples of the ads were then analyzed. This was done to bring awareness o the evolution of ads in *Cosmo* and show that content within these ads has implications. The hypothesis was proven with the data gathered and analyses made and it was found that a love culture does, in fact, exist. This Thesis does not seek to make broad statements about society based on these findings, rather it shows the significance and consequence of using sex and perpetuating a love culture in which sex is being used along with beauty to sell love to audiences—with women often objectified in the process.

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## **Introduction: A Look at *Cosmopolitan* and Advertising**

Sex, love, and beauty. Three aspects of our society that carry with them a plethora of connotations—good and bad—and have done so for decades. How do you define such broad concepts, especially within a culture that is constantly redefining them? Individually, these terms are almost impossible to give a definition that fits everyone in a society. You can have sex without love and beauty, beauty without love and sex, and love without sex or beauty. However, these terms are connected in that they subsist of societal standards and, when combined into ‘love culture,’ they become easier to study within a culture.

What is love culture exactly? For the purposes of this Thesis, this is a term that I believe I’ve coined that refers to the combination of love, sex, and beauty into a single entity—most specifically how sex and beauty are used to portray love through advertisements in American society. Advertising is a highly visual form of communication whose existence in media for decades has made it universally appreciated and impressionable to audiences. There are many aspects to visual communication in advertising—print, broadcast, and digital to name a few—but this Thesis will focus on print advertising in a single magazine: *Cosmopolitan*.

Advertising’s presence in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* is an economic structure, but is also highly influential to those reading the magazine. “The objective of advertisers is to use the most effective way to sell products/services,” which includes a variety of visual communication tactics such as the use of color to grab attention and increase sales (Stone, 3). Visual communication is a universal medium for ads and can

be highly impressionable and persuasive, especially when ads use motivators such as sex and emotion visually to sell certain ideals to a society (Stone, 4-5). For instance, it is a popularized saying and theory that “sex sells” within the media world, be it advertisements, television shows, or stories (Sheehan, 103). “A sexual appeal is a strong psychological appeal,” which advertisers use in conjunction with visually provoking images in order to sell products by capitalizing on the psychology of the “mating desire in humans” (Sheehan, 104). *Cosmopolitan* for example has advertised (and sold) more blatant sex since the mid sixties with editor-in-chief’s, Helen Gurley Brown’s, “message of sexual freedom for single women” (McGuire, [www.thesocietypages.org](http://www.thesocietypages.org)). Within the context of the ‘mating desire’ is the historical use of advertisements involving (arguably overly) sexualized women to sell a product, which often includes ideals of beauty and love for a culture.

This Thesis will focus on the heterosexual gender norms not because other gender norms are not available in our current society, but because this narrowed the scope for researched advertisements’ use of gender stereotypes and, for many years, these *were* the only available concepts of gender in ads. The social and cultural values that a society places on gender norms and the female role are often portrayed via advertisements. Ads use “these images [to] provide insight into the social and sexual values of the societies they are intended to represent” and can “influence the values and attitudes of the society as a whole” (Hovland et. al, 887). The pervasiveness in society can relate directly to the roles of women in American culture in particular.

In America specifically, advertisements have employed the use of sex and idealized standards of beauty in order to sell products. The consequences of this in a society can be a portrayal of love that shows a love culture in which women are the objects of men who continue to objectify them through the standards of sex and beauty that they were sold in the first place with ads. In fact, from advertisements in magazines in the 1970s, a survey showed that men portrayed were seen as objectifying women and women were seen as dependent on men in the limited context of homemaker (Hovland et. al, 888). What this study means in regards to a comparison of *Cosmopolitan* magazine is perhaps an evolution of the ways in which women are portrayed in advertisements. However, for this Thesis, it will be focused on the aspects of love, sex, and beauty within the structure of the ads.

### *Thesis Statement*

Advertisements in American *Cosmopolitan* magazines from the 1950s to 2015 selling beauty products are using sexualized women in order to sell not only idealized beauty standards to audiences of *Cosmo*, but the emotional aspiration of love. This, in turn, creates a love culture.

## Chapter 1: Background

### *Cosmopolitan's Evolution and (Sexual) Revolution*

*Cosmopolitan* magazine has been in circulation since 1886, when it began as a monthly, illustrated family magazine, was later transformed into a fiction magazine, “and, finally, to a magazine for younger women” in the late 1960s (Landers, vii). As it transitioned into a woman’s magazine primarily, it first featured long form narrative stories and illustrations with women’s fashion and life advice (McGuire, [www.thesocietypages.com](http://www.thesocietypages.com)) before evolving to include a “mix of articles on careers, celebrities, relationships, sex, and various topics the traditional women’s periodicals had not presented in such a lively and occasionally risqué style” (Landers, vii).

According to current circulation and audience data from the Standard Rate and Data Service (SRDS), *Cosmopolitan* has an audience of primarily women (about 88% of adult audience from Fall 2014 data) who are the median age of 34, with a median household income of about \$58,000 ([next.srds.com](http://next.srds.com)). Furthermore, this magazine has been “the highest-selling women’s magazine since 1972” ([www.beautyredefined.net](http://www.beautyredefined.net)) with current circulation (6 months) at 3,066,070 ([next.srds.com](http://next.srds.com)) and jumps in circulation in the 1890s and 1960s (Landers, 75 and 225). These factors in part demonstrate the multiple evolutions it has gone through in over a century since the first edition and offer a unique way to explore how the ideals in culture have changed—particularly in regards to how advertisements selling beauty through sex portray love.

In fact, “no form of communication is more associated with sex than advertising” (Merskin, 79). Because of the visibility of ads and their widespread nature, they are a perfect outlet through which the biological function of sex is used to “get our attention to sell products and services” (Merskin, 79). When Helen Gurley Brown became editor in chief in 1965, she revolutionized the magazine world, which simultaneously revolutionized the advertisements that were featured alongside her ideals of sexual freedom. Her ideals from *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) were “already urging women to postpone or skip marriage and simply enjoy a fulfilling sexual life,” which she continued in her editing of *Cosmopolitan* (Sivulka, 273). After the 1960s and Brown’s changes, *Cosmopolitan* was more frequently associated with sex, including its advertisements. Arguably, this change transformed the magazine into what it is today and affected the narrative of its ads.

Although the advertisements in *Cosmo* began selling beauty products and primarily targeted women as early as the 1920s as seen in archives of the original magazines, it was after Brown’s influence that the ads, then using more advanced color (and eventually digital) technologies, began to use sex to sell beauty products in the social ideal of love. Contributing to this phenomenon in advertising was the emergence from the Postwar Boom in the 1960s during which “politics, culture, and technology helped shape advertising” (Sivulka, 246). Magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* were influenced strongly by these factors and the feminist movement in the 1960s (Sivulka, 273) aided Brown’s message of freedom as “the ‘new’ advertising grew more outrageous to catch attention” (Sivulka, 256).

### *The Media's Influence*

Media, such as *Cosmopolitan's* print form, are large influencers of society as a whole and the advertisements in these media compound this influence. Curators and researchers of media make a case that it not only influences general socialization, but sexual socialization as well. According to *Sexing the Media* by Debra Merskin there are four main reasons for this: “(1) the content is pervasive and ubiquitous... (2) the content is ‘highly accessible and widely consumed’ (Mesch, 2012 p. 349)...(3)...the media present sex without complications or consequences, focusing on passions and pleasures; and (4) because the whole purpose of media is to attract readers and viewers,” making curators capitalize on sensationalist qualities of society (Merskin, 62). However, arguably the first two points are one and the same and Merskin's last point about the purpose of media was initially true as seen in the earlier decades of the advertisements examined, but is now a consequence rather than an intention of media.

Relevant to this Thesis, this information implies broader influences of media and their advertisements on a society, but the four reasons outlined above give context to the ads featured in *Cosmopolitan* and their evolution. The highly accessible nature, lack of consequences shown, and attraction through visuals (and, sometimes, copy) directly relate to ads in magazines such as *Cosmo*. Another component of the sexualization and socialization through ads is the fact that “there is also far less regulation of print media than there is of broadcast” and even less of the Internet (Merskin, 92). The lack of regulation was proven with Brown's daring magazine spreads of nude models and the Hearst Corporation's “remarkable latitude to choose topics” (Landers, 251) as well as many of the (overly) sexualized models featured in ads today.

### *Social Learning and Framing Theory*

Part of an advertisement's influence on a society is the use of social learning theory and framing in terms of how ads are absorbed by society (and gender roles are formed) from frequent exposure (Hovland et. al., 888). With the example of *Cosmopolitan's* large range as a longstanding staple in American magazines, it may very well be that love culture is defined from these advertisements and the theory that "as people are repeatedly exposed to advertising images, they tend to internalize the advertisers' views of themselves and others" (Hovland et. al, 888). Furthermore, these theories are examples of implicit learning that occurs even when the viewer is not paying attention. The framing of the advertisers' reality in the use of advertisements targeted at women in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* can theoretically have a huge influence on society and is, arguably, creating a love culture within this frame.

Additionally, the social framework for advertisements is imperative in the analysis of them and this Thesis' claim of love culture's contrived reality in America through sexualized ads of women. What is of further interest is that *Cosmopolitan's* tagline is "by women for women," which alludes to the statistic in the first sub section of this chapter that women are the primary audience. In the context of this Thesis, if the main audience is women, the perspective through which the ads are viewed is likewise affected. Furthermore, the dichotomy of ads is that "for the most part we who are tremendously affected by it [an ad], have no idea we are affected by it," which is in part a consequence of the disconnection with reality that these social frameworks create (*Advertising the American Dream*, 2008).

### *Buying and Selling Love and Sex*

As outlined in the **Introduction**, sex sells. According to Merskin in *Sexing the Media*, “Creative strategists using sex to sell use at least three approaches: biology, emotionality, and/or spirituality” (Merskin, 80). While using sex may be advantageous and even practical when selling lingerie, cologne, and perfume because “these products are intimately connected to bodies, romance, and attraction,” it begs the question: did the media make these seem intimately connected in the first place (Merskin, 80)? For beauty product advertisements in *Cosmopolitan* this question is connected to the idea of a love culture in which sex *and* beauty sell love.

*Ethics in Advertising: Sex Sells, But Should It?*” by Jessica Blair et. al reviews the trope that sex is bought and sold through advertisements and views this through the lens of ethics (Blair et. al, 109). The authors subvert the title of their work and cite Cebrzynski, 2000 by saying that “sex does not sell, but sexiness does [and] using sex appeals in advertising is a good way to target certain market segments but not all” (Blair et. al, 110). Their discussion of ethics relies on the categorization of ‘sexy ads’ that look at physical features, behavior, intimacy, and context (Blair et. al, 110). What this article is outlining is a differentiation of sex versus sexiness in media, not that sex does not exist. But is the use of this sex selling love?

Arguably, by utilizing sexiness in advertisements, the goal of the advertiser is to show women what the (beauty) product will help them achieve which is not only physical happiness, but emotional happiness as well. Kim Sheehan in *Controversies in Contemporary Advertising* (**Chapter 2**) posits, “advertising uses romances to make a sexual connection with women” (Sheehan, 104). What this statement implies is that



romance and sex are related entities in advertisements featuring women and both are used to connect to the audience (likely females as in the case of *Cosmopolitan*).

Sheehan argues that advertisers “provide images of courtship, relationships, and the process of falling in love” in order to make the ‘sexualized connection’ and sell these ideals via a product (Sheehan, 104).

In part what this Thesis is trying to support is not only that sex sells, which is already relatively widely regarded, but that sex sells *love*.

### *The Male Gaze*

The male gaze in the context of print advertisements has an influence on the physical angle of the model in the ad and the metaphysical looking and seeming objectification of this model by the audience. If, in fact, beauty ads do create a love culture when they use sexualization of women to sell love, there are consequences of this gaze and the female role in American society. This gaze has an influence on women’s advertisements in terms of how they are produced and the standards to which they are upheld while conveying certain themes. The male (and, alternately, female) gaze is best defined by:

Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman is herself to male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object—most particularly an object of vision: sight (Berger, 47).

In other words, advertisements in what is primarily a woman’s magazine are targeting women for whom the male gaze affects because of the ways in which they view themselves through societal standards for love, sex, and beauty. By Berger’s

definition, looking “creates a power dynamic...this dynamic thus makes unremarkable that women are always and ever available, ready, and waiting to be observed” (Merskin, 78). This often involves a perception and positioning in the advertisement that usually includes objectification and “in the world of Cosmo, ‘beauty’ is necessary to be worthy of and enjoy an intimate relationship with a man” ([www.beautyredefined.net](http://www.beautyredefined.net)).

In McGuire’s blog, she mentions that *Cosmopolitan*’s sexual revolution beginning in the sixties not only increased sales, but also made the magazine “sexually centered” from there after with such articles as “4 Traits Men Find Irresistible,” “What Men Secretly Think of your Hair and Makeup,” and “What You Should Do if He Cheats” (McGuire, [www.thesocietypages.org](http://www.thesocietypages.org)). Articles such as these are just one small sample of those featured in *Cosmopolitan*, but often add context to the types of advertisements found, as well as what is seemingly on women’s minds for a particular issue—or decade.

How this relates back to the overall Thesis is by the critical extension of the gaze as sexual attractiveness—or, in other words, beauty. The article titles above and in **Chapter 5** often refer to men, which suggests a male presence or gaze. Furthermore, “as social beings, we like to look at beautiful things. Even as babies, we are more attracted to beautiful pictures than to ugly ones,” which refers to advertising’s use of attractive female (and male) models for users to gaze at and to better sell the product and ideals featured in the ad (Sheehan, 102).

## Chapter 2: Literature

### *Existing Literature*

Among the existing literature there are multiple themes and theories that add context to analyzing advertisements in *Cosmopolitan*. Most notably these themes include: roles of women in a society portrayed in advertisements, sex used in conjunction with existing stereotypes and ideals of love, and advertising's capitalization on our psychology (social learning and framing theories in **Chapter 1**). The following focused literature analyses broaden the love culture topic to include how sex and gender are used in advertisements and the possible implications that this can have on how love, beauty, and sex ideals are shown in ads with women.

### *The Relationship of Gender and Advertising*

“Who is gazing at whom? A look at how sex is used in magazine advertisements” by Elizabeth Monk-Turner et. al. is a scholarly article primarily focused on the role of sex in magazine advertisements and the influence of the male gaze. One of the more significant claims that the authors immediately make is that “the roles women are shown in are much narrower than the roles depicted by men in advertising” (Monk-Turner, 201). In the context of print magazine ads, this means that women are often shown as passive, objects, and submissive to men. In the context of this Thesis, the authors of this article argue that gender in a society is often shown through advertisements that “mirror gender stereotypes” (Monk-Turner, 202).

Another interesting point that the authors make in this article is that magazine advertisements targeted at women feature women who are “more responsive to social

change,” but the authors still hypothesize that sex sells in those ads targeted to women as well (Monk-Turner, 202-203). In the Methodology section of this journal article is the authors’ analysis of three audiences—male, female, and gender-neutral—as well as the example of *Cosmo Girl* for one of the magazines they analyzed (Monk-Turner, 203). Their findings were made through a statistical examination of 477 ads and showed that there were fewer objectified advertising characters in ads targeted at women than men, which disproved their hypothesis and mine (Monk-Turner, 205). However, this leads me to question if there is simply a perception of more objectification in women’s magazines in our society and what affect this perception has on our culture (Monk-Turner, 207). This article gives a greater context to the ways in which sex is used in advertisements and the gender perceptions that occur from this. Although there is no mention of love or beauty portrayals, it seems to imply that sex is a large part of the love culture and the creation of advertisements in our society.

Chapter 7 of *Controversies in Contemporary Advertising* by Kim Sheehan is entitled “Gender and Advertising” and explores the same topics of gender conjoined with the history of advertising, but delves deeper into portrayals of sex and beauty in these advertisements and the intended and unintended affects on a culture. “Gender roles in our society have changed dramatically since the 1950s, and portrayals of men and women in advertising have been researched since nearly the same time,” is a statement that alludes to the hypothesis of this Thesis and to the change in magazines over the past 50 years (Sheehan, 89). Sheehan looks at information processing from the consumer side of advertising and shows that men and women absorb advertisements differently and, thus, the ads targeted at them are different as well (Sheehan 90). What

this means for our society is that certain gender roles and stereotypes that are shown in ads are portrayed differently in advertisements featuring women.

The sections on beauty and sexual stereotypes in advertisements are immensely relative to this Thesis. For instance, Sheehan mentions, “Theories of beauty are culturally constituted, primarily because of common socialization experiences” and changed over time with almost every generation, which can have a significant impact on how beauty is shown in ads (Sheehan, 95). One of the largest contributors to the continued beauty stereotypes is women’s fashion and beauty magazines (such as *Cosmopolitan*), which are “one of the most influential and potentially damaging media channels” (Sheehan, 97). In much the same way, females as sexual objects and decorations are stereotypes continued via ads (Sheehan, 97), but can be easily inoculated into our culture because the “scene becomes immediately set” with these stereotypes (Sheehan, 100). Sheehan’s exploration of the psychological response of sex in ads and the intended and unintended affects of love, sex, and beauty in ads relates back to my hypothesis that ads are selling these ideals (Sheehan, 106).

These examples of existing literature and those woven throughout the Thesis, give context to themes of advertisements involving sex and beauty that play into idealized love through an ad’s main goal: to see a product—in this case, a beauty product. Through others’ research on a similar topic, this Thesis is given validity and greater understanding. In **Chapters 4** and **5**, the themes of the existing literature particularly focused on gender and sex in advertising are used for the analysis of the advertisements examined and the subsequent findings.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### *Hypothesis*

I hypothesize that the *Cosmopolitan* advertisements from 1950 to 2015 utilize female sexuality to convey love (through copy, ideals, and stereotypes) with beauty products and, as time progresses, become more overtly sexualized yet still allude to achieving love through beauty.

### *Research Methods*

This Thesis contains an analysis of advertisements in *Cosmopolitan* beginning in the 1950s because the United States was at the end of the Postwar Boom that had started in 1945 and was on the verge of more sexual and social freedom after the 1960s. I found five to 10 advertising examples in the February edition for each of the 65 years covered in this Thesis. This month was chosen because it narrowed the exponentially large scope of research and because of its “Love Edition” implication.

Although love is a broad theme, this Thesis attempts to narrow the scope by viewing the advertisements through the lens of a love culture and the categories created based on this. Each edition of *Cosmopolitan* analyzed was scanned, grouped based on year, and the content sorted via spreadsheet. By analyzing advertisements and their surrounding content from each year starting in 1950 and ending in 2015, it attempts to show that advertisements use the stereotypes of women and female gender roles to sell beauty products that utilize women in overtly and overly sexualized ways to obtain love by reaching an idealized beauty standard.

### *Primary Sources*

The main research is focused on archives of *Cosmopolitan* magazines and the advertisements featured within them. These archives have been obtained and used through the University of Oregon Knight Library, Multnomah County Library, Salem Public Library, and Inter Library Loans from Texas, Oklahoma, and California. Each February edition of the magazine was scanned and saved as a full-color PDF (unless on microfiche and only in black and white). The editions came either individually per monthly issue (as would have been distributed) or bound in six-month increments—often with the front cover torn out.

### *Secondary Sources*

In addition to the primary sources, the use of secondary materials such as scholarly articles about advertising, gender roles, and media theories (**Existing Literature**) strengthen the argument and trends found in primary sources. These articles, books, and films are then used in **Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings** and woven throughout each chapter to strengthen the Thesis' argument and to examine themes uncovered with the primary sources.

### *How to Measure Portrayals*

The advertisements span over fifty years from 1950 to 2015 for which, every year available with unavoidable gaps, the Thesis will focus on five to 10 advertisements. The advertisements feature a woman as the main 'character' whom is selling a beauty product such as a skin care product, perfume, makeup, or other beauty enhancing product. The portrayal of love through sexualization in these beauty ads will

in part be measured by answering the following questions: Are their breasts a main focal point? Are their clothes revealing? Do they seem to be in a seductive pose? This will also play into objectification, as this Thesis will be looking if both the product and the women are seemingly being sold. As far as love, the analysis will also measure if ideals for women are being simultaneously sold with the beauty products. As per the hypothesis, the ads, through time, will likely change with the ideals of the time period—for example, there might be a perspective change from using these beauty products to increase chances of love to using beauty products to assert independence and, ultimately, find love.

In addition to the visuals in the ads, the titles of the articles surrounding them will be recorded to reveal content that readers are exposed to without confusing the copy analysis of the ads. The related aspects of advertising for and with women such as the male gaze (**Chapter 1**), placement of the advertisement within the context of the magazine, and popular culture themes of beauty and sex for each time period are also imperative in the analysis and findings of these ads. **Chapter 4 and 5** will analyze, for example, the amount of copy and the content of the copy for the beauty product and if it mentions ‘love,’ if the model is holding the product or if the product seems to be secondary to her, and other props or objects used in conjunction with the beauty product.



## Chapter 4: *Cosmopolitan* Advertisements

### *Overview*

There are 526 advertisements that have been analyzed and categorized for the purpose of this Thesis in order to find trends and support the Hypothesis. Although there are gaps in the years researched, the information is as complete as possible given the uneven distribution of the primary sources. Examples of pertinent ads are included in this chapter. The ads were viewed independently of editorial content, but certain article titles are provided in **Chapter 5** in order to deepen the possible meaning and implications of the advertisements. An analysis of categories, decades, and covers is included.

### *Categories*

After going through each ad for every year scanned, I placed each one in a category based on repeated themes that arose. Initially, there were over 15 categories that were narrowed into six: Seduction, Standing Out, Submission, Obtaining Perfection, Enhancing Oneself, and Natural.

Seduction's category includes four main subcategories: Sex, Romance, Sensuality, and Highlighted Body Part. Standing Out has three subcategories: Colorful, Active, and Independent. For Submission, the two subcategories are Staying in the Background and Softness. Obtaining Perfection has five subcategories: Hiding Imperfections, Protecting Oneself, Skinniness as Beauty, Defying Age, and Ugly as Shameful. Enhancing Oneself's three subcategories include: Adding to Beauty, Maintaining Health/Hygiene, and Attractiveness as Happiness. The last category,

Natural, has two subcategories: Nude and Natural Beauty. All subcategories have been broken up as such based on key terms in copy and image in the ad.

The data shown is interpreted and discussed in detail in **Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings.**

### *Tables*

The following tables break down the ads into the six categories by occurrence and percentage for each corresponding year.

<b>1950s</b>	Seduction	Standing Out	Submission	Obtaining Perfection	Enhancing Oneself	Natural
Occurrences	0	2	14	8	12	9
Percentage of <b>45</b> Total	0%	4.5%	31%	17.8%	26.7%	20%

Table 1: **“1950s Ad Data.”** Numbers and percentages are based on the 45 total ads examined from this decade and the corresponding placement into categories.

<b>1960s</b>	Seduction	Standing Out	Submission	Obtaining Perfection	Enhancing Oneself	Natural
Occurrences	8	9	9	8	4	11
Percentage of <b>49</b> Total	16.3%	18.4%	18.4%	16.3%	8.2%	22.4%

Table 2: **“1960s Ad Data.”** Numbers and percentages are based on the 49 total ads examined from this decade and the corresponding placement into categories.

<b>1970s</b>	Seduction	Standing Out	Submission	Obtaining Perfection	Enhancing Oneself	Natural
Occurrences	26	20	10	9	6	12
Percentage of <b>83</b> Total	31.3%	24.1%	12.1%	10.8%	7.2%	14.5%

Table 3: **“1970s Ad Data.”** Numbers and percentages are based on the 83 total ads examined from this decade and the corresponding placement into categories.

<b>1980s</b>	Seduction	Standing Out	Submission	Obtaining Perfection	Enhancing Oneself	Natural
Occurrences	15	39	11	13	7	25
Percentage of <b>110</b> Total	13.6%	35.5%	10%	11.8%	6.4%	22.7%

Table 4: **“1980s Ad Data.”** Numbers and percentages are based on the 110 total ads examined from this decade and the corresponding placement into categories.

<b>1990s</b>	Seduction	Standing Out	Submission	Obtaining Perfection	Enhancing Oneself	Natural
Occurrences	23	25	4	12	6	21
Percentage of <b>91</b> Total	25.3%	27.5%	4.4%	13.2%	6.6%	23%

Table 5: **“1990s Ad Data.”** Numbers and percentages are based on the 91 total ads examined from this decade and the corresponding placement into categories.

<b>2000s</b>	Seduction	Standing Out	Submission	Obtaining Perfection	Enhancing Oneself	Natural
Occurrences	34	28	4	7	3	10
Percentage of <b>86</b> Total	39.5%	32.6%	4.7%	8.1%	3.5%	11.6%

Table 6: **“2000s Ad Data.”** Numbers and percentages are based on the 86 total ads examined from this decade and the corresponding placement into categories.

<b>2010s</b>	Seduction	Standing Out	Submission	Obtaining Perfection	Enhancing Oneself	Natural
Occurrences	23	25	1	2	2	9
Percentage of <b>62</b> Total	37.1%	40.3%	1.6%	3.2%	3.2%	14.6%

Table 7: **“2010s Ad Data.”** Numbers and percentages are based on the 62 total ads examined from this decade and the corresponding placement into categories.

## 1950s

The 1950s were in the middle of the Postwar Era in America and the advertisements were following suit in the “boom” that was occurring and the “return to traditional family values” (Sivulka, 213). During this decade, “most advertisers portrayed women as wives and mothers despite the fact that about 31 percent of all women were employed in 1950” (Sivulka, 213) which, in turn, led to the representation of female consumers (most often middle class) in these roles “sacrifi[cing] their aspirations to pamper their husbands” and working in limited stereotypes (Sivulka, 220). **Table 1** shows the breakdown of ads.

The archives available from the 1950s included: '50, '53, '54, '55, '56, '57, '58, and '59. The largest percentage from this decade of the research included is Submission followed by Enhancing oneself and Natural. The lower percentages for Seduction and Standing Out are perhaps not surprising with the ideal of traditional family values during this era and the, arguably, more conservative use of media. The *Cosmopolitan* editions for this decade reflected this in the long form stories and advertisements that were mostly about the household and the practical beauty products. However, the love culture is apparent in ads such as Mahler's (**Fig. 1**), Norform's (**Fig. 2**) and Nestle (**Fig. 3**).



Figure 1: “Mahler’s 1956.” Although a smaller ad, the copy is poignantly highlighting societal values for women in particular.

This Mahler’s ad features an illustration, but the woman’s smile and self-voyeurism coupled with copy like “Brings relief and social happiness,” is an example of Enhancing Oneself and using a beauty product to bring about these positive consequences. The implication that this advertisement has in the love culture is a focus on removing of imperfection rather than adding to beauty with a product that shows a beauty standard for the time period and the copy alludes to these ideals bringing about happiness. The addition of the tagline, “New Beauty for You” is further interesting in suggesting a renewal of self worth through applied beauty practices and products.

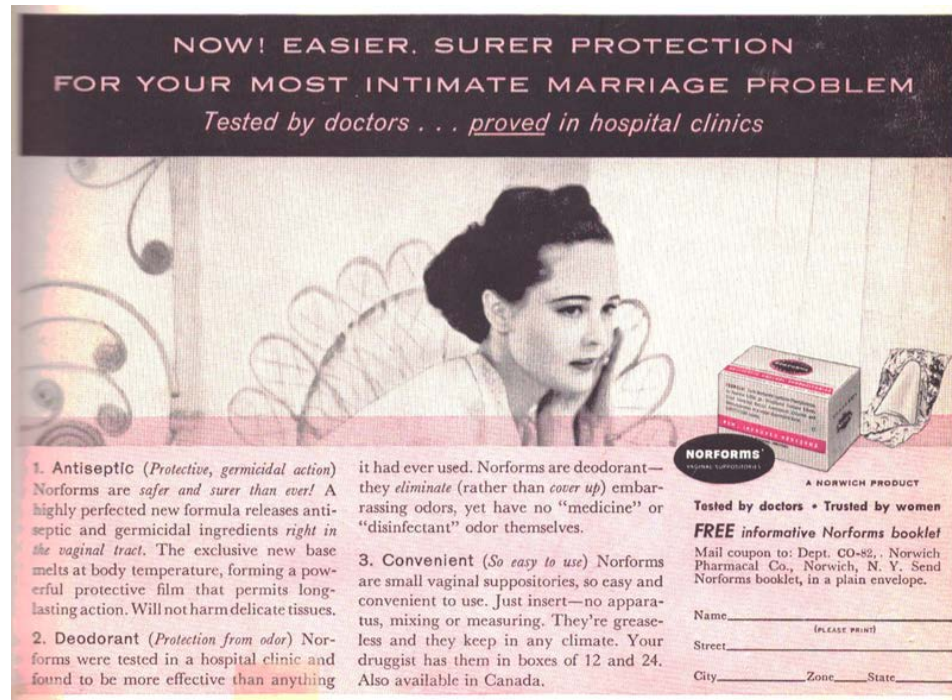


Figure 2: “Norforms 1958.” Continued into the early ‘60s, these advertisements featured concerned looking women and equated marriage problems with feminine problems.

The Norform’s ad from 1958 shows a woman at what looks to be a vanity table, holding her hand on her face and looking off to the side. This ad is part of a series that was also included in ‘55, ‘60, ‘62, and ‘63 and equates feminine problems with marriage problems, which are ultimately a woman’s job to fix. Although “love” is not expressly talked about, the idea of intimate marriage problem alludes to sex and love (and, perhaps, love is not as important as sex) and the ‘fairer’ sex’s role in this equation. Additionally, “in the twentieth century, prostitutes have had a central role in developing cosmetics. For them, sexiness is an occupational necessity, and hence anything that makes them look young, flushed, and fertile is quickly assimilated,” and is perhaps implied with products such as Norform’s and its allusion to an ‘intimate’ marriage problem (Twitchell 2000, 118).



Figure 3: “Nestle 1955.” Before and after ad for Nestle hair with themes of submission and beauty.

The last ad example for the 1950s is an ad from 1955 for Nestle hair color. The small ad is demonstrative and shows a before and after photo of a woman with muted and darker tones versus brighter tones surrounding the copy, “Look Younger, Lovlier.” The headline copy, “Are you the Woman That Nobody Sees?” is arguably the most telling and puts this ad in the Submission category. Although ads during this decade were often smaller without too many images, the change in color tone to demonstrate a younger, brighter face is indicative of beauty values as well as the body copy that this product will help women “Have a new personality...new attention...new thrills..[and] bring out all the hidden beauty in your hair” indicates that this beauty standard fits into the love culture because it will help a woman achieve more than just beauty—which ‘thrills’ and ‘attention’ suggests. Furthermore, as outline by James Twitchell in *Adcult USA*, “Clairol

also make hair accessory, changeable at will,” which seems to be mirrored in Nestle’s ad above and the idea of a ‘new’ self (Twitchell 1996, 147).

### 1960s

Previous to the 1960s, the format of *Cosmopolitan* featured long-form narrative and short stories with very few advertisements (and those ads featured were arguably more wholesome/traditional in nature.). In December of 1965, Helen Gurley Brown’s tabloid-style title, “Uncensored: How Girls Really Get A Husband,” “exhibited a *Cosmopolitan* trademark for identification, or lack of it” (Landers, 244-5). The copy for the articles was shortened and the advertisements became more prominent and more sexualized—they changed “to reach an audience that had dramatically changed when the baby boomer generation came of age” (Sivulka, 256). **Table 2** shows the breakdown of ads.

The archives available from the 1960s included: ’60, ’61, ’62, ’63, ’64, ’65, ’66, and ’67. The percentage of most categories from the advertisements examined from this decade are relatively even with the exception of Natural as the most common and Enhancing Oneself as the least common. Submission is still a relatively large percentage, yet it is with the same frequency as Standing Out. Seduction, which was not a category displayed in the 1950s, now has a significant percentage of the advertisements examined. This changing love culture and societal values in ads is displayed in examples such as Fems (**Fig. 4**), Max Factor (**Fig. 5**), and Coty (**Fig. 6**).





Figure 4: “**Fems 1964.**” Half page ad featuring a woman in full evening wear in field.

The copy is example of the Submission category.

The Fems ad from 1964 does not overtly show Submission, but does allude to it with the copy “So soft you forget them...so safe you can...” Although referring to the feminine protection this product offers, it seems to imply that women are as soft and safe as this product they can use. The simple fact of the woman in full dress clothes in the middle of a field is an unnatural scene and, although her clothes can be interpreted as daring, the copy perhaps suggests otherwise. Within the context of the love culture, submission plays on traditional roles of love and beauty and uses these to suppress women.

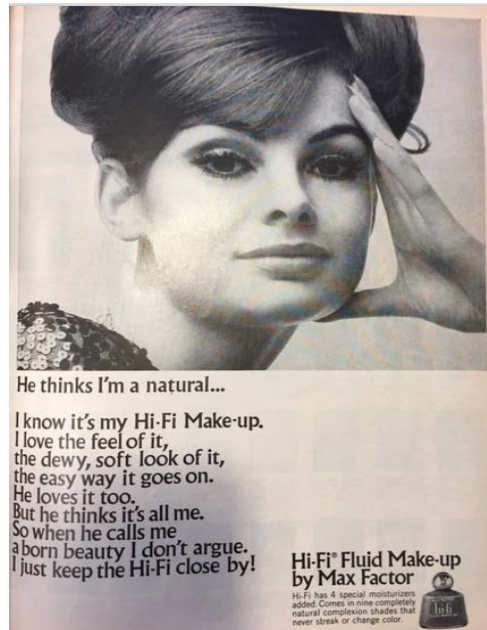


Figure 5: “**1965 Max Factor.**” Full-page ad highlighting the importance of beauty as looking natural to others (especially to a man).

The full-page advertisement from Max Factor is an example of Natural from the 1960s editions. The copy “He thinks I’m a natural...” outlines the secret that her makeup makes her look natural and her man (assumedly) thinks this is true. The woman in the ad stares directly into the camera and her airbrushed and heavily made up face juxtaposes the copy of looking natural. Interestingly, the addition of “So when he calls me a born beauty I don’t argue” could allude to a deception of women and also a silencing of them, yet also implies that the beauty this makeup creates is empowering—technically the bearer of a secret holds power over the deceived. The implication of this ad in the love culture is that, by using makeup to look natural, beauty is established yet it must be kept from a lover in order to remain ‘natural.’



Figure 6: “Coty 1967.” Full-page fragrance ad for Emeraude example of Seduction.

The advertisement from Coty’s fragrance in 1967 is an example of Seduction because the woman half in shadows is dabbing perfume on her breasts, which become the focal point especially because her face is covered in shadows and by her hair. The copy “Want him to be more of a man? Try being more of a woman. Feel feminine all over in a mist of Emeraude...to be more of a woman anytime” shows the importance of being feminine and the dichotomy of man versus woman in this love culture. The copy also suggests that femininity relies on masculinity and vice versa and, thus, both must be maintained to keep balance in the love culture.

## *1970s*

The advertisements created in the '70s were created in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, and the era of the Creative Revolution (Sivulka, 246-7). The resulting counterculture changed marketers who “began to slant their campaigns toward the nation’s teenagers and young adults” (Sivulka, 253) and their counterculture ideals—health foods, encounter groups, sensitivity training—began to color the ads as well (Sivulka, 255). While environmentalism and feminism were large movements affecting the values portrayed in media (Sivulka, 269), the diversity did not necessarily carry over into all ads featuring women—as most continued the stereotypes (Sivulka, 274). **Table 3** shows the breakdown of ads.

The archives available from the 1970s included: '71, '74, '75, '76, '77, '78, and '79. From the 1960s to 1970s, the percentage of Seduction advertisements increased and, for this decade of this Thesis’s research, it is the most frequent category. Submission has decreased, as well as Enhancing Oneself and Standing Out has, unsurprisingly, increased with Seduction. In my analysis, there is an increase in the use of age-defying products, nudity used in ads, and overt sex and sexuality from the previous two decades. Examples of this are shown with Pond’s (**Fig. 7**), Revlon (**Fig. 8**), and Charles of the Ritz (**Fig. 9**).



Figure 7: “**Pond’s 1971.**” Full-page advertisement for Pond’s beauty product is a throwback to the traditional woman.

The 1971 advertisement for Pond’s Skin Basics collection features a woman in what looks to be period clothing, which the copy highlights by saying “Pond’s used to appeal to ladies who wore cozy, warm shawls.” However, the ad has a modern twist with the woman’s contemporary makeup and hair and the added copy: “...But this is 1971. And now when it’s chilly inside baby, she’d rather look silky and sheer than bundled and bulky.” As an example of Standing Out, this ad seeks to equate outdated and contemporary beauty routines, yet maintains the importance of beauty—just under a different set of values (i.e. sheer versus bulky). Arguably, the simple fact that this ad’s image and copy seek to transform stale gender roles makes it an example of Independence.

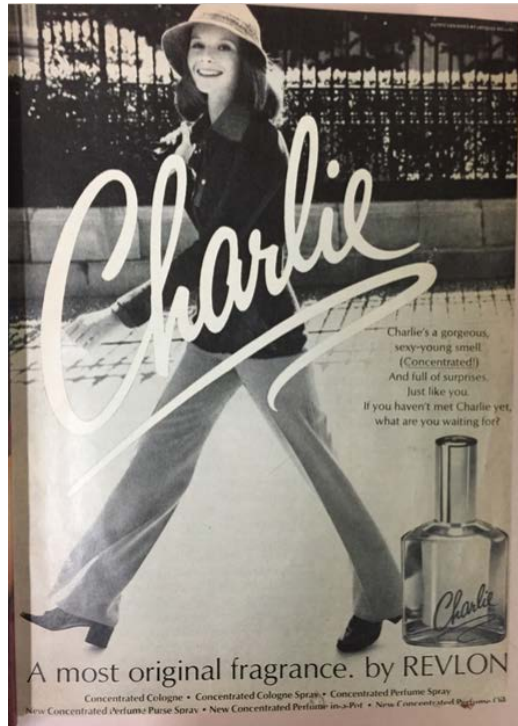


Figure 8: “**Revlon 1974.**” Full page Charlie perfume ad is one in series of famous advertisements known for highlighting women’s potential.

The 1974 Charlie perfume ad by Revlon features a (fashionable) woman walking in what seems to be a park joined by copy: “Charlie’s a gorgeous sexy-young smell...And full of surprises. Just like you. If you haven’t met Charlie yet, what are you waiting for?” The idea of being sexy and young as well as individual is highlighted in the ad and the androgyny of the name Charlie perhaps pokes fun at patriarchy. In the 1970s, Revlon’s Charlie campaign was seen as portraying the independent woman “making her way in a formerly male-dominated world” (Sivulka, 279), which was a consequence of the social and political movements at this time and displayed a slight change in the love culture that had been previously established. The campaign is widely regarded as one of three that “reflected this change in American society’s attitude toward women” (Sivulka, 276).

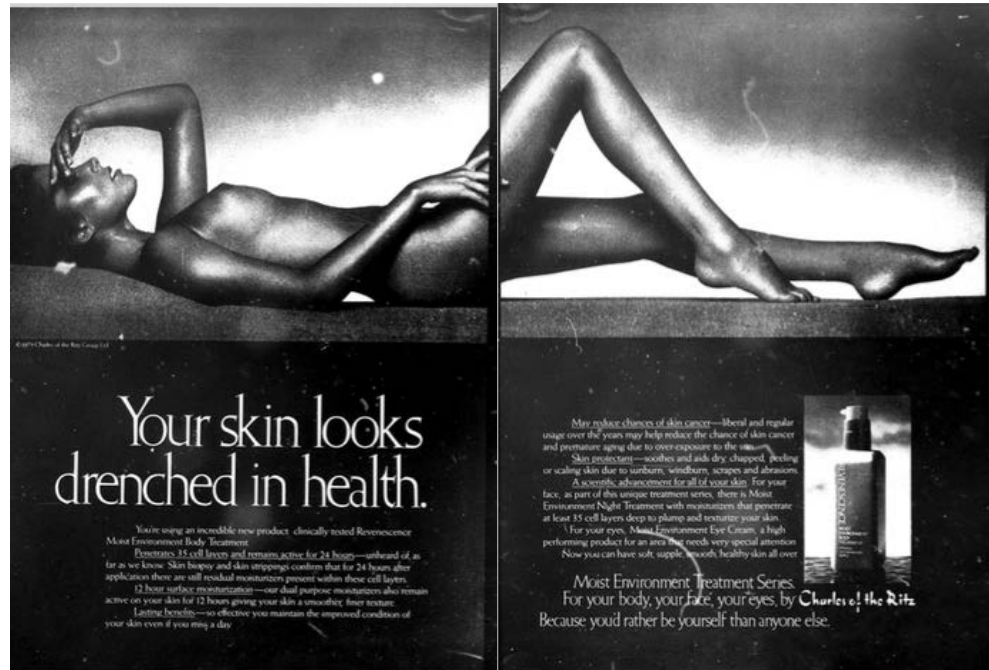


Figure 9: “Charles of the Ritz 1979.” Naked woman selling the “Moist Environment Treatment Series” cream.

The ad displayed in **Figure 9** is from Charles of the Ritz’s 1979 collection for multi purpose body cream. It is part of the Natural category for the nudity displayed and the copy “drenched in health,” yet it also could unsurprisingly fit in the Seduction section. The naked woman lies down across the top of the advertisement with glowing skin, one leg bent, and a hand over her eyes— anonymizing her (yet making her *any* woman) The copy at the end reads, “Because you’d rather be yourself than anyone else,” which also alludes to the Standing Out category, yet the woman is covering part of herself by her hand placement. From the perspective of using sex to sell, this ad is certainly utilizing these techniques and, simultaneously, over-sexualizing to obtain beauty.

## 1980s

By the 1980s, the culture had been influenced by the riotous political and social atmosphere that began in the '60s and continued for over two decades. At this time, advertisers began to “alter their portrayals of women due to forces of feminism” as well as the increases of women in agencies and increased divorce rates (Sivulka, 313). The influence that changes in society had on advertising was three fold including the strategies, themes, and messages. Furthermore, “following the currents of culture, advertisers tied their products to distinct lifestyles, immediate gratification, youth, and sexuality,” all of which was mirrored in *Cosmopolitan's* use of advertisements (Sivulka, 309). **Table 4** shows the breakdown of ads.

The archives available from the 1980s included the full run from 1980 to 1989. Throughout this decade's February issues, the most drastic change is the drop in percentage of Seduction advertisements. Most of the other categories stayed near the same percentile they were in the previous decade, but Standing Out increased by about 10%. In general, this was due to the rise in advertisements about being colorful and showcasing independence/uniqueness through this color. Examples of this change in the ad culture are shown with L'Erin Cosmetics (**Fig. 10**), Coty (**Fig. 11**), and Nivea (**Fig. 12**).





Figure 10: “**L’Erin Cosmetics 1981.**” Advertisement featuring four frames of women who are highlighting their eyes by hiding half of face.

The 1981 L’Erin Cosmetics advertisement is an example from Submission because of the copy that says, “When you speak with your eyes, speak softly with L’Erin.” This alludes to being “soft-spoken” and demure—similar to advertisements that showed women knowing their place and being put in the background in the 1950s. The copy continues with, “*Shh*. No harsh tones here. L’Erins latest shades say luscious color, but in a whisper” and the advertisement’s four frames of women show the women covering her mouth by using her hair, gloves, or clothes which could arguably show that women’s boldness should come from their makeup, not their lips.



Figure 11: “**Coty 1985.**” Perfume ad featuring man in background and woman and the act of selecting only one (of each).

The above advertisement from 1985 features Coty’s perfume and the copy “I love only one man. I wear only one fragrance.” Alongside this copy, the woman is wearing white clothing, which is often used to symbolize innocence and purity that the light behind her hair may allude to as well. The man in the ad is barely in the frame and looks at her from above and behind—she is sitting and automatically in a lower position—and seems to be smelling her (safe to assume based on the product sold). This advertisement in the Seduction category and Love subcategory, seems to represent both and the idea of selecting only one man and one fragrance is a choice for women that could suggest more power, yet there is a connection drawn between obtaining both.



Figure 12: “Nivea 1988.” Full spread ad for Nivea product line featuring a working woman and her school age daughter, as well as themes of maintaining youth.

The Nivea ad from 1988 is categorized as Standing Out in the subcategory of Independence, which includes the working woman. It features a woman in a skirt suit with briefcase meant to symbolize she is a businesswoman of some degree holding the hand of her young daughter and, assumedly, picking her up from school. The main copy is: “Is your face paying the price of success?” followed by “You work hard at work, you work hard at home. You’re under a lot of pressure.” This copy suggests that women in the workforce who balance this role with being a mother make sacrifices that are then displayed on their faces and show age and weakness. The consequences of this independence are a less youthful face, which this product line suggests is important in beauty and family life (which includes love).

## *1990s*

The market for women changed yet again in the 1990s and the aftereffects of the feminist movement and women's move into positions of power changed their buying power which "did not go unnoticed, as marketers who understood the women's market changed their fashion, beauty and cosmetics...advertising" (Sivulka, 342). What this did to marketing was change the ways in which advertisers reached out to women who, after all, held more of the buying power than they had in previous centuries. The brands, and their subsequent ads, "addressed women as active, confident, and professionally accomplished" (Sivulka, 342). **Table 5** shows the breakdown of ads.

The archives available from the 1990s included the full run from 1990 to 1999. From the 1980s, Seduction increased by 10%, Standing Out decreased, but still stayed a relatively large category, and the last three categories changed only minimally. However, Submission dropped below 5% of the advertisements analyzed—the lowest percentage of the four previous decades. This profile of the decade in terms of love, sex, and beauty is shown with examples: Estee Lauder (**Fig. 13**), Matrix (**Fig. 14**), and Cover Girl (**Fig. 15**)



Figure 13: “**Estee Lauder 1993.**” Full spread perfume ad with limited copy featuring a bride and young boy.

The “Beautiful” Estee lauder perfume ad from 1993 shows a bride in a huge gown holding a large pastel bouquet looking down while a young boy in white peeks in the door—presumably to see if she’s ready to get married. Because there is only one word of copy besides the company name, the story rests on the interpretation of the images. In this case, the simple fact that the ad features a bride preparing for her wedding day suggests that love is an aspiration and is beautiful and the woman who chooses to wear this perfume is beautiful as well—and can have it all. In regards to the love culture, this ad is selling a beauty product in order to appeal to those who see marriage and love as this aspiration and as beautiful in and of itself.



Figure 14: “**Matrix 1998.**” Among other trends, the 1980s featured more ads about physical strength that was then likened to products.

The above Matrix ad from 1998 shows a woman in a V position (arguably a sexual shape) with her body with her head back and arms around her legs, which are pointed straight into the air. She is wearing a black full body swimsuit and has a muscular body that highlights the copy, “Introducing hair that’s physically fit.” Not only is it seemingly an aspiration to have strength and flexibility, but these same qualities are important for a beauty regime and for hair. The change in beauty’s idealized standards is one seemingly societally driven with the onslaught of fitness literature and advertisements through *Cosmopolitan* during this decade and alludes to women’s increased sense of place and power. Within the love culture, this was a new aspiration.



Figure 15: “CoverGirl 1998.” Advertisement featuring Tyra Banks as CoverGirl and in testimonial to product usability.

The 1998 CoverGirl ad shows Tyra Banks as the endorser and model and simply includes her headshot, the product, and copy. The copy reads: “Your personality needs layers. Your face doesn’t.” This ad fits in the Natural category because of the reference to layers of makeup in the copy and the fresh-faced look that Tyra Banks is sporting is in direct contrast to makeup on models in earlier years. The addition of the “Easy Breezy Beautiful” tagline to Cover Girl (established in the ‘80s) aids the message of the natural look to makeup. Although this ad is not overtly sexualized, the idea of having the “ultimate finish” for beauty sold by a famous supermodel seems to be selling beauty as an aspect of a woman’s personality which, arguably, could be used to obtain a mate.

*2000s*

The Digital Age beginning in the 2000s revolutionized the ways in which media were viewed, but the political landscape involving 9/11 and the recession “all contributed to a record decline in advertising” (Sivulka, 368). Although the consumer behavior increased again in 2005, the “recession had caused profound changes in consumer behavior” with the American Dream changing and the previous ideals of society altering with them (Sivulka, 363). The gender roles and increased power of women—be in sexually, with work, or in romance—changed most products to become genderless (Sivulka, 376). However, the ads that remained gendered included “feminine hygiene and cosmetics,” yet also juxtaposed this with an increase in more contemporary messaging about women (Sivulka, 377-8). **Table 6** shows the breakdown of ads.

The archives available from the 2000s included: '00, '01, '02, '03, '04, '06, '07, '08, and '09. From the previous decade, Seduction and Standing Out increased and Obtaining Perfection decreased more drastically than the other categories, showing a slight change in the ads at this time. Examples of this are shown by Lucky (**Fig. 16**), Mederma (**Fig. 17**), and Nivea (**Fig. 18**).





Figure 16: “**Lucky 2001.**” Full page fragrance ad featuring stylized retro (1950s perhaps) and set in a diner with man and woman.

The 2001 Lucky Brand ad for their fragrance “Lucky You” is a stylized retro ad with a woman in pin up style with midriff showing and tied blouse with flowers revealing her cleavage. The woman leans over the man and places a cherry in her open mouth (the milkshake also has a cherry and is possibly an allusion to sex and female sexuality). The man in a white shirt is sitting down at breast-level and staring at her chest with mouth open in shock. Yet the staging that she is looking off and standing above him while he is stuck in a cliché position could display female empowerment as well. The copy “Get Lucky! XXXOOO” refers to the overt sexuality of the ad and is also a play on words with the brand name. The love culture of using this product to become ‘lucky’ and also being sold the male/female dynamic that the ad portrays visually.



Figure 17: “**Mederma 2004.**” Full page ad for scar cream featuring nude woman and simple background.

The above 2004 Mederma ad features a naked woman sitting with arms crossed over chest and partially covered in shadows. The copy, “We are all beautifully sculpted. Staying that way might require some refinishing” alludes to imperfections and the reference to ‘sculpted’ and ‘refinishing’ likens woman (and this woman in particular) to an object. Copy also points to certain areas on the woman’s body—such as “bike accident” by her knee and “mole removal” on her chin. This highlights the woman’s imperfections and seems to suggest that by becoming “softer” and reversing these imperfections, one can become beautifully sculpted again. In the love culture, this ad is using nudity to showcase and highlight certain aspects of a woman’s body and also references the obtainment of perfection.



Figure 18: “Nivea 2009.” Full page ad for Nivea’s Smooth Sensation lotion featuring male and female models.

The 2009 ad from Nivea is categorized as Seduction in the subcategory of Love because of the copy and suggestive imagery. The product being sold is Smooth Sensation lotion and the headline copy reads: “Smoothness. Cupid’s Secret Weapon.” Other copy alludes to ‘sensations’, ‘delicate’, and ‘intense’. The woman is mainly in the frame and she is leaning back with eyes closed into the man behind her who is looking down and about to kiss her shoulder. She seems to be wearing a silk slip (bedroom clothes) and the strap is coming off her shoulder. The accompanying tagline is “touch and be touched” which also gives reference to the sensual nature of the ad. However, though sexual, the copy referring to Cupid seems to suggest that this is an intimate moment between a couple and smoothness (via this product) is how such a moment is obtained.

## *2010s*

Advertising in the 2010s is still firmly planted in the Digital Age and, as of yet, still an unfinished decade in terms of complete analysis. However, the consumer and advertising behavior shown in the *2000s* copy and by Sivulka's book remain true during the first half of the current decade and are shown in the data. In addition to this, "the use of overt sexual appeals in print advertising has increased considerably in contemporary advertising practice," yet the topic has remained controversial into the current decade (Blair et. al, 111). **Table 7** shows the breakdown of ads.

The archives available from the 2010s included: '10, '11, '12, '13, '14, and '15. Of the last five years into the most current year with a February edition, the percentages are largest for Seduction, Standing Out, and Natural, a trend that has remained since the 1970s. Standing Out is yet again leading and has switched with Seduction while the other three categories—Submission, Obtaining Perfection, and Enhancing Oneself—have shrunk. The most notable change is Submission, which is below 2%. During these five years, the change in numbers suggests a bolder show of independence from women and the ads that use them. Some examples of this are Chanel (**Fig. 19**), DKNY (**Fig. 20**), and CoverGirl (**Fig. 21**).



Figure 19: “**Chanel 2011.**” This perfume ad features an oversized bottle that is being held by a flowered woman.

The 2011 Chanel “Chance” perfume advertisement plays on a multitude of layers in the love culture. The woman featured is naked with only a cord of flower vines with pink flowers covering her (deflowering is a reference made about women). She holds the oversized perfume bottle with eyes closed in an embrace that behooves a lover. Lastly, the copy, “It’s Your Chance. Embrace It,” adds nuanced empowerment to the narrative with the idea of embracing it (the perfume) and it (life) and the pronoun “your” gives power to the woman *reading* the ad. The use of sex to sell beauty in order to obtain something is tied into the love culture.

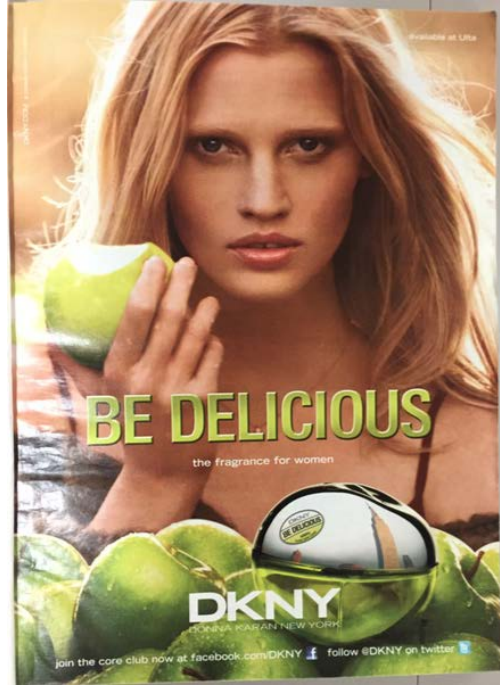


Figure 20: “**DKNY 2012.**” Ad for DKNY fragrance featuring women with apple and product in the shape of an apple.

The 2012 DKNY ad features a woman holding a bitten apple with the sun shining behind her and the copy “Be Delicious.” The green tones and outdoor setting possibly allude to the Garden of Eden and Eve’s bitten apple—sinful and self-indulgent. The idea is also that the woman (and other’s using the product) is delicious because of the product and smells delicious as well. “Using Woman in Advertisement as a Symbol of Sex: Cosmopolitan Magazine Example” by Ismail Güdeklî examines a similar ad in this campaign by using semiotics, suggesting the copy “highlights the deliciousness of woman as apple” and the bright green color scheme “highlights the vitality, freshness and naturalness” of the woman and product (Güdeklî, 6136).



Figure 21: “CoverGirl 2015.” Full spread ad highlights woman’s mouth and the makeup with fruit themes.

The 2015 CoverGirl ad is in the Seduction category because of the overt sexuality and the undertones as well. For instance, the woman holds a cherry between her teeth with cherry red lips (the product) and all the viewer sees of the model is her nose and mouth. The copy, “Colorlicious” alludes to icious words such as luscious, promiscuous, delicious, etc. and the word “succulent” combined with the image of the cherries dripping color onto the product make the tone sexual. The color red and the idea of a cherry is classically paired with women and the use of these symbols and meanings to sell beauty are a large part of the love culture that has continued into our present year.



## Campaigns

Specific campaigns highlighted the changes in ads and the love culture through the five decades. Many of these campaigns spanned multiple decades highlighted in this Thesis and, by doing so, reveal changes in the ad's concepts and also a surprising lack of change.

**Jontue:** Revlon's Jontue perfume campaign in the 1970s and 1980s is in the Seduction category for each of its respective years because of its themes of love and the duality of women being "Sensual...but not too far from innocence" (**Fig. 22**).





From the 1976 to the 1983 installations, the copy remains the same—as well as the only copy in the ad. For all of the ads, the color is muted and soft and a woman holds on to either her hat, a horse, or both and looks off in another direction. The women are clothed, but more skin is shown throughout the years with the most being in the 1983 ad as the woman drapes herself on the horse. The installation from 1987 shows a change in copy and concept. This year shows a woman and man by a river with her leaning into him and a horse tied in the background (perhaps as a reference to earlier campaigns). The copy reads: “If you believe in one great love as many people do...then you should wear Jontue.” Interestingly, the copy (and the addition of a male model) indicates a shift from the subcategory of Sensuality to Love, which displays a change in the love culture.

1957

1961

1971

Wait...  
Wait...  
Wait...

Why?

There's absolutely no reason why every normal woman, married or unmarried, shouldn't use Tampax. Millions and millions of women all over the world have used billions of doctor-invented Tampax. Why shouldn't you?

What are you waiting for? Why should you continue to play "martyr" when Tampax' internal sanitary protection will make you less conscious of "time of the month" . . . permit you to continue all your normal activities unhampered by annoying reminders? It helps women to be carefree, poised. Why not you?

Just read a few of the many advantages you receive by using Tampax: No tapers! No belt-pain-pal business! Can't feel Tampax when in place! No chance of odor forming! Easy to dispose of! Convenient to carry extras!

So do try Tampax this very month. You're the one who benefits! Tampax comes in 3 absorbencies (Regular, Super, Junior) to provide for individual needs. At drug and notion counters everywhere. Economy package gives an average 4-months' supply. Tampax Incorporated, Palmer, Mass.

© 1957 T. C. P. Co., Inc.

Recommended by a doctor—  
used by millions of women

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ONLY  
DIE-HARDS  
DON'T DARE!

Who'd ever think you'd see a divided skirt on city streets—and one that looks smart as paint!

Who'd ever think that girls could dye their hair blond as readily as their mothers used to color their lips? Who'd ever think that eye makeup would be the daytime star of the '60s?

Who'd have ever thought—never far from you—that millions of girls would be using billions of Tampax.

Only die-hards don't dare! Tampax' internal sanitary protection is such a clear-cut improvement!

There's no bulk, no chafing, no irritation. Why, you aren't even aware you're wearing Tampax!

Odor can't form. Disposal problems vanish. You can even bathe or shower wearing Tampax.

Tampax is actually neat and quick to insert with its skin-smooth applicator. And a package of 10 costs only 49¢ in your choice of any absorbency: Regular, Super or Junior.

Don't be a die-hard! Join the millions who *do* use Tampax. You'll be more than glad you did.

TAMPAX

Incorporated,  
Palmer, Mass.

The best way  
to make up  
for lost  
time:

don't lose it  
in the first place

Today's women are demanding their part of the action. Sitting by even during monthly periods is just no much lost time.

With Tampax tampons, you don't have to be a bench warmer on those difficult days of the month. Because Tampax tampons are worn internally, you can go anywhere, wear anything, do anything in comfort. And with complete confidence. The contour-applicator enables you to place the tampon in proper position where it expands in three directions for maximum protection. There's never any odor or anything showing. No chafing or irritation either.

Why not start right with Tampax tampons? Because you have better things to do with your time than waste it.

Right from the start . . .

TAMPAX.

SANITARY PROTECTION WORN INTERNALLY  
MADE ONLY BY TAMPAX INCORPORATED, PALMER, MASS.

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Figure 23: **“Tampax Across the Decades.”** Tampax ads showcasing female independence through their sexuality.

The advertisements from Tampax are not necessarily of the same campaign (although, arguably, the ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s examples have a similar stylistic quality), yet they maintain a cohesive message and relevancy in the overall love culture. The 1957 ad shows a headshot of a woman wearing modest clothes and the copy reads: “Wait...Wait...Wait...Why? There's every reason why every normal woman, married or unmarried, shouldn't use Tampax...Why should you continue to play 'martyr' when Tampax' internal protection will make you less conscious of 'time of the month.'” Although copy-heavy, it highlights female independence despite being married or unmarried and also focuses on normalcy. The 1961 ad is also copy-heavy and says, “Only Die-Hards Don't Dare! Who'd ever think you'd see a divided skirt on city streets—and one that looks smart as paint! Who'd ever think that girls could dye their

hair blond as readily as their mothers used to color their lips? ... *Who'd have ever thought—twenty-five years ago—that millions of girls would be using billions of Tampax.* Only die-hards don't dare!" The idea of a "divided skirt" (pants) the copy and image show is perhaps playing on greater freedom for women and a step towards some equality with men.

The 1971 ad shows the increased attention to living an active lifestyle and Tampax's role in helping women join by giving them freedom from their period. The copy reads: "The best way to make up for lost time: don't lose it in the first place. Today's women are demanding their part of the action. Sitting by even during monthly periods is just so much lost time. With Tampax tampons, you don't have to be a benchwarmer on those difficult days of the month...Because you have better things to do with your time than waste it." This shows women using their sexuality to their advantage and being part of the action. In 1981, the imagery of the ads changed slightly and the imagery of the women in white (a color of innocence and also of risk during that time of the month) takes up most of the frame and the copy "I Feel Smashin'" and "I can wear tight things!" alludes to a more overt female sexuality obtained in this independence. The last example from 2010, shows pro tennis star Serena Williams as she "shuts out Mother Nature's monthly gift," which uses the power of this female athlete to show that the company encourages women to have strength over themselves and nature.

**Ralph Lauren:** The "Romance" fragrance campaign by Ralph Lauren is in the Seduction category under Love because of the imagery it shows of love throughout the early 2000s to 2015.



Figure 24: “**Ralph Lauren Romance.**” Campaign featuring a male and female model and themes of love and affection.

This 2000s campaign for the company features the simple copy—“Romance”—and uses this as a theme for the imagery within. The women are arguably the main characters, but there is a deeper narrative with the addition of the male models. In all

but the 2015 version of this ad, the faces of both models are half hidden by their surroundings and, for all of them, there is an embrace of some sort between man and woman. 2001, 2008, and 2015 feature the most sensual poses of the six above ads with 2001's beach scene arguably the most overtly sexual—the woman wears a soaked white dress and is lying with the man in the water. The 2002 and 2015 versions show a woman in a position literally above the man and with seemingly more power in the photo and relationship imagery, whereas 2000, 2001, and 2008 have the man above or behind the woman while she holds onto him in some way. The 2013 version stands out because of its color and, also, the male and female characters are portrayed equally. The entirety of this campaign in *Cosmopolitan* shows an intimacy in the love culture, which seemingly always includes sex and power along with intimacy.

### *Covers*

Although not an advertisement, the covers of the February editions of *Cosmopolitan* and their models have evolved throughout the last 50 plus years. The copy on the cover indicates what the edition will include, but it also suggests the public values during any given period of time. The ways in which the cover models dress and pose is also an indication that gives cultural context to the advertisements within—and to the love culture as a whole. In some ways, the covers are advertisements in and of themselves because of the values they display.





Figure 25: “*Cosmopolitan Cover Evolution.*” Sample of covers from the 1950s to the 2010s showing evolution in copy, models, poses, and ideals.

Although the previous cover images are a small sample from the dates analyzed in this Thesis, their evolution can be seen in even this sample from the demure and dependent woman in the ‘50s and ‘60s to the daring woman of the ‘70s through ‘90s and, finally, to the independent and sexually in control woman of the 2000s. The amount and arrangement of the copy has changed somewhat over the last 50 year, but the focus on women living in a man’s world and then women living with a *man* has not changed drastically as such articles show from “A Girl’s Guide to Men” (1966) to “What His Valentine’s Gift Really Means” (2004) suggests that there is still a focus on women understanding men and catering themselves to please them or understand them. However, the addition of long form narration changed from the twentieth-century editions and overt sexuality with articles such as “Exotic Sex Secrets” (2004) and “Try the Sex Diet” (2013) are now commonplace.

#### *Additional Contextual Imagery*

The following images are included to give context to the love culture of the previously outlined decades. Although none of the images on the following page are advertisements, they provide a contextual view into societal thoughts about love, sex, and beauty during a given decade and, also, show the change in *Cosmopolitan*’s use of magazine space. The change from illustrations, switching from how women are objectified, and social commentary make the ads analyzed and their data more relevant.



Figure 26: “1963 Frankly Female.” Article cover images. Pages 90 and 91.

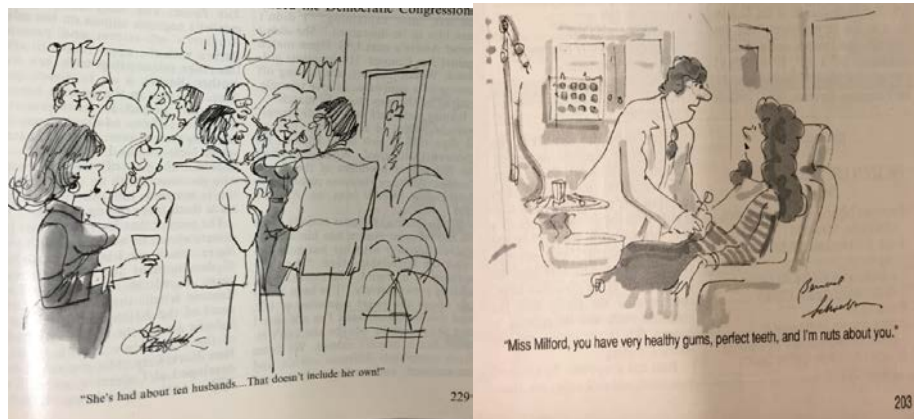


Figure 27: “’94 and ’96 Cartoons.” Social commentary cartoons about love and sex.



Figure 28: “2015 Sexy/Skanky.” Reader fodder categorizing as sexy or skanky.



## Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings

### *Analysis and Trends*

Analysis of the 526 advertisements involved in this research requires context of the ads themselves (images and copy), covers of the editions and their corresponding copy, and related images and copy in editorial that give context, as was shown in **Chapter 4**. Overarching trends for the 65 years studied include: minimizing or hiding imperfections, women as part of the product sold, beauty as an aspiration but not the greatest aspiration (love), beauty as necessity, highlighted femininity and sexuality, and the pleasing of self and, ultimately, another.

“Research on magazine advertising...shows that women, through pose, position, and other nuanced presentations are more likely than men to be shown as sexual objects,” (Merskin, 82). *Images of Powerful Women in the Age of ‘Choice Feminism’* by Erin Hatton and Mary Nell Trautner is one such research that measures “sexualization of culture” based on *Touch* (subtle to sexual), *Pose* (upright to lying down), *Mouth* (mouth closed or smiling to mouth open or object in mouth), *Breast/Chest; Genitals; Buttocks* (on a scale of focal point), *Text* (related to sexuality), and *Head versus Body Shot* (Hatton & Trautner, 69-70). Hatton and Trautner’s mode of measurement and methodology differs from this Thesis, yet many of the above components of the advertisements they studied are mirrored in **Chapter 4’s** data.

To further examine the data and find trends, I analyzed the data from the advertisements collected and, similar to Hatton and Trautner, looked at the percentage of ads with nudity, open mouth, breast/buttocks focal point, and text including “beauty,” “sex/sexy,” and “love/affection.”

**Nudity:** 48 or 9% of ads analyzed featured a woman in some degree of nudity.

Some advertisements showed women naked from the waist up (Feb 1982, Caress), in a fetal position (Feb 1978, Alpha Keri; **Fig. 29**), crouching or low to ground without clothes (Feb 1977, Alpha Keri), in the shower using a product (Feb 1997, Dove), or with a product or hands covering her nakedness. These ads were for a wide variety of beauty products including soap, hair products, and mascara.



Figure 29: “Alpha Keri 1978.” Ad demonstrating nudity and, perhaps, a reference to childlike innocence with the woman’s fetal positioning.

**Open Mouth:** 62 or 12% of ads analyzed featured a woman with a sexualized and open mouth. Many of the ads showed the model with a full open mouth (Feb 1965, Tampax), while others showed partially open lips (Feb 1953, Murine), or with an object near or in her mouth (Feb 1981, Maybelline; **Fig. 30**). Some women had their mouths open in surprise or in the beginning of the smile, but these ads were also for a range of beauty products—not just lipstick as may be assumed.



Figure 30: “**Maybelline 1981.**” Ad demonstrating Open Mouth category with sexualized copy “Take a tip.”

**Breast/Buttocks:** 22 or 4% of ads analyzed seemingly made a woman’s breasts or buttocks the focal point of the ad before or second to the product itself. Many of the advertisements focused on a woman’s cleavage by pointing the object (such as perfume) toward it (Feb 1966, Tuvache), placing or holding the object to cover the model’s breasts (Feb 2014, Herbel Essences; **Fig. 31**), or showed the side of her breasts as the focal point (Feb 2015, Calvin Klein). The buttocks focal point ranged from simply highlighting the lower half of a woman’s body (Feb 2003, Jergens) to showing the back of a woman in the shower using a beauty product (Feb 1980, Neutrogena).



Figure 31: “Herbal Essences 2014.” Ad demonstrating breasts as focal point and product hiding nudity somewhat, but highlight the ‘natural’.

**“Beauty”:** 21 or 4% of advertisements examined used the word “beauty” or “beautiful” in the copy. Most of these ads alluded to uncovering hidden beauty (Feb 1955, Nestle), showed the benefit of seeking out beauty or being beautiful (Feb 1954, Trushay Lotion), or showed new ways to become more beautiful (Feb 1956, Maybelline). There is a distinct change in what defines beauty through the decades examined from subdued demureness in the ‘50s to loud colors in the ‘80s and a change in boldness in women’s hair as well. In the ‘90s and early 2000s, this message seems to change to one of more overt beauty to copy that reminds women of their beauty (Feb 2003, Clairol) or looks at inner beauty (Feb 2008, Lovely).

**“Sex/Sexy”:** 11 or 2% of the ads analyzed used the words “sex” or “sexy.” The ads with this copy tended to focus on sexiness and youth as synonymous (Feb 1974, Revlon), subtle and soft sexiness of the makeup and women (Feb 2013, Maybelline), or focused on which body part in particular was sexy (i.e. mouth) (Feb 1980, Maybelline).

This category did not include ads that had allusions to sex such as Feb 2001 Clairol's copy, "She went all the way." The relatively small percentage of these ads is fairly surprising given the hypothesis of this Thesis, yet the high percentages for ads with nudity, women with sexualized mouths, and highlighted breasts/buttocks suggests that sexuality is still featured in these ads, just perhaps not told as overtly.

**"Love/Romance:"** 36 or 7% of ads analyzed featured the words "love," "lovely/loveliness," or "romance." This analysis does not include ads that *alluded* to love and romance, however. The copy of the ads analyzed sometimes used these words to refer to a significant other (Feb 1971, Frances Denney) while, at other times, referred to loving oneself because of the product (Feb 1962, Tampax). The ads that did talk about loving a significant other or romance tended to be perfume products such as Coty's Feb 1985 and Ralph Lauren's "Romance" perfume campaign in the early 2000s to 2015. The percentage of this copy is larger than "beauty" and "sexy," yet most of the allusions to love are not about romance. However, it may suggest that it is the underlying theme.

### *Findings*

Breaking down the findings by decade and bringing together conclusions based on these results is perhaps the most accurate way to categorize the findings and make ties to greater implications and beginning conclusions.

**1950s:** The data shows the heavy emphasis on Submission and Enhancing Oneself versus Seduction. Motivational Research during this decade combined psychology and marketing to understand consumerism. According to Sivulka, "at this time...sexually charged women appeared in magazines, movies, and advertisements"

(224) yet this is not displayed in the data. However, although there were no ads from the Seduction category, the advertisements in the other categories—specifically the three ads featured—allude to sex and sexuality. There was a heavier emphasis on practical and functional products (as shown by the Mahler’s ad) that “promised to satisfy emotional as well as material needs” (Sivulka, 224). The emotionality and sexuality during this era where traditional family roles were still perpetuated in parts shows that the love culture was already beginning to use sex for beauty products in order to achieve something else—namely love, which would lead to “social happiness” (Mahler’s 1956). The archives researched reveal women’s dependency, an emphasis on skinniness and maintaining form, mysterious but controllable women, and the importance of love as themes. Article and story titles include: “Sex without glamour” (1954, pg. 45), “Sexual Potency and Your Well Being” (1957, pg. 74), and “You can’t keep a good girl down” (1958, pg. 12). The article titles and the ads reveal a love culture that is deeply imbued with the submission of women and the importance of being a good—and beautiful—housewife. The beauty products promise to help women achieve this.

**1960s:** The audience that had changed in the 1960s to Americans that “were younger, better educated, and more mobile” with accelerated technology also changed the data with the ads analyzed (Sivulka, 246). The data reviewed in **Chapter 4** shows that there was an emphasis on Natural and Submission with Obtaining Perfection and Seduction at the same percentage. The “changes in social values” coupled with the change in communications affected campaigns (Sivulka, 247). The editions still kept the long form stories and articles, but their length shortened and the ads changed to full

page with more color and a specific focus on beauty products—a change from the practical and homemaker products from the previous decade. By the mid ‘60s, the ads were mostly about beauty, medical products, alcohol, and sex. During this time, there was also an emphasis on “naked” and “natural” makeup (the largest category in the data set). Telling article and story titles include: “Where Women Are Weakest” (1964, pg. 24), “When is a Man Remarriageable?” (1965, pg. 48), and “His Heart in Your Hands” (1967, pg. 105). What this seems to suggest is that beauty at this time was regarded in terms of how natural it looked and there was still an emphasis on women’s beauty and sex revolving around a man—yet there is slightly more empowerment than the last article title shows.

**1970s:** The social climate of the 1970s influenced the advertisements and the data from the ‘60s to this decade reflect this change. Although women began to question the traditional roles placed upon them, “admakers repeatedly used images of women as sex objects, brainless housewives, and dependent on men” (Sivulka, 274). These idealized roles are reflected in the larger percentages for Seduction (of which Sex is a subcategory) and Standing Out, as well as the still relatively high percentage for ads regarding Submission—although these changed from women in the background to the Soft subcategory. Given that, it is perhaps not surprising that during this time, “youthful models replaced elegant middle-aged ones” and the attitude of pleasure seeking was more prominent than in the previous two decades analyzed (Sivulka, 253). A subcategory in Standing Out is Independence, of which more women were shown in roles of power in ads that reflected society at this time and “ads began to ‘powerdress’ women and to cast them in business and managerial roles” (Sivulka, 275). The

researched years indicate a continued emphasis on the natural look, equating beauty to happiness, the duality of women in their sensuality and sexual freedom but their goodness as well, and, toward the end of the decade, an ownership over oneself and emphasis on individuality with increased nudity. Titles and articles include: “On Being Female: How you are brainwashed to ‘think like a girl,’ (1971, pg. 90), “How Independent Are You” quiz (1974, pg. 132), and “The Orgasm” (1978, pg. 144). What this suggests is that the 1970s was the beginning of a turning point in the love culture, which the greater emphasis on sexuality and independence suggests. Interestingly, Submission is still a category during this time as well as Obtaining Perfection and the ideals of beauty, though altered, remained the same: to obtain romance through femininity (beauty) and sex.

**1980s:** The ‘80s featured more drastic changes among the advertisements analyzed and the social climate. At this time, the “forces of feminism” had begun influencing advertising and “advertisers tied their products to distinct lifestyles, immediate gratification, youth, and sexuality” (Sivulka, 309). This can be seen with the data table and ad examples of this era—there is still an emphasis on sexuality and affection, yet there is an edge of Standing Out in the ads about the working woman and on perfection and freshness (Natural) that ties into the age-defying products increased during this time as well. *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes* posits that ads during this time “suggested that if you buy this product, you’ll be more sexually attractive, have better sex, or just feel better” (Sivulka, 317). While this is reflected in the advertisements categorized in Seduction, the category is perhaps diminished compared to Standing Out (and Independence) because of the ‘forces’ of feminism. The ads analyzed during this



decade reveal full page and full color ads, increased health consciousness, staying youthful yet working hard, and a confidence in sexuality. Titles and articles such as “Girls in the Locker Room” (1980, pg. 230), “Emotional Aphrodisiacs” (1981, pg. 174), “Caring in and out of bed” (1982, pg. 82), and “I survived my husband’s infidelity” (1989, pg. 92) reveal a change in women’s empowerment yet still had themes of sex and marriage. The love culture at this time is influenced by these themes and beauty ideals changed to include assertive and enticing women in positions of power as beautiful. Yet these women with increasing power were still in need of a product to obtain what the traditional roles were selling in the 1950s.

**1990s:** The data from the 1990s is similar to the 1970s data in that Seduction is again a larger category. Most categories are fairly close in percentage except for a large dip in Submission and Enhancing Oneself. “Rejecting the traditional fantasy-and-romance approach to advertising, advertisers drew attention to the underlying drives that established emotional connections with consumers,” which perhaps shows why the Seduction category increased from the last decade to this one (Sivulka, 342). Among the addressed themes in this decade was the idea of maintaining control “without being a superwoman” and a balance of work and home life, which is shown with the ads in Standing Out (Sivulka, 342). In the previous decade, the Standing Out category’s percentage was due to use of bold colors yet cosmetics changed during this time and “the minimalist ‘waif look’ dominated beauty and fashion magazines, which rejected the bold use of cosmetics,” again strengthened as the Natural category stayed relatively high (Sivulka, 349). Themes revealed in the ads examined throughout this decade are independent women in limited roles, increased control, emphasis on nudity and

sexuality, uniqueness of women, and emotional and physical strength. Surrounding title and article copy included: “Love: What it is and how to get more of it into your life” (1990, pg. 202), “Surprising tips for sharpening your sexual skills” (1993, pg. 84), “Will his love for you last?” quiz (1995, pg. 124), and “Are you the right kind of girlfriend?” (1999, pg. 194). What this data suggests is that the love culture, which has arguably progressed since the 1950s, had a greater emphasis on sexuality yet beauty products are still prominent (just altered) and the articles suggest that women during this time were still attempting to obtain love via these products.

**2000s:** As shown in **Chapter 4**, the three main categories remained Seduction, Standing Out, and Natural with the other three all lower than 10%. The ads during this year were increasingly sexualized—as shown by the examples—yet the cover mentions “The Love Edition” more boldly than any decade previously studied. Interestingly, “with the exception of some categories, such as feminine hygiene and cosmetics, the idea of gender began to disappear in ads traditionally targeted at women” (Sivulka, 376). What this trend shows is that, although culture is influencing many ads to become more gender neutral, cosmetics (the basis of this Thesis and analysis) are not and they continue to sexualize and show women as independent and wholly feminine. Through analysis of the ads during this decade, certain trends are apparent such as women challenging men and displaying fearlessness, rebel spirit, being bold (which is perhaps a reference to 1980s trends), freedom through beauty (specifically fresh and natural), and redefining beauty and sensuality. The surrounding copy during this time gives context to these trends and includes: “Are you a fun and fearless female?” (2001, pg. 56), “The Sweet Way He Took Me By Surprise” (2002, pg. 114), “Boys who steal our hearts”

(2004, pg. 116), and “Mind Tricks That Get You What You Want” (2008, pg. 172).

What this data shows in the context of the articles is that the love culture featured a greater emphasis on empowered female sexuality and beauty products that emphasize this, yet in the context of pursuing a man.

**2010s:** By far the greatest emphasis on Seduction and Standing Out has occurred during the previous five years since 2010 in this Thesis’ analysis of *Cosmopolitan*.

There is, again, an emphasis on the “Love Edition” on the cover and the themes that began in the 2000s in advertising culture continue through the 2010s as well. Feeling beautiful and seductive, dichotomy of purity and naughtiness, emphasis on real beauty (Dove’s Real Beauty Campaign, Sivulka pg. 378-9), classic, and controlling self and love are themes throughout 2010-2015. Surrounding articles such as “Tap into your seductive powers” (2010, pg. 106), “10 Romantic Moves that Guys Actually Dig” (2011, pg. 42), and “Can Looking too young hurt you at work?” (2013, pg. 113) give context to the themes reviewed through the ads. The love culture during the last five years has still included overt sexuality and nudity of women, as well as idealized beauty standards sold through beauty products, and a focus on love and seduction.

Interestingly, the 1950s included stereotyped females that included “the shy but lovely single girl, the triumphant bride, and the gossipy neighbor. These familiar themes are still being used today” (Sivulka, 221).

### *Implications*

The previous sections outline the findings and analysis from the data shown in **Chapter 4** and begin to allude to the implications that these advertisements present on the hypothesis of this Thesis. My hypothesis that, over time, advertisements would

feature more sexualized women in beauty product ads yet still seem to sell love seems to be true as shown through the table data in **Chapter 4** and the copy analysis of “beauty,” “sex,” and “love” at the beginning of this chapter. Although Seduction does not remain a category for all of the 65 years I examined, it was the lead for two decades and alternated with Standing Out—which arguably features women in powerful and sexualized positions (i.e. Independence). Throughout the first four decades analyzed, Submission remains above 10% and Obtaining Perfection remains above 10% for five decades. The relatively significant percentages for these categories based on ads analyzed for these years shows in part how women were often portrayed as soft, gentle, mysterious, and benign. However, there is a duality in the ads of women being pushed to the background at the same time they are attempting to break free—an independence and fierceness that is seen in later Seduction and Standing Out categories.

The relatively small percentages of ads overtly saying “love” at first seems to disprove my hypothesis that ads are using sex to sell love, yet these themes are not as overtly stated in the copy and ads that had scenes of romance and stages of love (courting, romance, marriage, making love, etc.) were a far larger category. In addition to this, the samples of article titles shown in this chapter’s “Findings” section in part supports the idea that love is—and has been—a narrative arc to the advertisements and their surrounding editorial in *Cosmopolitan*. The ads, in a way, speak to a woman’s role in the current cultural climate (which is explained in **Chapter 4** in each year’s section) and, by this, how she can be more lovable, beautiful, or sexy. In light of this, Landers’ quote, “Other scholars suggested that the role of women’s magazines was to cue readers to acceptable behavior,” suggests that the cultural climate surrounding these magazines

and to which the ads were contributing is an important factor in the overall love culture (Landers, 255). Although this Thesis does not attempt to show how these ads mirror society's view on love, the data from the relatively small percentage is *Cosmopolitan's* overall run seems to suggest that the ads are contributing to the love culture that is being partially created by their imagery and copy and strengthened by the surrounding copy as well.

Furthermore, what makes a woman beautiful has changed over the years from flat to full hair, petite to full body form, subdued to bold colors, and natural to obvious and back to natural looking makeup. The ads are inherently selling beauty because, at their most basic, they are selling a beauty product and, as shown in **Chapter 1**, sex sells. However, the underlying ideal that is being sold via sex and beauty is what can be attained by beauty and sex that leads to happiness, confidence and, ultimately, love.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

### *Limitations*

As shown in **Chapter 1**, advertising's use of appealing to our psychology on a physical and emotional level makes the analysis of said ads highly subjective. Those studying ads, producing them, or simply consuming them as readers or viewers approach their interpretation via their own lenses. Researchers will look at things differently than creators and their interpretations will be further different from consumers or critics of these same ads. This Thesis attempts to make the subjective process of analysis more objective in an order to support the Hypothesis. This was done in a number of ways including: consulting outside peer-reviewed sources for ads with especially loose interpretations (ex: pg. 46), using these sources to bring social and media context to the decades in which these ads were produced and sold, viewing previous studies that have analyzed ads and interpreting what works best in this analysis, and attempting not to make broad conclusions about society as a whole based on these ads.

Throughout the process of the Thesis, my idea of love culture changed fairly drastically. I at first viewed this term through a narrow and subjective lens, attempting to find a simple beauty ad and using the most direct interpretation of how it could fit into the love culture. This was most often showing that sex and beauty together were selling love. However, as the research progressed, the ideas of what a love culture could encompass expanded. By the end, I saw indications that love culture has perhaps switched from traditional homemakers pleasing their men to a connection with loving oneself in order to obtain happiness. This all still seemed to be achieved using sex and

beauty, yet there was more to the love culture than the narrow views I had first placed it in.

Lastly, as shown in **Chapter 3**, the advertisements were from archived editions of *Cosmopolitan* from libraries around the United States. The gaps in the years studied are due to lack of archival materials available in these libraries. A limitation of data in this Thesis is, in part, due to this and the fact that the '50s and '60s are the least complete runs because “by the late 1950s, total circulation plummeted by half” and continued into the '60s with library subscriptions dropping as well (Landers, 216). Furthermore, my particular focus on the February edition of each year in order to narrow the focus and use the “Love edition” implication perhaps often narrowed my focus too much—to the point of looking for a love culture where it was most likely to be found. Yet, although not included, other months of these archives often showed similar ads and their use of a love culture. If nothing else, this is an indication of the necessity of further study.

#### *Further Study*

Although the body of this Thesis focuses on the primary research of *Cosmopolitan* advertisements and their quantification and analysis, these findings have implications on further study. One of the main applications of further study could be the development of responsible advertising guidelines (particularly when using women) based on the findings. In addition to this, many of the themes found outlined in the analysis and findings section could carry over in similar trends to other magazines for men or women. This Thesis is not an overarching analysis of how society functions

with female stereotypes perpetuated by ads but, rather, quantifiable trends that could lead to further studies and conclusions.

### *Conclusions*

The multiple evolutions that *Cosmopolitan* underwent in even the last fifty plus years allow it to be analyzed for trends regarding its advertisements and/or editorial. This Thesis has looked at advertisements from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s issues of *Cosmo* in an effort to support the claim that sex sells love and that the combination of sex, beauty, and love create what I have coined as a love culture. Although every single year from 1950 until 2015 was not examined and there were slight gaps in the research, the volume of ads analyzed was high enough to come to some conclusions.

The first conclusion that can be made from the data and findings is that *Cosmopolitan* has employed advertising techniques that play on our psychology in regards to physical and emotional needs. In all 526 advertisements examined, this has remained true with some variation. Secondly, beauty advertisements have remained an integral part of the magazine for the years examined and, most always, use sex in some variation—pose, placement, or copy—to create a connection with the reader and assign value to the product beyond its functionality. Thirdly, despite the changes in what has been seen as beautiful in a woman physically (i.e. big hair) and mentally (i.e. independence), beauty in some sense has always been a part of the love culture's equation. Lastly, it is apparent from this relatively small scope of data that this over-century old magazine has contributed to and, in fact, created a love culture in which sex and beauty are used to sell the ultimate product: love.



## Annotated Bibliography

*Advertising the American Dream*. Perf. John Bernbach, Jerry Della Femina, Arlene Manos. Deluxe Digital Studios, 2008. DVD.

This short film distributed by Deluxe Digital Studios profiles a short history of advertising with an emphasis on 1960s advertising and culture and uses ad legends to do so. Although there is a focus on agency culture that this Thesis does not cover, the themes that the contributors outline involve mainly beauty and sex and the transformation of using greater sexualization in ads during this time period.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books, 1972. Print.

John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* is a book that looks at advertising and the mass media and uses his theory of the male and female gaze in regards to objectification. For my Thesis, I am less concerned with the male gaze in society and more concerned on how this relates to advertisements. For example, the male gaze in how women view themselves through men, which is arguably a component of ads in *Cosmopolitan* using sex, love, and beauty with idealized standards of all three.

Blair, Jessica Dawn, et al. "Ethics in advertising: sex sells, but should it?" *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 9.1-2 (2006): 109+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 3 Nov. 2015.

<<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA166850483&v=2.1&u=s8492775&it=r&p=AONE&asid=64d7e81f3528d17ff4a81c824f54da7b>>.

Jessica Dawn et. al's article about the ethics of using sex in advertising is related to my Thesis' section on sex and love in advertising. The authors first ask the question 'does sex sell?' and then go on to show that if it does (and they believe sexiness sells more than sex), certain ethics must be used. The latter part about ethics is not what this Thesis will cover, but is important when considering the negatively consequences of using sex to sell love or any other ideal.

"Cosmopolitan: Circulation." *Kantar Media*. SRDS, 2014. Web. 16 May 2015.

<<http://next.srds.com.libproxy.uoregon.edu/nmp/datacard/show/11710/3>>.

Standard Rate and Data Service (SRDS) gathers statistics and data on media outlets like *Cosmopolitan*. For this magazine, Kantar Media shows the median age, median household income, and male/female readership as well as money from advertising from Fall 2014.

"Cosmo Magazine: The Best-Seller That Sells Women Short." *Beauty Redefined*. 4 Jan. 2012. Web. 3 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.beautyredefined.net/cosmo-magazine/>>.

This article begins to demonstrate what my thesis project will encompass: the role of advertising on beauty image and, by result, love (culture). In the beginning of this article, it makes an interesting point that the tagline of *Cosmopolitan* is "by women for women." This may be a good start on how the advertisements' target audience influences the ads themselves and how, as a

result, the ads become about stereotypical versions of beauty that women can and ought to pursue. This article also embeds examples of more recent ads from the magazine and analyzes themes about “what men want.” Additionally, it also begins to touch on the subject of body image issues with young girls, which can be a result of the love culture that these ads create (although this is place for further study).

*Cosmopolitan Magazine* Mar.-Oct. 1888; Dec. 1910-May 1911; June-Nov. 1918: Print.

This source encompasses three bound archival copies of *Cosmopolitan* magazine from the Knight Library on the University of Oregon campus. These bound journals contain a range of monthly editions of *Cosmopolitan*, which show its evolution even in the relatively short period of time that our library has in print form. For example, the editions from 1888 are text heavy with little to no advertisements and some illustrations, whereas the editions from 1918 feature advertisements of all sizes throughout the entire edition—although there are still some longer narratives. Although I am not analyzing the ads from these earlier editions of the magazine, they are important to look at for context and to track the dramatic evolution that this magazine has had in the past century.

GÜDEKLİ, İsmail Aysad, and İbrahim ÇELİK. "Using Woman In Advertisement As A Symbol Of Sex: Cosmopolitan Magazine Example." *Journal Of Yasar University* 35.9 (2014): 6129-6137. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 3 Feb. 2015.

This academic article analyzes the relationship between women used in advertising and the subsequent view on sex. Although this is different from ‘love,’ sex is part of the love culture that I am trying to define within the context of my thesis. The author of this article looks at women in advertising through the frame of feminism and sexism and uses *Cosmopolitan* magazine as an example. She looks at the use of symbols, signifiers (a large part of semiotics that I hope to discuss in my thesis as well), copy, the placement of the woman and what objects are with her in the ad. This slightly different take on the ads (such as the use of semiotics in the authors’ methodology) in *Cosmo* adds interesting depth to my project.

Hatton, Erin, and Mary N. Trautner. "Images of powerful women in the age of ‘choice feminism’." *Journal of Gender Studies* 22.1 (2013): 65-78. Web. 3 Nov. 2015. <<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~trautner/Hatton-Trautner--JGS.pdf>>.

Hatton and Trautner examine images of sexualized models in advertisements by categorizing their pose, touch, mouth, etc. and the cultural climate in regards to sexualization as well. Their analysis of these ads into categories was used in my analysis of the *Cosmopolitan* ads in much the same way (although with less categories). What the authors do in this paper that this Thesis does not is analyze the sexualization of men as well as women and only sexualization, whereas this Thesis looks at sex, love, and beauty in the love culture.

Hovland, Roxanne, Carolynn McMahan, Guiohk Lee, Jang-Sun Hwang, Juran Kim. "Gender Role Portrayals In American And Korean Advertisements." *Sex Roles* 53.11/12 (2005): 887-899. Academic Search Premier. Web. 16 Apr. 2015. Although this article by Hovland et. al. compares gender portrayals in American and Korean advertisements, it is relative to my thesis because the first third of the article focuses on the nature of American advertisements, given in the context of the difference in Korean advertisements that help make it relative. Furthermore, it addresses framing and social learning theory, which are fairly large components to how these advertisements are perceived within a society and relates directly to how American culture is affected by the types of advertisements that *Cosmopolitan* has. I believe it is important to begin with the broader context of how American advertisements are featured in the world and then narrow it down to a specific culture (ours) and magazine.

Landers, James. *The Improbable First Century of Cosmopolitan Magazine*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010. Print. Landers' book is a general overview of the first century of *Cosmo*, which adds background to my research and, especially for my introduction, helps outline the presence of this magazine in American culture and imply a change in content in the 1960s. The majority of my Thesis will not be spent on the first century of *Cosmo* but it is important to understand its origins and the social and political atmosphere around which content was shaped during its existence—Helen Gurley Brown as a large example.

Debra Merskin. *Sexing the Media: How and Why We Do It*. New York: Peter Lang, 2014. Merskin's book is directly related to my points about use of sex and gender in advertising and what this might imply about the use of women in ads. Her points about objectification of women and the use of stale stereotypes are imperative in studying the advertisements analyzed in the data section. Although this Thesis does not delve into all of the negative consequences of using sex and gender in this way, the context of the ads are relevant and important.

McGuire, Lauren. "THE EVOLUTION OF COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE." *The Society Pages*. 26 Apr. 2010. Web. 3 Feb. 2015. <<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2010/04/26/guest-post-the-evolution-of-cosmopolitan-magazine/>>. This short overview of *Cosmopolitan* features the topics that my thesis would cover—although on a much shallower basis. It begins with the history of the magazine in 1886 and speaks of its evolution, which is shown starkly in the cover pages, the content, and, I'm sure, the advertisements within. One interesting fact that this points out is that the magazine is primarily referred to as just *Cosmo* now. Is this a symbol for the modern day love culture that this magazine has attempted to create? It seems to be a reference to the shorter articles and the racier things that are now featured, versus the novella-type magazine that it first was. Either way, this is another beginning resource to

understand the magazine and how its evolution has changed the way we view love.

Monk-Turner, Elizabeth, Kristy Wren, Leanne McGill, Chris Matthiae, Stephan Brown, and Derrick Brooks. "Who is gazing at whom? A look at how sex is used in magazine advertisements." *Journal Of Gender Studies* 17, no. 3: 201-209 (2008). *Academic Search Premier*. Web 16 April 2015.

The male gaze is an important aspect of my argument, which Monk-Turner, et. al attempt to evaluate in this article. It seeks to compare the ways in which advertisements are created for and marketed to men and women as separate audiences and what difference this might make on the perception of the sexes. They make a case that women are depicted in narrower roles than men and attempt to "explore the objectification of women in magazine product advertisements." The authors take a slightly different approach than I do in their analysis of advertisements, but the concept is the same and the approach is one of communicating values or a set of values via these ads that are targeted at either women or men. What this adds is a greater understanding for the types of advertisements used in print media especially featuring an objectified woman (or man) and the use of objects or framing techniques to achieve certain portrayals—in my case love culture, but in theirs a change in objectification.

Scholes, Robert, and Wulfman Clifford. *Modernism in the Magazines: A Introduction*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. Print.

Scholes and Wulfman analyze the hole in the archive with their paper and show that the missing component of many archived periodicals (including *Cosmo*) have been tampered with in the sense that the advertisements were cut out. What this means in terms of my Thesis (conclusions) is that the rareness of finding the archives intact limits data analysis.

Sheehan, Kim. *Controversies in Contemporary Advertising*. "Gender and Advertising." 2nd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014. *Google Books*. Web. 21 Apr. 2015. <[http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/57153\\_Chapter\\_7.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/57153_Chapter_7.pdf)>.

Chapter 7 from *Controversies in Contemporary Advertising* is entitled "Gender and Advertising," which plays in directly with the types of ads I will be analyzing to find portrayals of love, sex, and beauty. Gender norms and roles are an important place to start in regards to advertising geared toward women because they add the social aspect that is important to the understanding of society's perception about certain issues or themes (like love). This chapter covers information processing, gender stereotypes, role portrayals, as well as portrayals of sex and beauty with in-depth analysis of particular ads. In regards to my Thesis, this chapter gives not only depth to the issue of beauty and sex portraying love, but also provides an example of advertising analysis in the context and framework of these issues.

Sivulka, Juliann. *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*. 2nd ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2012. Print.

Juliann Sivulka's book breaks up the trends of advertising by decades and by certain contributing factors of society that changed ads. Specifically, in the data section of this Thesis, these trends are important in understanding the data collected and what may have contributed to any changes or lack thereof. The final section on advertising in the 2010s is somewhat incomplete, yet so is this Thesis given that it is only 2015.

Stone, Sherril. "The Psychology of Using Animals in Advertising."

(2014):*Northwestern Oklahoma State University*. Web. 7 May 2015.

<[http://www.huichawaii.org/assets/stone\\_sherril\\_the\\_psychology\\_of\\_using\\_animals\\_in\\_advertising\\_ahs2014.pdf](http://www.huichawaii.org/assets/stone_sherril_the_psychology_of_using_animals_in_advertising_ahs2014.pdf)>.

Although Sherril Stone's article is about the psychology of animals in ad, her introduction highlights the psychology of visual advertising as a whole, which is directly related to my point about visual communication being a component in ads' influence. I do not focus on the influence of ads on society as a whole because that broadens the scope of my thesis too much, but I do highlight that ad's use emotion and sex (as Stone mentions) to visually stimulate consumers.

Twitchell, James B. *Adcult USA*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. Print.

*Adcult USA* shows ad practices that have changed the industry and the ad's reflection of culture. His focus on products such as Noxema, CoverGirl, Breck and Clairol are relevant to this Thesis' focus and outline how beauty products were used in ads during specific periods in America. Twitchell also argues that there has been a "maintenance of gender" (147), which this Thesis certainly looks at as well.

Twitchell, James B. *Twenty Ads That Shook the World*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000. Print.

Twitchell's book highlights advertisements that changed the way the industry was run—one of them being Clairol's "Does she or doesn't she?" campaign and the subtle sexuality it proclaimed. While most of the ads he examines are not relevant to my topic, his use of examination adds an interesting point of view to my data and analysis sections and helps to show that many of these beauty ads wanted to show women that they "too could become such a creature" (134).