The social construction of feminine sexualities in women's popular periodicals: 1920-1996

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The social construction of feminine sexualities in women's popular periodicals: 1920-1996

Abstract
Some of the most significant changes in women's statuses and roles have occurred over the last eight decades. These changes in women's lives have been precipitated by social, economic, political, and cultural arrangements and technological developments. In varying degrees, some of the most significant of these events have had the effect of transforming women's lives in this century. Since these events have also led to shifts in perceptions of feminine status, roles, and sexuality that mirror and reinforce women's changing reality, we might anticipate a parallel transformation in cultural representations of feminine sexuality.

This study relies on two popular women's periodicals for uncovering cultural messages about feminine sexuality--Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle. A total of 55 issues were included in the sample. The analysis focuses on 598 "special" and "regular" feature articles from this sample.

While certainly theme shifts in how to look and be occur over several decades, these are embedded within two overarching meanings or paradigms of feminine sexuality--a modern, or "self actualizing" paradigm, and a traditional, or "other" focused paradigm. Thus, what has changed is the package (i.e., how to look and be), not the meaning of the feminine sexual ideal. The feminine sexual ideal that permeates all eight decades is presented as either sexually available, but deferent, or sexually chaste; her demeanor toward a romantic partner is "sweet," receptive, and supportive; to look at she is "pretty," "graceful," "decorative," and "soft."

While women since the 1970's have been presented with "new" choices in how to look and be it cannot be said that the cultural messages of feminine sexuality reflect the "increased choice" that is assumed to characterize women's lives over the last century. After all, there is no real choice in how to look and be when the very meaning of those prescriptions do not change. Considering the very significant transformations in women's social status and roles over the last eight decades, the finding that one of these paradigms of feminine sexuality permeates all eight decades is nothing less than striking.

In my attempts to understand this perplexity, I have relied on contextualizing these messages with considerations of social, economic, political, and cultural organization, and developments in reproductive technology and law. I have argued that, while the emergence of the modern meaning of feminine sexuality might be explained by shifts in gender ideology that were the consequence of a number of events, the persistent presence of the traditional paradigm might best be interpreted as a response to rapid social change or to tensions resulting from those very transformations that have occurred in women's roles.

Keywords
Women's Studies, Sociology, Social Structure and Development, Mass Communications

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THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININE SEXUALITIES
IN WOMEN'S POPULAR PERIODICALS: 1920-1996

BY

JUDITH JACKSON POMEROY
Bachelor of Arts, University of New Hampshire, 1990
Master of Arts, University of New Hampshire, 1993

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

May, 1998
This dissertation has been examined and approved.

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Aline Kuntz, Associate Professor of Political Science

April 9, 1998
DEDICATION

For
VANCE
with all my love
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Several people have inspired me as I have worked on this study. My father, Glen Speechley, who passed away five months before I began working on this project, and his belief in my abilities never left my mind for a day. My memories of my father and his stories of England during the “big” war, and fatherhood in the 1950’s and 60’s particularly inspired me to study society historically. Therefore, it was no surprise to me that I ended up in Michael Donnelly’s “historical sociology” course in the Fall of 1994.

In this course, it was Michael Donnelly that helped me to develop my ideas for this study. Michael is truly an exceptional mentor. He listened to me lament over the analysis and interpretation sections of this study an inordinate number of times, but especially during the summer and fall of 1997. During these lamenting sessions, he would listen, then encourage me to go away and think some more. When I would inevitably show up at his office one week later saying “it still doesn’t make any sense,” he would gently, and so respectfully guide me through the analysis process, allowing me to figure (almost) everything out for myself. But then, just when things would become to painful (e.g., after I had lost about two weeks worth of sleep over a particularly perplexing problem), he would offer some advice or suggestions. However, when he did finally offer advice, he showed immense respect for the fact that this was my study, saying things such as “here’s an idea,” or “how about this,” followed by “what do you think?” I can not thank him enough for that. Sometimes I just wanted the answers, but I am now glad that he let me sort things out on my own.
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48 of the pristine “4,000 footers” in New Hampshire while going through this process
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think I have learned during this process is “perspective.” For me, that perspective is
infinitely spiritual and personal. Learning “perspective” has been a very expensive, but
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.......................................................................................................................iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....................................................................................................iv

LIST OF TABLES.............................................................................................................xxii

LIST OF FIGURES...........................................................................................................xxiii

ABSTRACT.......................................................................................................................xxiv

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION ..........................................................</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Significance of Studying Gender Historically and Culturally</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Popular Periodical for Women</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions to the Literature on the Cultural Messages of Femininity</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Messages of Feminine Sexuality: Perennial and Shifting Meanings</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Two Paradigms of Feminine Sexuality</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Message Carriers of Feminine Sexuality</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Perennial Metaphors of Feminine Sexuality</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretations for the Messages of Feminine Sexuality: Contradictions Between Cultural Messages and Social Arrangements</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact Versus Fiction: Investigations of the Cultural Messages of Femininity</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cultural Messages in Women’s Popular Periodicals: Contradictions in the Findings</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Historical Study of Cultural Messages: Possibilities for Disentangling the Contradictions............................................................................. 21
- Hemlines and Economics................................................................. 21
- Women's Roles and Social Change.................................................. 22

The Investigation of Organizing Themes in the Non-Fiction in Women's Popular Periodicals.......................................................................... 23
- Representations of Feminine Sexuality in Cultural Messages..................... 24

The Production of Cultural Messages: Industry Considerations................... 25
- The Relationship Between Producer and Message................................. 25

Approaches to Cultural Data.................................................................................. 28

The Meaning of Cultural Data: Interpretive Theory a La Goffman and Hochschild................................................................. 29

Fragmentation and Alienation: Marxist Approaches to Understanding Cultural Messages of the Feminine......................................... 32

Deconstructing the Messages: Postmodern Theories..................................... 33

Summary.................................................................................................................. 34

III. METHOD................................................................................................................ 37

Introduction..................................................................................................... 37

The Periodicals................................................................................................... 37

*Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*: The Groundbreakers.............. 38
- Audience Profile of the Periodicals.......................................................... 39


The Sample............................................................................................................. 41

Coding and Analysis............................................................................................... 45
- Grounded Theory Methodology................................................................. 46

General and Content-Specific Coding.............................................................. 47
IV. OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN’S LIVES BETWEEN 1920 AND 1996

Introduction

Patterns in Marriage and Birth Rates: The Effects of Social Crisis Disturb a Downward Trend

Median Age at First Marriage: Increases and Decreases and Social Crises

The Baby Boom Years: Young Newleyweds and the High Marriage Rate Combine to Produce a Boom in the Birth Rate

Transformations in Women’s Educational Attainment and Work Force Participation Rates: The Social Implications

Education and Paid Work for American Women: The Changing Profile of the “Working Woman”
- Changes in the Profile of the Female Worker
- The Emergence of the Married Worker
- Tide of Change: Married Women Continue to Enter the Work Force
- Middle-Class Women Enter the Paid Labor Force

The Effects of Women’s Increased Educational and Work Opportunities: Implications for Divorce?
- A Decline in the Divorce Rate and the Great Depression
- A Dramatic Increase in the Divorce Rate
- The Cold War and “Togetherness”: The Declining Divorce Rate
- Liberal Politics, Sex, and an Increase in the Divorce Rate

Summary and Conclusions: Implications for the Cultural Messages of Feminine Sexuality
### V. THE MAGAZINE INDUSTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialization and the Advent of the “National Magazine”</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Printing Press and the Transformation of Periodicals</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Revolutionary Rotary Press</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advertising Industry and the Popular Periodical</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nationalization of the Economy, and the “Consumer Revolution:”</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Growth of the Advertising Industry</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advertising and the Business of Publishing</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advertising and the “Product”</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Feminizing Consumerism</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines for Women</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Josepha Hale and <em>Godley's Lady's Book</em></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <em>Ladies Home Journal</em></td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisa Knapp: The Sisterly Approach</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Vote</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Education and Work</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Life as a &quot;Working Mother:” The Reconstruction of a Nineteenth</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century Contradiction</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cult of the “Real Woman”</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Bok and the Missionary Magazine</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Vote, Education, and Work</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Reformer</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Construction of the Advice Column</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Private Life Contradictions</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “True Womanhood” Superseded the “Real Woman”</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Profile of <em>Ladies Home Journal</em></td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Profile</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Employee and Contributor Profile</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Circulation Rates</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mademoiselle</em>: Rebel Without a Cause</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Forging the Link of Gendered Consumerism</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### A Profile of *Mademoiselle* ................................................................. 116
- Audience Profile .................................................................................. 116
- Ladies Home Journal and *Mademoiselle*: A Contemporary
  Comparative Profile .............................................................................. 117
- Employee and Contributors Profile ..................................................... 118
- Circulation Rates ................................................................................ 118

**Summary and Conclusions** ................................................................... 118

### VI. EMERGENT THEMES AND PARADIGMS OF
FEMININE SEXUALITY: PART I ................................................................. 121

**Introduction** ........................................................................................ 121

The Message Carriers of Feminine Sexuality ............................................ 125

*Grooming* Vehicle Themes ...................................................................... 126

Patterns in *Grooming* Vehicle Themes on Feminine Sexuality .............. 129

*Interaction Style* ................................................................................... 135

*Situationalized Grooming and Interaction Style* ...................................... 136
- *Situationalized Grooming* .................................................................... 136
- *Situation Performance* .......................................................................... 136
- *Sexual Interaction Style*: The Options and Limitations ....................... 136
- *Interaction Styles* Combining Love and Work ..................................... 138

*Situational Grooming and Situation Performance* ................................... 140

The *Traditional* Paradigmatic Themes on Feminine Sexuality: 
*Situational Grooming and Situation Performance* Vehicle Themes
from the 1920’s to the 1960’s .................................................................... 141

The “Mysterious Virgin” of the 1920’s .................................................... 145

*Situational Grooming* in the Romantic Relationship: 
The Youthful Look ................................................................................... 146

*Situation Performance* in the Romantic Relationship: 
A Demeanor of Mystery and Intrigue ..................................................... 147
- *Sexual Interaction Style*: The Virgin ................................................... 149

*Situational Grooming* at Work: The *Tailored/Mannish* 
Look ........................................................................................................... 149
Similarities in the Themes of the 1920's and 30's

"Motherly and Virginal:" Themes and Meanings of Feminine Sexuality in the 1930's

Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship:
The Well Presented Look

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship:
Yielding, Motherly, and Sexually Ignorant
- Sexual Interaction Style: Virginal

Situational Grooming and Situation Performance at Work: The Tailored/Mannish Look and the Traditional Feminine Demeanor
- Situational Grooming
- Situation Performance

A Shift in the Meaning of Feminine Sexuality: The Emergence of the "Asexual Woman," the 1940's

Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship:
The Fresh, Pretty, Rosy Look

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship:
Receptive, Interesting, and Sexually Indifferent
- Sexual Interaction Style: The Asexual Woman

Situational Grooming at Work: The Well Presented Office Look

Situation Performance at Work: Feminine and Professional - The Presentation of an Oxymoron in the Work Scripts

Persistent Themes, Different Techniques: The "Family Minded and Asexual Woman," the 1950's

Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship:
The Naturally Made-Up Look

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship:
Family Minded and Sexually Indifferent
- Sexual Interaction Style: The Asexual Woman
A New Meaning to the “Tailored” and “Sophisticated” Look: The "Smart" Look of the 1930’s .......................................................... 236

Grooming Themes: The “Smart and Polished” Look .......................................................... 236
- Backstage Preparations ......................................................................................... 238

A Shift in Grooming Themes: From “Tailored” and “Sophisticated” to the “Ultimately Feminine” Look of the 1940’s .................................................. 239

Grooming Themes: “Decorative and Sweet” .......................................................... 240
- Backstage Preparations ......................................................................................... 242

The “Gracefully Decorative and Sweet Woman,” Grooming Themes in the 1950’s .......................................................... 244

Grooming Themes: Pretty, Rosy, and Graceful .......................................................... 245
- Backstage Preparations ......................................................................................... 246

A Second Shift in the Grooming Themes: From “Ultimately Feminine” to the “Natural Woman” of the 1960’s .................................................. 249

Grooming Themes: “Sophisticated” and “Natural” .................................................. 250
- Backstage Preparations ......................................................................................... 252

The Third Shift: Emergence of the “Seductive Woman,” Grooming Themes in the 1970’s .......................................................... 254

Grooming Themes: The “Sexy” Look .......................................................... 255
- Backstage Preparations ......................................................................................... 257

“Seductive,” “Sweet,” and “Businesslike,” The “Anything Goes” Look of the 1980’s ......................................................................................... 258

Grooming Themes: Looks of the Past Revisited .................................................. 259
- Backstage Preparations ......................................................................................... 261

The Return of the “Natural Woman,” Grooming Messages in the 1990’s .......................................................................................... 263

Grooming Themes: A Twist on the “Natural Woman” Look of the 1960’s .......................................................... 264
- Backstage Preparations ......................................................................................... 265

Summary and Conclusions: The Relative Constancy of Grooming Choices Over Eight Decades ......................................................................................... 267

xvi
IX. METAPHORS OF FEMININE SEXUALITY: THE FRAGMENTATION AND ALIENATION OF BODY AND SELF .................................................................270

Introduction ..................................................................................................270

The Perennial Construction of Selves .................................................................271

The Myriad Ways of Looking and Being .................................................................272
- Search for the Sincere Self ........................................................................273
- The Schizophrenic Self ............................................................................274

The Fragmentation of Appearance and Self ........................................................277
- Alienation from Appearance and Self ...........................................................278
- Alienation from Self ...................................................................................279

Summary and Conclusion .................................................................................280

X. INTERPRETATION OF THE THEMES AND PARADIGMS OF FEMININE SEXUALITY ............................................................................283

Introduction..................................................................................................283

Interpretations for the Themes on Feminine Sexuality ........................................284

The 1920's and 1930's: Similar Themes, Structural Disparity ...........................287

Messages of Feminine Sexuality in the 1920's: Inconsistency with Structural Arrangements .............................................................................288

The Glorification of the Mother Role for Women: Politics in the Ladies Home Journal .........................................................................................289
- Cautionary Tales in an Era of Calm ...........................................................290
- Chastity Themes During the “Sexual Revolution” ....................................290
- “Conservative” Politics in the Messages of Ladies Home Journal .................292

Women Working and Voting: The Masculinization of Appearance ........................294

Competing Political Ideologies, and Structural and Political Tensions Produce Contentious Messages of Feminine Sexuality .................................296
- Tensions and Contradictions Between Vehicles ..........................................296

xvii

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
- The Woman Who Equates Sex and Love as the Sexual Ideal ............................................................ 316

Sex, Anxiety, and Unhappy Marriages: Tensions Between Structural and Political Arrangements ......................... 318
- Sex at the Office .......................................................................................................................... 319
- The “Feminine-Private” Self and the “Public-Worker” Self: Perpetual Conflict and Anxiety ......................... 319
- The Negative and Positive Effects of Work on Marriage ...................................................................... 320

Message Consistency with Both Structural and Political Arrangements .................................................................. 322

The 1960’s: The Second Transitional Period in the Themes of Feminine Sexuality ................................................. 324

Family Minded Demeanor Amidst the “Sexual Revolution:” Tensions Between Competing Political Ideologies and Social Change .............................................................. 327

The Asexual-Sexual Twist: Tensions Between Structure and Competing Political Arrangements ...................................... 328
- The “Pill” .................................................................................................................................. 329
- The “Sexy” Look ......................................................................................................................... 330

Contradictions Between the “Feminine” and the “Worker” Self: Tensions Between Cold War Rhetoric and Rapid Political and Social Change ................................................................. 331

Messages of Feminine Sexuality: Tensions Between Political Ideologies and Social Structural Change ...................... 332

The Third Shift: The Emergence of a New Paradigm of Feminine Sexuality .......................................................... 334

The 1970’s: The Modern Paradigm of Feminine Sexuality ...................................................................................... 334

Shifts in Demeanor and the Emergence of Critical Scripts: An Indication of Shifts in Women’s Economic, Political, and Social Status ......................................................................................... 337
- Critical Scripts ............................................................................................................................ 338
- The Sexual Self ............................................................................................................................ 339

“Sexiness” at the Office ........................................................................................................................................ 340
Persistence of the *Traditional Meaning of Feminine Sexuality* ................................................................. 342

Consistency and Contention in the Messages of Feminine Sexuality ....................................................................... 343

The 1980's and 1990's: Structural Similarity and Shifts in Meanings........................................................................ 344

Messages Reflect Tensions Between Competing Ideologies and Structural Organization ........................................ 347
- The Presence of Cautionary Tales and Critical Scripts .................................................................................. 347
- The "Sensual Woman" and Anxiety at the Office ...................................................................................... 348

Tensions Between Competing Ideologies and Structural Organization: The Virgin and the Asexual Woman Reemerge .... 349

Contentious Messages: "Other" and "Self" Focused Messages of Feminine Sexuality ............................................. 351

Tensions Between Competing Political ideologies and Social Change: Contentious Messages of Feminine Sexuality .......... 351

The 1990's: The Fourth Shift in the Messages of Feminine Sexuality .................................................................... 353

A Political Cooling Off Period: Implications for a Transformation in the Messages of Feminine Sexuality ...................... 355
- Contentious Messages .............................................................................................................................. 356

Summary and Conclusions .................................................................................................................................... 357

XI. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY: PERENNIAL MEANINGS OF FEMININE SEXUALITY IN A CENTURY OF GREAT CHANGE .................................................................................................................. 361

The Myth of "Increased Choice" .............................................................................................................................. 363
- The Perennial Emphasis on the "Other" ........................................................................................................... 364
- Can One More Choice Truly Be Called "Increased Choice?" .......................................................................... 365
- Recycled Themes ............................................................................................................................................... 366
- Shifting Themes Within Perennial Meanings: Changes in how to Package the Feminine Sexual Ideal .................... 367
- From the "Mysterious Virgin" to the "Self-Actualizing Woman" .................................................................... 367

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Total Number of Prescribing Versus Non-Prescribing Scripts by Decade.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.2</td>
<td>Scripts included in the Sample.</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.1</td>
<td>Two Paradigms of Feminine Sexuality: “Other” and “Self” Focused.</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.2</td>
<td>Grooming Themes on Feminine Sexuality: The “Looks”</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.3</td>
<td>Cautionary Tales and Critical Scripts Within the Paradigms of Feminine Sexuality.</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.4</td>
<td>Patterns in the Grooming Themes over time.</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.5</td>
<td>The Sexual Interaction Styles over Eight Decades.</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.6</td>
<td>The Asexual Interaction Style Themes.</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.7</td>
<td>Situational Grooming and Situation Performance Vehicle Themes from 1920 to 1969.</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.8</td>
<td>The Paradigms of Feminine Sexuality: Traditional and Modern.</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7.1</td>
<td>Situational Grooming and Situation Performance Vehicle Themes from 1970 to 1996.</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7.2</td>
<td>Cautionary Tales and Critical Scripts: The Modern Paradigm of Feminine Sexuality.</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8.1</td>
<td>Grooming Themes and Categories from 1920 to 1996.</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8.2</td>
<td>Two Paradigms of Feminine Sexuality: “Other” and “Self” Focused Within the Grooming Categories.</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURES

Figure 4.1  The Marriage Rate over Eight Decades...................................................56
Figure 4.2  Median Age at First Marriage over Eight Decades...............................58
Figure 4.3  The Birth Rate over Eight Decades.......................................................61
Figure 4.4  Educational Attainment over Eight Decades.........................................63
Figure 4.5  Work Force Participation over Eight Decades.......................................64
Figure 4.6  Work Force Participation Rate by Age....................................................65
Figure 4.7  The Divorce Rate over Eight Decades....................................................72
ABSTRACT

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININE SEXUALITIES IN WOMEN'S POPULAR PERIODICALS: 1920-1996

by

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University of New Hampshire, April, 1998

Some of the most significant changes in women's statuses and roles have occurred over the last eight decades. These changes in women's lives have been precipitated by social, economic, political, and cultural arrangements and technological developments. In varying degrees, some of the most significant of these events have had the effect of transforming women's lives in this century. Since these events have also led to shifts in perceptions of feminine status, roles, and sexuality that mirror and reinforce women's changing reality, we might anticipate a parallel transformation in cultural representations of feminine sexuality.

This study relies on two popular women's periodicals for uncovering cultural messages about feminine sexuality - *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. A total of 55 issues were included in the sample. The analysis focuses on 598 "special" and "regular" feature articles from this sample.

While certainly theme shifts in how to *look* and *be* occur over several decades, these are embedded within two overarching *meanings* or paradigms of feminine sexuality - a *modern*, or "self actualizing" paradigm, and a *traditional*, or "other" focused paradigm. Thus, what has changed is the package (i.e., how to *look* and *be*), not the meaning of the feminine sexual ideal. The feminine sexual ideal that permeates all eight decades is presented as either sexually

xxiv
available, but deferent, or sexually chaste; her demeanor toward a romantic partner is "sweet," receptive, and supportive; to look at she is "pretty," "graceful," "decorative," and "soft."

While women since the 1970's have been presented with "new" choices in how to look and be it can not be said that the cultural messages of feminine sexuality reflect the "increased choice" that is assumed to characterize women's lives over the last century. After all, there is no real choice in how to look and be when the very meaning of those prescriptions do not change. Considering the very significant transformations in women's social status and roles over the last eight decades, the finding that one of these paradigms of feminine sexuality permeates all eight decades is nothing less than striking.

In my attempts to understand this perplexity, I have relied on contextualizing these messages with considerations of social, economic, political, and cultural organization, and developments in reproductive technology and law. I have argued that, while the emergence of the modern meaning of feminine sexuality might be explained by shifts in gender ideology that were the consequence of a number of events, the persistent presence of the traditional paradigm might best be interpreted as a response to rapid social change or to tensions resulting from those very transformations that have occurred in women's roles.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Women's statuses, roles and, thus, also their experiences, have been more significantly transformed in the last eighty years than perhaps at any other time in U.S. history. These changes in women's lives have been precipitated by social, economic, political, and cultural arrangements and technological developments. Some of the most significant of these events include the ratification of the nineteenth amendment in 1920, winning women the right to vote (Chafe, 1972; Flexner, 1975; Johnston, 1992; Woloch, 1994); twenty years later, with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 and then the U.S. in 1941, white, non-immigrant women began to join black and white immigrant women in the labor force (Chafe, 1972; Kelley, 1979; Kessler-Harris, 1982, 1990; Lerner, 1971b, 1972, 1979; Van Horn, 1988; Weiner, 1985; Woloch, 1994); a decade later, white, middle-class women also began entering the workforce in unprecedented numbers (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 1990); corresponding to these shifts, divorce rates began to increase, and marriage and fertility rates began a thirty-year long decline; during this same period, the birth control pill for women was developed, thus allowing women to control their lives in new ways (Chafe, 1972; Gordon, 1990); a short while later, in 1964, the Civil and Women's Rights Movements were underway; by the early 1970's, the Equal Rights
Amendment was once again brought to Congress for consideration of a constitutional amendment, the first quotas bill was introduced, abortion was legalized, and the no-fault divorce law was passed (Chafe, 1972; Gordon, 1990; Woloch, 1994). In varying degrees, these events and others have transformed women’s lives in this century. But what effects have these events had upon cultural representations of the feminine?

Since these events have also led to shifts in perceptions of the feminine that both mirror and reinforce women’s changing reality, we might anticipate a similar transformation in cultural representations of the feminine; conventional wisdom would certainly lead us to anticipate a parallel between social, economic, and political transformations, shifting perceptions, and cultural representations of the feminine. Certainly, on the surface, popular cultural messages appear to attempt to capitalize on the transformations that have occurred in women’s lives over the past century. For example, the now famous Virginia Slims cigarette advertisement that proclaims: “you’ve come a long way, baby” suggests a recognition of and attempt to capitalize on the changes that have occurred in women’s statuses and roles; albeit that the message is an attempt to capitalize on this new status by suggesting that a truly “modern” woman smokes cigarettes, a behavior that was once unthinkable for a “proper” woman. In wanting to understand the ways in which these historical events over the last eight decades had affected the cultural messages of femininity, and in wondering what cultural representations of the feminine looked like during this period of significant change, I found myself asking several questions: what are the themes of femininity that have appeared in popular culture over this...

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1 The ERA was, of course, first proposed in 1923. See Chafe, 1972; Flexner, 1975; Johnston, 1992; Woloch, 1994 for more information on both the first and second attempts to ratify the ERA.
century of great change? In expecting that the answers would not be simple ones, I also asked: have the themes changed over time, or are marketing slogans aimed at the “modern” woman misleading us to believe that these messages have been transformed? If the themes have changed, have the meanings also changed, or are the meanings consistent over time? However, uncovering the themes and meanings of femininity is only the first step in understanding why the cultural messages look the way they do when they do. Thus, I asked a fourth question: what explains these themes and overarching meanings? That is, how are these messages, and any changes therein, connected with social structural conditions, political and cultural organization, and changes in laws and technologies pertaining to reproduction? For example, do the messages change with the introduction of the birth control pill? If so, how do they change?

The Significance of Studying Gender Historically and Culturally

The investigation of the ways in which gender and, in particular, femininity, is produced through popular culture has both contemporary and classical significance in sociology. Sociologists of culture (Gerbner, 1967; Lewis, 1978; Lamont, 1996; Lowenthal, 1961) maintain that the mass media is a fruitful place to begin the study of uncovering the ways in which social realities, such as the gendered organization of society, are constructed. Since it is believed that changes in the communication patterns and cultural messages of a society signal, or are signaled by a change in social institutions, culture seems a useful place to begin understanding and explaining the evolution of social categories over time. Overall, popular culture is said to be a viable avenue of investigation for uncovering the dialectical process of
the shaping of action by structure and structure by action; an idea which has both classical and contemporary significance in sociology.

One way in which to investigate feminine sexuality as an historical product is through the medium of mass communication, such as the popular periodical. Whether the prescriptions and expectations within periodicals are reflecting or creating gendered realities is a hotly contested debate; in reality, it is probably a combination of both “push” and “pull.” For the purposes of this study it is maintained that popular culture is one forum for reflecting and sustaining social conditions and, in this way, these mediums of mass culture do contribute to reinforcing a gendered social life.

The Popular Periodical for Women

Women’s popular periodicals are one forum that offer a glimpse into the culture of femininity and, when contextualized, it becomes apparent that such a culture does not develop separately from mainstream social, economic and cultural conditions, but in conjunction with them (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995). For example, when it was first published in 1883, the structure and contents of *Ladies Home Journal* reflected the separate spheres of women and men in late nineteenth century America (Chafe, 1979; Damon-Moore, 1994;

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2 There is significance in Sociology for studying femininity, or social roles, historically. Although both are connected to the social roles we occupy, there has been a distinction made between personal self concept and social self concept. Whereas personal self concept refers to individual feelings about one’s self, social self concept has been used to refer to the social expectations for a category of people who share particular characteristics, such as women. Research on women’s social self concept has maintained that personal self concept can be summarized to be those attributes that capture women’s experiences as women, but it is proposed by many sociologists that personal self concept must be examined in the context of the historical, social and cultural conditions; that is, social self concept structures personal self concept and, hence, the necessity and significance for studying femininity historically.
Degler, 1980; Scanlon, 1995). However, women's popular periodicals have also been important for constructing femininity. In addition to reflecting cultural and social structural transformations, these periodicals represent the first forum for discussing gender constructions and relationships between the sexes (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995). Therefore, they have been instrumental in shaping the "vocabulary of gender" (Scanlon, 1995: 7) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Damon-Moore, 1994; Fishburn, 1944; Scanlon, 1995; White, 1970). This "vocabulary of gender" perennially represents the feminine ideal as white, middle class, and heterosexual.

Since women's popular periodicals are in the business of crafting femininity, of prescribing appropriate roles, values, feelings, and behaviors for women, this medium of mass communication seems to be a valid source for investigating the ways in which the feminine is created and transformed in culture. Furthermore, since these periodicals remain significant in the lives of many women, they seem an appropriate medium for understanding cultural representations of the feminine. However, while Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle do target specific audiences, it would be too simplistic to conclude that these women mold their behavior in accordance with the prescriptions that confront them in Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle. While the readers of each periodical do represent a group who share some very basic attributes, such as race and socioeconomic status, these women also bring their own experiences to their reading of these periodicals. That is, rather than mold their behavior to the sometimes narrow prescriptions within the pages of Ladies Home Journal or Mademoiselle, readers actively construct their gender identity and, thus, their sexuality, by incorporating the respective periodicals' ideas of femininity with their own lived experience.

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While readers may pick and choose messages to suit their own life circumstances, the messages are perhaps important to all women. They are important to all women because, as Arlie Hochschild has maintained (1983), while we are all required to engage in impression management, we are not required to participate equally; that is, subordinates are required to engage in these techniques much more often than superordinates. These magazines offer a forum for women to learn the art of impression management and, thus, the appropriate grooming and demeanor for achieving the feminine sexual ideal. Since a presentation of an appropriate feminine sexual self is necessary for both approbation and acceptance, developing skills in this art are crucial to a woman’s well being. Certainly this may also be the case for men. However, there are far fewer periodicals and products, both cosmetic and hygienic, targeted at men. Furthermore, while these periodicals do target women, they do not target them equally. Specifically, women of color, poor women, and lesbian and bisexual women appear rarely in these periodicals throughout the twentieth century (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979). However, these women are also subject to cultural messages of the feminine within these periodicals.

_Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle: 1920-1996._ Of these periodicals, two have been more successful than any others - _Ladies Home Journal_, first published in 1883, and _Mademoiselle_, first published in 1935. Within the popular periodical industry for women, only two successful genres have emerged, the homemaker/wife genre and the single, working woman genre. Of these two genres, _Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle_ have been the most successful. However, it is _Ladies Home Journal_ that is credited with not only influencing the tone and structure of the industry, but also with shaping ideas about gender in the
nineteenth and twentieth century (Scanlon, 1995). Furthermore, while *Mademoiselle* may be the most popular periodical in its genre, it has been unable to topple the popularity of *Ladies Home Journal*, which still sells more copies today than any other women's periodical. Beginning in the 1930's, however, *Ladies Home Journal* was deposed for a period of time by a new genre of women's popular periodicals. This new genre was spearheaded by *Mademoiselle*. While it was unable to depose *Ladies Home Journal* for very long, it too has remained the most successful periodical within its genre. Thus, this study documents the messages of feminine sexuality that appear within the two most successful popular periodicals for women in this century - *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. However, since they target only a very specific audience that is white, middle class, and heterosexual, representations of feminine sexuality that do not fit this mold are omitted. Specifically, all women of color, poor women, and lesbian and bisexual women are excluded from the feminine sexual idea in *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*.

Since it has been my purpose to investigate the messages of femininity as they appear over the most significant period of change for American women, I begin with the year 1920, and continue through to 1996. There could be many rationales for beginning earlier or later than 1920. However, most scholars agree that the most significant changes in women's social status have occurred since the 1940's (Chafe, 1972; Woloch, 1994). Since we might expect these changes to be reflected in the cultural messages of femininity, I wanted to capture this shift. Thus, hoping to capture changes in the messages, I began to document the messages of femininity twenty years prior to this period.
Contributions to the Literature on the
Cultural Messages of Femininity

This investigation of the messages of femininity in women's popular periodicals both extends and complements previous research in four specific ways. First, while many others have investigated these messages (Damon-Moore, 1994; Franzwa, 1974; Goffman, 1976; Hochschild, 1990; Hochschild, 1990; Hoekstra, 1972; Honey, 1972; Itzin, 1986; Kroeber, 1952; Lefkowitz, 1975; Lopate, 1978; Nye, 1972; Scanlon, 1995; Sidel, 1986; Sochen, 1987; Stolz, no date; White, 1970; Wiebel, 1977), previous research has focused on the presentation of the social roles prescribed for women, such as wife, mother, and worker (Franzwa, 1974; Hoekstra, 1972; Lefkowitz, 1975; Lopate, 1978; Sochen, 1987; Stolz, no date). However, permeating the view of women in various social roles are views of women as sexual beings.

Butler and Paisley (1979) have maintained that, in addition to exploring the messages that appear in articles rather than fiction and advertisements, what is also needed is an investigation of the themes that organize the cultural messages of femininity. While much of the research literature shows that the portrayal of women in these periodicals is imbued with meanings about feminine sexuality (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Sochen, 1987; White, 1970), rather than focusing on this theme, previous studies mainly discuss feminine sexuality implicitly. Therefore, since it is one of the organizing themes in these periodicals, in this study I further extend our understanding of the cultural messages of femininity by focusing upon themes of feminine sexuality.

Since prescriptions for feminine behavior are discussions about expectations for behavior between the sexes (Connell, 1995; Lorber, 1994; Ortner, 1981; Rutter and Schwartz, 1997), then almost all of the messages in these periodicals in some way touch upon sexuality. For
example, since they are consistently sexualizing women’s bodies, articles that focus on appearance contain hidden meanings of feminine sexuality. Women’s bodies have historically been used as a means to display wealth, to attract a mate, or to achieve a certain image and it is through these scripts that women learn how to present their sexual selves. While men’s bodies have been used in the same way at various times throughout history, the male body has never consistently personified wealth (the Victorian bustle dress and its many layers of expensive petticoats), or breeding (the corset and the childsize waist) the way women’s costume has. However, since scripts on demeanor that instruct, advise, and inform readers on how to “act” in romantic relationships and around men also contain messages about feminine sexuality, it is not only bodies that are sexualized in these periodicals. Since in these periodicals women also receive instruction on how to present a feminine demeanor to men, they are also alluding to, if not explicitly, sexualizing behavior.

Issues of sexuality involve desire, behavior, and sexual identity (Ortner, 1981; Rutter, et al., 1997), and each of these are constructed in women’s popular periodicals. Since they offer advice on presentation of appearance and self, the articles in women’s popular periodicals are essentially tool boxes not for creating desire, but for fulfilling social and cultural prescriptions of desire, behavior, and sexual identity.

In addition to extending previous research by focusing on the themes of feminine sexuality, this study also adds to our knowledge of these messages by investigating the messages over time. In studying the cultural messages of feminine sexuality over a seventy-six year period, this study extends our knowledge on the evolution of these messages. Furthermore, this study

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3 For example, in the eighteenth century the “cod piece” could be viewed as a corollary to the nineteenth-century bustle or the eighteenth-century empire dress.
also complements previous research by contextualizing the messages with social, political, and cultural conditions. Since it enables interpretation on why the messages look the way they do when they do, contextualization of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality over time is particularly important to our understanding of their evolution. Also complementing previous investigations, in this study I also incorporate a consideration of the producer of these messages. Specifically, I document the development of the industry, the influence of its editors, the audience, and structural organization of both *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. However, while I do investigate the producers, this study is not intended as a study in the production of knowledge. Rather, my aim has been to investigate the messages themselves.

### The Messages of Feminine Sexuality:
**Perennial and Shifting Meanings**

In this study I will show that popular cultural messages are much more complicated than conventional wisdom would lead us to believe. While the messages sometimes appear to contradict the social structural (economic, and demographic organization) arrangements of society, while reaffirming political organization, at other times, the messages appear to affirm both social structural and political arrangements. Therefore, while conventional wisdom might lead us to expect a parallel between social change and cultural messages, my findings reveal that cultural messages neither operate strictly as dependent or independent variables of social change. That is, cultural messages of the feminine are more complex than we might at first think.
The Two Paradigms of Feminine Sexuality

The messages of feminine sexuality reveal a remarkable constancy over the last seventy-six years. Only two meanings of feminine sexuality emerge over this period, and one of these spans all eight decades. I refer to the constant meaning as a perennial message of feminine sexuality. This paradigm, the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality, is characterized by the following features:

* **romantic relationship justifies existence**: a woman needs a man to support her or give her life meaning
* **please a male partner with appearance**
* **please a male partner with demeanor**: nurturing, friendly, warm,
* **sexual woman**: virgin, sexually indifferent, equates sex and love
* **traditional feminine demeanor at work**, such as friendliness, helpfulness, understanding
* **"other" focused orientation on the effects of work on marriage**

A second meaning of feminine sexuality, the modern paradigm, emerges around the 1970's and, while it continues to appear into the present decade, this message is continually prescribed alongside the traditional paradigm. The modern paradigm includes the following features:

* **romantic relationship improves existence**: a woman does not need a man to support her or give her life meaning, but it is nice to have a man in your life
* **pleasing self with appearance**: should nourish the body, take care of it for your own health
* **pleasing self with demeanor**: only look after him if you want to, if you feel like it, and if he appreciates it; be who you want to be; confidence, and self-awareness
* **sexual woman**: sex is necessary for a woman’s happiness and well-being
* **traditional masculine demeanor, such as confidence, aggressiveness, assertiveness**
* **"self" focused orientation on the effects of work on marriage**

Thus the messages of feminine sexuality are bifurcated, with both perennial (i.e., the traditional meaning) and shifting messages (i.e., the emergence of a modern paradigm) appearing over
these eight decades. However, while the key elements that distinguish the two paradigms of feminine sexuality do not shift, the themes within the paradigms do shift over time. These theme shifts occur mainly in the 1940’s, 60’s, and 90’s. For example, while readers are instructed to be “chaste” in the 1920’s, by the 40’s readers are instructed to be “asexual;” that is, to engage in sex, but for their partners and not their own pleasure. In explaining the perennial presence of the traditional paradigm and the emergence of the modern, and the theme shifts that occur within them, I bring social structural organization, political and cultural events, and developments pertaining to birth control technology to bear on their interpretation.

The Message Carriers of Feminine Sexuality

The paradigms and the themes within them are communicated via two message carriers or vehicles of feminine sexuality. The messages of feminine sexuality in these periodicals center on either appearance or behavior, what I refer to as grooming (appearance) or interaction style (behavior) scripts. Both scripts involve impression management techniques (Goffman, 1952), although different techniques are implemented depending on the script. Grooming scripts often rely on techniques for “front” or “backstage” techniques (Goffman, 1952); that is, how to “look” for an audience. On the other hand, interaction style scripts implement what Arlie Hochschild has referred to as “emotion management” (Hochschild, 1983) or the control and manipulation of one’s own feelings in order to induce a feeling in another. The two vehicles revolve around two themes: a romantic relationship and a work theme.

Perennial Metaphors of Feminine Sexuality. In addition to the perennial presence of the

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4 "Scripts" is a term that I use to refer to the articles from the periodicals. I use this term in a similar way to Goffman, emphasizing the fact that the "articles" are essentially rule books, or guidelines for appropriate grooming or interaction style.
traditional paradigm, the emergence of the modern, and the theme shifts that occur within them both, there are also perennial metaphors of feminine sexuality, and these cut across both the traditional and modern ideals. These metaphors are essentially my interpretation of the perennial separation between the grooming and interaction style scripts in these periodicals. Within the grooming scripts, readers are instructed to “find” themselves by dividing the body into parts; that is, readers receive instruction in finding the “right” hair style, dress, or makeup to match their personality, or in changing their personality to achieve a certain “look.” Finally, I also offer some interpretations for the perennial separation or fragmentation between the grooming and interaction style scripts. I maintain that this fragmentation amounts to an alienation of body from self.

Interpretations for the Messages of Feminine Sexuality: Contradictions Between Cultural Messages and Social Arrangements

In explaining both the bifurcation in the messages and the theme shifts within the paradigms, I consider social structural arrangements, political ideologies, public policies, and laws and technologies pertaining to reproduction. I will show that, sometimes the messages of feminine sexuality appear to contradict social arrangements, while at other times they complement them. Moreover, I will also show that the messages are sometimes contentious, prescribing contradictory messages within a decade.

Gerda Lerner (1979) has maintained that such messages (i.e., messages that appear inconsistent with the arrangements of women’s lives) occur during periods of rapid social change. As a consequence of changing expectations, Lerner (1979) maintains that popular culture may resort to an idealization of the feminine and, thus, it may not reflect the social,
political, and cultural organization of society at that time. Whatever the reason for the representation or the change in it, Lerner maintains that mass culture representations require interpretation because, rather than represent women's actual experiences or social structural arrangements of that experience, the image may represent a backlash and a subsequent idealization of the past. I argue that the paradoxical messages that often appear when social structural, political, and cultural arrangements are contrasted with these cultural messages may perhaps be a response to the tensions resulting from those very transformations occurring in women's roles.

In the next chapter I will highlight some of those studies that have contributed to my understanding of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality and have helped me to develop my research questions. In Chapter 3, I present a discussion of the methods used in this study. Prior to the analysis chapters, Chapters 4 and 5 outline the social structural organization of women's lives over the last seventy-six years (Chapter 4), and the development and audience profile of Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle. In Chapters 6 through 8, I document the two paradigms of feminine sexuality and their theme shifts. Chapters 9 and 10 offer some interpretations for the organization and evolution of the messages documented in Chapters 6 through 8. Specifically, Chapter 9 focuses on an analysis and interpretation of the organization of the messages of feminine sexuality into grooming and interaction style scripts. In Chapter 10, I attempt to explain both the bifurcation in the messages of femininity sexuality and the theme shifts that occur within the two paradigms. Finally, in Chapter 12, I offer my conclusions about the cultural messages of feminine sexuality over the past seventy-six years.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of the literature that has contributed to the development of the questions that guide this study. Since this chapter presents a review that focuses upon those studies that have been influential to my own understanding and thoughts on the cultural messages of feminine sexuality, this review is not intended to be exhaustive. There are certainly many studies on culture and femininity that are not presented here (Adburgham, 1972; Lazier-Smith, 1989; McRobbie, 1988; Millum, 1975; Press, 1991). These studies offer excellent expositions on either the messages of femininity or the effects of popular culture viewing on femininity, but they are omitted from this review because they did not directly contribute to my own approach to the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. Thus, this review is selective, drawing on and describing those studies that have directly contributed to the development of the central questions that guide this study.

In addition to addressing the ways in which the literature has contributed to the development of the central questions in my own study, in this chapter I also discuss some theoretical positions that have influenced my approach to the study of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. Those theoretical positions that have influenced my approach most come broadly from the interpretive traditions in sociology; specifically, from Erving Goffinan, and Arlie Hochschild. In addition, while they have not been as influential to my approach, some
feminist theories, particularly poststructuralist and marxist, have also been important to my thoughts as I have approached this data.

Fact Versus Fiction: Investigations of the Cultural Messages of Femininity

Many scholars have looked at the representations of femininity through popular culture (Franzwa, 1974; Goffman, 1976; Hatch and Hatch, 1958; Hochschild, 1989; Hoekstra, 1972; Honey, 1972; Itzin, 1986; Kilbourne, 1992; Kroeber, 1952; Lefkowitz, 1975; Lopate, 1978; Morelock and Kurth, 1975; Newkirk, 1977; Nye, 1972; Sidel, 1986; Sochen, 1987; Stoltz, no date; Tuchman, 1978; White, 1970; Wiebel, 1977). For the most part, these and other studies have focused on an investigation of the messages in the short story fiction or advertisements that appear in women’s popular periodicals. These studies have been represented either by descriptive investigations or documentations of the latent messages and meanings of femininity, or some combination of both (Franzwa, 1974; Goffman, 1976; Hoekstra, 1972; Kilbourne, 1992; Kroeber, 1952; Lefkowitz, 1975; Sidel, 1986; Sochen, 1987; Stoltz, no date; Tuchman, 1978; White, 1970).

Cultural Messages in Women’s Popular Periodicals: Contradictions in the Findings.

Investigations of the cultural messages of femininity in fiction, advertisements, and articles in women’s popular periodicals have been contradictory, with some scholars arguing that there is a relatively enduring representation of the feminine in women’s popular periodicals, and others arguing that the messages change over time. In their respective comparisons of the fiction in women’s popular periodicals and depictions of women as workers, several authors conclude that there is a striking constancy to the cultural messages of femininity (Franzwa, 1974; Lefkowitz, 1975; Sochen, 1987; Stoltz, no date). Specifically, Franzwa, who compares
government statistics on mother's who work outside the home to the role depictions of women in stories taken from *Ladies Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and *Good Housekeeping* from 1940 to 1970, reports that the stories do not reflect reality. According to Franzwa all of the stories depict women in one of four roles: 1. single and looking for a husband; 2. housewife-mother; 3. "spinster;" 4. widowed-divorced, or soon to re-marry. Similarly, in her study of the representation of femininity in women's popular periodicals from 1940 to 1970, Stolz reports that the presentation of women in domestic roles has not only remained consistent, but has actually increased. Stolz concurs with Franzwa that the presentation of married heroines in non-domestic roles in short-story fiction has consistently remained low. Similarly to Franzwa and Stolz, Lefkowitz also reports a remarkable tenacity in the cultural messages of femininity. She documents that the heroines depicted in the fiction in three women's popular periodicals between 1950 and 1967 were all married, middle class, young, attractive, and love oriented, and that few career oriented heroines appeared in these stories.

Other studies investigating role representations in women's popular periodicals also report relatively little change. In her study of the wife/mother role representations in *Ladies Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Woman's Home Companion*, and the *Delineator* from 1900 to 1920, Hoekstra also concludes that little has changed, and that the representations of the feminine in women's popular periodicals reinforce a "pedestal myth." Hoekstra finds that the fiction presents a heroine in six basic situations that emphasize certain role expectations. All of these situations and corresponding role requirements consistently cast women in a spiritual role and, as a consequence, place women on a pedestal. The five situation/role combinations are as follows: 1. boy meets girl; 2. learning a lesson: the heroine in these stories is rewarded for
doing “right” and punished for doing “wrong;” 3. uniting a parent (usually the mother) and child: these stories “spiritualize” motherhood and show that a woman is not completely fulfilled without attaining this role; 4. mother centered: maternal love is shown to be more rewarding and more mature than romantic love; 5. problem solving: these stories depict older women as wise, saving marriages, and families. Hoekstra finds that deviation from these roles means loss of this spiritual role and, consequently, the heroine’s “womanliness.” Similarly to Hoekstra, in her study of the representation of women’s roles, Sochen (1987) argues that representations of the feminine are relatively unchanging.

Sochen finds that representations of the feminine in the fiction of popular periodicals are relatively consistent, taking only one of three images at any particular time: “Mary,” the pure and good woman, “Eve,” the temptress, and the “independent woman.” Sochen reports that, while representations of the feminine as “Eves” are always present in popular periodicals and culture in general, “Marys” and the “independent woman” become the dominant images of femininity during times of social upheaval.

On the other hand, some scholars have argued that representations of the feminine in women’s popular periodicals do change over time. However, these changes are usually presented as ebbs and flows rather than abrupt shifts. In their respective studies of the depictions of femininity in popular culture, Johns-Heines and Gerth (1949), Kroeber (1952), Newkirk (1977), and White (1970) all report changes in representations of femininity. Specifically, in his study of hemlines over three centuries, Kroeber reports that changes in hemlines reflect changes in depictions of the feminine. Similarly, in their study of “heroes” in the Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal, Country Gentleman, and the Atlantic from
1921 to 1940, Patrick Johns-Heines and Hans Gerth (1949) also conclude that representations of femininity are transformed over time. And, in her study of the roles of women as presented in the nonfiction of Mademoiselle, Redbook, and MS. from 1966 to 1974, Newkirk (1977) also reports findings that contradict those of Franzwa (1974), Lefkowitz, and Sochen (1987). While Newkirk reports, similarly to Franzwa (1974), Lefkowitz (1975), Stolz (no date), Morelock (1975), Hatch (1958), and Sochen (1987), that there are four major roles for women presented in these articles: 1. domestic roles; 2. non-domestic, non-career roles; 3. self-identity roles (pursuing goals); and 4. social activist, she contends that representations of the feminine in non-domestic roles has increased. Based on her findings, she reports that, while MS. featured no women in domestic roles during this time, it featured 75 articles presenting women in either non-domestic, self identity, or social activist roles; Redbook had 9 articles featuring women in domestic roles, and 25 articles featuring women in either non-domestic, self identity, and social activist roles. Newkirk maintains that, while this demonstrates that the images have changed, these roles still represent an unbalanced, unchanging depiction of femininity.

Perhaps some reasons for the inconsistent findings have to do with the time periods under study. Newkirk, after all, investigates roles of women as presented in women’s popular periodicals between 1966 and 1974, whereas Franzwa, Lefkowitz, Hoekstra, and Sochen, investigate these very same issues at a much earlier time period. Additionally, while most other studies investigate representations of the feminine over a twenty or forty year period, Kroeber’s study is an investigation of the cultural messages of femininity over three centuries. Finally, Kroeber’s, Newkirk’s, and White’s findings may contradict other studies because of the data
themselves. Specifically, unlike previous studies which report no change in the images of the feminine, the Kroeber, Newkirk, and White studies represent investigations of the feminine in non-fiction. Thus, it may be that these different mediums within popular periodicals for women are communicating different messages.

Fact not Fiction. Butler and Paisley (1979) maintain that since the bulk of the research on the content of periodicals has focused on advertisements or short-story fiction, new areas of the popular periodical need to be explored for their message content. Since different messages may be communicated by the different mediums within these periodicals, Butler advises a focus on those messages that appear in the articles of women's popular periodicals.

As I have shown thus far in this chapter, certainly investigations of the messages of the feminine do differ based on the content under investigation; specifically, those studies focusing on non-fiction, such as studies by Kroeber, Newkirk, and White, contradict previous findings on the cultural messages of femininity. However, in addition to their investigations of the different contents in women's popular periodicals, these studies differ in other ways; specifically, while all of the studies investigate cultural messages of femininity at specific points in time, others investigate them over an extended period of time. Therefore, in order to document changes in the cultural messages of any kind, perhaps it is necessary to investigate those messages historically, or over time. Additionally, in order to explain their evolution, or lack thereof, what is also necessary is an historical contextualization of the messages. Therefore, this study extends previous research first by studying the cultural messages of femininity within the articles of these periodicals and, second, by studying the messages historically.
The Historical Study of Cultural Messages: Possibilities for Disentangling the Contradictions

Perhaps one step in disentangling the contradictory findings in these studies on the cultural messages of femininity is the study and contextualization of those messages over time. While most scholars do place these cultural messages in historical context, the majority are unable to answer questions pertaining to the evolution of the messages because they do not document them over an extended period of time (Goffman, 1976; Hatch and Hatch, 1958; Hochschild, 1989; Hoekstra, 1972; Itzin, 1986; Lefkowitz, 1975; Lopate, 1978; Morelock and Kurth, 1975; Newkirk, 1977; Nye, 1972). Studies that do document cultural messages over an extended period of time, and that also go beyond the descriptive, also attempt to connect representations of the feminine to social, economic, political, and cultural arrangements (Kroeber, 1952; Sochen, 1987; White, 1970; Wiebel, 1977).

Hemlines and Economics. In an historical content analysis looking at women's evening dress fashions in popular periodicals over 3 centuries, Kroeber notes not only changes in women's fashion over time, but also connects these changes in the depictions of the feminine in popular culture to corresponding social conditions; specifically, Kroeber reports that length of hemline is related to social conditions. According to Kroeber, in times of "stability" and "low variability," versus times of "uncertainty or strain" and, consequently, "high variability," there is a corresponding pattern of evening dress for women as presented in popular periodicals. Alluding to the significant relationship between social conditions, popular culture, and behavior

1 Of course, this study alone will not suffice for disentangling the contradictory messages. Rather, many historical studies on the cultural messages of feminine sexuality would be required in order to discern some more reliable pattern of their evolution.
in general, he maintains that social and economic arrangements appear to reflect the fashions that are advertised in women's popular periodicals.

Similarly to Kroeber, Wiebel (1977) investigates fashions for women as depicted in women's popular periodicals over the last one-hundred years, arguing that changes are connected to social, economic, and political events. According to Wiebel, images and expectations for the "fashionable woman" depicted in women's popular periodicals change over time to meet the political, cultural, social, and economic conditions within which ideologies of femininity emerge. Thus, she maintains that messages of the feminine correspond to these ideologies. Similarly to both Kroeber and Wiebel, Sochen also argues that social conditions appear to be related to the image that dominates a particular period.

Women's Roles and Social Change. Sochen reports that the three consistent images presented in women's popular periodicals, "Mary," "Eve," and the "independent woman," correspond to social conditions. Specifically, while "Eves" are always present in popular periodicals and culture in general, "Marys" and the "independent woman" become the dominant images of the feminine during times of social upheaval. However, Sochen notes that, during these times of social change and uncertainty when the "Marys" and "independent women" come to dominate the depictions of the feminine in women's magazines, the "Marys" are rewarded for their behavior, while the "independent women" are punished. White (1970) concurs with Kroeber, and Sochen, maintaining that cultural messages reflect the social and cultural conditions of a given decade. White reports that shifts in representations of feminine sexuality in the fiction of women's popular periodicals correspond to shifts in ideas about
sexuality; specifically, White is referring here to the impact of Freudianism on early twentieth-century thought.

Since these studies document changes in the cultural messages of femininity over an extended period of time, they are able to answer questions pertaining to the evolution of these messages. Scholars who do investigate these messages over time posit a connection between the cultural messages of the feminine and historical conditions. Therefore, in investigating messages of the feminine over an extended period, and contextualizing those messages with social, economic, political, and cultural organization, this study both complements and adds to research in this area.

In addition to studying cultural messages of femininity historically, and investigating the messages within the articles of women’s popular periodicals, Butler and Paisley (1979) also call for a focus on the themes that are communicated within women’s popular periodicals. According to Butler, the biggest gap in our knowledge about the representation of the feminine in women’s popular periodicals has less to do with which aspects of magazine content are analyzed (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, or advertisements) and more to do with what themes are focused upon. Butler and Paisley specifically call for an investigation of the organizing themes, or the messages that structure these periodicals.

The Investigation of Organizing Themes in the Non-Fiction in Women’s Popular Periodicals

Much of the previous research on the cultural messages of the feminine have focused upon investigations of the social roles prescribed for women. However, permeating these prescriptions are messages about feminine sexuality. Almost all studies discussed in this chapter emphasize a latent theme that defines women’s experience in relation to their romantic
involvement with a male partner; that is, they address the issue of feminine sexuality as it is presented in women's popular periodicals. Since women in these periodicals appear to be defined in terms of their sexuality, or in relation to their connection with men in romantic relationships, sexuality seems to be one of the central organizing themes in these periodicals. Thus, to further extend previous work on the cultural messages of femininity, an investigation of the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality seems important to our understanding of the construction of femininity in these periodicals.

Representations of Feminine Sexuality in Cultural Messages. Several studies do implicitly address representations of feminine sexuality in women's popular periodicals (Damon-Morre, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Sochen, 1987; White, 1970). However, it is rarely identified as a theme that structures these periodicals. Damon-Moore identifies a love and romance theme that, she says, structures women's popular periodicals, but the purpose of her study is not to further investigate representations of the feminine through this theme. Additionally, while Scanlon (1987), Sochen (1987), and White (1970) identify themes of feminine sexuality within the cultural messages that they examine, their respective purposes are not to investigate this theme.

While White maintains that representations of feminine sexuality shift in the fiction of women's popular periodicals around the 1920's, and she attributes this to social and cultural change, her purpose is not to elucidate this theme. Similarly, both White, and Sochen highlight a transformation in sexual images that are presented in women's popular periodicals and connect these transformations to shifts in social structural arrangements, but their purpose is to expound on the latent messages of femininity, not to highlight the central theme organizing these messages. Finally, while Scanlon touches upon the sexualization of women as they are
represented in various roles in these periodicals, her main purpose is to situate the messages within what she interprets to be a "gendered consumerism." Therefore, her purpose is not to highlight the nuances of the central theme that organizes the messages that she is describing.

Therefore, building on these studies that highlight the importance of the message of feminine sexuality in these periodicals, my study extends previous research by focusing exclusively on the themes and meanings within the messages of feminine sexuality. However, in addition to investigating these messages through articles, rather than either fiction or advertisements, studying them over time, and focusing on messages of feminine sexuality, we can not forget that these messages are cultural documents; that is, they are produced.

The Production of Cultural Messages: Industry Considerations

While this investigation of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality is not a study of the production of knowledge of those messages, it can not be forgotten that the data that I am relying upon are of a special kind. Specifically, the data that I use to document the messages of feminine sexuality are drawn from a cultural source. Therefore, some knowledge about the production of this data is necessary.

The Relationship Between Producer and Message. Lopate (1978) and Itzin (1986) both maintain that, in addition to reflecting the period in which they are produced, cultural messages also reflect the interests and motivations of the editors who produce them. Lopate reports that popular periodicals present the same story or feature article in a way that the editors believe will reflect their readership (i.e., Vogue - professional, upper, to middle class; Cosmopolitan - young, working, to middle class). In her study, she observed that several different magazines covering an article on Jackie Onassis Kennedy focused on what they believed reflected the
interests of their readers. *Ladies Home Journal*, a middle class, traditional (i.e., housewife-mother centered) magazine, focused on Kennedy’s wealth, while *Family Circle*, which Lopate identified as a working class magazine, focused on her mothering style. Furthermore, Itzin (1986) maintains that, while popular periodicals do act as agents of socialization and, thereby, are important in constructing individual personal identity, representations of femaleness in these periodicals represent both hegemonic stereotypes of women and the editors ideas of what readers want. Thus, they often do not represent women’s *true* experiences. However, White maintains that these considerations must also be placed in historical context; that is, the editors and their expectations reflect social structural arrangements.

In her study of the relationship between popular periodicals for women in England between 1693 and 1968, White’s (1970) findings support those of Lopate, and Itzin. White maintains that, along with social and political conditions, the production of a periodical affects the substantive content and message. However, White goes further, adding that the editorial approach and advertising ratios and techniques in women’s popular periodicals are related to technological, social, political, and economic conditions. As an example, the rise of the printing press is one example of how technological conditions impacted upon the production of the popular periodical. Specifically, the printing press served to increase the circulation of all popular periodicals and, since greater circulation and the expenses associated with the printing press made it necessary for the publishers to seek financial backing from other sources, a dramatic increase in advertising appeared at this time (White, 1970). As such, the publication and structure of women’s popular periodicals cannot be separated from the history of paper and ink manufacturing, and the printing press.
While the images, representations, and ideas within the product reflect social conditions, they also reflect the interests and values of the producers of the message system (Butler, et al., 1979; Gerbner, 1969). In addition to reflecting the period in which they are produced, since they are also produced within an institution, the messages also represent an institutional image of social life that is unique. Complementing previous research in this area, in this study I will sketch the historical development, social profile of "important" editors, and an audience profile of both *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*.

Therefore, in addition to extending our understanding of the cultural messages of femininity by 1. investigating the messages as they appear in articles, 2. studying those messages historically, and 3. uncovering themes and meanings of feminine sexuality, this study also complements previous research by situating the data within the industry in which they are produced. Again, however, this investigation is not intended as a study of the production of knowledge and, thus, the producer will not be brought to bear upon the interpretation of these messages. Rather, my sketch of the producers is intended as an exposition of the source of my data, highlighting the social profile of the producers, the audience to which the messages are targeted, and the structural organization of the periodicals.

While the studies discussed thus far have been important for helping me develop my research questions, some theoretical contributions have also been influential to the approach I have taken in this study.\(^2\) My approach to understanding these cultural messages mainly reflects Erving Goffman's, and Arlie Hochschild's respective approaches to interpretive theory.

\(^2\)In addition to several theoretical paradigms that have been important in guiding my approach towards this data, I have also relied upon several theoretical positions on sexuality. Those scholars that have been particularly influential to my thinking on sexuality include Adrienne Rich, Gayle Rubin, Carl Degler, Ann Ferguson, and Kathryn Wieble.
Additionally, while they have been less important to my approach, some feminist theories, particularly postmodern and marxist, have also been very influential to my thinking as I have struggled with trying to understand cultural data (Martin, 1987; Press, 1991; Weedon, 1987).³

**Approaches to Cultural Data**

Several theories have been influential to my thinking as I have approached the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. However, since this study is an investigation and analysis of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality and my central questions center on the relationship between these messages (culture) and the historical conditions (structure) in which they emerge, I must also briefly address the long standing debate in the functionalist tradition on the relationship between culture and structure. This tradition has maintained that culture is an epiphenomena of structure; that is, that cultural messages reflect social structural arrangements. However, in my thematic analysis approach, I investigate the evolution of these messages and, therefore, avoid committing the same error as the functionalists. Through a thematic analysis, I will show that these cultural messages are much more complicated than this basic paradigm would lead us to believe.

The three theories that have been important to my approach to this data will be discussed in their order of importance. First, both Erving Goffman’s, and Arlie Hochschild’s approaches to the interpretive tradition have been fundamental to my understanding of these messages; second, Emily Martin’s use of the marxist concept of alienation has also been important as I

³While I have also looked at related theories to the marxist tradition, namely cultural hegemony theories from cultural studies, I will not include a discussion of those theories here. These theories represent a distinct approach to cultural data that is interesting and exciting and, while I have recently begun to read Andrea Press, and Angela McRobbie’s work, these approaches are not reflected in this study.
have tried to understand some of the more nuanced meanings of feminine sexuality; and, finally, Chris Weedon's poststructuralist approach has taught me to continually reflect on "what is not said" and "who is excluded" in these messages.

The Meaning of Cultural Data: Interpretive Theory a La Goffman and Hochschild

Both Goffman (1976) and Hochschild (1989) investigate cultural messages of the feminine and both apply theoretical concepts that are useful for approaching and understanding this type of data. In his study of advertisements, Goffman focuses on the meanings of gender displays, maintaining that such displays present women and men with rules that guide behavior. Goffman's analysis of these messages centers on backstage and frontstage "display" techniques for achieving the appropriate image. Based on his findings he concludes that a latent message is communicated concerning expectations for the relationship between men and women; specifically, he draws an analogy between expectations for the relationship between parents and children in explaining the latent messages of male and female behavior. Similarly, Hochschild is also concerned with uncovering the latent messages within a script. However, unlike Goffman, Hochschild uncovers multiple meanings of femininity. Additionally, whereas Goffman centers on uncovering messages based on the actor's outer appearance, Hochschild also departs from Goffman in that she addresses expectations for feeling, or "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1983, 1990).

Hochschild takes Goffman to task for overlooking feelings and for focusing solely on outer appearance; albeit that she concedes he did this because of his ambivalence toward the idea of self. Furthermore, Hochschild criticizes Goffman's observance of rule following, which places everyone in the category of actor. Thus, Hochschild is particularly critical of Goffman's
assertion that the world is a stage upon which we all must act because, as she maintains, expectations for compliance with norms for appearance and demeanor are not distributed equally. Hochschild maintains that, while everyone is required to use impression management for the sake of approbation and also to engage in work to fix spoiled identities, we are not required to do this equally. Specifically, she goes on to maintain that, as evidenced by the plethora of advice books and magazines for women, women are especially susceptible to rules for demeanor and appearance. The multiple messages of femininity that Hochschild finds within these advice books and magazines are a testament to these inequitable expectations in the norms for demeanor and appearance.

In different degrees, both Hochschild’s emphasis on feeling rules and Goffman’s focus on “display” have been very important to me as I have approached the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. In extending both Hochschild’s and Goffman’s work, my own attempt to understand these messages has led me to incorporate both “display” and “feeling rules.” Readers are not just presented with messages about how to “look” or “act,” but neither are they only exposed to scripts that tell them how to feel. Rather, the cultural messages of feminine sexuality are a package; that is, the feminine sexual ideal includes prescriptions for both back/frontstage techniques and for emotion management. Therefore, in an attempt to understand the feminine sexual ideal as a package in these periodicals, I incorporate both Goffman’s concepts of back and frontstage (the display), and Hochschild’s concept of emotion management or feeling rules. However, I do rely more on Goffman’s ideas of impression management and back/frontstage for describing the evolution of the messages.
Whereas backstage and frontstage impression management techniques refer to work on demeanor or appearance to fit a particular situation, Hochschild’s concept of emotion management refers to the control and manipulation of feelings. The two techniques for accomplishing this goal are deep and surface acting. Interaction style scripts that recommend deep acting offer suggestions to the reader on how to transform her feelings about something, someone, or some situation, whereas those scripts that recommend surface acting propose ways in which the reader might change the outward appearance of her feelings, although not her actual feelings. Therefore, both concepts, back/frontstage and emotion management, are important for understanding the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. In attempting to understand the messages of feminine sexuality by combining both concepts, I am able to uncover the latent messages of both how to act and feel, and also how to look and “choreograph a scene with men” (Hochschild, 1990: 284).

Finally, in this study I also draw on Hochschild’s (1990) idea of “gender codes.” Hochschild approaches her data as a set of complex messages that amount to strategies for achieving the feminine ideal and she refers to these strategies as gender codes. These codes are sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradictory and contentious, but her main point is that there are multiple messages.4 In my own approach to understanding the complexity of the messages of feminine sexuality over time, I have not only borrowed this idea of gender codes from Hochschild, but also her concepts for identifying the two central codes of femininity; that is, the “traditional” and the “modern-egalitarian” codes (Hochschild, 1990: 286). However, while Hochschild’s exposition of these codes focuses on posturing (how to smile, stand) and

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4 Hochschild’s study is not historical. However, she does select advice books from several different decades.
feeling rules (how to feel), my own study mainly centers on prescriptions for grooming (appearance) and demeanor (behavior). Furthermore, while Hochschild focuses on the degree to which patterns overlap and contradict one another, my own analysis centers on uncovering the most frequently mentioned codes and tracing their evolution over time.

Overall, I appreciate the complexity with which Hochschild approaches these cultural messages. Unlike many other scholars, Hochschild emphasizes the multiplicity within the messages and the different strategies for achieving the feminine ideal, and I have attempted to approach and present the richness of this data in a similar way. Since this data is so rich, my attempts to understand it have also led me to other theories. Specifically, Emily Martin’s approach to marxist ideas on alienation have been particularly useful to me in interpreting one of the central messages of feminine sexuality within these periodicals.

Fragmentation and Alienation: Marxist Approaches to Understanding Cultural Messages of the Feminine

After applying the concepts that were borrowed from Goffman and Hochschild, I also found Emily Martin’s application of alienation from marxist theory very useful for understanding some of the messages of feminine sexuality in my own study. However, while Martin does not apply this theory to cultural data, I think the application here is a valid one. In her study of American women’s perceptions of their bodies, Martin applies the marxist concept of alienation to describe the relationship between women’s sense of self and body. She maintains that, in capitalist societies, a separation of spheres between work and home becomes epitomized in every relationship, including that between self and body. However, according to Martin, this alienation is more acute for women than for men because, for women, becoming a
full sexual being entails becoming a physical body. Martin maintains that, consequently, becoming a fully sexual being involves repressing the self, or separating the self from the body. As a consequence of this fragmentation or separation of the body from the self, women become alienated from themselves, just as the worker becomes alienated from her work in the true marxist concept of alienation.

Martin attributes this fragmentation and alienation to the development of capitalism in the West. Thus, she maintains that it is neither a "natural" fragmentation nor a "natural" way of viewing the world. Rather, it is attributable to economic forces. This idea of the "unnaturalness" of this fragmentation of body from self can also be applied to the cultural messages of femininity as they appear in women's popular periodicals.

This fragmentation of body from self also exists in the study of femininity in women's popular periodicals. Specifically, with all respect for the insights they have offered us on the cultural construction of femininity, both Goffinan and Hochschild fragment body from self by investigating appearance and demeanor as if they are naturally separate; that is, Goffinan investigates appearance, and Hochschild demeanor. However, as I will document, these two aspects of self are also treated separately in the periodicals. But, rather than overlook this separation, what is necessary is an analysis and interpretation of that separation. Thus, Martin's work on the marxist concept of alienation has been useful for helping me approach and analyze the cultural messages of feminine sexuality within these periodicals.

Deconstructing the Messages: Postmodern Theories

Finally, in addition to borrowing concepts from the interpretive tradition and relying on concepts from marxist theory to explain some central findings, I have also implemented some
ideas from poststructural theorist, Chris Weedon. Specifically, I have implemented Weedon’s emphasis on *deconstructing* the messages of feminine sexuality, or addressing exclusions in these messages. Given that my data are drawn from two popular periodicals that are crafted for and attract a white, middle class, heterosexual audience, it is especially necessary to continually ask who is excluded by this representation of the feminine sexual idea.

In sum, in my approach to the cultural messages of feminine sexuality, I have drawn on the interpretive tradition in sociology, and marxist and poststructuralist theories. Concepts from each of these approaches have been important for both analyzing and interpreting the messages that emerge within these periodicals. While the interpretive theories of Goffman and Hochschild have been the most influential, I believe that concepts from each of these theories have been exigent to a more complete understanding of the messages of feminine sexuality as they appear in these periodicals over time.

**Summary**

In this chapter I have presented a review of the literature that has been important for helping me develop my research questions. Additionally, I have also discussed three theories that have been influential to my thoughts and approach to understanding the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. The interpretive tradition, as presented by Erving Goffman, and Arlie Hochschild, has been especially important to my thoughts and approach. I have particularly relied upon Goffman’s and Hochschild’s concepts of impression management (back and frontstage and emotion management) for disentangling the messages within the data, but I have also applied their respective approaches to understanding and interpreting these messages. Additionally, I have also relied upon Emily Martin’s implementation of the marxist theoretical
concept of alienation, and Chris Weedon’s ideas from poststructuralist theory on exclusionary messages.

Overall, the literature on cultural messages of femininity in women’s popular periodicals has been contradictory. In order to further our understanding of these messages, both this and other studies that investigate the evolution of these messages over an extended period of time are required in order to disentangle these contradictions. This study is necessarily only one small part of that attempt. In addition to documenting these messages over time, some scholars also offer explanations for their evolution in light of social, economic, political, and cultural conditions. In addition to building on these previous research attempts to investigate these messages over time, this study also complements previous research by contextualizing these messages with social arrangements.

Since much of the previous research on the cultural messages of femininity have focused on fiction and advertisements, my study further extends previous research by focusing on an analysis of special and regular feature articles. While more recent studies are beginning to focus increasingly on feature articles, and also to address structural themes on femininity within these periodicals, my research also extends previous work by investigating a central organizing theme within the periodicals - feminine sexuality. Finally, while this is not a study of the production of knowledge and, thus, I do not investigate the relationship between the producer and the message, my study also complements previous research by exposing the meaning makers of these messages; specifically, in order to situate the messages within the popular periodical industry, I offer an historical sketch of the development of that industry, a social profile of its “important” editors, an audience profile of Ladies Home Journal and
Mademoiselle, and a brief analysis of the structural organization of these two periodicals. Therefore, my study both adds to and extends the literature on the cultural messages of femininity.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Introduction

Sociologists of popular culture have long maintained that mass communication is a fruitful place to begin to study the construction of social reality (Gerbner, 1967; Lewis, 1978; Maffesoli, 1995). Since they are in the business of prescribing gender relations and, thus, femininity, the popular periodical for women seems a particularly appropriate medium in which to uncover the evolution of the messages of feminine sexuality.

The Periodicals

In this study, I document the messages of feminine sexuality that appear in Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle. While today there are many different genres of women's periodicals available, the staples have been and continue to be those that emphasize either the home and family, or fashion and the romantic relationship. However, those periodicals that emphasize fashion and the romantic relationship represent a relatively new phenomenon in the industry of women's popular periodicals. Before the 1940's, women's popular periodicals in the United States were exclusively family focused, whereas today these periodicals range from those focused on dating, family, marriage and the home, to those focused on work and careers, and self improvement (Mott, 1966; Peterson, 1956; Wood, 1971). However, the general purposes of women's periodicals have remained relatively unchanged since the first women's
periodical was published in the United States in 1928 (*Godey’s Lady’s Book*) (Woodward, 1960). These purposes, service (this classification includes, in addition to homecare, cooking, needlework, fiction, beauty, and health, or feminine presentations of self), fashion, and homecare, reflect a formulaic model handed-down from *Godey’s Lady’s Book* and *Ladies Home Journal* (Mott, 1966; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). However, a new genre of women’s popular periodicals emerged in the 1930’s to challenge these long maintained and traditional purposes, and *Mademoiselle* magazine spearheaded this transformation (Mott, 1966; Peterson, 1956; Woodward, 1960). Adding a new focus on employment and intimate relationships, *Mademoiselle* paved the way for a new orientation in women’s popular periodicals - fashion and romantic relationship.

Of the two most popular genres of women’s periodicals, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle* represent the most successful periodicals in the industry. Whereas *Ladies Home Journal* has always been a home and family focused periodical for women, *Mademoiselle* has consistently emphasized fashion and the romantic relationship. Both *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle* were forerunners in their field. Following *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, it was *Ladies Home Journal* that established the structure and content of women’s popular periodicals into the 1930’s, at which time social structural and economic shifts are said to have paved the way for a periodical aimed at the “working woman.”

*Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*: The Groundbreakers

Since this study aims to uncover the messages of feminine sexuality within women’s popular periodicals, it is necessary to include a sample that is diverse, or that represents a range of feminine images within these periodicals. Therefore, because they each have one of the highest
circulation rates for periodicals of their genre, and because each were forerunners, setting the tone for their respective genres, this sample will include Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle.

**Audience Profile of the Periodicals.** Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle both represent periodicals that have consistently been targeted at a white, middle class audience of women. However, while Mademoiselle’s audience is younger, more educated, and single, Ladies Home Journal readers are more often married, and many are mothers.

A breakdown of female readership information for 1995\(^1\) for Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle reveals that the majority of the female readers of Ladies Home Journal are between 25 and 54 years of age, whereas Mademoiselle readers are between 18 and 49. Over 80 percent of Ladies Home Journal readers are high school educated and, whereas 67 percent of Mademoiselle readers have either attended or graduated college, a little less than half of Ladies Home Journal readers have attended college.\(^2\)

According to the guidelines in the US Census data on income, Ladies Home Journal readers would be classified as working to middle class, while Mademoiselle readers would be classified as middle to upper middle class. While over a quarter of the readers of Ladies Home Journal are employed as professionals or managers, only 17 percent of Mademoiselle readers report professional or managerial employment. While Mademoiselle does not report percentages on the number of readers who are working mothers, Ladies Home Journal reports that just over a quarter of their readers are mothers who work out of the home. However,

\(^1\) Information on female readership was supplied by McCall’s Research Group report for Fall 1995 and by Conde Nast Publishing.

\(^2\) No information on race was supplied by either McCall’s or Conde Nast Publishing.
while the majority of *Ladies Home Journal*'s readers are work-at-home mothers, *Mademoiselle* reports no percentages for readers who are work-at-home mothers.

Certainly there are differences between the readership of *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. First, the readers of *Mademoiselle* are typically younger than the readers of *Ladies Home Journal*; second, despite their youth, *Mademoiselle* readers are more educated and earn more money than the readers of *Ladies Home Journal*. Thus these two periodicals are directed at specific groups of women. And, according to several authors (Butler, 1979; Peterson, 1956; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960), the fact that these periodicals attract a specific audience is no coincidence. The periodicals are marketed so as to appeal to specific groups with the assurance that advertising revenue will be supplied if they can show the advertiser that their audience is the best consumer group for their particular product.


I began looking at the themes of feminine sexuality within these periodicals beginning with the issues from 1920 and ending with issues from 1996. There could be many rationales for beginning earlier than 1920; certainly the industrial revolution had an enormous impact on the lives of the readers of *Ladies Home Journal*, as white, middle-class women began entering the paid labor force in unprecedented numbers for the first time shortly before the turn of the century. However, since most social historians agree that the greatest amount of change for all women, regardless of race and class, occurred around the period of World War II, I decided upon 1920 because a good period of time prior to a "significant shift" might be necessary to observe any corresponding shift in the messages of feminine sexuality.
Regardless of race and class, women’s lives were irrevocably transformed beginning in the 1940’s, and this change was succeeded by different types of social structural shifts in later decades. These changes led to shifts in women’s social status and, thus, their experience. Given these shifts in women’s social status and roles, we might expect to see a transformation in the messages of feminine sexuality that correspond to this shift.

The Sample

Since popular periodicals targeted at women follow a routine format throughout the year, with focus issues corresponding to particular months (e.g., the Valentine issue in February), the September issue, since it is not targeted at any holiday or event, was the issue included in this sample. Beginning in 1920 and continuing through to 1996, the September issue was selected from each periodical. This issue was selected from every third year, beginning with the first year of each decade. A total of fifty-five issues are included in the sample.

Women’s popular periodicals prescribe femininity; that is, they advise women on what to think and feel, on how to dress, wear their hair, whether or not to wear make-up and how much of it to wear when they do. Furthermore, they provide information to women on issues sometimes pertaining only to women, such as when they inform women on issues about birth control pills or pregnancy, and sometimes they offer information that pertains to a general audience, or not specifically to women. This study focuses upon an analysis of those messages within Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle that are specifically prescribing femininity; that is, informing and advising women on what it means to be and/or how to be a woman.

Through the medium of these periodicals, women are informed and advised about femininity through advertisements, and fiction, and through “special” and “regular” feature
However, whereas advertisements and fiction prescribe femininity in an implicit rather than explicit way, through narratives of other peoples lives and pictures of other people, the message systems within the “regular” and “special” feature scripts are directly informing and advising the reader on issues of her own femaleness. Additionally, while advertisements and fiction have been investigated extensively (Butler and Paisley, 1979), articles have not. Therefore, since they are directly prescribing femininity through advising and informing the reader about what it means for her to be female, and since they have been previously overlooked, this study focuses on an analysis of the message systems of the “regular” and “special” feature scripts in these periodicals. Table 3.1 documents the total number of regular and special feature article scripts for the fifty-five issues included in this sample by decade, revealing that 839, or forty-four percent of these scripts were actively prescribing femininity.

Since the questions I ask in this study pertain specifically to issues of sexuality, the final sample was 598 scripts, or 71 percent of the total number of prescribing scripts. Of these scripts, thirty percent are represented by Ladies Home Journal (N=185), and seventy percent from Mademoiselle (N=413). Table 3.2 documents the total number of scripts included in the sample for each decade by the treatment of sex and sexuality within each script. “Sexuality” focused scripts are those that are explicitly offering advice or information on sexual activity, sexual performance, or sexual health. The “sexuality implied” scripts are those not directly offering advice or information on sexual issues, but rather allude to these issues through a discussion of some other issue. Finally, “non-sexuality” scripts are those that neither directly discuss, nor allude to sexuality; these scripts were not included in the analysis. A description of

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3 From now on referred to as “scripts.”
4 For a breakdown by periodical, see Appendix A.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECADE</th>
<th>PRESCRIBING</th>
<th>NON-PRESCRIBING</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920’s</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930’s</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940’s</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950’s</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960’s</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970’s</td>
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<td>270</td>
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<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980’s</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
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<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|        | 839         | 1050            | 1889   |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Sex Implied   | 18.0  | 29.7   | 77.1   | 65.8   | 80.0   | 124.0  | 66.6   | 100.0  | 89.2   |
| %             | 3.3   | 5.4    | 14.4   | 14.2   | 12.1   | 10.8   | 13.4   | 10.7   | 13.3   |
| cum           | 3.0   | 4.8    | 12.8   | 12.7   | 9.5    | 10.8   | 13.4   | 10.7   | 13.3   |
| Sex Focused   | 2.0   | 2.0    | 2.0    | 2.0    | 2.0    | 2.0    | 2.0    | 2.0    | 2.0    |
| %             | 3.1   | 3.1    | 3.1    | 3.1    | 3.1    | 3.1    | 3.1    | 3.1    | 3.1    |
| cum           | 3.3   | 3.3    | 3.3    | 3.3    | 3.3    | 3.3    | 3.3    | 3.3    | 3.3    |

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scripts in each category follows:

**Sexuality focused:** focus exclusively on sexual behavior, activity, performance, and sexual health and education, offering advice and information on sexual behavior, sexual problems and advice on sex.

**Sexuality implied:** those scripts that are not directly focused on sexuality, but sexuality is alluded to or is an aspect of the script. For example, an article that is focused on work would not be categorized as a “sexuality” script if it were focused secondarily on sexual behavior. Such a script, with a secondary focus on sexuality, would be included in the sample, but not as a “sexuality focused” scripts. That is, if the script alludes to sexuality, such as appearance at work, or sexual relationships at work, then it would be categorized as a “sexuality implied” script. If the purpose of the script is to advise and inform women on an appropriate sexual behavior, or performance, or on sexual health, then this script would fit the criteria of a sexuality focused script.

**Non-sexuality:** scripts that are neither directly prescribing sexuality nor alluding to it. An example of such scripts includes messages on jobs for women, or family cooking tips.

Table 3.2 reveals that the sexuality implied scripts comprise the largest proportion of the prescribing scripts (N=535, or 64%), and that scripts focused exclusively on sexuality appear least often within such scripts (N=63, or 7%).

**Coding and Analysis**

This study focuses upon a thematic analysis for investigating and interpreting the messages of feminine sexuality in this sample. Thematic analysis is a useful method for situating scripts and for uncovering a script’s latent meanings; that is, interpreting the meanings of the script (Denzin, 1994). Furthermore, since it is a method that focuses on describing scripts in terms of their themes and the meanings within them (Denzin, 1994), thematic analysis is a particularly effective method for an interpretive approach to script or text analysis.

Interpretive sociology does not lend itself to a formulaic approach to analysis; rather the analyst must “make sense of” the data before she can come to a decision about how the data can best be understood and analyzed; as it is with this data. “Making sense of” this data has
required uncovering ways in which to make sense of the messages of feminine sexuality within these fifty-five issues. By immersing themselves in the data, interpretive sociologists allow the data to “speak for itself.” In this case, I poured over the data many times before making a determination about how the data should be analyzed. Thus, every effort has been made to steep the analysis in the data, rather than by imposing a framework on the data and, consequently, losing the essence of the messages and meanings conveyed by the data. The method that was used to achieve this was Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Grounded Theory Methodology. While the emphasis in GTM is upon theory building, this study implements and adapts GTM’s approach to data collection and analysis. The particular GTM techniques that I implement in this study include open-coding, or an analysis of the content to be uncovered (e.g., what is said?), and axial coding, or a contextualization of that content (e.g., under what conditions “it” is being said?) (Strauss, et al., 1990).

Open coding is the first stage of coding, whereby the text is read, and notes are taken on the content. The notes are then grouped together into “properties” that resemble one another. These properties are grouped together under a broad “category” heading that captures the meaning of those “properties.” In the second stage of coding, these properties are dimensionalized and contextualized. During this second stage, the category and its properties and dimensions are interpreted through their relationship with the context in which the property is mentioned. In other words, the contextualization aspect of axial coding involves providing further detail on the context in which the property appears.
General and Content-Specific Coding

At the coding stage, each September issue included in the sample was first perused to identify those "regular" and "special" feature scripts that pertain only to women; that is, those prescribing femininity. The scripts were then divided into two categories: those prescribing femininity and those not prescribing femininity. Two sets of coding forms were developed to capture the essence of the scripts: one general and one content-specific coding form (see Appendix B). The general coding form documents those "special" and "regular" scripts that do not prescribe femininity. This form was completed for each issue for the purposes of thoroughly documenting the general themes that emerge within women's periodicals. While this information did not prove useful for answering the central research questions in this study, it has been useful for further contextualizing and sketching the development, structure, and tone of *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. For example, some scripts on "cooking techniques," "parenting," and "marital advice," while not prescribing femininity as such, are perhaps important to document because, by implication, they are prescribing femininity; i.e., women cook, parent, and "work on" relationships. Some of this information is documented in Appendix C.

Content-Specific Coding. While all issues contain many "special" and "regular" scripts that do not prescribe femininity, the scripts that do prescribe femininity have been coded using the content-specific form. This form was developed during the collection of data for two separate pilot studies, the first conducted during the summer of 1996 and the second during the fall of that same year and, hence, has undergone many transformations. The first pilot study was

\[ N=16 \text{ for first pilot and } N=30 \text{ for second pilot. However, only one script prescribing femininity was selected from each issue.} \]
conducted in order to develop a coding scheme that would reflect the content of the scripts, and to develop a thorough understanding of the structure of the periodicals, the themes within them, and to develop research questions based on the information gathered. Analysis of the data during the first pilot study uncovered critical themes in the messages conveyed.

Information gathered during the first pilot study revealed that feminine sexuality is a critical theme for prescribing femininity in these texts. Therefore, in order to investigate this theme on feminine sexuality further, a second pilot study was conducted, and the current content specific coding form took shape. It was this form that was used to code the 55 issues included in this sample. A total of 839 scripts were coded using the content specific coding form (324 of these were from *Ladies Home Journal*, and 515 from *Mademoiselle*). As stated earlier, of these scripts, only those prescribing or alluding to feminine sexuality were included in the analysis (refer to Table 3.2).

The content-specific coding form documents the information in those scripts that prescribe femininity. The first three sections further document the structural organization of each script; specifically, section one documents the more rudimentary aspects of the script, such as the title and length of script, the structuring of the script within the issue (for example, is this a “special” or “regular” script? where does the script appear within this structure? that is, is this a “fashion” or a “homemaking” script?); section two focuses on the author, noting the gender and status of the author (is this an “expert?” a “true story?” or a “reporter?”), and the ‘tone’ s/he adopts; the third section documents the theme, target group, and degree of focus on sexuality within the script (i.e., sexuality implied, non-sexuality, sexuality).

While I initially intended to document information gathered in sections one through three in
a content analysis, I soon found that these sections were not useful for answering the central questions of this study. However, much of this information, along with the information from the general coding form, is documented in Appendix C as part of a sketch of the structural organization of *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. My ability to answer the central research questions pertaining to the themes of feminine sexuality rested on section four of this form.

The section on "sexuality" represents the fourth and final section in the content-specific coding form, the section of the form where I document the information on prescriptions for feminine sexuality. This section includes a focus on how sexuality is prescribed at work, and according to different social roles, such as wife, mother, and the "single girl." However, my initial attempts to understand the themes of feminine sexuality were impeded by this distinction between social roles and activities and their relationship to prescriptions for feminine sexuality. After pouring over the data for many months, and after several attempts to write the analysis around these themes, I discovered a pattern in the way the themes of feminine sexuality were communicated, and it was this insight that led me to the analysis of the themes reflected in the thematic analysis.

**Message Carriers and Themes**

In the process of immersing myself in the data during the open-coding stage, I discovered that the messages of feminine sexuality were communicated through scripts that focused on either appearance or behavior. I refer to these "appearance" and "behavior" scripts as vehicles or message carriers of feminine sexuality. While sometimes these vehicles would appear together, they more often appeared as separate vehicles. From now on I will refer to the
appearance-oriented scripts as *grooming* vehicle scripts and the behavior-focused scripts as *interaction style* (Goffman, 1952) vehicle scripts.

**Grooming: The Categories and the Looks.** After gathering information on all of the *grooming* vehicle scripts, I discovered that these were focused on one of four categories: *body* (all scripts having to do with body shape, such as weight loss and "reducing diets," exercise, and/or "covering, advice and instruction on hygiene products, posture); *dress, face* (includes all references to face, such as skin care and makeup); and *hair* (includes all references to hair in, such as hair care and hairstyling, and hair removal). In addition to the separation of *grooming* vehicle scripts into these categories, however, there were also some scripts that prescribed a general "look" that was not connected to the categories of *body, dress, face,* or *hair.* During the open-coding stage, I grouped these general looks according to their similar properties under categories that captured their overall meaning. For example, several of the looks contained the same properties, such as "sweet," "angelic," "childlike," in which case I grouped them under one heading, which I called "virginal."

**Impression Management Techniques for Grooming.** Finally, in addition to these categories and general looks, the *grooming* vehicle scripts contain impression management techniques (Goffman, 1952). Specifically, the *grooming* vehicle scripts emphasize backstage manipulation of both the general looks and the *grooming* categories (i.e., *body, dress, face,* and *hair*) for achieving the feminine sexual ideal. The feminine sexual ideal is achieved in the *grooming* vehicle scripts through the correct implementation of backstage preparations. This involves manipulation and control of the *body, dress, face,* and *hair.*
Interaction Style. Similarly to the grooming vehicle scripts, the interaction style vehicle scripts also contain themes. These themes center on “appropriate” demeanors for achieving the sexual ideal and this also involves impression management techniques. Specifically, these scripts instruct readers in the art of emotion management (Hochschild, 1983), or the manipulation and control of one’s own feelings in order to achieve a certain sexual self.

After collapsing the data into grooming and interaction style vehicle categories, I then proceeded to the axial coding stage, whereby I looked for contexts within each of these vehicles. This stage uncovered two themes within the vehicles, a work theme and a romantic relationship theme. However, not all of the grooming and interaction style vehicle scripts were situationalized around one of these themes. Sometimes they appeared alone, or unsituationalized. When they do appear alone I refer to them as simply grooming and interaction style vehicle scripts, but when they are situationalized I refer to them as either situational grooming (i.e., grooming that is situationalized) or situation performance scripts (i.e., behavior that is situationalized).

Thematic Versus Content Analysis

In addition to discovering that sections one through three of the content specific coding form were not useful for answering the central questions in this study, I also learned that a content analysis was also an inappropriate method for answering the questions of this study. Specifically, while it may be useful for documenting the manifest content of a script, it falls short in uncovering the meanings within a script and in placing it in historical, cultural, and social context (Denzin, 1994; Glassner and Corzine, 1995). Initially, I did begin to document the frequencies of these vehicles and the themes in a content analysis chapter. However, while
a content analysis is useful for the purpose of documenting the relative appearance of the vehicles and the romantic relationship and work themes that appear in this sample, it is inadequate for answering the central questions of this study. Specifically, the strengths of content analysis lie in its quantitative application and, thus, its ability to predict the reliability of some content. On the other hand, because it focuses on uncovering themes and their messages and meanings, thematic analysis is a more appropriate method for answering questions pertaining to the messages of feminine sexuality as they change over time. Therefore, this study relies on a thematic analysis.6

Thematic Analysis

After dividing the messages first into vehicles and then into either the romantic or work themes, I then began to document the themes of feminine sexuality. Since they were separated into grooming and interaction style vehicles, I analyzed these messages separately. Within the grooming vehicle scripts, I began to document the prescriptions for the grooming categories and themes for each decade, and then the backstage techniques for achieving them. For those grooming vehicle scripts that were situationalized, I began to document the categories, themes, and backstage prescriptions for both the work and romantic relationship themes. The interaction style vehicle scripts were also divided into work and romantic relationship themes, and I then documented the themes for general demeanor and sexual demeanor in both the work theme and the romantic relationship theme scripts. This analysis is documented in Chapters 6

6 See Appendix C for the frequencies on the message carriers and their categories, through 8.

52
Analysis Of the Evolution of The Themes of Feminine Sexuality

As outlined in chapter 1, the ultimate goal of this study was not only to document the themes of feminine sexuality and any changes therein, but also to explain their evolution. After documenting the themes of feminine sexuality in chapters 6 through 8, I then offer some interpretations for the evolution of these messages of feminine sexuality in chapter 10. In this analysis, I bring the social structural arrangements of women's lives to bear on the evolution of the messages. Thus, what is first necessary to the analysis is an overview of the social structural arrangements of women's lives over the last seventy-six years. I turn now to this in chapter 4.
CHAPTER IV

OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION
OF WOMEN'S LIVES BETWEEN 1920 AND 1996

Introduction

Social patterns in marriage, divorce, fertility, work force participation and education in the United States have unarguably transformed the lives of all American women. While these transformations have been experienced differently by different groups of women based on race, age, and socioeconomic status, all American women living in the twentieth century have seen their lives transformed by the events in both this century and those of the late nineteenth century.

Given these shifts in women’s social status, we might expect to see a corresponding shift in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. Certainly conventional wisdom would lead us to believe that this would be the case. For example, during periods of high employment for women, we might expect divorce rates to climb as women begin to gain financial independence and, hence, no longer feel the need to remain in unhappy or abusive relationships. Furthermore, in addition to conventional wisdom, some sociologists posit a correspondence between social structural arrangements, such as marriage, divorce, and fertility rates, and cultural prescriptions and expectations for motherhood, work, and sexuality. Thus, they take the position that cultural expectations, and the changes therein, are associated with social structural arrangements and transformations. Therefore, since we might expect a correspondence between social structural arrangements and cultural messages of feminine
sexuality, I must first document those arrangements that organized women’s lives between 1920 and 1996\(^1\) and the relationships between these arrangements.

**Patterns in Marriage and Birth Rates: The Effects of Social Crisis Disturb a Downward Trend**

Figure 4.1 documents the marriage rate from the 1920’s to the 1990’s, revealing some interesting trends. The steady decline in marriage rates in the 1920’s reflect a trend that began in the 1910’s. However, while the trend is attributed to other social structural arrangements at this time, such as the steady increase in both age at first marriage that began around the turn of the century and women’s work force participation, the sharply declining rate in the 1930’s is attributed to social crisis; namely, the Great Depression. Overall, while marriage rates tend to reflect a trend toward decline since the turn of the century, there are several periods in which this trend has been disturbed or even reversed. Specifically, these periods are the 1930’s through the 1950’s. However, while the marriage rate in the early 1930’s appears to reflect a “disturbed” pattern that was brought on by the Great Depression, the patterns of the 1940’s and 50’s represent a reversal of the trend that began at the turn of the century.

By the early 1940’s, the declining trend in the marriage rates is reversed and marriage rates begin an unprecedented increase that continues throughout the 1950’s. Therefore, while marriage rates do decline throughout the early 1930’s, the trend is reversed once the threat to

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\(^1\)The social structural arrangements of women’s lives between 1920 and 1996 occur against a backdrop of other social, political, and cultural events. It is these events, for example, that propel women into the work in the 1940’s and, thus, increase the median age at marriage. While some of these events are discussed in this chapter, a more complete discussion is located in chapter 8. Since I am focusing on the social structural arrangements of women’s lives, I have selected only those events that social historians consider to have directly impacted upon these arrangements.
Table 4.1: The Marriage Rate over Eight Decades

Data is presented for every year from 1920 to 1949, then for every five years thereafter up to 1994.

Data for all figures in this chapter are taken from Taeuber, 1991.
the economic order is perceived to be under control.

Similarly to the 1930's, the marriage rate in the 1940's and 50's also appears to reflect several social crises. Specifically, the dramatic increase at this period is attributed to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, prompting a rash of weddings in the United States. This increase is felt into the mid 1940's, and especially after the U.S. entered the war. While the rate does begin to taper off into the late 1940's and early 50's, both the Cold War and the Korean war continue to disrupt a firm sense of national stability. Thus, several authors maintain that, rather than represent a reflection of other social structural arrangements, the marriage rate during this period reflects these particular social crises; specifically, the Cold War and the threat to national security. However, the declining marriage rate that begins in the 1960's and continues through to the mid 1980's is attributed to the organization of other structural arrangements, such as the increasing age at first marriage and women's work force participation rates, and to social events and developments in contraceptive law and technology.

**Median Age at First Marriage: Increases and Decreases and Social Crises**

Of course, marriage rates tend to reflect the median age at first marriage. Specifically, as age at first marriage declines, marriage rates increase, and as age at first marriage increases, marriage rates decline. It is perhaps this relationship between age at first marriage and the marriage rate that explains the blip that occurs in the 1940's through the 50's.

The age at first marriage in the 1920's that is documented in Figure 4.2 reflects a trend that began in the late nineteenth century; that is, age at first marriage begins to rise. This process, however, begins to be reversed by the early 1940's. While age at first marriage continues to climb throughout the 1930's and marriage rates initially reveal a sharp decline, the marriage
Table 4.2: Median Age at First Marriage over Eight Decades

Median age is reported for every year from 1920 to 1992.
rate begins to stabilize and reflect those arrangements of the 1920's by the middle part of the 30's. However, by the 1940's these trends are reversed.

Age at first marriage plummets to an unprecedented low beginning in the 1940's and, thus, marriage rates increase throughout this period. In comparison to the 1940's, age at first marriage begins to increase again by the 1950's and, consequently, marriage rates begin to decline, reflecting the trend that began at the turn of the century. However, as documented in Figure 4.2, notice that age at first marriage is still much younger in the 1950's than it was throughout the 1920's and 30's. Furthermore, notice also that the marriage rate in the 1950's is significantly higher than the rate in either the 1920's and 30's. Therefore, while the direction of the numbers may reflect the trend that began at the turn of the century, they are significantly transformed in the 1940's and 50's. However, the median age at first marriage is transformed again by the 1960's.

In the 1960's, age at first marriage begins an increase that continues throughout the next three decades. While social crises continue to permeate U.S. society into the 1970's, with the equality movements of the 1960's and the "sexual revolution" of the early 1970's contributing to a shift in morals and manners (Chafe, 1972; Woloch, 1994), the trends that began at the turn of the century reemerge during this period. Perhaps the reason that these particular crises did not have the same impact upon age at first marriage and marriage rates in the 1960-70's as those in the 1940's-50's has to do with the nature of those crises. Specifically, the social crises that occurred in the 1930's-50's were perceived as a threat to national stability, security and order, whereas those in the 1960's-70's were intended to transform the social order (Chafe, 1972; Cott, 1979; Degler, 1980; Woloch, 1994). Thus, the effects were far reaching, as age at
first marriage and, subsequently, marriage rates continued to reflect the trend that began at the turn of the century.

The Baby Boom Years: Young Newlyweds and the High Marriage Rate Combine to Produce a Boom in the Birth Rate

Of course, as age at first marriage increases and marriage rates decline, birth rates also decline and, as documented in Figure 4.3, this relationship is reflected in the 1920's. Specifically, as age at first marriage continues to increase and marriage rates decline, fertility rates also decline throughout the 1920's, reflecting a trend that began at the turn of the century. As we might expect, the birth rate sharply declines in the early 1930's, reflecting the increasing age at first marriage and the declining marriage rate owing to the Great Depression. However, reflecting the young age at first marriage, by the 1940's and 50's, the birth rate explodes. The trends of the 1940's and 50's stabilize by the end of the decade and this is attributed by many authors to a fading Cold War rhetoric and rising discontent as the equality movements of the 1960's get underway (Chafe, 1972; Demos, 1986; Flexner, 1975; Rothman, 1978; Thebaud, 1994). Beginning in the late 1950's, age at first marriage begins to increase and marriage and birth rates decline.

Therefore, similarly to age at first marriage and the marriage rate, the birth rate also follows a pattern that began at the turn of the century. However, there are two periods that disturb or reverse all of these trends; those periods are the early 1930's, and the 1940's through the 1950's. During these periods the country is wracked by social crises that threaten national stability and security (Chafe, 1972). However, the 1960's and 70's are also marked by periods of social crisis, yet the trends established at the turn of the century resume during these decades.
Table 4.3: The Birth Rate over Eight Decades

Birth rates are reported for white and total populations for every year up to 1987.
Chafe, 1972; Woloch, 1994). As I alluded to earlier in this chapter, several scholars have maintained that the reason for the different response has to do with the nature of the respective crises (Chafe, 1972; Cott, 1979; Flexner, 1975; Woloch, 1994). Specifically, while the social crises in the 1930’s-50’s were perceived as threats to the social order, those in the 1960’s through the 1970’s represent efforts to transform that order.

While age at first marriage, and marriage and birth rates tend to reflect one another, their particular configuration in any given decade is certain to have a dramatic effect upon women’s experience of life. But structural organizations of other sorts also affect the particular shape that these arrangements take. Specifically, as both women’s educational attainment and work force participation increase, so does the divorce rate.

**Transformations in Women’s Educational Attainment and Work Force Participation Rates: The Social Implications**

As Figures 4.4 and 4.5–4.6 document, both women’s educational attainment and their work force participation have increased significantly over the last seventy-six years. Historically, women’s increasing educational attainment and participation in the paid labor force have coincided with an increase in age at first marriage and, thus, a declining marriage and birth rate. However, these increases are also implicated in the growing divorce rate in the twentieth century.

**Education and Paid Work for American Women: The Changing Profile of the “Working Woman”**

Women’s enrollment in the primary and secondary education system and their completion of either the twelfth grade or college all reveal a steady increase over the last seventy-six years.
Table 4.4: Educational Attainment over Eight Decades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Data is in Percentages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data for High School and College is presented for 1960 to 1995 in 5 year increments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data for enrollment is presented for the first year of each decade beginning with 1920 and ending in 1970. Data for the 1950's and 60's is presented for each year within those decades.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5: Women's Work Force Participation over Eight Decade

Data is in percentages

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Table 4.6: Work Force Participation Rate by Age

Women 16-19 years of age

Women 20-24 years of age

Women 25-44 years of age

Women 45-64 years of age

Data is in percentages.

All data reflects decennial census statistics, with the exception of the 1940's through the 50's, when data is presented for each year.
While certainly poor women and women of color are still less likely to complete the twelfth grade or to attend and complete college, American women do receive more education today than ever before. As Figure 4.5 documents, women have also continued to participate in the paid labor force in unprecedented numbers throughout this decade. Moreover, there has been a transformation in the social profile of the female worker over these last eight decades.

Despite all the social transformations and crises occurring throughout these eight decades, women's participation in both the educational institution and the paid labor force reflects a steady increase at all levels of participation. However, similarly to age at first marriage, and marriage and fertility rates, women's work force participation rates also reveal a pattern that corresponds to certain decades; specifically, the early 1930's and the 40's through the 50's.

Changes in the Profile of the Female Worker. While women's work force participation continues to increase over all eight decades, the type of women working does shift over time. Specifically, while women in the paid labor force were more likely to be between the ages of 16 and 24 in the 1920's, by the 1930's a growing number of older women were employed in the paid labor force (Chafe, 1972; Kelley, 1979; Kessler-Harris, 1982 & 1990; Lerner, 1972; Mattaei, 1982; Van Horn, 1988; Weiner, 1985). While the average age of a female worker was increasing, we do know that few white women worked once they were married during these decades, and this was especially true in the 1930's during the Great Depression.

Historically, however, immigrant and poor women and black women have always worked in America. Gerda Lerner points out that, it was black women who were primarily responsible for the economic well-being of their families throughout their history in the U.S. While this is still often true today, the degree to which black women were economically relied by their families became less true after the Civil Rights Movement.
seven percent of the women who did continue to work during the 1930’s were either black or foreign-born whites.

In addition to their increasing age, other transformations occurred in women’s work force participation between the 1920’s and 30’s. Specifically, the number of women in the professions declined as the Women’s Professional Association informs women that the only way to compete with men was to specialize in home economics and interior decoration (Chafe, 1972). Coinciding with this plea to women is a decline in the classics (science and humanities) at women’s colleges, as a new emphasis on “women’s activities” emerge during this period. This new emphasis on “women’s activities,” such as home economics, sewing, and child care, coincided with an increasing unwillingness to hire married women over men (Chafe, 1972; Weiner, 1985; Woloch, 1994). However, despite disparaging comments from the government and public alike, women did continue to work throughout the depression (Chafe, 1972). Women’s Bureau surveys during this period report that 90% of women worked for economic need, with one out of 4 of the respondents reporting that they were the sole earner for their family. Furthermore, despite employers insisting that women worked for “pin” money, the same Women’s Bureau survey reports that 95% of all income earned by married women went toward support for the family. Nonetheless, as indicated by data reported for the 1940’s in Figure 4.6, by the end of the 1930’s, the majority of workers who were female were between the ages of 16 and 19. In other words, older women and, thus, perhaps married women and mothers, were successfully relegated to the home.

Thus, changes in the profile of the female worker between the 1920’s and the 1930’s may be attributed to the Great Depression (Chafe, 1972; Mattaei, 1982; Van Horn, 1988; Weiner,
1985). While black women and immigrant white women had continued to work since their arrival in this country (Lerner, 1972), middle-class white women who were single entered the work force in unprecedented numbers beginning around the turn of the century (Chafe, 1972; Lerner, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 1982 & 90; Weiner, 1985). However, unlike black women and immigrant white women, the middle-class white worker left the paid labor force when she married (Chafe, 1972; Lerner, 1972). But this profile changed somewhat by the 1930’s, as an increasing number of women who were entering the paid labor force at this time were older and, therefore, perhaps also married. This trend that began in the 1930’s accelerated in the 1940’s as a new social crisis emerged.

The Emergence of the Married Worker. Between 1900 and 1940, the median age of the female labor force rose to over 30 (Chafe, 1972). In contrast to 1900, when married women constituted 15 percent of the paid labor force, by the mid 1940’s married women were joining the paid labor force at a rate 5 times faster than that of single women and they comprised 35% of all women employed in 1940 (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 1982 & 1990; Mattaei, 1982; Van Horn, 1988; Weiner, 1985). However, while the percentage of women in the paid labor force was almost exactly the same in 1940 as it had been in 1910, the numbers and profile of the female worker was starkly different after America was propelled into World War II five years later (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 1990; Mattaei, 1982; Weiner, 1985).

As Figure 4.6 documents, a shift occurs in the profile of the female worker by the mid 1940’s, as an increasing number of older women entered the paid labor force. While the numbers and the profile of the female worker was not significantly transformed from those of the 1930’s, by the middle of the 40’s the number of women in the paid labor force increased
dramatically (from 23.6% in 1930, to 27.9% in 40, to 35.8% in 45), with women constituting fifty-seven percent of the paid labor force by V.E. day. For the first time in U.S. history, women's economic status changed significantly with the advent of WWII (Chafe, 1972; Lerner, 1972; Kelley, 1979; Kessler-Harris, 1990; Mattaei, 1982; Van Horn, 1988; Weiner, 1985).

WWII and the need for a stable work force to replace the men who had left to fight the war meant that women were moved from a marginal to a basic source of labor (Chafe, 1972). During this period, there was a fifty percent increase in the female labor force and seventy-five percent of the women that entered the work force during this period were married. However, after the war, these women were sent home (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 1990).

Tide of Change: Married Women Continue to Enter the Work Force. Between 1945 and 46, 2.5 million women in America "voluntarily" left the paid labor force and another million were laid off. But in the same period, 2.75 million were hired (Chafe, 1972). Thus, the Women's Bureau reports that there was a net decline in women's employment of only 600,000. They also maintain that, despite women "voluntarily" leaving the labor force and the lay offs, four out of five women were still employed and nearly half were in the same position in 1946. By 1946, women occupied forty percent of the operative positions in industry and their numbers continued to grow in heavy industry (from 9 to 13%) (Chafe, 1972; Kelley, 1979; Kessler-Harris, 1990; Mattaei, 1982). While their numbers waned around the beginning of the Cold War period, the postwar economic boom resulted in an ongoing demand for female workers in sales and service jobs and so women continued to enter the work force. Moreover,
as Figure 4.5 documents, reflecting the trend that began in the mid 1940's, older women continued to represent the majority of female workers throughout the 1950's:

* by 1950 women over 45 constituted majority of workers.
* By 1952, 2 million more wives held jobs than at the peak of WWII (10.4 million).
* The proportion of married women who worked jumped more than 50% from 15.2 to 24%

* for the first time, wives comprised the majority of women employed. (52.1% in 50 compared to 36.4% in 40).
* the number of couples in which both worked leaped from 3 to 7 million (11% in 40 to 20% in 48).
* almost 25% of the total labor force were mothers with kids under 18 years old.

Middle-Class Women Enter the Paid Labor Force. Reflecting a trend that began in the 1910’s, through the 50’s women between 20 and 24 years of age continued to represent the biggest group of women workers. However, the biggest transformation occurred in the percentage of women between the ages of 25 and 64 who entered the work force after WWII. As Figure 4.6 documents, throughout the 1960’s this trend remained unchanged, with an ever increasing number of older women entering the paid labor force. However, there were other changes that began to occur in the 1960’s, perhaps indicating that American women were becoming recognized as a permanent feature of the paid labor force. Specifically, women’s employment begins to increase at this time at a rate four times faster than that of men’s, with the greatest growth taking place among educated wives from middle-class families (Taueber, 1995). Whereas during WWII married women workers had come almost exclusively from lower class families and, thus, worked out of economic necessity, by the 60’s it was just as likely for female workers to be middle class (Chafe, 1972). Furthermore, by the beginning of
the 1970's, forty percent of all women worked and fifty percent of these were women with children between the ages of 6 and 18 years of age; these trends continue to the represent the work force into the present decade (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 1990; Weiner, 1985; Woloch, 1994).

These new trends perhaps indicate a stabilizing effect, whereby during the late 1960's to early 70's women were becoming perceived differently. The changes wrought by WWII appear to have irrevocably altered the status and role of American women, moving them from the private to the public sphere and, thus, changing perceptions of gender relations and femininity. Certainly these changes have been connected by several scholars to shifts in median age at marriage and, thus, to marriage and fertility rates (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris; Lerner, 1972; Rothman, 1978; Weiner, 1985). Specifically, as women have entered the paid labor force in increasing numbers, the median age at first marriage has increased and, thus, marriage and birth rates have declined. Furthermore, they have also been connected to shifts in the divorce rate.

The Effects of Women's Increased Educational and Work Opportunities: Implications for Divorce?

As Figure 4.7 documents, with the exception of the early 1930's and the 50's, the divorce rate reveals a pattern of steady increase over the last eight decades. Several scholars maintain that the divorce rate has less to do with changes in divorce law than with changes in the social structural arrangements of women's lives (Chafe, 1972; May 1980 & 1988). Specifically, several scholars have posited that transformations in the divorce rate and age at first marriage are certainly connected to women's opportunities for education and their participation in the
Table 4.7: The Divorce Rate over Eight Decades

Data was available for every year up to 1949, and 1960-69. Data for the 1950's, 70's, 80's, and 90's was only available for the first year of each decade and then for the half decade points. Data for the 1990's goes up to 1994.
paid labor force and to political and legislative arrangements.

While women's educational attainment and work force participation, without exception, has continued to increase over the past seventy-six years, I have described how women's participation in the paid labor force is more complicated than a simple increase over time. Specifically, while the sheer increase in the numbers of women entering the work force is interesting, what is also important to document is the transformation in the social profile of women as workers. The sheer increase of women into the paid labor force, however, is also partly useful for explaining other social structural transformations that have occurred in women's lives over the last eight decades; specifically, among other considerations, women's work force participation is connected to shifts in median age at first marriage and to the divorce rate.

A Decline in the Divorce Rate and the Great Depression. As Figure 4.7 documents, while the divorce rate does climb throughout the 1920's, it remains relatively stable. But by the early 1930's the divorce rate dips quite significantly. However, this initial decline in the divorce rate is perhaps less connected to women's work force participation rates than to the social crisis of the day. While the 1940's and 50's are also marked by their own social crises, WWII, the Cold War and the Korean war, there are other changes that may be more useful for interpreting the sharp increase in divorce that occurs in the 1940's (Chafe, 1972; Woloch, 1994).

A Dramatic Increase in the Divorce Rate. Beginning in the 1940's, the divorce rate increases significantly and this coincides with a rash of weddings and the outbreak of WWII. While it is almost certain that these events were precipitous, the rate of divorce is also attributed to women's growing financial freedom as a consequence of women entering the paid
labor force (Chafe, 1972; Woloch, 1994). However, women's entrance into the paid labor force is connected not only with financial independence, but also with a growing sense of self-consciousness and the ability to leave an unhappy or violent marriage. Thus, in addition to quick romances that later failed, the divorce rate is also said to be connected to women's increasing work force participation.

The Cold War and "Togetherness": The Declining Divorce Rate. As Figure 4.6 documents, similarly to the divorce rate in the early 1930's, the trend that began at the turn of the century is reversed by the 1950's and this pattern continues through to the mid 1960's. However, while women continue to enter the paid labor force in unprecedented numbers during this period, like the 1930's, there are other circumstances that may explain the declining divorce rate.

The 1950's is the era of the Cold War, of affluence and, as proclaimed by McCall's magazine, the era of "togetherness." "Togetherness," or family concern over all other concerns, can perhaps be thought of as the defining characteristic of the decade and, thus, it is perhaps not surprising to see the divorce rate decline during this period (Chafe, 1972; May, 1980 and 88; Woloch, 1994).

Liberation Politics, Sex, and An Increase in the Divorce Rate. As Figure 4.6 documents, by the mid 1960's, the divorce rate begins to rise again, and by the 1970's it increases significantly. In fact, between 1965 and 1975, the divorce rate doubles (10.6 to 20). While women were viewed as a permanent part of the work force during this period and their college enrollment increased, there are also other considerations that may explain the divorce rate. Combined with their entrance into the paid labor force and women's increased enrollment in college, the equality movements of the 1960's, the birth control pill and the sexual revolution
were almost certainly precipitous to the rising divorce rate (Chafe, 1972; Gordon, 1990; Woloch, 1994). The increase in the divorce rate does level off, however. Figure 4.6 documents that by the mid 1980’s, the divorce rate begins to stabilize and even declines slightly by the 90’s.

The divorce rate is certainly affected by women’s educational attainment and their participation in the work force. However, it also appears to be affected by other events that are occurring in any given decade, such as cultural and general economic circumstances, or a social crisis. Similarly, median age at first marriage and, thus, the marriage and fertility rate are connected with both women’s educational attainment and work force participation. Specifically, as women’s educational attainment and work force participation increases, so does median age at first marriage. As a consequence of the increasing age at first marriage, marriage and birth rates decline. However, just as with the divorce rate, there are other events to be considered in explaining these arrangements. But one conclusion is clear, the social structural arrangements of women’s lives have been significantly transformed in this decade.

Summary and Conclusions: Implications for the Cultural Messages of Feminine Sexuality?

While explanations for the particular configurations may vary somewhat, scholars agree that the social structural arrangements organizing women’s lives in this decade have been significantly transformed (Chafe, 1972; Degler, 1980; Demos, 1986; Rothman, 1978; Thebaud, 1994; Woloch, 1994). As a consequence, these changes have also wrought tremendous shifts in the social status and roles women occupy in this society and, thus, their experiences of the world have also been transformed. But shifts in women’s social status and roles have been
dependent upon class and race considerations and so shifts in women's experiences have not been parallel (Chafe, 1972; Ladner, 1971; Lerner, 1972, 77, & 79; Woloch, 1994); that is, not all women have experienced similar shifts in social status and so women do not experience the world similarly. Nonetheless, big changes have occurred in the social status of white women; that is, the audience for *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. Given these changes in white women's lives, both conventional wisdom and the basic sociological paradigm that posits a relationship between culture and structure might lead us to expect a correspondence between shifts in women's social status and the messages conveyed in the periodicals. Specifically, we might expect periods of social structural change to coincide with shifts in the messages of feminine sexuality. However, in addition to these structural considerations, these messages appear against a backdrop of social change. Thus, considerations such as political ideology, legislative decisions, cultural transformations, and medical technology as they pertain to the lives of women must also be brought to bear in understanding the messages of feminine sexuality.

Finally, we can not forget that the messages are also produced within an industry - the popular periodical industry for women. In order to preserve its interests, this industry is invested in producing certain images and messages about feminine sexuality that are driven by considerations of audience profile. Therefore, in order to situate the messages that are documented in Part III, in chapter 5 I sketch the emergence and development of the popular periodical industry, with special attention to the women's popular periodical industry. Finally, in this chapter, I also compare the development and audience profiles of *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*.
CHAPTER V

THE "MAGAZINE INDUSTRY"

Introduction

The themes of feminine sexuality that I will discuss in chapters 6 through 8 appear against a backdrop of dramatic social structural change for women. In order to situate these messages within those changes, in the last chapter I sketched a broad overview of those social and economic shifts occurring in women’s lives. However, the themes of feminine sexuality do not only occur against a backdrop of social structural change. Rather, the themes are also produced within an industry; specifically, the popular periodical, or magazine industry. This industry is characterized by its own particular motivations and interests and, thus, in addition to contextualizing the themes historically, the messages that are documented beginning in chapter 6 must also be situated within this industry. In this chapter I will provide a further backdrop for the themes that will be presented beginning in chapter 6, discussing the emergence and development of the popular periodical industry, with special attention to a comparison of the development, and audience profile of Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle.

Industrialization and the Advent of the "National Magazine"

The economic changes occurring in America at the end of the nineteenth-century permitted the necessary conditions for the emergence of a national magazine (Damon-Moor, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Steinberg, 1979). While periodicals were published prior to this period, the Historical Chronicle and the General Magazine, for example, mass circulation periodicals
were not available until the late nineteenth century in America. Prior to the industrialization of America, periodicals were expensive and time consuming ventures, too expensive for publishers to produce with the expectation of monthly consumption by the majority of people (Peterson, 1956). It was the effects of industrialization, specifically the transformation of America from a “domestic market” to a national economy, that paved the way for the “national magazine” (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Steinberg, 1979). This economic transformation in America that occurred after the Civil War signaled advances in manufacturing, machinery, such as the printing press, and developments in the “corporatization” of America, and each were important to the emergence of the popular periodical industry (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979). Although these events were invaluable exigencies to the industry, the logistics of publishing and distributing the popular periodical were also related to a number of other more minor events:

* systematic methods for gathering subscriber information.
* special postal rates for mass mailings authorized by congress in 1879 to “encourage the dissemination of knowledge.”
* newsstand display, which increased in response to high mobility of the population following WWI. Newsstand display made the popular periodical more prominent.

Of course, however, these more minor events were all directly related to the advances in the printing press and the development of “big” business (Peterson, 1956):

**The Printing Press and the Transformation of Periodicals**

Transformations in the economy revolutionized the periodical publishing industry. Advances to the flat-bed press made larger circulations possible and, as a consequence,
reduced the price of the popular periodical making them affordable to the "average" person by the late nineteenth century.

The Revolutionary Rotary Press. The revolutionary transformations in the printing press at the end of the nineteenth century and its impact upon the popular periodical industry cannot be overstated. R. Hoe and Company transformed the periodical industry and paved the way for the advertising industry by revolutionizing the flat-bed press in 1886. The new rotary press was transformed again in 1890 by C.B. Cottrell and Sons. By now the rotary press could produce ten times the amount of work as the flat-bed press. The expense savings were very real for these periodicals, since prior to the rotary press they had to pay people to hand paint and engrave each sketch on copper or wood. The cost in terms of time and number of employees necessary to accomplish such a task was staggering to the periodicals; the first popular periodical for women, Godey’s Lady’s Book, hired 150 women to tint its illustrations. The rotary press made it possible for the publisher to reduce the cost of the periodical and, as a consequence, circulation of the popular periodical increased. This increase in circulation attracted the advertising industry.

The Advertising Industry and the Popular Periodical

Large circulations were also made possible by the advertising industry (Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Wood, 1971). Since popular periodicals were, and still are, sold at below the cost of production, it was the advertising industry that made it possible for the publisher to not only regain the costs of production, but also to make a profit (Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995). While advertising first appeared in the popular periodical in the 1700’s, social structural and economic conditions prevented this medium from becoming a forum for advertisers until after
the Civil war. Specifically, this lack of participation by the popular periodical industry in advertising was partly due to the publishers unwillingness to advertise, and partly due to the economic structure in America at the time - a "domestic" as opposed to "national" economy. In contrast to the twentieth century, publishers had full control over editorial format in the nineteenth-century and they were very resistant to the idea of their periodicals containing advertisements, partly because they thought that advertisements would lower the tone of the periodical and also because they feared losing control of editorial format to the advertisers; a legitimate fear, since this is what happened in the 1930's (Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995). However, by the 1880's, the social structural and economic conditions that had prevented advertisements from appearing in the periodicals had disappeared. Publishers could no longer afford to resist the economic support offered by the advertising industry, and so advertising slowly began to creep into more and more pages of the popular periodicals. And, finally, the economic conditions, that previously served as an impediment to the development of an industry based on advertising, had disappeared.

Nationalization of the Economy, and the "Consumer Revolution:" The Growth of the Advertising Industry. The changes that took place in American purchasing in the 1880's, referred to by many as a "consumer revolution" (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979), have been linked to the growth of the advertising industry. Prior to the American Civil War, manufacturing had been localized, with agricultural products serving as the chief source of wealth (Peterson, 1956). By the 1880's, however, the growth

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1 Both the General Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, both published for the first time in 1741, contained advertising.
and spread of factories meant manufacturing had become a national as opposed to local venture. As a consequence, by the turn of the century the value of manufactured products was more than double that of agricultural products. Since manufacturing led to both increased availability and variety of goods, a “consumer revolution” followed (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979). Whereas previously consumers had been local, the “new” economy signaled competition between producers for consumers and so advertising one’s goods became “good” business and, thus, the “advertising industry” was born.

Advertising and the Business of Publishing. In addition to its effects on the product, this reliance on advertising also made, and continues to make, publishing a volatile business. If revenues fall one month, key personnel are fired and, as Peterson says, “...fresh blood (is) brought in...” (98). After the Great Depression, when advertising revenues were slashed, the advertisers turned to market research in order to discern which periodical could offer the best or most appropriate market (Peterson, 1956). Ultimately, however, it was the publisher who began utilizing Gallup poll techniques as an attempt to devise an editorial format that would fit the advertisers demands (Peterson, 1956).

Because of their dependence upon advertisers, the logistics of publishing a periodical meant, and still means, that many do not survive beyond their first year in publication (Peterson, 1956). In general, periodical publishing involves little overhead, with the majority of publishers employing fewer than 10 people; since story writers, for example, can be retained freelance. It is the cost of production that represents the biggest expense for the publisher. However, if a publisher can present an idea for a periodical, financial backing was relatively easy to attain, as
printers, interested in keeping their presses running, were ever willing to give financial assistance to a “good idea” (Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995). However, since the “backers” are willing to assist a new periodical only for the short term, or until advertisers step in and the periodical becomes self supporting, financial backing is often temporary.

The periodical must stay afloat long enough to attract an audience and, subsequently, advertisers, the life line of the popular periodical (Damon-Moore, 1994). Success for the periodical publisher is determined on a month by month issue and, while a new periodical can compete with the highest circulation periodicals within the first years of its publication, that same periodical can fail the very next year (Peterson, 1956). This is why Gallup poll techniques became so imperative to the publisher. With Gallup techniques, editorial formats can be worked and re-worked until the desired audience has been reached and, having acquired the appropriate audience, the editorial formula is maintained, and advertisers flock to the periodical. However, even the most experienced and wealthy publishers sometimes fail; periodicals such as the Delineator, and the Lady's Home Companion, two of the highest circulation magazines for women prior to the 1920's, lost ground to such periodicals as the Ladies Home Journal and Good Housekeeping. For the sake of advertising revenue and, thus, survival as a business, the popular periodical adopts a 'conservative’ or status quo approach to the issues it addresses (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; White, 1970).

Advertising and the “Product” Once advertising became linked to profit for the publishers in the late nineteenth century, the periodical publishing industry was changed forever (Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995). With the advent of advertising, the publisher became less interested in a periodical format that focused on the publisher’s agenda, and more interested in attracting...
advertising. The reader became less of a reader than a consumer to the publisher and, as a consequence, editorial format became more and more specialized so as to attract an audience that was homogenous and, therefore, attractive to an advertiser trying to reach a certain market (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995). Consequently, attempts to reach a certain audience and to please the advertiser led editors to shy away from risks in editorial content (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979).

While often times popular periodicals will present controversial topics, or controversial positions on such topics, these opinions are often later countered or criticized, sometimes within the same issue (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995). Overall, while contentious points are often presented in the popular periodical, the status quo is always preserved (Scanlon, 1995). In other words, within the homogenous population for whom the periodical is attempting to appeal, it must strive to please the majority and, in doing so, the popular periodical reinforces what Scanlon (1995) and others refer to as ‘conservative’ ideas (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; White, 1970). When the periodical is one directed at women, the ideas about femininity are likely to represent ‘conservative’ positions (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995).

The effects of advertisers on editorial content, however, are complex. At first, editors informed advertisers that there editorial content would not be compromised by advertising agendas (Steinberg, 1979). And while publishers, the business brains behind the popular periodical, did tend to support their editors staunch resistance toward advertisers, the publishers knew that the success of a popular periodical depended directly on both the amount and type of advertising it attracted. The proliferation of patent medicine advertising in popular
periodicals during the late 1870's, while providing the popular periodical with a sizable revenue, was not the most desirable type of advertisement (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979). Publishers wanted to fill their periodicals with advertisements from national companies, companies that could increase their revenues from the advertisers. However, since the period contained mainly advertisements for folk medicines, with cures for "female complaints," such as hysteria and other nervous disorder, national companies were hesitant to attach themselves to the popular periodicals (Showalter, 1985; Stage, 1979; Steinberg, 1979). Physicians, or the "experts" (Ehrenreich, 1978; Showalter, 1985; Stage, 1979), were gaining in authority over the folk therapists who represented the patent medicine industry and, hence the hesitation of national companies to attach their products to the popular periodicals of the day (Steinberg, 1979).

While resistance from editors, based on their own reform-minded agendas, did keep advertisers from dictating editorial copy throughout the progressive era, the effects of advertising in the popular periodical was not only more pronounced in the periodicals for women, it restructured these periodicals at the end of the nineteenth century (Damon-Moore, 1995; Steinberg, 1979). This effect of advertising on the restructuring of women's popular periodicals cannot, however, be separated from larger social structural changes, specifically the growth of consumerism (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979).

Feminizing Consumerism. The events occurring in the 1880's in America, expansion in business, advancements in the transportation and communication infrastructure, a growing national market, and the invention of machinery for household use, signaled what is referred to as a "consumer revolution" (Damon-Moore, 1994; Ewen, 1976; Steinberg, 1979). Publishers
quickly made the connection that, since women were the purchasers of goods for the home, a ‘new’ periodical, one targeting women as consumers, might be worthwhile (Damon-Moore, 1994; Ewen, 1976; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979). Whereas popular periodicals targeted at women had previously contained sheet music and short stories, with some patent medicine advertisements, the new periodicals for women focused on consumption (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995). Coinciding with this “feminization of purchasing” is a transformation in the roles of women.

Magazines For Women

While women’s popular periodicals were made possible by the same historical events that brought about the “general” popular periodical, the emergence of popular periodicals for women were also a product of three other key events (Damon-Moore, 1994; Mott, 1957; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). One of these key events, previously discussed, was the “consumer revolution” and the consequent gendered advertising that appeared in these popular periodicals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979). The other events are the publication of Godey’s Lady’s Book and Ladies Home Journal, two popular periodicals for women that set the pace for women’s popular periodicals in America (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979; White, 1970; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960).

Women’s popular periodicals began circulating in America by 1800. However, all of the popular periodicals for women at this time were imported from England. The English periodicals for women were more popular than their American counterparts, it is believed,
because they included fashion, fashion forecasting, and elaborately engraved illustrations (Tortora, 1973). The American popular periodicals for women that wanted to compete with the English journals had to imitate them, and one of the first to do this successfully was *Godey's Lady's Book* (Entrikin, 1946; Finley, 1931; Fishburn, 1944; Mott, 1957; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). This periodical, the first to be edited by a woman, helped set the tone for all women's popular periodicals throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century (Entrikin, 1946; Finley, 1931; Fishburn, 1944; Tortora, 1973; Woodward, 1960).

**Sarah Josepha Hale and *Godey's Lady's Book***

*Godey's Lady's Book* (GLB), the first successful periodical exclusively for women, was first published in Philadelphia in 1837 by Louis Antoine Godey. Its executive editor was Sarah Josepha Hale, an ex-schoolteacher from New Hampshire, who was employed by Louis Antoine Godey in 1928 as an “editorial assistant” for the *Ladies Magazine*, as GLB was then called (Entrikin, 1946; Fishburn, 1944; Mott, 1957; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). The *Ladies Magazine* was so successful under the editorship of Hale that, in 1837, Godey moved both Hale and the periodical from Boston to Philadelphia, the center for periodical publishing during the nineteenth-century, changing the name at that time to *Godey's Lady's Book* (Mott, 1966; Wood, 1971).²

GLB was a periodical read by and written for white, middle- to upper-class women. It contained mainly the concerns of Sarah Josepha Hale, which included a major focus upon democracy and the “democratic way,” and education for women (Finley, 1931; Scanlon, 1995; Tortora, 1973; Woodward, 1960). It also included articles on health, and homecare, as well as
short-story fiction (Fishburn, 1944; Woodward, 1960), and later, still under her editorship, a growing concentration on fashion emerged; this focus on fashion was in stark contrast to the *Ladies Magazine* that she had previously edited.

According to some (Fishburn, 1944; Scanlon, 1995), Hale's focus upon education for women translated into training in the "domestic sciences;" a term she popularized (Tortora, 1973, Scanlon, 1995). "Freedom," then, meant "freeing" women from menial domestic chores through developing the skills of domestic science; that is, being an "organized" and "efficient" housekeeper. This idea of "domestic science" is revisited in 1907 in the pages of the *Ladies Home Journal* by Christine McGaffey Frederick. Frederick adapted the term "scientific management," a turn of the century technique for managing the factory floor, and adapted it to the home. Both the idea of "domestic science" and "scientific management" maintained that housekeeping should be considered not only the highest calling for women, but also a profession that required skill and training for it to be effective. It is important to note that, while both Hale and McGaffy maintained that housekeeping should be "professionalized," their interpretation of "professionalization" was not consistent with current day interpretations; for example, housekeeping was not to be considered a public service deserving of wages, but as a

2 The information on Hale’s tenure at GLB is contradictory. One report says that she retired in 1878 (Tortora, 1973), which is probably incorrect since other sources document her death as occurring in 1879 (Entrikin, 1946; Scanlon, 1995; Wood, 1971); one report maintains that she retired in 1870 (Woodward, 1960), and another reports that it was 1877 (Entrikin, 1946). It should also be noted that contradictory information also surrounds the nature of her interest in women’s rights and the approach taken on this subject in GLB. Several reports maintain that she worked to preserve women’s roles within the family, and to professionalize the housekeeper role relegated to women (Fishburn, 1944; Scanlon, 1995; Tortora, 1973), while others maintain that she was a “crusader for the rights of women” (Finley, 1931; Woodward, 1960).
response to organize the many "ill run" homes of America. These ideas, perhaps not coincidentally, coincide with the industrialization of America and the consequent split between rural and urban living and its corollary, the sexual division of labor (Chafe, 1972; Woloch, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Stage, 1979).

According to several sources (Fishburn, 1944; Scanlon, 1995; Tortora, 1973), Hale's purpose in GLB was to preserve the status quo of female-male relations in the home (Scanlon, 1995), as she said in 1828:3

"Husbands may rest assured that nothing found in these pages shall cause her to be less assiduous in preparing for his reception or encourage her to usurp station or encroach upon the prerogatives of men" (Woodward, 1960).

However, according to other sources (Finley, 1931; Woodward, 1960), Hale was a "crusader" for women's rights: working with Matthew Vassar, she helped organize the first collegiate ranked institution for women, Vassar College (Finley, 1931); she backed the passage of legislation proposed in New York state in 1837 to give women the right to retain their property upon marriage (Tortora, 1973; Scanlon, 1995; Woodward, 1960); and she founded the society for the advancement of women's wages, and started the first daycare for the children of "working women."

Despite its focus upon issues that were certainly political at the time, such as women's right to higher education, and the "women's wage," GLB never once addressed slavery, or women's suffrage (Woodward, 1960). In 1828 when the Women's Suffrage Association was being formed and the Ladies Magazine was being published for the first time, Hale never mentioned

3 "Status quo" is meant to refer to the audience which Hale's periodical targeted. No information is available on circulation rates or audience profile for GLB, but its structure and content reveals that it was a periodical targeted at white women from the middle-classes.
it in the pages of her periodical. In 1850, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton became the leader of the National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA), the only mention of women's suffrage that appeared in GLB was an editorial by Hale declaring that suffrage was something that could not even be discussed until women had enough education to vote "wisely" (Entrikin, 1946; Finley, 1931). According to several sources (Finley, 1931; Tortora, 1973; Woodward, 1960), Hale maintained that women were not intellectually prepared for the vote and that they first required a vocational training prior to being given any such privilege. According to some sources (Finley, 1931; Woodward, 1960), Hale believed that education for women should go beyond training in "domestic science," although she did maintain that "domestic science" should be a fundamental aspect of all women's education. Through higher education, Hale believed that women should be provided with the skills necessary to obtain employment, such as typing, telegraphy, stenography, drawing, shorthand, and designing (Finley, 1931; Woodward, 1960).

While women's suffrage is never explicitly mentioned (Tortora, 1973), Hale did carve out GLB's position by ignoring it altogether. Under the editorship of Hale, GLB maintained the position that women's "powers" were persuasive and not coercive and, as a consequence, women should concentrate on the home and let men have their own sphere. Therefore, GLB's position that women should not venture into the public sphere was, at the very least, an implicit rejection of women's suffrage.

According to Woodward (1960), these inconsistencies in GLB, education and property rights, but not the vote, have remained as a distinguishing legacy in popular periodicals for women. As a consequence of the pattern established by GLB, Woodward (1960), and

89
Fishburn (1944) maintain that women’s popular periodicals today ignore matters of fundamental political and economic import, and address serious issues with a tone that Woodward refers to as “feather duster prose;” that is, issues were not debated seriously, but glibly with simple solutions offered to complex problems. However, Scanlon (1995) disagrees, maintaining that, while the status quo is always preserved, many political issues are debated seriously within these periodicals, with many viewpoints represented.

Certainly Hale’s life, her life’s work and what appeared in her periodical also represent inconsistencies. GLB was the first periodical to advocate for women’s education, yet at the same time it affirmed the traditional roles of wife and mother, always informing women that it was these roles that they should aspire to and that represented their “highest calling.” Despite this, Hale, who did not attend school herself, but was educated by her brother at home, worked her entire life (Finley, 1931; Woodward, 1960). Additionally, Hale was considered a “spinster,” since she did not marry until the age of 25. Widowed just eight years later, she never remarried (Finley, 1931; Mott, 1957; Woodward, 1960). Hale continued to work as a teacher during her marriage to David Hale, and during and after her five pregnancies (Finley, 1931; Woodward, 1960). After she entered publishing, she placed women in every available job on the GLB and continually worked to improve women’s wages (Woodward, 1960).

Her life and the causes that she championed both in and outside of her work in publishing GLB, appear inconsistent with the portrayal of femininity presented in the pages of GLB. However, as Scanlon (1995) points out, these periodicals consistently present a ‘conservative’ image of femininity, despite the fact that often times the social reality of the writers’ lives may appear as a contradiction to that presented within the periodical. However, the paradox is a
perennial one in popular periodicals for women. These inconsistencies between representations of the feminine and the social realities of the writers' lives appear and disappear with the shifting social structural conditions that shape women's lives. For example, all women, regardless of race, age, and marital status, were expected to be working during WWII, and so the paradox disappears only to reappear in the 1950's with the call for women to return to the home (Chafe, 1972; Woloch, 1994).

Hale has been referred to as the "mother of women's popular periodicals" (Mott, 1957; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960) because, crafted under her editorship, GLB became the archetype for women's popular periodicals (Fishburn, 1944; Woodward, 1960; Damon-Moore, 1994). However, an equally formative periodical emerged to take its place in the late nineteenth century. That periodical was *Ladies Home Journal*, and the two editors that created it were Louisa Knapp and Edward Bok (Curtis Publishing Company, 1953; Damon-Moore, 1994; Mott, 1957; Scanlon, 1995; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960).

**The *Ladies Home Journal***

The *Ladies Home Journal* (LHJ) is credited with being the second most important periodical for defining the structure of the contemporary women's popular periodical in America (Damon-Moore, 1994; Mott, 1957; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). GLB declined in popularity after Hale retired, and publication stopped altogether in 1879 only to be replaced by LHJ, which was able to tap the same "women's market" (Wood, 1971). LHJ was first published by Cyrus Curtis in 1883, the only magazine to be independently published at the time. Curtis was publisher of the Philadelphia based periodical, *The Tribune and Farmer*, in which he edited a weekly column for women.
called "Woman and the Home." This section fast became the most popular section of the periodical, so Curtis dropped *The Tribune and Farmer* and focused exclusively on a popular periodical targeted at women; he called it the *Ladies Home Journal* (Damon-Moore, 1994; Mott, 1957; Scanlon, 1995). The inception of LHJ was certainly related to historical events, such as the "consumer revolution" of the 1880's, since Curtis is reported to have said that the very purpose of the periodical was to reach a national audience, with the intent of providing a forum for advertisers (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979); LHJ was intended by Curtis to be nothing more than a money maker (Steinberg, 1979). He said in 1890:

"Do you know why we publish the *Ladies Home Journal*? The editor thinks it is for the benefit of the American woman. That is an illusion, but a very proper one for him to have. But I will tell you; the real reason, the publisher's reason, is to give you people who manufacture things that American women want and buy a chance to tell them about your products." (Steinberg, 1979:19).

Certainly, then, the gender assumptions regarding consumer behavior fueled the emergence of such popular periodicals as LHJ in the late nineteenth century.

Since it was to be the mainstay of his periodical, advertising was an issue to which Curtis gave a great deal of his attention. While most publishers were trying to write editorials that appealed to certain kinds of audiences that could then bring in advertising, Curtis was pioneering new techniques (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979). For example, in the hopes of attracting national advertisers, Curtis offered demographic information to advertisers thirty years before market research became standardized (albeit this information consisted of regional circulation rates and crude income estimates of the LHJ audience). He also pioneered current techniques for building an audience and attracting advertisers through selective advertising. Finally, he was a visionary in that he saw the importance of advertising for the future of popular
periodical publishing, and so offered more space to advertisers than any other popular periodical of that time. But, as the quote above suggests, Curtis kept the editorial and advertising departments separate. At first he worked to avoid confusing the aesthetics with the business of publishing by hiring his wife, Louisa Knapp, as editor.

Under Knapp's editorship, LHJ quickly became a success; by the second year of publication, it was the best selling popular periodical in America. Thus, while Curtis may have been more concerned with the business aspects of LHJ, he was fully aware that it was his editors that were responsible for the success of the periodical, and he made it very clear to advertisers that it was the editors that controlled the 'artistic' aspects of LHJ (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Steinberg, 1979). As a consequence, advertisers were dissuaded from attempting to persuade Curtis to alter both the structure and the content of the periodical, since editors had publicly maintained that their first commitment was to the readers (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979). It is clear that editors had a great deal of influence, not only in crafting the format of the periodical, but also in determining its contents (Peterson, 1956). As with GLB, those women's popular periodicals that emerged during the later nineteenth century expressed the concerns and interests of their editors (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956). Thus it was these editors that are responsible for crafting the popular periodicals for women that are available today. When Knapp retired in 1889, both she and Curtis agreed to hire a business minded editor, Edward Bok. It was under the editorship of Bok that LHJ left its mark on the contemporary women's popular periodical (Damon-Moore, 1994).
Louisa Knapp: The "Sisterly" Approach

If magazines got their personality from their editor in the nineteenth century, as Peterson (1956) maintains they did, then LHJ during Knapp’s tenure is perhaps best described as a “sisterly” periodical (Damon-Moore; 1994); it offered a forum for discussions on issues that concerned and interested women, never condescending to the readers because advice was offered mainly by readers. At this time, LHJ was mainly a ‘service’ periodical, one focused on housekeeping, with editorialis on cooking, cleaning, flower arranging, interior decorating, and needlework. If only symbolically, this ‘service’ focus reinforced the idea that housework was an important and central role in a woman’s life (Damon-Moore, 1994). However, much of the discussion about housework in LHJ expresses a discontent with what is described as the “unpleasantness of housework.” Housework is described as monotonous, menial, time consuming, and fatigue inducing. The solution, according to Knapp, was to purchase the latest technology for the home. Knapp and other LHJ writers maintained that the latest machinery for the home would allow women more time for self-conscious activities, such as joining one of the growing number of women’s clubs, and this would make them better housekeepers (Chafe, 1972; Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979).

This image of gendered consumerism represented in LHJ, however, contradicted reality. While LHJ was targeted for an all white, middle-class, female audience, women within this class experienced different economic opportunities. In their study of “Middletown,” the Lynds found that, in the same street block, one woman was using a vacuum cleaner, one a carpet sweeper, and another a broom. For cleaning clothes, they found that one woman used a scrubboard, one an electric washing machine, and another used a laundry service. These
disparate experiences in housekeeping are also likely to have existed for the readers of LHJ (Scanlon, 1995). However, while this contradiction existed then and today, it is important to note that consumer aspirations were encouraged among women readers of LHJ, thus linking gender with consumerism.

Of course, for those women who could afford the latest in home technology, rather than offer them more time for “self conscious activities,” the technology actually served to create more work for these women; for example, clothing patterns became more complicated, and cooking recipes more detailed and complex (Chafe, 1972; Damon-Moore, 1994). Additionally, unlike the approach taken by the mid-nineteenth century women’s movement leaders, Knapp’s approach was not holistic; after all, Knapp’s liberation for women was aimed at improving their housewifery abilities. However, Knapp’s was the first attempt by a periodical to respond to the issues and concerns of women in the late nineteenth century and, to that extent, her contribution was significant.

The Vote. Her attempt to respond to the issues and concerns of readers is certainly consistent with the reform minded era in which she was editor of LHJ, but in some ways her presentation of the issue of women’s role in the private sphere was visionary. Her argument was not unlike the position later adopted by the leaders of the women’s movement during the Progressive era, and not completely dissimilar to that proposed several years later by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in her treatise on *Women and Economics* (1898) (Chafe, 1972), now considered to be one of the most important assessments of the position of women in America. Consistent with the views of the leaders of the women’s movement during the Progressive era and with Gilman, Knapp called for an extension of the realm of women from the private to the
public sphere, basing her argument on the view of women as having greater moral depth, more
compassion, and understanding than men. Carrie Chapman Catt, Jane Addams, and Gilman, of
course, went on to formulate an argument maintaining that it was because of these very
qualities that women should be included in the public sphere (Chafe, 1972), with the idea that
they would bring some morality to this arena.

Given Knapp’s emphasis on expanding women’s activities and concerns beyond the private
sphere, it is not surprising that Knapp never wavered in her support for women’s suffrage.
However, her position on women’s roles in education, politics, and work, did often focus on
how occupations in these areas could serve the family. This at first appears as a contradiction,
but given the historical scene, progressivism and the challenging of women’s roles, it appears
that Knapp was caught between “progress” and “tradition” (Damon-Moore, 1994). Unlike her
successor, Edward Bok, She never explained how involvement in politics would help the
family, but undoubtedly she would have made that connection had she been asked.

Education and Work. In LHJ, Knapp addressed many issues that became increasingly
important topics throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Chafe, 1972). She
maintained that girls should receive a high school education as well as boys because she
believed that women should be financially self supporting. Similarly to Hale, editor of GLB,
she also maintained that higher education was the key to preparing young women for marriage,
since it could serve to improve their domestic skills (Damon-Moore, 1994). However, as with
Hale, Knapp’s views on both female education and wage work for women were progressive,
since only 3 percent of girls in America received a high school education at the time, and the
idea of women’s employment was still a highly contentious issue, albeit the contention was
around the idea of clerical work for white women of the middle-classes (Damon-Moore, 1994).

The contention arising around the debate of women’s work for wages rested on the following premises: whereas some opponents of women’s wage work maintained that, since they would no longer care for the home, women would become “masculinized” by wage work; on the other hand, many of the proponents of women’s wage work maintained that, since women were willing to work to contribute to its “betterment,” wage work was in the sphere of “womanliness” because it epitomized a woman’s reverence for the home (Chafe, 1972; Damon-Moore, 1994). While both arguments were presented in L.H.J, Knapp continually made it known that she agreed with the latter argument (Damon-Moore, 1994). While the idea of married women working for wages was a radical idea during this time, it does appear that this position was neutralized in L.H.J through editorials that emphasized working for the improvement of homelife, rather than for personal fulfillment (Damon-Moore, 1994).

Once again the image represented in L.H.J contradicts reality. The debate concerning women’s work for wages centered on white women from the middle classes, yet few women fitting this description were able to find “suitable” work during this period (Chafe, 1972). At the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of jobs that were available to women were not considered socially acceptable for this particular group of women, regardless of marital status. Women that worked for wages at the end of the nineteenth century were predominantly employed as farm laborers, domestics, unskilled factory operatives, or teachers. While certainly teaching was a profession predominantly comprised of middle-class, white women, this was the only “respectable” employment option this group. The other occupations were
comprised of women who were either black, or white, single and poor. Due to the structure of
the economy, clerical work was not an available option until the 1940’s (Chafe, 1972).
Therefore, LHJ presents an image that barely existed in late nineteenth century America: that
of the white, middle class office “girl.”

Life as a “Working Mother:” The Reconstruction of A Nineteenth Century Contradiction.
Contradictions between the role expectations for women in the nineteenth century and the
lifestyles of the early editors of women’s popular periodicals are evident, but each editor dealt
with this inconsistency differently. Unlike Hale, the structure and content of Knapp’s periodical
closely approximated her personal life, since she saw her primary roles in life as being those of
wife and mother. Knapp continually affirmed the importance of her roles as wife and mother in
her periodical, maintaining that they were considerably more important than her role as editor
of LHJ (Damon-Moore, 1994). Modeling the importance of the wife/mother role relative to
worker role, Knapp performed her editing duties exclusively from her home during her tenure
at LHJ (Damon-Moore, 1994). However, she was still a successful professional woman, and
Damon-Moore (1994) proposes that this continual affirmation of her roles as wife and mother
may have been a coping strategy for Knapp, something she may have engaged in because her
life contradicted current gender expectations. Being editor of the most successful periodical in
history at a time when “real” women were at home cleaning and taking care of children almost
certainly took its toll on Knapp, a woman who was evidently aware of the contradictions. In
1889, Knapp announced to LHJ readers that she would be retiring because her daughter, who
was thirteen, needed her full time attention. After her retirement she became a full time
housekeeper and mother.
Cult of The “Real Woman.” Just prior to her retirement in 1889, Knapp doubled the size of LHJ, from 16 to 32 pages, and added LHJ’s first cover (Damon-Moore, 1994). This cover featured a masthead that captured the personality of LHJ during Knapp’s tenure. The masthead was of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, who led her subjects into war (Steinberg, 1979). In addition to the hallmark “sisterly” approach of LHJ during her tenure, Knapp’s approach has been characterized by Damon-Moore (1994) as the ideology of “real womanhood.” The attributes of “real womanhood,” as described by Frances Cogan (1989) in her assessment of advice columns in the mid-nineteenth century, includes a set of qualities considered desirable for middle-class women to possess. These attributes include intelligence, physical fitness and health, self-sufficiency, economic self-reliance, and careful marriage choice. On the other hand, Edward Bok’s tenure represented an image of femininity best characterized by Barbara Welter’s cult of “true womanhood,” a representation of the feminine as pious, pure, submissive, and exclusively domestic (Damon-Moore, 1994).

Edward Bok and The Missionary Magazine

Replacing her as editor in 1889, Bok announced to LHJ readers that Knapp had retired because “a growing sense of her maternal duty...led her to realize that her daughter’s welfare must be her sole thought” (Damon-Moore, 1994:55). Bok then proceeded to dismantle the approach and ideology that characterized LHJ during Knapp’s tenure. The “sisterly” approach and the ideology of the “real woman” were quickly replaced by the “missionary” approach, so named because its focus was on improving and making the world a “better place” (Peterson, 1956; Steinberg, 1979). As one might expect in a periodical directed at women, making the world a better place began with a focus upon improving womankind.
Given the political scene in America during this time, it is perhaps not surprising that a popular periodical might adopt this "reform minded" agenda. However, this focus was pivotal in the history of women's magazines because it was the first periodical to approach women as in need of advice, especially on how to conduct themselves as women (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979; Woodward, 1960). This "helping" approach has continued to define the approach of women's popular periodicals to the present day (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Steinberg, 1979).

LHJ's "service" focus was not disrupted during Bok's tenure, but it adopted a moralizing tone that was absent during Knapp's tenure (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). As Bok himself acknowledged, the periodical became imbued with explicit messages concerning the moral conduct of its readers. Consistent with this orientation, LHJ championed many causes during the period between 1889 and 1919. This transformation of the personality of LHJ is attributed to Bok's own philosophy on life (Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979), which was based on his own interpretation of the writings of Emerson, Thoreau, and Charles Wagner, author of *The Simple Life*. Bok's "simple life" in the pages of LHJ emphasized nostalgia for nineteenth century values and combined it with an eagerness for progress. It was this "eagerness for progress" that bridged the gap between gender and consumerism in LHJ. Since he viewed consumerism as an extension of women's traditional role, the relationship between the simple life and gendered consumerism was a natural one in Bok's mind.

While both Knapp and Bok encouraged women to expand their activities through participation in consumer culture, their understanding of its meaning and consequence in
women’s lives were in contrast to one another. Bok maintained that participation in the consumer culture would improve the efficiency of the household and, therefore, familial relationships, whereas Knapp anticipated that such involvement would ultimately lead to an improved “sense of self” for women. Thus, while Knapp applauded the plethora of the women’s clubs that began to emerge in the early part of the 1880’s, and encouraged participation in them, Bok deplored them. Bok maintained that a woman’s highest callings, those of wife and mother, should be her ultimate fulfillment in life, and that involvement in the “self growth” and women’s “clubbing” “movement” were distractions and impediments to this “true” calling. However, when women’s clubs began incorporating certain reform agendas of the progressive era, such as service to the poor and aid to abused women and children, Bok altered his opinion on their appropriateness (Steinberg, 1979); this redefinition of the women’s club now corresponded with Bok’s own ideas on femininity and his own reform agenda in LHJ.

The “simple life” rhetoric espoused by Bok reinforced and contributed to a gendered consumerism in LHJ; that is, Bok’s nostalgia for nineteenth century views on women’s role was combined with a faith in technological progress for improving family life. According to Bok, the social organization of gender, as well as race and class, was appropriate in the late nineteenth century because the simple life and the Progressive era were philosophies that were inherently moral and fair to everyone. Contradicting the reality of black women, poor white women, widowed, abandoned, and single women in late nineteenth century America, Bok maintained that a woman’s role in life was to concentrate all of her energies in her home (Chafe, 1972).
The Vote, Education, and Work. In keeping with his original view of women's primary role as wife and mother, Bok was initially opposed to suffrage for women. In LHJ, Bok proselytized the issue of suffrage, declaring that civic concerns were man's domain, and home a woman's and, therefore, women should not receive the vote (Steinberg, 1979). However, in 1912, after writing an article for LHJ outlining why women should receive the franchise, Jane Addams persuaded him otherwise. A formative leader of the NWSA, Addams and other members proposed that the very reason women should be given suffrage had to do with their connection to the home. Maintaining that their position as "carers" for the home was a testament to their moral superiority over men, the NWSA argued that women's involvement in civic issues was a natural extension of their duties in the home, since it reflected women's concern for protection of the household. Given that this argument was consistent with and perhaps affirmed Bok's views on the role of women, it is hardly surprising that he changed his position on suffrage. LHJ's position on suffrage, while changed, served to affirm previous conceptions on femininity.

While Bok never wavered in his views on women's education, always advocating Hale's notion of "domestic science," Bok's ideas on women's wage work was also changing. Since Bok saw the wife/mother as the cornerstone of a stable home, concerns about her working for wages were focused on fears of disruption to the home. Therefore, while LHJ maintained that it was acceptable for a single "girl" to work at some "suitable" occupation until marriage, it was never acceptable for a married woman to seek employment outside of the home. Six years later, in 1907, Bok included several articles in LHJ that described employment that would be suitable for women, single or married; these correspond to those types of work recommended
by both Hale and Knapp. Again, however, this representation of women’s wage work is inconsistent with the facts at this time, and negates the experience of the majority of women who were working for wages (Chafe, 1982; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979). Consistent with his views on women’s role in society, Bok advocated education and wage work for women only when the motivation was clearly for service to the family, and vehemently opposed the pursuit of education or work as a means to “self fulfillment.” Given that the facts reveal that the majority of “working women” were either black, or white and poor, it is interesting that LHJ saw the need to caution women against pursuing work as a means to “self fulfillment.”

The Reformer. In addition to LHJ’s new focus on crafting morality, it championed many reforms, hence the “missionary” label it received.” Characteristic of popular periodicals at this time, this self-improvement orientation reflected the mood of the country in the late nineteenth century (Peterson, 1956; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). The “Big Three” periodicals, *Ladies Home Journal, Good Housekeeping,* and *McCalls,* so named because of their circulation rates in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were all “self-improvement” oriented magazines. However, neither *McCall’s* nor *Good Housekeeping* championed causes with the same veracity as LHJ (Peterson, 1956; Woodward, 1960).

Some of LHJ’s crusades were aimed directly at issues concerning women, such as the campaign against the egret feathers that many women wore in their hats, but some were more general in scope. Some of the campaigns were successful in creating change, while others were not only unsuccessful, but became the brunt of jokes in other popular periodicals, such as the early 1890’s campaign to bring an end to the public drinking water cup (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979). Interestingly, however, none of the campaigns aimed at issues
concerning women were successful; the egret campaign was not successful in deterring women from wearing the then popular feathers in their hats; the campaign against the French fashion industry, in which LHJ accused women who purchased the fashions as “unpatriotic,” did not stop women from purchasing French fashions; and, finally, the campaign against suffrage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century resulted in a substantial decrease in subscriptions and a threatened boycott from women readers, which Bok was able to prevent from occurring at the last minute. LHJ was, however, much more successful with its more general campaigns (Steinberg, 1979).

LHJ’s crusade against sexually transmitted diseases, and the “beautify America” campaign, were both successful for creating change. LHJ’s concern with the former campaign, which was aimed directly at preventing the spread of syphilis through health and sex education in public schools, was consistent with LHJ’s position on the role of women (Mott, 1957; Steinberg, 1979). The number of infants born blind to syphilitic mothers during the late nineteenth century was increasing and, given her primary role as guardian of the family, Bok saw this as an issue that should be brought to the attention of all American women (Fishburn, 1944; Mott, 1957; Stage, 1979; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971). Seven years after this campaign, public school sex education was instituted in America. According to some sources (Chafe, 1972; Steinberg, 1979), this was in some ways to the credit of LHJ, the first popular periodical to address the issue of sex, albeit that it received its impetus from the social hygiene movement (Stage, 1979). Similarly the “beautify America” campaign, which included home architectural plans in each issue, is said to have had one of the most important effects on the American home from the 1890’s to the 1950’s. Since Bok enlisted “professionals” to help
form the platforms for these campaigns, one of the most lasting impressions these campaigns had on women's popular periodicals was the introduction of "expert" advice (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Hochschild, 1994; Ehrenreich and English, 1978).

Construction of the Advice Column. The "advice column" began in 1889 with Side Talk to Girls, a column for teenage girls, written by Ruth Ashmoore (Wood, 1971). The column grew in popularity until it was eventually expanded in the late 1890's to include a section for "women's problems and concerns." When placed in historical context, the emergence of the advice column in women's popular periodicals in the late nineteenth century makes sense. Given popular and professional concern with female "hysteria" in the late nineteenth century, and all of the folk medicines that were a response to it, it was perhaps only a matter of time before women's popular periodicals would offer their own remedy to this peculiarly female malady (Ehrenreich, et al., 1978; Showalter, 1985; Stage, 1979). It is not until the early twentieth century, however, when science superseded the popular folk medicines of the late nineteenth century, that the "experts" rise to prominence in the women's popular periodical (Ehrenreich, et al., 1978).

Consistent with the sentiments of the time, Bok began a crusade in LHJ against the patent medicine industry (Steinberg, 1979). During this period, Bok increasingly solicited the service of "experts" who were requested to write columns on issues ranging from childcare, nutrition,

4 Steinberg (1979) maintains that "Ruth Ashmore" was in fact a pseudonym for Edward Bok. However, Damon-Moore (1994) indicates that "Ruth Ashmore" was a pseudonym for a woman called Isabel Mallon. While it was certainly not uncommon for male writers to use pseudonyms in women's popular periodicals in the late nineteenth century (Mott, 1957; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960), it is difficult to determine exactly how often this did occur. Since documentation is either contradictory or no longer available, it is almost impossible to confirm the actual sex of the authors of these columns, short-stories, and articles.
cooking, nursing, house keeping, to beauty, and etiquette.

**Private Life Contradictions.** Similarly to Knapp, Bok’s life was replete with contradictions that were the result of his association with LHJ. While Bok extolled family life throughout his tenure at LHJ, he was reportedly very unhappily married to Mary Louisa Knapp, Louisa (Knapp) and Cyrus Curtis’ daughter (Damon-Moore, 1979; Steinberg, 1979). While he chastised men who were not “family oriented” in the pages of LHJ, he reportedly spent very little time with his own family (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979). Both Knapp and Bok, then, represented an image of family life in LHJ that was inconsistent with their own experience. While it appears that the contradiction was too great for Knapp to endure, the pressure to conform to expectations for family life in late nineteenth century America were apparently not as great for Bok.

Of course, while both emphasized work as opposed to family in their lives, it may have been that Knapp was violating a greater gender norm than Bok. While Bok spearheaded a campaign to get fathers involved in “family life,” cultural expectations and institutional arrangements still supported and reinforced men’s role in the public world and women’s role in the private (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971). The supreme economic importance of the father in the middle-class home encouraged an environment where family life revolved around the father, catering to his every need (Chafe, 1972; Ehrenreich, et al., 1978; Woloch, 1994). However, this was soon to change as the “century of the child” got under way, deposing the father as head of the family (Ehrenreich, et al., 1978).

Bok certainly never dealt with these contradictions during his tenure at LHJ (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979). In 1919, when Cyrus Curtis asked Bok to make some changes
to LHJ that would reflect the "new" thinking about women and the home in America, Bok refused and submitted his resignation the same day. LHJ had a succession of editors after Bok, but none of them were successful and their tenures were brief. LHJ's success in the twentieth century hinged on Beatrice and Bruce Gould, a husband-wife team, that were appointed as editors in chief by Curtis in 1935.

"True Womanhood" Supersedes the Real Woman. When Bok succeeded Knapp as editor, circulation had reached unprecedented numbers in the history of popular periodicals (Damon-Moore, 1994; Mott, 1957; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). LHJ continued to make history during Bok's tenure, reaching the 1,000,000 mark in 1903, just four years after he had become editor in chief. Bok's success is attributed to his use of the survey technique (Damon-Moore, 1994; Mott, 1957; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971). This technique, not popularized until the 1930's by George Gallup, was used to gage reader response to articles, to discover their interests, and to determine current audience (Chafe, 1972; Damon-Moore, 1994). Gathering such information was doubly advantageous to LHJ as a business enterprise, since knowing the audience meant that Bok was better able to market LHJ to attract advertisers to the periodical (Peterson, 1956; Steinberg, 1979). The importance of advertising revenue was pivotal to LHJ's immediate and long term success in the women's popular periodical industry.

Bok increased LHJ's circulation, making it the most popular women's periodical in history through the 1950's. However, while his "simple life" orientation is partly responsible for it, Bok's reliance on the advertising industry helped make the connection between gender and consumerism a little more complete. And some sources maintain that, since it was the first
large forum for advertising, the link between gendered consumerism is partly the responsibility
of Bok’s tenure at LHJ (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995).

Bok also had an impact on the structure of LHJ and, consequently, contemporary women’s
popular periodicals (Damon-Moore, 1994; Fishburn, 1944; Mott, 1957; Scanlon, 1995; Wood,
1971; Woodward, 1960). In contrast to Knapp’s periodical, which offered what has been
categorized as “sisterly” advice to women on housekeeping techniques, Bok added an
emphasis on “expert” advice (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995). Of course, this view of
women as in need of help is consistent with LHJ’s representation of women as embodied in the
idea of “true womanhood.”

A Profile of *Ladies Home Journal*

LHJ was a success during both Knapp’s and Bok’s tenure. While its circulation rates
steadily increased throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, and through the first fifty
years of the twentieth, the make-up of its employees changed, but its audience characteristics
remained essentially the same; that is, white, middle class, and heterosexual, and it is these
characteristics that are reflected and revered in the pages of LHJ.

Unfortunately, information on employees, circulation rates, and audience profile for
women’s popular periodicals are only retained for advertising purposes and, since advertisers
are interested in current profiles, only information dating back five years is archived. Therefore, since an historical sketch of LHJ’s audience profile, employee profile and circulation
rates is impossible, we have to rely on information that is impressionistic.  

108

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Audience Profile

In 1883 LHJ reported that it had a small audience of male readers, but by World War I LHJ was the third most popular magazine among soldiers. This information did not surprise Curtis and Knapp, who initially conceived of LHJ as a "family" periodical (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979). The male audience continued to grow during Bok's tenure, but a male readership is almost non-existent in contemporary women's popular periodicals (Damon-Moore, 1994). The audience for women's popular periodicals, then and now, has remained predominantly female.

Based on the structure and content of LHJ during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it can be stated with some reliability that it was targeted for and reached white, native born lower-middle to middle-class women who resided in suburban and urban America (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; Steinberg, 1979). After collecting surveys in the 1890's, the Curtis Publishing Company described the woman who read LHJ as a "busy housewife...who wore no cosmetics because she stressed her natural and inward beauty" (Steinberg, 1979: xvii).

In the late nineteenth century, LHJ attempted to reach an audience that fit a "mass appeal" profile, and it continues on this mission today (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995). Since "mass appeal" is associated with "mainstream" culture, LHJ has always left out a significant

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5 Damon-Moore (1994) reports that information on circulation rates are not available for previous decades. Information that she provides is based on biographies of Edward Bok, and LHJ, and interviews with relatives of Curtis, Knapp, and Bok. In the hopes of uncovering further information on audience profile, I checked the Standard Rating Data Service (SRDS), the service used by advertisers to determine audience profile and "fit" with a product. However, advertisers retain only the latest ten years of SRDS. The SRDS is available at libraries, but only current year copies are retained, and the rest discarded.
number of people whose experiences do not fit with mainstream culture. "Mainstream," often associated with race, class, and sexual and religious preferences, means that those targeted are white, middle-class, heterosexual, and Christian.\textsuperscript{6} Ironically, the aim of "mass appeal" means that LHJ continues to target an archetype that excludes as many women as it includes. LHJ, both then and now, negates the experience of women of color, women who are not married, lesbians, and married women who work by not including them in the periodical.

A breakdown of female readership information for 1995\textsuperscript{7} reveals that LHJ readers today are the late twentieth-century equivalent of the original audience. Close to half of LHJ readers have attended college, over a quarter are employed as professionals and, according to U.S. census data on income, the audience can be classified as working- to middle-class. While over a quarter of LHJ readers are "working mothers," their primary role is still mothering; the majority of them are "in-home mothers." While information on their employment status is provided, no information is supplied on the number of mothers who are married or single; the implicit assumption is that mothers are also married.

\textbf{Employee and Contributor Profile.} In contrast to its homogenous female audience, the ratio of male to female contributors at LHJ has continued to grow over the years. During the early years of Knapp's tenure at LHJ, the periodical is characterized by Damon-Moore (1994) as a uniquely "feminine periodical." Knapp employed only three female assistants. Additionally, it is

\textsuperscript{6} It was not until 1942 that the first popular periodical for African-Americans was published, the \textit{Negro Digest}. The first popular periodical for African-American women, \textit{Essence}, was not published until 1970. \textit{Family Circle} and \textit{Woman’s Day}, both first published in the 1920’s, were periodicals specifically for women who were poor. They were sold only at grocery stores (the first women’s periodicals to be sold at such a venue), were very cheap, and featured inexpensive cooking recipes, and housekeeping tips (Scanlon, 1995).

\textsuperscript{7} See Appendix D for a comparison of the audience profiles of the Big Three periodicals. Information on audience profile was supplied by McCall’s research group.

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reported that approximately 95-98 percent of LHJ contributors were also female at this time (Damon-Moore, 1994). By the end of her tenure, however, it is believed that the percentage of male contributors had increased substantially. This ratio of male to female contributors continued to grow under Bok’s editorship.

The gender homogeneity that characterized Knapp’s tenure at LHJ was short lived in the history of women’s popular periodicals (Damon-Moore, 1994). The number of female contributors to LHJ declined from seventy-two in 1890 to sixty-three in 1900, while the number of male contributors increased from twenty-four to thirty-four percent (Damon-Moore, 1994). Additionally, the type of work women performed on the periodical also changed during Bok’s tenure. Whereas women had previously written the articles for LHJ and staff had edited the service columns, under Bok’s editorship, women edited the service columns and men wrote the articles. While LHJ was primarily a service periodical, with the service sections serving as the backbone of the periodical, it was the articles that were reserved for opinions, prescriptive statements, and expectations for feminine conduct (Damon-Moore, 1994). Thus, the tone of LHJ was altered irrevocably during Bok’s tenure, and continues to be reflected in contemporary popular periodicals for women (Damon-Moore, 1994; Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). This change in tone, however, did not prove detrimental to LHJ’s success.

**Circulation Rates.** Circulation rates steadily increased during Knapp’s tenure at LHJ, culminating in an all time high (850,000) for popular periodicals when she retired in 1889 (Steinberg, 1979; Wood, 1971). By 1903, LHJ was reaching 1,000,000 readers, and by 1956 it was reaching more readers than any periodical published before it or since (5,000,000)
Attributed to the popularization of television in the 1950's, subscription rates either leveled off or declined for all popular periodicals in the 1950's. While able to combat the competition from radio in the 1930's, LHJ found it more difficult to compete with television in the 1950's. However, while its readership did level off in the 1950's, LHJ lost very few subscribers. Today, LHJ still claims its spot as one of the biggest selling women's popular periodicals, if not the biggest, in America (Standard Periodical Directory, 1996; Standard Rating Data Service, 1997).

While demographics, radio, and television certainly played a role in the leveling off of its circulation rates, the 'new' popular periodicals for women also had a long term effect on LHJ's success (Peterson, 1956; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). While the role of women underwent a great deal of social, political, and economic change in the 1920's and 1930's, LHJ remained a service oriented periodical and, thus, did not acknowledge the change occurring in women's lives (Chafe, 1972; Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973; Woodward, 1960). While the "working woman" was a fact of economic life by the 1930's, LHJ continued to fill its pages with housekeeping tips and cooking recipes (Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973). Women had changed, but the 'old' service periodicals were not responding (Tortora). However, in response to this untapped market, a 'new' genre of women's popular periodicals began to emerge (Mott, 1957; Peterson, 1956; Woodward, 1960). The first of this new genre being Mademoiselle, first published in 1935 (Mott, 1957; Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960).
Mademoiselle: Rebel Without A Cause

The many different genres that comprise women's popular periodicals is a relatively new phenomenon. Before Mademoiselle (Mlle), women's popular periodicals in the United States were exclusively family focused, whereas today these periodicals range from those focused on dating, family, marriage and the home, work and careers, and self improvement (Mott, 1966; Peterson, 1956; Wood, 1971). However, Woodward (1960) does argue that the general purpose of women's periodicals has remained relatively unchanged since Hale was editor of GLB. These purposes being threefold: 1. service (this classification includes homecare, cooking, needlework, fiction, beauty, and health); 2. fashion; 3. homecare (Mott, 1966; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). Others have disagreed with this assessment (Peterson, 1956), maintaining that the purpose of women's magazines is more connected to the time period in which they are written than to a formulaic model handed-down from GLB. One example that Peterson points to is Mlle, which challenged the long maintained and traditional purposes of women's periodicals by adding a new focus on employment and intimate relationships.

Unlike the popular periodicals for women before it, Mlle did not attempt to imitate LHJ. Knowing that its success was dependent on being “different” from the service periodicals of the nineteenth century, Mlle set about creating a periodical for the “career girl” (Mott, 1957; Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). However, in addition to avoiding competition with the Big Three, Mlle also had to compete with radio. With the exception of LHJ, the Big Three popularity waned with the popularization of radio, and Mlle, if it was to succeed, had to offer something that both radio and the Big Three did not. Since sex was censored on the radio, Mlle attempted to attract readers by introducing the first sex survey in popular periodicals and by including articles on advice concerning sexual matters (Peterson,
Thus, Mlle’s format contained two key elements, both of which distinguished it from LHJ and allowed it to compete with radio: specialization and sex (Butler, 1979; Woodward, 1960).

Mlle emerged in the 1930’s as a rebel, so named because it challenged existing conceptions of femininity and, more specifically, female sexuality (Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973; Woodward, 1960). While LHJ was the first popular periodical to introduce sex through its campaign against syphilis in the 1890’s, Mlle was the first to explicitly address feminine sexuality through the use of the “sex survey” and the “sexual advice column.” However, this focus on sex as a means to attracting an audience is very telling of Mlle’s “purpose” in the industry.

Ultimately, while LHJ was a missionary magazine, Mlle was a merchant; that is, it was solely in the business to make a profit, and a profit by any means necessary (Mott, 1957; Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960); a rebel, but one without a cause. According to Peterson (1956), editors became expendable in the new genre of periodicals for women. If sales fell, editors and staff were replaced almost immediately and, therefore, editors’ influence on the structure of a periodical became minor as they were instructed by the publisher to comply with a “formulaic” approach to the structure and content of the periodical (Peterson, 1956; Woodward, 1960). For the first time in the history of women’s popular periodicals, the publisher, rather than the editor, was constructing the periodical. Consequently, given the business relationship between the publisher and the advertisers, the control of a periodical’s structure and content became increasingly influenced.
by advertisers (Peterson, 1956). Given this, Mlle helped to reinforce the link between femininity and consumerism that was established by LHJ in the 1880's.

Forging The Link of Gendered Consumerism. While Knapp had welcomed the new consumer culture as a means to expanding women's activities beyond the private sphere, Bok viewed it as a natural extension of women's traditional roles as wives and mothers. The connection between femininity and consumerism, while established by LHJ, was forged by Mlle. This "forging" was developed in response to several key social and economic conditions that occurred between the turn of the century and the late 1920's.

At the turn of the century, white women from the middle-classes began working for the first time (Chafe, 1972). In response to their new financial independence and in recognition of the constraints upon their time, the "ready-to-wear" fashion industry emerged (Chafe, 1972; Tortora, 1973). Recognizing both this untapped audience and the developing fashion industry as a potential advertiser, Mlle created a "fashion and career-oriented" periodical for "young women." Therefore, just as Cyrus Curtis had created a periodical for the advertisers of "good quality products" in the 1880's, Mlle was constructing a forum for a very specific industry. As a consequence, Mlle helped fuel the fashion industry by appealing to younger, middle-class women and by presenting images of working women which linked appropriate ways of looking and being to the consumption of clothing, makeup, and other products. While LHJ had used the gendered roles of wife and mother to sell household products, Mlle used the gendered image of "working woman" to sell clothing and personal care products, thus reaching a different market, whose image it helped to shape.
A Profile of Mademoiselle

Since demographic information on women's popular periodicals is only available for the last five years of publication, in order to sketch a profile of Mlle's audience, its employees, and its circulation rates, we must rely on impressionistic information.

Audience Profile. Mlle was the first in its genre to appeal to a specialized audience, to target what it believed was a cohesive group of women (Woodward, 1960). Unlike its predecessors, Bazaar and Vogue, who did not attempt to target a specialized audience, Mlle specifically targeted a younger, less affluent, but working group of women (Tortora, 1971; Woodward, 1960). An impressionist audience profile reveals that this group of women included college undergraduates, or women who were both newly graduated from college and married (Hershey, 1983; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960). Similarly to the readers of LHJ, these women were white, and middle-class. Thus, Mlle ignored, and continues to ignore, the experience of many young working women, poor women, and women of color (Chafe, 1972).

While we cannot say with certainty how Mlle's readership has altered since it began publication in 1935, its readership has changed since the 1960's. The percentage of Mlle's readers who are married has steadily declined since the 1960's. Seventy-seven percent of its readership were reportedly married in the 1960's, compared to sixty-one percent in the 1970's, forty-eight percent in the 1980's, and thirty-seven percent in the 1990's. Similarly, the percentage of readers who are mothers has also declined. Reportedly, eighty-two percent of the readership were mothers in the 1960's, compared to forty-six percent in the 1970's, forty-one percent in the 1980's, and forty-percent in the 1990's. While LHJ only provides

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8 Information on audience profile was supplied by Conde Nast Publishing, Mademoiselle branch division.
information on the number of mothers, thereby concealing the number of its readers who are single mothers, Mlle provides this information. Over these four decades, with the exception of the 1970's, Mlle readership has always included single mothers.

In addition to their changing roles in the family, Mlle's readers have always worked. While a little less than half of its audience worked in the 1960's (48%, increasing to 55% in the 1970's, and 68% in the 1980's), almost three quarters of them work today (71%). However, as with changes in LHJ's audience profile, these changes do not reflect a change in Mlle's readership as much as they reflect social structural and demographic change (Chafe, 1972; Degler, 1980; Kessler-Harris, 1990). A 1995 comparative profile analysis of Mlle and LHJ reveals that both continue to attract their original target audience.

*Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle: A Contemporary Comparative Profile.* Mlle's audience is younger, and more educated than LHJ's. Whereas the majority of the Ladies Home Journal readers are between 25 and 54 years of age, the majority of Mlle's audience is between 18 and 34. And, while over 80 percent of LHJ readers are high school educated, and close to half have attended college, Mlle reports that 67 percent of its readers have attended or graduated college. However, while Mlle readers have achieved higher educational levels than LHJ readers, LHJ readers do earn higher incomes, and are more likely to be employed in professional or managerial positions. Given that Mlle readers are much younger than the readers of LHJ, this income/occupation/education disparity is not surprising. Finally, while 37 percent of Mlle's readers are married, and 40 percent are mothers, the majority of LHJ readers are “in-home” mothers.”

9 All information was supplied by Conde Nast Publishing, Mademoiselle branch division. No information on the racial composition of Mlle's audience.
Employee and Contributors Profile. Unfortunately, employee profile information is limited for the new genre of women's popular periodicals. However, it is known that the new genre were financially unstable, having to rely solely on the support of their backers. Therefore, publishing became an increasingly volatile business in the 1930's. The Merchants, in the business for the money rather than the sake of a crusade, hired and fired editors and other personnel on a whim (Peterson, 1956). However, now published by one of the most influential publishers in the popular periodical industry, Conde Nast, Mlle is financially stable.

Circulation Rates. Mlle, the periodical responsible for displacing LHJ in the 1930's, has always had a relatively small circulation; today, Mlle reaches one million readers (The Standard Periodical Directory, 1996; Standard Rating and Data Service, 1997; Woodward, 1960). Given this fact, it's ability to have toppled LHJ from its position as the biggest selling women's popular periodical in history, is surprising. However, this feat is attributed to its focus upon "specialization" (Peterson, 1956; Woodward, 1960).

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter I have situated the messages of feminine sexuality against the popular periodical industry, describing the economic underpinnings of the industry itself, the social characteristics of the producers, and sketching an audience profile of the periodicals. In highlighting this information, I have intended to further contextualize the themes that will be discussed in the next three chapters.

The development of the women's popular periodical industry appear to reflect both social and political transformations as well as the producers (Damon-Moore, 1994; Peterson, 1956; Scanlon, 1995; White, 1970; Wood, 1971; Tortora, 1973). Especially during the period
between 1880 and 1920, the popular periodical industry was characterized by both the editors and the Progressive era in America (Steinberg, 1979). Reflecting this period of great social reform in which they came of age, women's popular periodicals were essentially "missionary" magazines (Peterson, 1956). Just as the Progressive era had its leaders, the women's periodical had its own crusaders. Just as Jane Addams was one of the pivotal characters in the organization of Hull House, Edward Bok was the critical element in the campaign against "urban decay" and for sex education in America (Chafe, 1972; Steinberg, 1979). In other words, the editor was crucial to the structure and content of the early periodical (Mott, 1957; Peterson, 1956; Woodward, 1960).

By the 1930's, the Progressive era was over and America, still recovering from WWI, was in the grip of the Great Depression. Women's roles had changed drastically since the turn of the century, and whole industries were developing in response to these transformations (Chafe, 1972; Degler, 1980; Tortora, 1973; Woloch, 1994). The women targeted by LHJ had changed, but LHJ did not respond to these transformations in women's roles (Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973; Woodward, 1960). Therefore, in addition to losing ground to radio, LHJ also opened up the market for competition. Competition came in 1935, when a new genre of women's periodicals emerged to corner the new demographic - the "working woman" (Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973; Woodward, 1960).

The importance of the editor for structuring the women's popular periodical became negligible as publishers took control of the periodicals and, consequently, advertisers became increasingly influential in determining the structure and content of each and every issue (Peterson, 1956). In contrast to the "missionaries" of the late nineteenth century, the new
genre of women’s popular periodicals were “merchants;” that is, they were in the business to make a profit by targeting a specific demographic segment of the population and, thereby, offered a forum for the fashion industry (Tortora, 1973). This deemphasis on the editor and the reconstruction of the women’s popular periodical as a forum for the fashion industry transformed both the product and the business of periodical publishing forever (Peterson, 1956; Tortora, 1973). One consequence was the reinforcement of the link between femininity and consumerism. By the 1930’s, this link that was first established in popular periodicals by LHJ in the 1880’s, was now irrevocably forged (Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995).

However, despite social structural change and the emergence of new women’s periodicals apparently in response to those changes, women’s popular periodicals continue to target a “composite” woman. LHJ set this tone and, while Mlle reconstructed the organization of women’s periodicals, the tone is essentially the same; that is, advice to women on relationships and fashion are the staple of any women’s popular periodical. Furthermore, this “composite” woman - her potentials, activities, thoughts, opinions, feelings and appearance - is given shape by the images of femininity that are presented within the pages of women’s popular periodicals. Therefore, these periodicals have played an important role in shaping the “vocabulary of gender” (Butler, 1979; Damon-Moore, 1994; Scanlon, 1995; White, 1970; Wilkinson, 1986).

The themes of feminine sexuality that will be discussed in the next three chapters occur against this backdrop. That is, it should be kept in mind that, in addition to occurring against a backdrop of social structural change, the themes of feminine sexuality are also produced. Therefore, the messages may reflect not only historical circumstances, but also the interests and motivations of the producer.
CHAPTER VI

EMERGENT THEMES AND PARADIGMS
OF FEMININE SEXUALITY: PART I

Introduction

Themes of feminine sexuality appearing in *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle* between 1920 and 1996 do change over time, but there is one constant paradigm that pervades all eight decades. This paradigm, the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality, is documented in Table 6.1. The *traditional* paradigm presents readers with prescriptions for behavior that emphasize gendered behavior, and accepts hegemonic\(^1\) organizations of gendered behavior by emphasizing the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence, and on obedience to a male partner through creating both an appearance and demeanor to his liking. Finally, this paradigm also presents readers with two sexual interaction style choices; the reader should be either sexually chaste, or asexual. Thus, the *traditional* paradigm emphasizes an “other” focused orientation. In addition to this romantic relationship focus, the *traditional* paradigm is also present in scripts that contain a work theme. This paradigm also pervades these scripts, as readers are presented with themes that encourage a “yielding” demeanor at work. In addition, there is also a focus on the effects of work on the

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\(^1\) This concept refers to the cultural domination of some group over other groups. This definition of the term is consistent with Robert Connell’s use of the term (1995). However, there are other uses of this concept, such as the classical Gramscian use of the term by Andrea Press (1991). Press uses the term to describe “the way the dominant culture orchestrates the consent of those who are dominated within it...working class subjectivity is colonized in hegemonic interests.”
Table 6.1  Two Paradigms of Feminine Sexuality: “Other” and “Self”Focused

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRADITIONAL</th>
<th>MODERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
<td>romance justifies existence</td>
<td>romance improves existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style in the</strong></td>
<td>please partner with appearance</td>
<td>please self with appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Romantic</strong></td>
<td>please partner with demeanor</td>
<td>please self with demeanor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship:</strong></td>
<td>(includes: domestically skilled, receptive, yielding)</td>
<td>(includes: independent, assertive, confident)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
<td>traditional feminine demeanor</td>
<td>traditional masculine demeanor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style at</strong></td>
<td>(includes: friendly, helpful, warm)</td>
<td>(includes: confident, ambitious, assertive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>work:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effects of work on marriage</td>
<td>effects of work on marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(“other” focused)</td>
<td>(“self” focused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Image:</strong></td>
<td>Virginal and asexual</td>
<td>Sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>love and sex equated</td>
<td>love and sex separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>opposed to sex education</td>
<td>pro sex education and information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
romantic relationship within these scripts and, thus, this emphasis is also consistent with an
“other” focused orientation.

While the *traditional* paradigm is a constant message of feminine sexuality over these eight
decades, beginning around the 1970’s a second paradigm emerges - the *modern* paradigm.² Thus, from the 1970’s to the present, two paradigms of feminine sexuality appear in the
periodicals, both the *traditional* and the *modern*. While the *modern* paradigm also emphasizes
differences between women and men, this paradigm centers on the importance of the romantic
relationship for improving rather than justifying a woman’s existence. Also conversely to the
*traditional*, *modern* paradigm messages present the reader with prescriptions that emphasize
crafting an appearance and demeanor for the “self,” rather than for a male partner. Whereas
prescriptions for the ideal demeanor in *traditional* paradigm messages emphasize a yielding and
submissive stance, the *modern* paradigm emphasizes confidence, openness, and assertiveness;
the former traits might be considered traditionally feminine and the latter traditionally
masculine. Consistent with this emphasis on self, prescriptions for sexual demeanor in the
*modern* paradigm emphasize a sexually interested and active interaction style. Finally, whereas
*traditional* paradigm messages emphasize an “other” focused demeanor in both the romantic
relationship and the work theme scripts, *modern* paradigm messages stress a “self” focused, or
what might be considered a traditionally masculine demeanor.

While the *traditional* paradigm is a perennial message of feminine sexuality, the themes of

² The terms “traditional” and “modern” are borrowed from Arlie Hochschild’s work (1989),
where she uses them to capture the prescriptions in women’s advice books in the 1960’s
through the 1980’s. *Traditional* and *modern-egalitarian* are used by Hochschild to discuss the
techniques women are advised to implement in presenting a certain feminine self in
relationships.
feminine sexuality do change over time; specifically, frequent shifts in the themes not only occur around the traditional and modern paradigms, but also within those paradigms. While the traditional is a constant message throughout all eight decades, there are shifts in the themes for how to achieve the traditional ideal. However, while there may be shifts in how to achieve this ideal, what remains constant is the “other-focused” orientation that is the hallmark of the traditional paradigm. Thus, while the meaning may change, the focus on “others” remains throughout all eight decades. Similarly, while the modern paradigm is prescribed beginning in the 1970’s and continuing through to the present, some themes within this paradigm do shift. However, as with traditional paradigm messages, what remains constant is the emphasis on the “self.”

In this chapter, I present the messages of feminine sexuality that appear in Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle between 1920 and 1969. Thus, this chapter centers only on the traditional paradigm messages of feminine sexuality and documents the shifts in prescriptions for achieving the feminine sexual ideal as presented within that paradigm. In the next chapter I document the emergence of the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality and also the shifts in prescriptions for achieving it. Since the traditional paradigm is a constant theme of feminine sexuality, in chapter 7 I will also document this paradigm as it appears alongside the modern paradigm. In documenting the traditional and modern paradigms of feminine sexuality, I will focus on two of the message carriers of feminine sexuality that were discussed in chapter 3: situation performance and situational grooming. While all four message carriers will be discussed in more detail here, because of their different message contents, grooming vehicle themes are discussed separately from situation performance and situational grooming scripts.
The documentation of unsituationalized *grooming* themes appear in chapter 8.³

**The Message Carriers of Feminine Sexuality**

As discussed in chapter 3, the themes of feminine sexuality, and the paradigms within which they are situated are presented through two message carriers or vehicles. These vehicles are either *grooming* or *interaction style* focused. *Grooming* vehicle scripts contain themes on appearance, or how to look, and includes four *grooming* categories: body, dress, face, and hair. Within this vehicle, prescriptions for body shape, appropriate dress, length and style of hair, and face decoration appear. On the other hand, *interaction style* vehicle scripts prescribe demeanor, or how to *be*. Both of these vehicles involve impression management techniques (Goffinan, 1952), although different techniques appear within each. In *grooming* vehicle scripts, backstage techniques (Goffinan, 1952) are emphasized, whereby *grooming* categories (body, dress, face, and hair) are molded or transformed by implementing techniques such as “corseting” or makeup in order to achieve a front stage (Goffinan, 1952) appearance. Each decade emphasizes different techniques or backstage preparations for achieving the looks that are prescribed. However, in the case of *interaction style* scripts, different techniques of impression management are required. While *grooming* scripts call for the manipulation and control of appearance, *interaction style* scripts calls for emotion management, or the manipulation and control of feelings. The two techniques for accomplishing this goal are deep

³ See also chapter 9 for a discussion of the separation of *grooming* from *situationalized* scripts. In this chapter I document the separation of demeanor focused scripts from appearance focused scripts, and the very reason for my separating them for the purposes of analysis has to do with their separate treatment in the periodicals. That is, since they are communicating such different messages, it is difficult to combine them in this analysis.
acting and surface acting (Hochschild, 1983). Interaction style scripts that recommend deep acting offer suggestions to the reader on how to transform her feelings about something, someone, or some situation, whereas those scripts that recommend surface acting propose ways in which the reader might change the outward appearance of her feelings, although not her actual feelings.

In addition to appearing alone within a script, the grooming and interaction style vehicle scripts often appear situationalized around two themes: a romantic relationship or a work theme. When grooming vehicle scripts are thematized around either the romantic relationship or the work theme, I refer to this as a situational grooming vehicle, and when interaction style vehicle scripts are thematized, I refer to them as situation performance scripts (Goffman, 1952).

The themes of feminine sexuality which are communicated through these four vehicles together comprise the paradigms of feminine sexuality, are documented in Table 6.1. In this chapter, the data is presented to highlight the themes within each vehicle by decade, and then to situate those themes within the paradigms of feminine sexuality.

**Grooming Vehicle Themes**

Table 6.2 documents the grooming vehicle themes of feminine sexuality that emerge over these eight decades. These themes represent the “looks” that are available to women over look. Over these eight decades, ten grooming themes emerge: Tailored/Mannish, Sophisticated, Modern, Trendsetter, Classically feminine, Girl Next Door, Romantic, Natural, Virginal and, lastly, the Seductress look. The names that I have attached to these themes are intended to capture the meanings of the conceptual categories that comprise them. For
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MANNISH/TAILORED:</strong></th>
<th><strong>SOPHISTICATED:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mannish</td>
<td>sophisticated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tailored</td>
<td>classic/classy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharp</td>
<td>simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secure</td>
<td>elegant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple</td>
<td>chic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neat</td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>successful</td>
<td>chic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classic</td>
<td>professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional</td>
<td>sleek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smart</td>
<td>smooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polished</td>
<td>soignee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business style</td>
<td>simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal</td>
<td>worldy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handsome</td>
<td>dignified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well groomed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>military style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well presented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MODERN:</strong></th>
<th><strong>TRENDSETTER:</strong></th>
<th><strong>CLASSICALLY FEMININE:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>untamed</td>
<td>graceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual</td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>lovely/lovable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self assured</td>
<td>wild</td>
<td>gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent</td>
<td>dramatic</td>
<td>curvy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vital</td>
<td>daring</td>
<td>fresh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>togetherness</td>
<td>exotic</td>
<td>soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aware</td>
<td>dashing</td>
<td>warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verve</td>
<td>trendy</td>
<td>ladylike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aggressive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gutsy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>savvy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liberated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self reliant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ROMANTIC:</strong></th>
<th><strong>GIRL NEXT DOOR:</strong></th>
<th><strong>NATURAL:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>fresh</td>
<td>natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>folkloric</td>
<td>lively</td>
<td>healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enchanting</td>
<td>soft</td>
<td>pure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nostalgic</td>
<td>old fashioned</td>
<td>relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bewitching</td>
<td>clean</td>
<td>simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mysterious</td>
<td>neat</td>
<td>sporty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old fashioned</td>
<td>outdoorsy</td>
<td>subtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piquant</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentimental</td>
<td>youthful</td>
<td>outdoorsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frilled/ruffled</td>
<td></td>
<td>comfortable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VIRGINAL:</strong></th>
<th><strong>SEDUCTRESS:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gentle</td>
<td>femme fatale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiny</td>
<td>sensual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>innocent</td>
<td>flirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fragile</td>
<td>slinky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pure</td>
<td>sultry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dainty</td>
<td>voluptuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delicate</td>
<td>saucy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demure</td>
<td>siren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genteel</td>
<td>alluring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angelic</td>
<td>devilish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>virginal</td>
<td>racy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engenue</td>
<td>erotic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young</td>
<td>provocative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweet</td>
<td>risqué</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
example, when a script contains prescriptions that include such concepts as “manly” or “manlike” the conceptual category was added to the tailored/mannish theme and the script was classified accordingly.

Therefore, these “conceptual categories” can be thought of as “signs” because they are necessary for achieving a certain look. However, notice that occasionally the signs overlap with different looks. One example of this is “soft” which is located in both the classically feminine look and natural look. This overlapping is sometimes necessary because the same concepts are communicating different messages about feminine sexuality. In other words, sometimes the concepts represent different signs. In the example of “soft,” when references to “looking soft” are accompanied by a context that emphasizes “natural” or “subtle,” then such scripts are considered to contain a natural rather than a classically feminine theme. Conversely, when references to “soft” are accompanied by signs that indicate a classically feminine rather than a natural theme, then the script is classified accordingly. For example:

“...feminine softness...pretty colors..” (LHJ, 1943)

versus:

“subtle makeup...feminine means light, and softer (fabrics)... softer makeup.” (LHJ, 1986)

In the first example, the signs indicate a classically feminine look is in order, whereas in the second a natural look is called for. Different meanings are being communicated by such concepts as “soft” or “tailored” and determining the meanings or essence of scripts that contain such ambiguous concepts is a necessary step prior to classifying the themes in those scripts.

All themes that appeared in a script were coded.

The precise page numbers for each quote reported were not recorded during coding. This was an unfortunate oversight, since it will now be difficult for the reader to locate quotes. While it will not help the reader of this dissertation, it should be noted that future publications based on this study will include page numbers for each quote.
Table 6.3 places the *grooming* themes within the two paradigms of feminine sexuality. Most of the looks are present within both paradigms, but there are several that appear either in the *traditional* or the *modern* paradigm. Specifically, the *modern*, *trendsetter*, and *natural* looks appear mainly in the *modern* paradigm, while the *girl next door* and the *virginal* looks appear mainly in the *traditional* paradigm. All other *grooming* themes appear frequently in both paradigms. Thus, some *grooming* themes are perennial, spanning all eight decades. Overall, while these themes only loosely correspond to the paradigms of feminine sexuality, there is a pattern to the *grooming* themes. While certain themes, such as the *girl next door* and *virginal* themes appear more frequently prior to the 1960’s, the *natural* and *modern* looks appear more often after this period. However, despite a shift in the *grooming* themes that occurs around the 1960’s, there is a constancy to the themes over time, with certain themes spanning all eight decades.

**Patterns in Grooming Vehicle Themes on Feminine Sexuality**

Table 6.4, which documents the changes and patterns in the availability of the *grooming* themes over these eight decades, reveals a constancy in the *grooming* themes over time. The most frequently appearing theme is the *mannish/tailored* look (N=73, or 16.69%), closely followed by the *classically feminine* (N=68, or 15.52%) and the *sophisticated* looks (N=66, or 15.06%). The *natural* look and the *seductive* look are also frequently mentioned themes (N=53, or 12.09%, and N=50, or 11.42%, respectively) over these decades. However, the remainder of the themes appear less frequently than these other themes, with the *romantic*, *girl next door* and the *trendsetter* looks appearing the least often of any of the *grooming* themes (N=27, or 6.13%, N=18, or 4.08%, and N=15, or 3.39%, respectively).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grooming:</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL</th>
<th>MODERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;--- Mannish/Tailored ---&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;--- Sophisticated ---&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;--- Classically Feminine ---&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;--- Romantic ---&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;--- Seductive ---&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern ---&gt;</td>
<td>Trendsetter ---&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural ---&gt;</td>
<td>Girl Next Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;--- Virginal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEME</td>
<td>DECADE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man/Tailored</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>column %</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row %</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>column %</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row %</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>column %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trendsetter</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>column %</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>row %</td>
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<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic. Fem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>column %</td>
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<tr>
<td>row %</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl N. Dr</td>
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<tr>
<td>row %</td>
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<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>cum</td>
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<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginal</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>column %</td>
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<tr>
<td>row %</td>
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<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
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Table 6.4 Patterns in the Grooming Themes over time (continued)

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<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>12.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>col %</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row %</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>437.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen in Table 6.4, the most frequently appearing themes vary from decade to decade. However, while they are not the most frequently appearing themes in every decade, mannish/tailored, classically feminine, and sophisticated looks appear more often than any other grooming theme. Rather, these themes have peaks and valleys, with the sophisticated look becoming one of the most frequently mentioned look in the 1920's, 30's, 60's, 70's, and 90's, and the classically feminine look becoming one of the most frequently mentioned looks in the 1940's, and 50's. Overall, while the mannish/tailored is the most popular theme for prescribing feminine sexuality in only three decades (the 1920's, 30's, and 80's), it is the most frequently mentioned look (N=73, or 17%).

Similarly, while the natural and the seductive looks are not among the most frequently mentioned looks, they do achieve some popularity during some decades. The natural look does not become a popular theme for prescribing feminine sexuality until the 1960's, but it becomes one of the most frequently mentioned looks from then on. The seductive look follows a similar path, becoming increasingly popular over these eight decades and peaking in the 1970's and 80's. Unlike the natural look, however, the seductress look first appears in the 1940's and continues to remain steady up to the 1970's, at which time the look becomes significantly more popular for prescribing feminine sexuality.

Some of the least mentioned themes, the modern and the virginal looks especially, do become popular in certain decades. The modern look is an example of the latter, as it becomes increasingly popular over the decades, or remains relatively unpopular except during certain decades. The modern look is an example of the latter, as it becomes increasingly popular for prescribing femininity over the decades, reaching peak popularity in the 1970's and 80's.
Conversely, the virginal look reaches peak popularity in the 1940's, and then declines in frequency from then on.

Similarly to the modern and the virginal looks, the peripheral themes, the romantic, girl next door, and the trendsetter looks either decline in popularity or achieve some semblance of popularity for prescribing feminine sexuality in a later decade. However, the difference between these themes and the modern and virginal themes is that the peripheral looks never become the most popular looks for prescribing feminine sexuality in any decade.

Overall, what is perhaps most interesting about these patterns is the limited number of theme options and the perennial nature of many of the themes. While certain themes increase and decline over the decades, with other themes remaining on the periphery, some themes span all eight decades. Thus, despite the emergence of new themes in later decades, themes from the 1920's continue to be frequently prescribed into the 1990's. These themes are discussed in chapter 8.

Interaction Style

As with the grooming vehicle, the interaction style vehicle scripts prescribe a general or unsituationalized demeanor for feminine sexual behavior over these eight decades. These scripts involve the use of emotion management and, like backstage techniques, the techniques that are prescribed shift over time. However, demeanor rarely appears alone as a message carrier of feminine sexuality. Rather, for the most part, demeanor is situationally prescribed and so appears in situation performance scripts on either work or the romantic relationship. Therefore, just as the meaning of “attractiveness” and how to be changes over these eight
decades, their meanings also change with the situation, be it work or love. Thus what passes as feminine sexuality is both time and situation dependent.

Situationalized Grooming and Interaction Style

In addition to appearing alone, grooming and interaction style scripts that are alluding to or prescribing feminine sexuality are often situationalized around either a romantic relationship or work theme.

Situational Grooming. These are grooming themes that are situationalized and, like the general grooming themes, their backstage prescriptions also change over time. Additionally, the purpose of the backstage preparations, from pleasing a male partner to pleasing the self with appearance, shift over time; these themes are documented in Table 6.1.

Situation Performance. While surface and deep acting are continually called for in almost all of the interaction style scripts that focus on either the romantic relationship or the work theme, demeanor themes in romantic relationship scripts do change over time, and these changes are also documented in Table 6.1.

Sexual Interaction Style: The Options and Limitations. While both vehicles prescribe feminine sexuality through either a focus on grooming or interaction style in relation to interactions with men, scripts exclusively focused on prescribing sexual activity or performance are found mainly within the romantic relationship theme in the situation performance vehicle scripts. Table 6.5 documents the themes in sexual interaction style over these eight decades, revealing a transformation in the expectations and prescriptions for feminine sexual behavior.

Only 8 interaction style scripts were located in the sample. Therefore, they were not included in the analysis.
Table 6.5 The Sexual Interaction Styles over Eight Decades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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over time. As Table 6.1 documents, the three sexual interaction style themes that emerge shift over time. The *virgin*: the sexually chaste woman, appears in the 1920's, 30's and 80's; *asexual*: this representation of feminine sexuality appears in the 1930's through the 60's, and then again in the 80's. As Table 6.6 documents, the *asexual* woman is represented as either sexually disinterested, or, unlike men, able to control her sexual "instincts," and also as a woman who views sex as a part of her conjugal duties and is unable to separate sex from love; and, finally, *sexual*: the sexually active woman, which appears in every decade since the 1960's. With the exception of the 1970's, all prescriptions specify an opposite-sex-partner as the only legitimate, or normative sexual interaction style.

These themes represent the full range of sexual interaction styles that are presented to the readers of these periodicals, but the way in which they are communicated does change; that is, while there are only three interaction styles prescribed, each one is given new meaning in each decade.

*Interaction Styles Combining Love and Work.* Sexuality is also emphasized in work-focused *situation performance* vehicle scripts. In fact, while some references are made in certain decades to the need or purpose of work for women, the overall tone of *interaction style* vehicle scripts is a romantic relationship focus. Since the *interaction style* scripts in these periodicals focus on the need and importance of romantic relationships for women, it is perhaps not surprising that this also spills over into workplace interaction style prescriptions. These themes are also documented in Table 6.1.
Table 6.6  The ASexual Interaction Style Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>1930's</th>
<th>1940's</th>
<th>1950's</th>
<th>1960's</th>
<th>1980's</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disinterested/Control</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equates sex &amp; love</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjugal Responsibility/knowledge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Situational Grooming and Situation Performance

Scripts that combine situationalized grooming and performance emphasize both appearance and demeanor. These scripts present the reader with messages about who to be and how to look situationally, and these messages change over time. As these examples document, overall the traditional paradigm emphasizes pleasing a male partner with an "attractive" appearance and a "yielding" demeanor:

"...success of marriage depends on the bride, she must be able to put her pride on the shelf. She must sell herself to her husband as the beautiful ideal with which he believes he walked down the aisle...bring reality to his eyes slowly...never show your temper...be what he wants you to be." (Mlle, 1939)

"should be attractive and receptive...don’t play hard to get, but don’t be too forward either. When you meet him again, let him know casually that you remember him. After a year of dating, cry and tell him “what about us?” Withdraw from his physical advances if he doesn’t respond at this point. Say Good-bye sadly, not angrily...he will come running.” (Mlle, 1953)

"A wife should be family minded, then beautiful, responsive, and healthy. He should come before anything else in her life...nothing more important to America right now than preservation of the family.” (LHJ, 1960)

Whereas the modern paradigm, as the following examples indicate, emphasizes self concern or pleasing the self, and a demeanor that is self focused, assertive, confident, independent:

"lose weight and see how much your husband likes the change...more importantly you will too.” (Mlle, 1973)

"sexy is more than the dictates of media and society...some people who are attractive don’t seem it. They do all the right things, but still don’t seem attractive. What attracts (men) is a combination of life experiences with family, friends...(people) with universal sex appeal are confident, open, warm, self accepting, vital, spontaneous...so you can enhance your sex appeal by by working on it.” (LHJ, 1976)

"These are the looks to be worn by women who are independent in all the best ways...self assured, self appreciative...” (Mlle, 1980)

"some women think they still need to wait on a man...do it only if and when you want to, and only if it is appreciated.” (Mlle, 1990)
These excerpts capture the tone of the scripts that combine *grooming* and *interaction style* vehicle scripts, and highlight the implementation of both emotion management and impression management techniques. In the first two examples of the *traditional* paradigm, surface acting is called for, whereby the reader is instructed to manipulate the emotional scene, but not change her feelings as such. Since the context of the third script emphasizes changing her understanding of life once married, the recommendation is toward deep acting. However, impression management is continually called for, as readers are instructed not only on how to look, but also on how to achieve the look.

In highlighting the shifting themes and meanings of feminine sexuality, and situating the themes within the *traditional* and *modern* paradigms, the documentation of the data that now follows will focus on the situationalized vehicle themes; that is, the *situational grooming* and *situation performance* vehicle themes.

**The Traditional Paradigmatic Themes on Feminine Sexuality: Situational Grooming and Situation Performance Vehicle Themes from the 1920's to the 1960's**

Table 6.7 documents the themes within the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality between the 1920's and 60's. Over these five decades there is an overall emphasis in the romantic relationship scripts on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman's existence, and these messages are communicated through cautionary tales and critical scripts. Table 6.8 documents the cautionary tales and the criticisms that appear for these and other scripts in the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality. The cautionary tale scripts warn or caution women against some behavior, whereas critical scripts are cautionary tales with a twist. For example, while women are cautioned against remaining single in some decades,
Table 6.7  Situational Grooming and Situation Performance Vehicle Themes from 1920 to 1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECADE</th>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>R ontance Justifies Appearance Demeanor Sexual Interaction Traditional Feminine Effects on marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20’s</td>
<td>gives woman her identity slender body; youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(cautionary tales &amp; criticisms combined)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30’s</td>
<td>gives woman her identity; gives meaning to life tailored; curl hair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40’s</td>
<td>adult status; attractiveness; (cautionary tales &amp; criticisms combined) narrow body domestic; soft; yielding; warm; receptive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50’s</td>
<td>gives meanings to life (cautionary tales alone, &amp; combined with makeup; color hair; curvy smart; family focus; domestic; yielding asexual; love/sex equated soft; warm; &amp; professional; conflict for women Deters &amp; contributes: more interesting, but detracts from home/ kids; sex (focus: other) detracts from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60’s</td>
<td>gives meaning to life NA family minded asexual/sexual; love/sex equated conflict for women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6.8 The Paradigms of Feminine Sexuality: Traditional and Modern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Style in the Romantic Relationship:</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL</th>
<th>MODERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Style in the Romantic Relationship:</td>
<td>romance justifies existence</td>
<td>romance improves existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Style at work:</td>
<td>please partner with appearance</td>
<td>please self with appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Style at work:</td>
<td>please partner with demeanor</td>
<td>please self with demeanor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Style at work:</td>
<td>(includes: domestically skilled, receptive, yielding)</td>
<td>(includes: independent, assertive, confident)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

--- Cautionary Tales and Criticisms combined --->

--- Cautionary Tales --->

Criticisms --->

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Style at work:</th>
<th>traditional feminine demeanor</th>
<th>traditional masculine demeanor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Style at work:</td>
<td>(includes: friendly, helpful, warm)</td>
<td>(includes: confident, ambitious, assertive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Style at work:</td>
<td>effects of work on marriage (“other” focused)</td>
<td>effects of work on marriage (“self” focused)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Image:</th>
<th>Virginal and asexual</th>
<th>Criticisms ---&gt;</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Image:</td>
<td>love and sex equated</td>
<td>pro sex education and information</td>
<td>love and sex separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Image:</td>
<td>opposed to sex education</td>
<td>pro sex education and information</td>
<td>opposed to sex education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
marriage might also be criticized in those same decades. In addition to this emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence, there is also an emphasis in the traditional paradigm on crafting both an appearance and a demeanor for the purposes of pleasing a male partner. Finally, the romantic relationship scripts that represent a traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality emphasize either an asexual, virgin, or virginal sexual interaction style, and equates sex and love.

Table 6.7 also documents the work theme scripts from these five decades. Between the 1920’s and 60’s, these scripts prescribe a traditional feminine demeanor; that is, friendliness, helpfulness, warmth, understanding, and compliance are stressed in these scripts. Furthermore, work scripts from these five decades also emphasize an “other” focused relationship between work and the romantic relationship. That is, in scripts where work and romantic relationship themes are combined, the emphasis in the messages from the 1920’s to the 1960’s is on the “other” rather than the self; for example, readers are invited to think about work in relation to its effects on their partners. Finally, within these scripts that combine work and romantic relationship themes, sexual activity is sometimes mentioned. During these five decades, the emphasis on sex at the office is also “other” focused; that is, the effects of sex at the office are discussed in terms of its effects on “others,” rather than its effects on the “self,” as in modern paradigm decades.

While there are shifts in the themes of the feminine sexual ideal between the 1920’s and the 60’s, the traditional paradigm message is constant throughout all five decades. Thus, while the ways in which to achieve the traditional ideal change over the decades as prescriptions for demeanor and grooming shift over time and within situations, there is a constant message
throughout all five decades; that message being the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality. As they appear in the situational grooming and situation performance vehicles, I will now document those shifts and changes in meanings of the traditional feminine sexual ideal from the 1920's to the 1960's.

The “Mysterious Virgin” of the 1920’s

Themes in the 1920’s represent the feminine sexual ideal as the mysterious virgin; the woman who is innocent, strange, and unknown. Furthermore, overall, the themes are consistent with the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality, as the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence is stressed and communicated through scripts that combine cautionary tales and critical messages. Additionally, the messages in this decade emphasize pleasing a male partner through both appearance and demeanor. Finally, messages in the 1920’s further represent this paradigm through an emphasis on the virgin sexual interaction style. The specific themes that are consistent with the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality are documented in Table 6.7, revealing that:

* romantic relationship justifies existence: through the romantic relationship women attain a public identity
* please a male partner with appearance: youthful, slim, hide figure flaws
* please a male partner through demeanor: mysterious
* sexual interaction style: sexual inexperience and innocence

Finally, the situational grooming vehicle themes in the work scripts prescribe a tailored/mannish look. While the themes within each of these vehicles shift over each decade, I will now document how the themes from the 1920’s combine to represent the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality.
**Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship: The Youthful Look**

As documented in Table 6.7, *situational grooming* prescriptions in the 1920’s instruct the reader to “hide your figure flaws” and to possess a “youthful look.” The reader in this decade is instructed to be “appealing,” “attractive,” “pleasant looking and smelling” in a way that will attract a man. The purpose of the *grooming* activities being not for her own pleasure, but solely for a male partner. For example, the emphasis is on weight in this example from LHJ which begins by explaining that women over 50, “having spent the last 30 years of their lives taking care of a house, children, and husband” (in that order), have lost the skill of how to take care of their appearance:

"...you shouldn’t try to look young, but rather your age...skill is involved with dress because it involves lingerie, hose, shoes, gowns, gloves, hats, wraps, accessories, and corsets. The focus is on taste...being well presented and hiding any figure flaws. Special attention should be paid to the corset. ...the corset should be fitted...you shouldn’t feel corseted, but supported. You need three different corsets - one for everyday, and sportwear, one for formal daytime, and one light corset for evening.” (LHJ, 1926)

The reader is informed that a successful appearance will please both her husband and her children. In 1929, a reader writes in to say that looking young is appealing.

"After ten years of marriage my husband and I stole a night away from the children...we ended up at a hotel...but the man at the reception would not give us a room because he thought I was too young to be married to my husband...he intimated that he thought I was either his mistress or a prostitute.” (LHJ, 1929)

This reader was complimented that the man at the reception desk thought she was too young to be married to, what appeared to be to him, a much older man. She is additionally complimented that the receptionist mistook her for a prostitute, since her perception is that prostitutes must be very young women. Finally, she also realizes that this is a compliment to
her husband. Overall, emphasis in the 1920’s through the 1960’s is on creating an appearance that is to “his” liking:

“...you should look good...retain youthful look...for your husband and your children” (LHJ, 1926)

“marriage is happier if toil is reduced for the wife...machinery allows the wife to retain her charms by avoiding drudgery.” (LHJ, 1920)

However, while this theme on creating an appearance to “his” liking begins in the 1920’s, it becomes more prevalent in the 1930’s, when it becomes combined with also creating a demeanor to “his” liking.

This emphasis on creating an appearance to “his” liking is connected to another message in the traditional paradigm that emphasizes the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence.

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship: A Demeanor of Mystery and Intrigue

The emphasis on pleasing a man through an “appropriate” appearance is connected to the message on the importance of the romantic relationship for women. The situation performance scripts on romantic relationships emphasize the importance of the romantic relationship in both the traditional and modern paradigms of feminine sexuality. However, in the traditional paradigm, emphasis is placed on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying her existence:

“the feminine movement calls for the education of women, but most women know that it is the law of nature for women to pursue a husband and home (LHJ, 1920)

“...how to find a new husband after you are widowed...a woman loses her identity when she loses her husband, so you need to make some changes in your life. The scriptures condone remarriage after widowhood...you need to live by the scriptures.” (LHJ, 1920)
While coupling is emphasized in the 1920’s, it is not prescribed to the degree that it is in modern paradigm decades, when cautionary tales appear in the periodicals advising women against remaining single. However, there is an ambivalence toward marriage in the 1920’s, whereby readers are presented with messages that combine criticisms of marriage and cautionary tales:

“...the widowed woman has what no other woman has - freedom... however, you lose your identity when your husband dies.”
(LHJ, 1920)

Criticisms and cautionary tales disappear from the interaction style scripts after the 1920’s, only to reappear again in the 1940’s.

Prescriptions for grooming and interaction style in the romantic relationship do change over time. In the 1920’s, readers are instructed to be “mysterious” to men, and to avoid the “nude look” of the flapper. The “freedoms” of the “new woman” are criticized in the 1920’s as they are perceived to detract from the ability to be mysterious in a relationship. This inability to be mysterious in the romantic relationship is linked in these scripts to both changes in grooming and interaction style techniques; specifically, to changes in grooming techniques which emphasize a “sporting” look. Along with her involvement in work and politics, this look is attributed to have lessened her mystery:

“...1920’s girl is self reliant and capable...a previous quality expected only of men...but in acquiring these gains she has lost something. The pursuit of pleasure that goes along with the need for independence and work...we now experience nervous exhaustion, and now women are resorting to drugs and suicide. There is no mystery to her body anymore because she wears less...” (LHJ, 1920)

This emphasis on mystery also appears to be reflected in messages emphasizing a virgin sexual interaction style.
**Sexual Interaction Style: The Virgin.** Consistent with prescriptions for a mysterious demeanor in the romantic relationship, a virgin sexual interaction style is also emphasized. The virgin is sexually innocent, although not necessarily ignorant, and she represents the ideal sexual interaction style in the 1920’s:

> not wanting the fuss...the couple did not want people on the train to know that they were newly-weds...so they asked the negro porter not to tell people...soon she noticed people staring at her in disgust...she approached the porter asking him ‘what did you tell people about me and my husband?’ and he responded ‘I tell’d them you wuz just good frenz.’ The woman then immediately understood why the people were staring...they thought she was a ‘loose woman. (LHJ, 1929)

In this script, readers are presented with a woman whose identity is spoiled because she has failed to maintain an appearance of sexual innocence. This woman certainly must engage in some impression management and emotion management techniques to recover her identity as “sexually innocent” and, thus, save her self from denigration as a “loose woman.”

In addition to appearance and demeanor in the romantic relationship, prescriptions for appearance and behavior are also found in work theme scripts. In the 1920’s, emphasis is on the readers’ appearance in these scripts. These prescriptions are consistent with grooming vehicle messages that fit either a traditional or a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality (see Table 6.3), as a tailored/mannish look is emphasized for work.

**Situational Grooming at Work: The Tailored/Mannish Look**

Unlike the romantic relationship scripts, situational work-grooming messages are more grooming theme than grooming category focused in the 1920’s; that is, rather than prescribe backstage prescriptions for the grooming categories of body, dress, face, and hair, the work scripts emphasize grooming themes. In later decades, the emphasis is on the grooming
categories rather than the themes. However, the introduction of codes does not mean that backstage preparations disappear at the work place. In fact, backstage preparations increase over time at the work place, as do the looks prescribed. Overall, however, prescriptions for the 1920’s are “look” rather than backstage focused.

The work looks that are prescribed during the 1920’s correspond to the general grooming prescriptions for that decade. Therefore, situational grooming vehicle messages that are work focused in the 1920’s prescribe a look that is tailored/mannish:

“...smart suits for the modern business woman...want a reputation for smartness at the office.” (LHJ, 1926)

“...appearance may be the determining factor in your business career... don’t go extreme for the office...street shades, and good taste.” (LHJ, 1929)

Thus, this prescription is consistent with either paradigm of feminine sexuality. However, backstage techniques for grooming at work stress “proper” office attire in the 1920’s, whereas in later decades emphasis is placed on transforming the body, dress, face, and hair. However, dress is mentioned in the 1920’s, with an emphasis on office/after office attire:

“longer skirts, and higher waists this season, but don’t go extreme for office wear. If you plan on going from the office to a party after work, there are dresses that are appropriate for both.” (LHJ, 1929)

This emphasis on adapting a work dress to suit an evening appointment continues throughout the traditional paradigm decades, but the prescriptions shift in meaning beginning in the 1950’s.

Similarities in the Themes of the 1920’s and 30’s

The 1930’s continues with these essential ingredients for the traditional paradigm of

See chapter 8 for a breakdown of the general grooming themes for each decade.
feminine sexuality, that is, an emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence, creating a demeanor and appearance for attracting and pleasing a man, and sexual innocence continue into the 1930’s. However, while the themes are similar, there are some shifts that occur in the 1930’s.

“Motherly and Virginal:” Themes and Meanings of Feminine Sexuality in the 1930’s

Message of feminine sexuality in the 1930’s represent an image of the motherly (i.e., nurturing, and exclusively other focused) and virginal (i.e., both sexually innocent and disinterested) woman. However, while minor theme shifts do occur between the 1920’s and 30’s, the themes of feminine sexuality continue to reinforce the traditional paradigm. Specifically, romance continues to justify a woman’s existence in the themes of the 1930’s, and readers are instructed to please a male partner through both appearance and demeanor. Also consistent with the traditional paradigm, the sexual interaction style scripts combine a virgin and asexual theme, emphasizing both sexual purity and disinterest during this decade. Furthermore, the purpose of work is also tied to the romantic relationship, and an emphasis on a traditional feminine demeanor at work also appears in the themes of the 1930’s. However, while themes in the 1930’s reinforce the traditional paradigm, some themes are transformed between the 1920’s and 30’s.

While the situational grooming vehicle scripts for the romantic relationship theme in the 1920’s emphasize the categories of body (slim), and overall appearance (youth), by the 1930’s, pleasing a man with appearance requires a tailored dress. Furthermore, prescriptions for demeanor also shift, as readers are presented with themes emphasizing pleasing a man with a
yielding and a "motherly" style in the 1930's, whereas the 1920's stresses "mystery." The two decades, however, emphasize a similar theme on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman's existence; that is, emphasis is placed on a woman attaining a public identity through involvement in the romantic relationship, and the two decades also share a similar sexual interaction style theme. Overall, themes on the romantic relationship in the 1930's can be interpreted as departing only slightly from those from the 1920's, as a virginal, as opposed to virgin, style is prescribed.

Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship: The Well Presented Look

Consistent with the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality, the emphasis on crafting an appearance to suit a man continues into the 1930's. Similarly to the 1920's, the look is tailored/mannish in the 1930's. In the 1930's, readers are told that in order to get a husband after college they must adapt their clothes:

"...from sweaters to two piece dresses...belted, or one piece (to get a husband)." (LHJ, 1933)

But unlike scripts in the 1920's, there are no instructions on body shape or face during this decade. Rather, the emphasis in the 1930's is on a "well presented" appearance that will attract and please a man. Another prescription for attracting and pleasing a man that appears in this decade is the emphasis on haircare. Readers in the 1930's are presented with several scripts specifically focused on "curling" techniques for their hair:

"curling your hair will become more common as soon as the prejudice and conservatism has worn off. It doesn't take long to do - just one hour, and the gadgets are less grueling than before. It will be better for your husband...because you won't climb into bed with curlers anymore." (Mlle, 1939)
Consistent with the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality, this emphasis on pleasing a man through both appearance and demeanor also appears alongside messages that emphasize the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence.

*Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship: Yielding, Motherly, and Sexually Ignorant*

Consistent with the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality, the importance of heterosexual coupling is reaffirmed again in the 1930’s:

“...don’t fuss about the time of day that you get married, you’re lucky enough to get the man of your dreams any day...It doesn’t matter what you wear for your wedding...might want to wear a street length dress. Brides glow no matter what they wear because they are triumphant that they have justified their existence because most women are old fashioned at heart. Keep making a fuss of him because you haven’t gotten him yet.” (Mlle, 1939)

While there are no criticisms or cautionary tales on coupling during the 1930’s, there is a transformation in the prescriptions for *grooming* approaches and *interaction style* techniques. While some scripts in the 1920’s prescribe *grooming* techniques that emphasize creating an appearance to a partners liking, this approach continues into the 1930’s and is combined with an emphasis on also constructing a demeanor to “his” liking. In the 1930’s, the wife should look beautiful, and be yielding, subordinating her will to his, and she should possess a “mothering” demeanor toward him.

“...her sole task is to sell herself to her husband as the beautiful ideal with which he believes he walked down the aisle...she should never show her temper, or that she has a will of her own...her chief duty is the maintenance of unreality so she needs personal self denial and common sense cleverness.” (Mlle, 1939)

“you should mother him, but be pretty and interesting...go to work and make him win you all over again.” (LHJ, 1939)
Thus, this emphasis on crafting a demeanor to suit him continues to reinforce the traditional or “other” focused orientation of the 1920’s.

**Sexual Interaction Style: Virginal.** Themes on demeanor and sexual interaction style in the romantic relationship also continue to reflect this traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality into the 1930’s. Specifically, the virgin sexual interaction style prescription of the 1920’s continues in this decade:

> “don’t sit in parked cars after dark with men...double dating only.”
> (Mlle, 1939)

but unlike the 1920’s, the virgin ideal of the 1930’s is also asexual, that is, she is not only sexually inexperienced, but, except in the context of conjugal responsibility, she is also sexually disinterested:

> “all this talk about sex has gotten women very nervous before their wedding night...as long as you believe in the man you are marrying, any mistakes that you make are not irreparable. Women have been coping with sex for years and have lived happily after the wedding night...just be natural...don’t read books or listen to others because then you won’t respond naturally.” (Mlle, 1939)

> “...in the car on the way to the church (on my wedding day), my father told me that half way wasn’t enough in marriage...that I should go three quarters of the way.” (LHJ, 1936)

This sexual interaction style requires the reader to engage in surface acting. Since sex education is frowned upon, she is told to respond “naturally,” and to “cope” with her husband’s sexual approach.

Issues of feminine sexuality continue to appear in the work theme scripts into the 1930’s. However, while the emphasis in these scripts is on appearance in the 1920’s, new themes emerge in the 30’s. While the general grooming look continues to be prescribed for the work
look, prescriptions for demeanor at the office and discussions on the effects of work on marriage also appear in the 1930's.

*Situational Grooming and Situation Performance at Work: The Tailored/Mannish Look and Traditional Feminine Demeanor*

*Situational Grooming.* The looks that are prescribed at the work place during the 1930’s correspond to the general *grooming* vehicle prescriptions for that decade; that is, the *tailored/mannish* look. Therefore, since this look appears in both paradigms of feminine sexuality, the prescription is neither explicitly *traditional* or *modern*.

Beginning in the 1930’s, the backstage scripts offer advice on clothing styles, and generally emphasize a “well presented” look at the office:

“adapt clothes for work...start wearing dresses and suits.” (Mlle, 1936)

Similarly to the 1920’s, themes in the 30’s also advise a transformation in appearance from office to after office:

“clothes should be adapted for office...but there are outfits that are suitable for both.” (Mlle, 1936)

In addition to the look that is prescribed, themes concerning demeanor at the office and the effects of work on marriage appear in the 1930’s, and these are consistent with the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality.

*Situation Performance.* Similarly to the romantic relationship theme scripts, work theme scripts either prescribe *grooming* or a gendered *interaction style*. For example, work scripts either prescribe appearance or they focus on the effects of work on marriage (either negative or positive) or the appropriate degree of femininity that should be brought into the office. The
prescriptions for demeanor at work and themes concerning the effects of work on marriage that appear during this decade reflect the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality.

The ways in which work is said to affect marriage changes over these eight decades. In the 1930's, work is said to contribute to the happiness of marriage because it “makes you more interesting:”

> “return to work so that he will find you interesting.” (LHJ, 1939)

Furthermore, there is an emphasis in the 1930's on introducing the private “feminine” self to the public world. The “office girl” of the 1930’s is advised to use her “voice” to “get (her) way at the office,” which should be “soft, warm, friendly, natural...not professional.” Her voice is said to be her “greatest gift” because it can “open doors” not only for promotion, but in “finding a husband.” Thus, the demeanor that is prescribed is traditionally feminine:

> “...your boss wants the same thing from you as your husband...honesty, trustworthiness, understanding.” (Mlle, 1939)

The 1940’s and 50’s sees a transformation in the expectations of “office girl” demeanor, but themes emphasize a feminine-private self at the office throughout the 1930’s.

Thus, while some differences do exist, the themes of feminine sexuality are similar in the 1920’s and 30’s. However, while some minor shifts in theme do occur by the 1930’s, prescriptions in the 40’s represent a much more significant shift in the themes of feminine sexuality.

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**A Shift in the Meaning of Feminine Sexuality:**

**the Emergence of the “Asexual Woman,” the 1940’s**

While the *traditional* paradigm continues to be reinforced into the 1940’s, Table 6.7

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156

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documents a significant transformation in the themes of feminine sexuality beginning in this decade:

* **romantic relationship as justifying existence**: adult status and attractiveness achieved through the romantic relationship

* **pleasing a male partner with appearance**: classically feminine, tailored, rosy cheeks, slim body,

* **pleasing a male partner with demeanor**: domestic skills, yielding, receptive, supportive, interesting, partnership

* **asexual interaction style**: sexual disinterest or control; knowledge of sex for purpose of pleasing partner

* **traditional feminine demeanor**: friendly, understanding, but also professional. Makeup is introduced for the first time

* **work as connected to the romantic relationship – other focused**: work contributes to the downfall of a romantic relationship because a woman should have no more than one priority

Perhaps the most significant change in the themes is the shift from the "virgin" prescriptions of the 1920’s and 30’s, to a full emphasis on an asexual interaction style. Additionally, shifts also occur in the situational grooming themes around this period. While themes in the situational grooming vehicle for the romantic relationship continue to present readers with a well presented look, the classically feminine look increases in frequency during this period. Furthermore, an increasing emphasis becomes placed on all aspects of the grooming categories, as body, dress, face, and hair become included in these scripts, and readers are instructed in how to transform these categories for the purposes of pleasing a male partner. However, while some themes in the situation performance vehicle continue to reflect those prescriptions from the 1930’s, as readers are presented with prescriptions emphasizing the importance of domestic skills and a yielding demeanor, new themes also appear. Specifically, in addition to domestic skills and a yielding demeanor, readers are instructed to acquire skills in
receptivity, and being supportive; these require a great deal of emotion management. Overall, since it continues to be the only way for women to achieve adult status, the emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman's existence persists; both cautionary tales and critical scripts are combined in communicating this message to readers in the 1940's.

*Situational grooming and situation performance* vehicle themes are also transformed by the 1940's, as readers are instructed to wear makeup to the office for the first time. However, the emphasis on a "well-presented" dress also continues to appear in the work-grooming themes of the 1940's. *Situation performance* themes in the 1940's also incorporate some, but not all, of the prescriptions from the 1930's, as readers are presented with themes that emphasize the importance of a traditional feminine demeanor, such as friendliness and understanding at the office. However, unlike themes in the 1930's, themes in the 40's reveal a tension, whereby readers are instructed to be both "feminine" and "pretty," "brainy" and "professional." Readers are instructed in these scripts to present a self that is neither too much of one or the other, but a perfect combination of both. Finally, work theme scripts emphasize the "other," since they stress the effects of work on deterring marital happiness because it detracts a woman's full attention from her husband and family. Thus, the themes within these vehicles are significantly different from those of the 1920's and 30's. However, as I will now illustrate, the themes of the 1940's continue to reinforce the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality.

*Situational Grooming* in the Romantic Relationship: The Fresh, Pretty, Rosy Look

While the traditional paradigm in the situational grooming vehicle messages continues to emphasize "pleasing a man" with appearance:
"a housewife's personal care is as important as homecare...an attractive woman in the house is a morale lifter for the whole family." (LHJ, 1946)

"A pretty figure is what men look at a woman for...and nice hair."
(Mlle, 1946)

**grooming** vehicle messages that are situation specific and relationship focused are transformed in the 1940's. In addition to the continued emphasis on the *tailored/mannish* look, in the 1940's a new focus on the *classically feminine* look emerges. These backstage preparation scripts advise women on how to be "fresh," "pretty," "lovelier," and "more feminine:"

"you should look fresh, pretty, and rosy in the morning." (Mlle, 1946)

"husbands marvel at a wife who is piquant, decorative, and worthwhile." (LHJ, 1949)

"...take care of yourself so that you can look lovelier...naps and relaxing oil baths." (LHJ, 1946)

"we don’t want girls to be dressed up all the time. Sport clothes are fine with us, but we want our ladies to look and act like ladies...a simple Brooks sweater, a suit, and hats...hats are great for the fairer sex...they should be glad that they can go into a store and buy a personality" (LHJ, 1940)

No new backstage preparations emerge in the 1940's, but there is a continuation of those prescriptions from the two previous decades. Similarly to the 1920's, backstage preparations in the 1940's continue to emphasize body shape:

"men hate tummies, so don’t be ashamed to wear a girdle...aren’t they back in anyway?" (LHJ, 1940)

And scripts prescribing appropriate hair styling for getting and keeping a man also continue into the 1940's:

"...thing that makes a man look at you at parties instead of someone else is a pretty figure, an appealing color, or a delightfully coiffed head." (Mlle, 1946)
In addition to the traditional paradigm message, which emphasizes pleasing a male partner with demeanor, messages centering on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence also continue into the 1940’s.

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship: Receptive, Interesting, and Sexually Indifferent

While demeanor themes are transformed in the 1940’s, with a new emphasis on receptivity emerging, the traditional paradigm emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship for women continues. By the 1940’s, readers are told that marriage is the gateway to adulthood for women:

“A mother sees her daughter as a woman for the first time on her wedding day.” (Mile, 1946)

and a gateway to attractiveness:

“...attractiveness is the woman who is the most accomplished and happiest of homemakers. A housewives personal care is as important as homecare...” (LHI, 1946)

However, similarly to the 1920’s, contentious themes emerge during this decade, as coupling also becomes criticized:

“...you don’t need a man if you have enough to support yourself...you have your children to keep you from feeling lonely...you are better off with your freedom.” (LHI, 1949)

“...he was sent away, so we had to cancel our wedding plans once again. He asked me to go with him, but I told him that I would need to think about it, that I had alot of responsibilities, and that I would like to give notice to my boss...he just said that ‘it would be a comfort to know that you cared enough for me to give everything up.’ I told him that I still needed to think about it.” (LHI, 1943)
However, similarly to the 1920's, these criticisms cited above are combined with themes that reinforce the importance of marriage for women. The first excerpt, for example, goes on to explain that marriage gives a woman her adult status and identity, while the second emphasizes that, even though she had to “think about” leaving her job “without notice,” the reader makes it clear that she fully intended to leave her job to be with her husband.

Demeanor themes from the 1930's continue to appear in the 1940's, with emphasis placed on domestic skills and an overall yielding demeanor:

“Being a good wife depends upon many things, some social and psychological and others domestic. He should like the meals you serve him...you should accept his viewpoint when you disagree.” (LHJ, 1949)

Thus, emotion management continues to be involved in achieving the appropriate demeanor. In this example, it appears that it is up to the reader whether or not she should actually accept his viewpoint (i.e., deep acting), or whether she should just appear to accept it (i.e., surface acting). But new prescriptions also emerge during this decade. The reader is instructed not only to be “worthwhile,” but also to be supportive, interesting, and receptive; that is, to listen to him:

“You should be responsive to his gestures of affection.” (LHJ, 1949)

“men like a girl who is receptive to their ideas.” (Mile, 1943)

“he needs your emotional support not your complaints during this period (of war).” (LHJ, 1943)

“you should have interesting days to discuss with him...have interests other than in the home and the kids.” (LHJ, 1949)

Again, emotion management is called for in these situation performance vehicle messages that prescribe an interesting, receptive, or supportive style. Specifically, in the example on “supportiveness,” the message is that, regardless of one’s own concerns, a “supportive” front
should be presented. However, since the script does not specify whether the reader should deny her own concerns (i.e., deep acting) or whether she should merely refrain from discussing them (i.e., surface acting), it is unclear whether or not the reader is receiving instruction in deep or surface acting.

Cautionary tales also appear in the 1940’s, representing a rejection of the themes from the previous two decades, as readers are informed that the “modern” marriage is a partnership. Therefore, because it is a partnership, readers are informed that they should not manipulate their husbands to get their own way as they did in the past:

“don’t manipulate your husband to get the things you want...women expect too much...it takes time to adjust to marriage. A good marriage is a partnership.” (Mlle, 1946)

References to “the past” are alluded to in these scripts in the 1940’s, indicating a rejection of previous interaction style prescriptions, or perceptions of them. Whereas in the 1920’s women were told to be “mysterious,” and “motherly” in the 30’s, by the 40’s they are told to be partners with their spouses. Similarly to the transition in prescriptions for demeanor between the 1920’s and 40’s, sexual interaction style themes also shift during this period.

**Sexual Interaction Style: The Asexual woman.** While the prescribed sexual interaction style shifts during the 1940’s, the message continues to represent the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality. Maintaining for the first time that women need knowledge of sex, the prescribed sexual demeanor of the 1940’s is a rejection of the 1920’s-30’s “virgin” demeanor. Unlike her counterpart from the 1920’s-30’s, the reader of the 1940’s is told to be knowledgeable about sexual behavior and to enjoy sex with the sole purpose of pleasing her partner and, thus, preserving marriages:
“women expect too much from sex...it will take time to adjust...good marriage is a partnership...don’t consult textbooks on how to respond sexually to your husband...it is not fair to him...your response should be spontaneous.” (Mlle, 1946)

In addition, her sexuality is to be controlled:

“husband should come before all others...he should be primary in your life. If you do not follow him to camp...be careful if you have a man friend escort you to places in the evening...be careful of an affair...but a woman with sincerity and depth won’t have an affair. True womanhood means outgrowing the need for immediate satisfaction.” (Mlle, 1943)

Given this focus on sexually satisfying her husband only, the reader is advised to obtain information on sex through books beginning in the 1940’s, and this suggestion continues through until the 1960’s. Thus, since the emphasis remains “other” focused, the theme is still consistent with a traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality.

Situational Grooming at Work: The Well Presented Office Look

Overall, the office look is “well presented” in the 1940’s. However, consistent with prescriptions from the previous two decades, appearance continues as the mainstay in work theme scripts into the 1940’s. But, conversely to the 1920’s and 30’s work-grooming scripts and romantic-grooming scripts in the 40’s focus exclusively on backstage preparations. These prescriptions are focused on face, as makeup is mentioned for the first time at work:

“...made up and well-groomed.” (Mlle, 1949)

Dress is also prescribed and the look is “well presented,” as “tailored,” “smart” suits and dresses are prescribed. Finally, consistent with the 1920’s and 30’s prescriptions for an office and after office look, work-grooming scripts in the 40’s also suggest an after work look that can be accomplished through choosing a versatile suit that goes “from office to party.”
In addition to prescribing appearance for the office, work scripts in the 1940's also offer readers advice on office demeanor. Also, similarly to the 1930's, these scripts also connect work and marriage, offering advice to readers on how to combine both. However, despite changes in the prescriptions between this and the previous two decades, the traditional paradigm runs consistently through both the romantic relationship and the work scripts throughout these three decades.

**Situation Performance at Work: Feminine and Professional - the Presentation of an Oxymoron in the Work Scripts**

Consistent with the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality, work theme scripts emphasize the effects of work on others in the 1940's. Unlike scripts in the 1930's, which emphasized ways in which work contributes to marital happiness, work activity is described as contributing to the downfall of marriage in the 1940's:

> "many women will end their period of war work convinced that home is the place where she can make her best conquests and secure her most beautiful rewards." (LHJ, 1943)

Themes in the 1940's also transform the 30's "office girl" demeanor. Beginning in the 1940's the readers is instructed to allow *some*, but not all of her feminine side to emerge at the office. There is a tension in these scripts, as readers are instructed to contain their feminine side, but not completely:

> "bosses prefer both their employees and their wives to be attractive...you should be attractive if you want a job...this means being well, but shouldn't be too concerned about appearance or too brainy...one is silly and the other dreary." (Mile, 1949)
This theme continues into the 1950's. Overall, by the 1950's, there are several theme shifts, but the message remains essentially the same, as the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality continues to be prescribed.

**Persistent Themes, Different Techniques:**
The "Family Minded and Asexual Woman," the 1950's

In addition to continuing to reflect the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality, Table 6.7 reveals that messages in the 1950's do not represent a significant departure from those in the 1940's; that is, the themes continue to represent the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality:

* **romantic relationship justifies existence:** cautionary tales are implemented to express the message that life is meaningless without a male partner

* **pleasing a male partner with appearance:** makeup, hair coloring, "lose it" and "hide it"

* **pleasing a male partner with demeanor:** receptive, supportive, yielding, domestic, family minded, and smart

* **asexual:** sexual disinterest or control; knowledge for purpose of pleasing partner; love and sex equated

* **traditional feminine demeanor:** both friendly, tactful, and professional; the conflict between feminine nature (i.e., understanding, feminine, warm) and the public-worker self (i.e., professional)

* **work as connected to the romantic relationship - other focused:** contributes to marriage by making wife more interesting to her husband, and deters because it gives her more than one priority; sexual activity at work is also "other" focused, since the emphasis is on the effects of this activity on her husband and family, rather than on her self

While the themes have changed, the traditional paradigm is still clearly present within those themes.
The emphasis on an asexual interaction style continues to appear into the 1950’s. Additionally, while demeanor themes from the 1940’s continue into the 50’s, a new emphasis on “family mindedness” emerges during this decade.

The importance placed on the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence continues unabated in the 1950’s, but with a new emphasis. Whereas the themes in the 1940’s emphasize the importance of the romantic relationship for achieving adult status and attractiveness, by the 1950’s the emphasis more closely resembles that of the 1920’s and 30’s, as life becomes defined as meaningless without a male partner. However, whereas previously this message was communicated through a combination of both cautionary tales and critical scripts, this message is communicated only through cautionary tales in the 1950’s. While situational grooming vehicle scripts in the romantic relationship continue to emphasize grooming of the body, dress, face, and hair, prescriptions for how to achieve the ideal looks are somewhat transformed by the 1950’s. Specifically, makeup is mentioned for the first time in the romantic relationship scripts, as is hair coloring. Similarly, prescriptions for demeanor continue to emphasize themes from the 1940’s, including receptivity, supportiveness, domestic skills, and a yielding style. However, “family mindedness” and being “smart” are also added to the list of themes. Finally, like those messages from the 1940’s, themes on sexual interaction style in the 1950’s continue to negate a feminine sexual self. However, while sexual interaction style themes emphasize disinterest, a new theme also emerges: the equation of sex and love.

Themes in the work scripts between the 1940’s and 50’s are also similar. The “well presented” look of the three previous decades, and the “well made-up” look of the 1940’s continue into the 1950’s, as does the tension between the traditional feminine and professional...
demeanor. However, an added twist to the tension between the feminine and professional demeanor appears in the 1950's, as scripts emphasize a conflict between the feminine self and the worker self. That is, in addition to prescribing both a professional and a traditional feminine demeanor at work, work scripts in the 1950’s also present the worker as in a perpetual conflict. This conflict is attributed to the incompatible fit between the feminine self and the world of work. Finally, work themes on the effects of work on marriage combine themes from previous decades, maintaining that work both contributes to and deters from marital happiness. However, since the theme is that work distracts a woman from her main priority, her family, the emphasis is still “other” focused. Additionally, themes on sex at the office are also “other” focused in this decade, since the emphasis is on the effects of this activity on “others.”

In addition to sharing many themes with previous decades, the 1950’s also departs from those prescriptions of the past, adding a new emphasis in the work scripts on the classically feminine look and a “slender” body. Furthermore, work themes in the 1950’s also depart from those in previous decades in other ways. For example, combining themes from the 1930’s and 40’s, work themes in the 50’s maintain that work both contributes to and deters from marital happiness. And, finally, sexual activity is mentioned for the first time in the work scripts during this decade.

Overall, while some of the themes from the 1950’s do depart from those of the 1940’s, the themes between these two decades are more similar than different. And, like the three previous decades, while the themes may change over the decades, the overarching message is a reinforcement of the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality.
While a new emphasis on a “natural,” but made-up look, emerges in the 1950’s, the emphasis on pleasing a man through appearance continues into this decade:

“your husband wants you to be shiny, bright and attractive.”
(Mlle, 1950)

Similarly to the 1940’s, themes in the 1950’s add to rather than transform the prescriptions for grooming and interaction style in the romantic relationship. In addition to looking “pretty,” having the right “figure,” and “hairstyle,” readers are told to wear makeup for the first time:

“makeup can give you brilliant good looks, when without it you are just dull passability. makeup fresh, soft, for day...please your partner - wear the combos he likes. Cosmetics make any girl prettier.” (Mlle, 1950)

Also, hair, first mentioned in the 1940’s, is mentioned again in the 1950’s. However, the 1940’s prescriptions for “clean,” “soft locks” are replaced in the 50’s with a new emphasis on transforming the “natural” look:

“...husband wants you to look natural, but dye your hair to avoid the mousy look.” (Mlle, 1950)

Additionally, body shape continues to be a theme in the 1950’s. However, whereas the emphasis was on “hiding it” in the 1920’s and 40’s, by the 1950’s the emphasis is more focused on “losing it:”

“lose weight and your life will change.” (LHJ, 1953)

“lose weight...machines that you lie on and they do the work.”
(Mlle, 1956)

although, “hiding it” continues:

“...if you are not slim enough, then either diet to lose weight or get a girdle.” (Mlle, 1950)

Additionally, a “well-presented” dress also continues to be emphasized:

168
"...wear fresh looking clothes for your husband." (Mlle, 1950)

"...a suit for work, dress for a date." (Mlle, 1959)

In addition to the similarity between the situational grooming vehicle themes, the 1940's and 50's also share similar situation performance themes.

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship: Family Minded and Sexually Indifferent

The traditional emphasis on creating an appearance to her partner's liking continues in the situation performance vehicle message during this decade, as readers are instructed to craft a demeanor to match appearance. However, while prescriptions from the 1940's continue into the 50's, a new emphasis on family mindedness emerges. Additionally, the traditional emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman's existence also persists into the 1950's. In the 1950's, readers are told that the romantic relationship is important for "fulfilling a woman:"

"tiredness at work indicates a problem in your personal life...perhaps because you have no beau. No beau at all is worse than a no good beau." (Mlle, 1950)

And while the criticisms of previous decades disappear in the 50's and 60's, cautionary tale scripts continue to reinforce the importance of marriage for women by outlining the consequences of failure:

"graduate students have no time for relationships...it is a waste of a woman's time...she should just take the money and go abroad. Employers don't care about a woman employee having an advanced degree. even with a PhD you will still get less promotion and pay than men.” (Mlle, 1956)

"The divorce rate is making people ask what is wrong with the institution? Women must make most adjustments...it is best if you are both virgins or both experienced...but sex before marriage means marriage is less likely to succeed...” (LHJ, 1956)
Whereas cautionary tales in the 1940’s were criticisms of messages from previous decades, cautionary tales in the 1950’s are more consistent with those from the 1920’s; that is, they describe the consequences of non-compliance with current prescriptions:

“...husband suffers if the wife lacks homemaking skills...it is a failing of her mother. A husband bitterly resent a sloppy, slovenly wife... (LHJ, 1953)

and, while the 1940’s rejects the interaction style prescriptions from the 20’s and 30’s, maintaining that they are “manipulative” and not appropriate in a marriage that should be based on “partnership,” themes in the 50’s reject the 40’s “modern marriage:”

“...false conception of marriage as partnership is bad for marriage...it is not equal sexually...the divorce rates are so high because of women’s high expectations. Marriage is protection, not a partnership.” (LHJ, 1959)

Rather than transforming prescriptions for behavior, themes in the 1950’s add to the prescriptions for interaction style in the romantic relationship. In addition to being receptive, the “ideal” wife/partner is also “smart,” and “family minded.” However, this decade presents mainly contentious interaction style themes. In addition to being receptive, interesting, supportive, and domestically skilled, and yielding, and these involve the same emotion management techniques as those in the 1940’s, the ideal wife in the 1950’s is simultaneously told not be these things:

“...husband married you for your sweet reasonableness not your cooking.” (Mlle, 1950)

Thus the interaction style themes in the 1950’s are mixed. However, while the demeanor prescriptions begin to be mixed in the 1950’s, the sexual demeanor remains consistent with the traditional paradigm.

Sexual Interaction Style: The Asexual Woman. Just as with sexual interaction style themes from the 1940’s, readers in the 50’s continue to be presented with the asexual prescription. As

170
in the 1940’s, themes in the 50’s emphasize that the reader should place her husband’s sexual needs and interests before her own, and that sexual satisfaction is secondary to a happy marriage for women, as the following examples document:

“women must make most of the adjustments in marriage. Best if both virgins, or experienced. If a woman has sex before marriage, she is more likely to achieve orgasm in marriage, but more likely to divorce...but true goal of marriage is marital success, not orgasms for women.” (LHJ, 1956)

“sex should be enjoyed...but a good wife works on pleasing her husband.” (Mlle, 1956)

“...you should accept that the way a husband makes up after a fight is with sex...be more concerned with his desires than your own.” (LHJ, 1953)

“Do frigid women make good mothers? The answer is “yes,” and they are happy people who have reasonably good sex lives...a man will leave a marriage if the sex is not satisfactory, but a woman won’t because she married to establish a home and have children, whose welfare becomes the prime business of her life.” (LHJ, 1953)

Further reinforcing an asexual interaction style, themes in the 1950’s equate sex and love. This theme maintains that women are incapable of separating sex from love and, thus, are more vulnerable in sexual relationships that are not based in marriage. While the equating of sex and love does not appear in the asexual interaction style themes of the 1940’s, it appears in all asexual scripts thereafter.

This sexual interaction style message also appears in work scripts. While these scripts also continue to emphasize “appropriate” appearance and demeanor at work, for the first time, themes prescribing a sexual interaction style appear in the work scripts.

Situational Grooming at Work: Return of the Tailored/Mannish Look

The work-grooming themes from the 1920’s and 30’s, which emphasized a well-presented or tailored look, reappear in the 1950’s. Also similarly to the 1920’s and 30’s, work-grooming
scripts in the 1950’s prescribe a look for work that corresponds to the general *grooming* scripts during this period. However, this means that, in addition to the *tailored* look, the *classically feminine* look is also frequently mentioned during this period:

"an easy, graceful look...fitted dresses with low waist to make you look pretty, and curvy." (Mlle, 1956)

"suit for work, dress for date, will see approval in his eyes." (Mlle, 1959)

"heavier makeup at the office." (Mlle, 1959)

Additionally, makeup prescriptions from the 1940’s also continue into the 1950’s. However, other *grooming* categories also emerge during this decade, as body shape, face, and hair appear in these scripts. Like readers in the 1940’s, readers in the 50’s are instructed to wear makeup at work, but whereas the prescription was for “soft” makeup in the 40’s, it is now “heavier” makeup. In addition, readers are instructed to be “slim” so that they can wear the latest fashions that are “slim, but sittable for the office” (Mlle, 1950).

Also, while the transformation of the daytime/evening look is also prescribed in the 1950’s, a new emphasis emerges in the office/after office look during this decade. For the first time, rather than receiving instructions on versatile office clothing, readers are instructed to completely change their look from office to party:

"can transform the office look for evening - baren." (Mlle, 1950)

Thus, there is a transformation in the backstage *work-grooming* prescriptions during the 1950’s. In addition to this transformation, shifts in the themes on demeanor at work also emerge during this decade.

*Situation Performance* at Work: Tensions and Sex at the Office

While *work-grooming* scripts transform the reader’s work appearance, *interaction style*
themes are consistent with the traditional paradigm and with the situation performance themes from the 1940's. Specifically, through the 1940's and 50's the reader is told to allow some, but not all of her feminine side to emerge at the office:

"speech affects whether you get a raise or not...you don't want to have an unlovely voice." (Mlle, 1950)

"I thought men and women could be equal at work, but I have found I can not compete by being aggressive, but by being feminine...being tactful, compliant, dressing well....but still professional." (Mlle, 1950)

In addition to prescriptions for a traditional feminine demeanor in the work theme scripts, a tension emerges in these scripts in the 1950's and this continues through to the 1980's. The tension that emerges in the 1950's presents work as a conflict for women; that is, a conflict between women's "feminine" and "public" selves. Beginning in the 1950's, work-demeanor scripts instruct the reader to be schizophrenic; that is, to be one person in public and someone else in private. Alluding to a tension that exists between a public and a private personality, the periodicals' maintain that women have essentially a private nature and, therefore, women find it difficult to exist in the public world of work because it negates their true feminine side:

"your grandmother would not have wanted to be labeled sexy, and today, you don't want to be labeled ambitious. Now all women have to be ambitious because some are...a job is only one way to experience ambition. Because of the first woman that went to work, we now all have to be as interesting as the career woman and as womanly as the housewife." (Mlle, 1956)

In addition to this tension, sexual activity at work is mentioned for the first time in the 1950's:

"this woman had an affair with a colleague...her husband sees the wife role in a traditional way, but all people in marriage need self expression ...it will take both to restore the marriage after the office romance." (LHJ, 1959)
While certainly the self is emphasized in this script on sex at the office, the overall emphasis is on the dangers that office work poses to marital happiness. However, the message changes in later decades from "other" to "self" focused.

Finally, work scripts in the 1950's combine some prescriptions from the 1930's and 40's, as work is described as an activity that both contributes to and deters from happiness in marriage. Similarly to the 1930's, work is said to contribute to marital happiness in the 1950's because it makes you more "interesting," and it is also believed to be a good way of attracting and meeting men:

"one man advises girls to 'find yourself first and then a man will find you...'
another says 'you need to be interested in something else before you can interest a man... work is a good thing to do because it gives you something to talk with him about at the end of the day." (Mlle, 1953)

While work is said to detract from marital happiness in the 1940's because it forces a woman to have more than one priority - her husband - work in the 50's is associated with career women and single life. Thus, it is perceived to be a sad and unfortunate choice that some women make (Mlle, 1956).

The asexual ideal of the 1940's and 50's continues to be emphasized into the 1960's. However, a new prescription that contradicts this theme also emerges: the sexual woman. This combination of conflated themes increasingly indicates a conflict or tension in these cultural messages that represent the beginnings of a new paradigm of feminine sexuality.

The Rumblings of a New Meaning of Feminine Sexuality:
The "Asexual-Sexual Woman" Twist in the 1960's

The themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1960's represent both a continuation and a departure from those from previous decades. However, while the messages indicate a
shift away from the *traditional* paradigm, they are not distinct from it. Specifically, themes continue to reinforce key messages that represent the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality. Specifically, the traditional meaning of feminine sexuality continues:

- *romantic relationship justifying existence:* a male partner gives meaning to a woman’s life
- *pleasing a male partner with demeanor:* a woman should be family minded

Furthermore, while *grooming* becomes secondary for pleasing a male partner by the 1960’s, the emphasis on *grooming* is still for the purpose of pleasing a man. However, there is a significant shift in the prescriptions for sexual interaction style during this period, as readers are presented with an *asexual-sexual* twist:

- *asexual-sexual twist:* women have a sexual nature, sexual desires, but should restrain themselves for the sake of the family

This emphasis is distinct from the previous four decades and from a *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality, which de-emphasizes a feminine sexual nature. However, the connection between sex and love that first appeared in the 1950’s continues and, consequently, this perhaps negates the *sexual woman* theme. Additionally, while *situation performance* vehicle messages are rare in the work themes of the 1960’s, the *situational grooming* vehicle scripts emphasize a look that is distinctly different from all previous themes. Specifically, while the *sophisticated* look is not new, the *seductress* look is, and I believe this look does not merely represent a new theme in the *traditional* paradigm. Since it only appears in later decades, it implies a distinctly different understanding of women in the workplace. Therefore, like the emergence of the *asexual-sexual* woman, this new look at the workplace, perhaps indicates the beginnings of a divergence from the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality.

175

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Finally, while little mention is made of situation performance at work in the 1960’s, the conflict between “female nature” and the public world of work continues to be stressed in this decade:

* traditional feminine demeanor: feminine nature (i.e., understanding, friendly, warm) conflicts with public-worker self (i.e., professional)

This theme, which began in the 1950’s, emphasizes women’s inability to cope in the paid labor force because it is contradictory to “female nature.” Furthermore, for the first time, the situation performance vehicle messages do not mention the connection between work and the romantic relationship.

While the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1960’s continue to represent the traditional paradigm, some new meanings emerge that appear to challenge this paradigm. Specifically, the beginnings of an emphasis on a feminine sexual nature is an indication of a new paradigm of feminine sexuality. However, scripts that emphasize a feminine sexual nature simultaneously appear with scripts stressing the importance of familial interests and responsibility over self interest, and also with scripts that equate love and sex. Thus, strains or tensions in the meaning of feminine sexuality begin to emerge around this period, as the messages appear to reflect both old and new meanings. In this next section I will present the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1960’s, highlighting the ways in which they continue to both represent the traditional paradigm and reflect the beginnings of a new paradigm of feminine sexuality.

Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship: Be Beautiful

The traditional emphasis on pleasing a man with appearance shifts in the 1960’s to a new
focus on demeanor. This new focus emphasizes being beautiful through the right behavior:

“wife should be family minded and then beautiful...responsive healthy...he comes before anything else in her life...” (LHJ, 1960)

However, while situational grooming vehicle messages do not disappear altogether, the emphasis on grooming category prescriptions (i.e., body, dress, face, and hair) do disappear by the 1960’s. Overall, the focus in this decade is simply “look beautiful.” But, similarly to the 1940’s, the situational grooming vehicle messages in this decade are more look than backstage focused. However, whereas the looks prescribed in the situational grooming scripts of the 1940’s matched the general grooming codes, there is an inconsistency between the general grooming codes and the situational grooming themes in the 1960’s. While the general grooming codes of the 1960’s emphasize the natural and sophisticated look, the trendsetter look is offered to the “housewife” during this period:

“be outrageous in an outlandish maxi.” (LHJ, 1969)

The other looks are equally inconsistent with the general grooming looks that are prescribed during this period, as the romantic and modern look are prescribed:

“for the informality of the housewife...a gypsy look...long flowing skirts...or the roaring 20’s look...or a jumpsuit.” (LHJ, 1969)

However, each of these looks are only mentioned once. Overall, the emphasis in the romantic relationship scripts in the 1960’s is on situation performance.

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship: Continued Emphasis on Family Mindedness

The 1950’s focus on family mindedness continues to represent the core of the feminine sexual ideal in the 1960’s, as does the traditional paradigm emphasis on the importance of the
romantic relationship for giving meaning to a woman’s existence:

“...he comes before anything else in her life...nothing is more important to America right now than preservation of the family.” (LHI, 1960)

Readers in this script are instructed to engage in deep acting; that is, they are requested to reassess their feelings about family life so that they can be happy and, thus, successful mothers and citizens. Coupling is also reinforced during the 1960’s. Similarly to the cautionary tales in the 1950’s, the 60’s spells out the consequences of not being coupled and, thus, reinforces the emphasis placed on romantic relationships in these periodicals:

“...the sexes have become homogenized...women wear the slacks and men do the cooking...the feminists have largely won their battle, but sex and psychological differences persist...and so women are vulnerable in such relationships.” (Mile, 1963)

Unlike the 1950’s, however, the 1960’s represents a return to the situational grooming and situation performance styles of the 1930’s, whereby readers are presented with scripts that combine both vehicles and emphasize being “attractive,” but “practical.” Again, however, no mention of the grooming categories, body, dress, face, hair, appear. Rather, emphasis is placed on a prescription that first emerged in the 1950’s; that is, “family mindedness.” Whereas in the previous four decades the reader was told that her appearance and her demeanor were equally important in getting and keeping a man, by the 1960’s she is told to be, first and foremost, “family minded” and, secondly, “attractive.” Thus, demeanor has become more important than grooming by the 1960’s. Similarly, a new twist in sexual interaction style themes also emerge during this decade.
Sexual Interaction Style: The Asexual-sexual twist. The sexual interaction style prescriptions in the 1960’s represent a continuation of the 1940’s and 50’s emphasis on asexuality and the connection between sex and love:

“...sex is inner for women and outer for men...most men can separate sex and love, but women cannot...women who engage in non-love sex often grow to dislike themselves...sophomore women who discard their virginity often drop out of college...people today are faced with the threat of nuclear war, so postponed satisfaction brings little joy...but if they hurry they may get jaded before their time.” (Mlle, 1963)

Thus, the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality continues into the 1960’s. However, the rumblings of a new paradigm begins to emerge in the 1960’s, as readers are presented with prescriptions that are distinctly “self” rather than “other” focused.” Specifically, whereas themes in previous decades emphasize controlling or even denying a female sexual nature, by the 1960’s there begins to be some acknowledgment of a female sexual nature. However, while women’s sexual desire is acknowledged in these themes, readers are still advised to squelch this “desire” in deference to “community responsibility” - hence the prescription is toward an asexual-sexual twist:

“...it is understandable that women are curious (about sex), but we can use our imaginations too...It is best to be a virgin when you marry because otherwise you will leave your husband with doubts about your fidelity...if you succumbed to desire once, he may think, then you may succumb again. Sexual behavior has an effect on the community, so we must consider this. The modern woman is the cradler of the race and transmitter of its culture. If she is trustworthy, Americans will be trustworthy. (Mlle, 1963)

However, also similarly to the 1940’s and 50’s, readers are advised against being virginal:

“...don’t be virginal either. Mature love making is the blending of ourselves spiritually...sexual promiscuity is destructive.” (Mlle, 1963)

Rather, the reader is advised to gain knowledge through books:

“the increase in information available on sex has meant an
improvement in marriages.” (LHJ, 1960)

Further evidence of a significant shift in the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality also appears in the 1960’s, as contraception and abortion are mentioned for the first time. While information on contraception and abortion do appear, it would be misleading to infer that the prescriptions also favor that “information” on sexual behavior be obtained through experience, since scripts only refer to contraception in the case of rape:

“rape victims can prevent possible conception by taking large ‘morning after’ doses of estrogen birth control pills.” (LHJ, 1969).

Additionally, the context reveals a different emphasis than in later decades:

“Announcing the death of Dr. Robert Douglas Spencer who performed abortions with the full knowledge of the local police and church officials. He began performing abortions after a member of his own family died from a botched abortion. He charged one-tenth the going rate of illegal abortions.” (LHJ, 1969).

Unlike in later decades, however, the emphasis on contraception and abortion is favorable in the 1960’s.

Similarly to the emergence of new sexual interaction style themes, new themes appear in work-grooming scripts during this decade. However, themes from previous decades also continue to appear in the work theme scripts in the 1960’s.

Situational Grooming at Work: Anything Goes

Similarly to previous decades, the 1960’s work-grooming scripts prescribe looks that both reinforce and contradict the general grooming themes from this decade. Unlike previous decades, since many looks are prescribed simultaneously, work-grooming themes in the 1960’s
appear to be at odds with one another. These looks range from the sophisticated, the tailored, to the seductress look.

The sophisticated look, one of the most frequently mentioned looks during this decade, is prescribed in the work scripts:

“...what to wear to move up...class is key...elegance in fabrics...shapliness and class.” (Mlle, 1960)

but, while it is not a prescribed general grooming look, the femme fatale look is also a prescribed look for the office:

“fashion lets you be your own woman anytime...high breasts and a plunging neck line...the femme fatale look at the office.” (Mlle, 1960)

While the backstage preparations of the 1950’s (i.e., body shape, makeup, after office wear) disappear in the 1960’s, they are replaced by a return to the backstage themes of the 1930’s and 40’s; that is, a focus on dress:

“you need a fashion change from college to career.” (Mlle, 1963)

but also there is a return to the 1920’s and 30’s emphasis on being “properly” attired, or tailored, at the office:

“what to wear if you want to move up...class is the key, which means smooth, mobile, not cutesy, no gimmicks...” (Mlle, 1960)

“...women today lead busy lives...you have to organize your time at work . Chicness and practicality should go hand-in-hand...no woman can afford to look impractically dressed (at work). Wear closed toe shoes.” (LHJ, 1960)

As with previous decades, feminine sexuality is not only alluded to through grooming focused scripts, but also through scripts emphasizing a certain work demeanor. While most of the emphasis is on appearance in work scripts in the 1960’s, the tension between the feminine self and worker self that emerged in the 50’s continues into this decade.
**Situation Performance at Work: Tensions Between a Feminine Self and a Worker Self**

Similarly to the 1920’s, work prescriptions in the 1960’s are mainly grooming focused. However, the conflict between the feminine self and the public self that emerged in the 1950’s, continues into the 1960’s:

"...mixing social life with work, a bad combination. You must either be a partier and not a worker, or a worker and not a partier...women do have an alternative choice amidst all the confusion, you can be a housewife." (Mlle, 1966)

This focus in the *interaction style* focused work scripts, therefore, is consistent with the overall *traditional* emphasis in the themes of the 1960’s.

For the most part, themes from the 1960’s continue to represent a *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality. However, some themes from this decade appear to challenge this paradigm. Specifically, the beginnings of an emphasis on a feminine sexual nature is an indication of a new paradigm of feminine sexuality, and this becomes more fully articulated in the messages of the 1970’s.

**Summary and Conclusions:**

**Persistent Messages of Feminine Sexuality**

In this chapter I have documented the messages of feminine sexuality between 1920 and 1969. I have shown that, while the themes do change over time, there is a consistent meaning of feminine sexuality that is communicated across all five decades. This paradigm is represented by an “other” focus orientation, the *traditional* paradigm, whereby readers are presented with messages that emphasize the following:

* romantic relationship justifies existence; told through cautionary tales and criticisms combined; and cautionary tales that appear alone
* pleasing a male partner with appearance
* pleasing a male partner with demeanor (domestically skilled, receptive, yielding)
* sexual interaction style that emphasizes a virgin, or asexual demeanor
* traditional feminine demeanor at work, such as friendliness, helpfulness, understanding
* “other” focused orientation on the effects of work on marriage

While the themes within this paradigm do change over the decades, the one constant across all fifty years is the “other” focused orientation of the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality.

In an attempt to capture the shifts in the themes across each decade, I have attached labels to each decade. Since prescriptions for demeanor in the 1920’s call for “mystery” and sexual “innocence,” I have summed the messages in this decade as the era of the mysterious virgin. In addition, the grooming vehicle prescriptions for the 1920’s and 30’s emphasize a tailored/mannish look in both the romantic relationship and at work. I have summed the themes from the 1930’s as motherly and virginal. During this decade, readers are told to be “motherly” towards their husbands, and to be not only sexually innocent, but also disinterested. In the 1930’s readers are also told to present this traditional feminine demeanor at work; that is, to be motherly or nurturing, friendly, and warm at the office.

Themes in the 1940’s represent a clear departure from previous decades. I have characterized this shift as the emergence of the asexual woman because the prescribed sexual interaction style stresses sexual indifference, control on the part of the reader. In addition to being sexually indifferent, the reader is also expected to be receptive and interesting to her partner, and to be “freshly” groomed in the romantic relationship and “well presented” at work. Finally, themes in the 1940’s emphasize that the reader cultivate both a feminine and a professional self at work.
Themes in the 1950’s, which do not represent a significant departure from those in the 40’s, have been summed as *family minded and asexual*. During this decade, readers are encouraged to focus on crafting a family minded demeanor and, similarly to themes from the 40’s, to be sexually indifferent. *Grooming* vehicle themes during this decade stress a “natural,” but “well made-up” look in the romantic relationship and a *tailored/mannish* look for work. A tension emerges in the work scripts during this decade between the feminine self and the worker self.

A second significant shift in the themes occurs in the 1960’s. Themes in this decade might be summed as the *asexual/sexual woman* twist. Indicating a shift in the paradigm of feminine sexuality, themes in this decade paradoxically emphasize both sexual indifference and sexual interest. In addition, emphasis is placed on demeanor rather than *grooming* in the 1960’s, as appearance takes a back seat to family mindedness in the pursuit of a romantic partner. However, appearance at work continues to be important in the 1960’s. But, for the first time, a range of “looks” are prescribed, including the *tailored/mannish* and the *femme fatale* looks. Finally, the tension that emerged in work scripts in the 1950’s continues to appear in the themes of feminine sexuality into the 60’s.

While the themes do shift over the decades, with some decades representing greater change than others (40’s and 60’s), the messages within each decade continue to reinforce the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality. In fact, the *traditional* paradigm continues to appear throughout the next three decades. However, while messages in the next three decades continue to reflect some of the central features of the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality, messages beginning in the 1970’s clearly represent a significant departure from the
traditional paradigm. In the next chapter I will discuss both the emergence of this new paradigm of feminine sexuality and the continuation of the traditional paradigm.
CHAPTER VII

EMERGENT THEMES AND PARADIGMS
OF FEMININE SEXUALITY: PART II

Introduction

In chapter 6 I document the themes of feminine sexuality that appear between the 1920's and 60's. In that chapter it was revealed that, while the themes do change over time, there is a perennial meaning of feminine sexuality that spans all five decades. In this chapter I will document the emergence of a new paradigm of feminine sexuality. However, as I will show, rather than replacing the traditional paradigm, this new meaning of feminine sexuality appears in conjunction with the old. Thus, since it appears across all eight decades, the traditional paradigm appears to capture a truly perennial meaning of the feminine sexual ideal.

The Modern Paradigm of Feminine Sexuality. Beginning in the 1960's, the messages of feminine sexuality appear to burst out of the boundaries of the traditional paradigm, and a new meaning of the feminine sexual ideal emerges. This new meaning represents a shift from an “other-focused” to a “self-focused” paradigm, or a shift from a traditional to a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality. However, while there are rumblings of this shift in the messages of the 1960’s, the emergence of this new paradigm is not fully realized until the 1970’s. However, since they appear in conjunction with one another throughout the next three decades, the meanings of feminine sexuality from the 1970’s on are contentious, straddling the

1 The themes shift somewhat in every decade, but there are two significant transformations in the themes that occur in the 1940’s and then again in the 1960’s. See chapter 7 for a discussion of these shifts.

186
traditional-modern ideal.

In this chapter I will discuss both the emergence of the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality and the shifting themes within it. Furthermore, I will also document the continued presence of the traditional paradigm over these next three decades.

**The Traditional and Modern Paradigmatic Themes of Feminine Sexuality:**

*Situation Grooming and Situation Performance Vehicle Themes from the 1970's to the 1990's*

Table 7.1 documents the shifts in the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality between 1970 and 1996. By the 1970’s, there is a transformation in themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the romantic relationship scripts that constitutes a paradigm shift. This transformation represents a shift from an emphasis on the romantic relationship as justifying a woman’s existence to a new emphasis on it improving her existence. Furthermore, as Table 7.2 documents, rather than the cautionary tales and the combination of cautionary tales and critical scripts that appeared in the five previous decades, beginning in the 1970’s, these scripts appear separately. Additionally, although cautionary tales continue to appear, for the first time the romantic relationship is criticized. In addition to the new emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship contributing to a woman’s existence, messages in the 1970’s also stress crafting an appearance and demeanor for the “self.” Finally, also for the first time, the romantic relationship scripts in the 1970’s emphasize sexual interest and activity. However, while critical and cautionary tale scripts appear in both the themes of the traditional and the modern paradigms, critical scripts of the sexual interaction style appear for the first time. Therefore, while prescriptions for the virginal and asexual woman are never criticized, themes
Table 7.1  Situational Grooming and Situation Performance Vehicle Themes from 1970 to 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECADE</th>
<th>THEME</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Romance Improves</td>
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<td>Appearance</td>
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<td>Demeanor</td>
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<td>Sexual Interaction</td>
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<td>Masculine/Feminine</td>
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<td>Effects of</td>
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<td>Existence</td>
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<td>for self &amp; him</td>
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<td>for self &amp; him</td>
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<td>Style</td>
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<td>demeanor at work</td>
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<td>work on marr</td>
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<td>70's</td>
<td>don't need a man,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>beauty via</td>
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<td>confident, happy,</td>
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<td>sexual</td>
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<td>deters&amp;contributes:</td>
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<td>more interesting;</td>
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<td>role reversal</td>
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<td>(cautionary tales,</td>
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<td>criticisms)</td>
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<td>80's</td>
<td>don't need a man,</td>
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<td>feminine self;</td>
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<td>conflict for women</td>
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<td>(cautionary tales alone,</td>
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<td>&amp; combined with</td>
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<td>&amp; criticisms alone</td>
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<td>90's</td>
<td>not necessary for</td>
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<td>slender,</td>
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<td>confident, open, self</td>
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<td>sexual</td>
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<td>deters: keeps him</td>
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<td>faithful, required</td>
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<td>for fulfillment;</td>
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<td>sex at office</td>
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Table 7.2 Cautionary Tales and Criticisms: The Modern Paradigm of Feminine Sexuality

<table>
<thead>
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<th>MODERN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction Style in the Romantic Relationship:</strong></td>
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<td>romance improves existence</td>
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<tr>
<td>please self with appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td>please self with demeanor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(includes: independent, assertive, confident)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cautionary Tales and Criticisms combined</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cautionary Tales</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Criticisms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction Style at work:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional masculine demeanor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(includes: confident, ambitious, assertive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effects of work on marriage</td>
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<tr>
<td>(&quot;self&quot; focused)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Image:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
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<tr>
<td>love and sex separated</td>
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<td>pro sex education and information</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Criticisms</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
emphasizing sexual exploration begin to be criticized in the 1970's.

Work scripts also reveal a shift by the 1970's, as a traditional masculine demeanor is prescribed for the office. However, the work theme scripts persistently combine both the traditional feminine and the traditional masculine demeanor and, thus, they do not constitute a fully modern paradigm. I will now document the emergent themes of feminine sexuality as they appear in the 1970's through the 1990's, highlighting their connection with both the modern and the traditional paradigms of feminine sexuality.

**Emergence of the “Self-Actualizing” Woman of the 1970’s**

As Table 7.2 reveals, the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1970’s shift significantly from previous decades. In the 1970’s the “self” focused, or modern paradigm emerges and the self actualizing woman is prescribed. This new meaning of feminine sexuality emphasizes the importance of the romantic relationship for improving rather than justifying a woman’s existence:

* romantic relationship improves existence: marriage should come later, after some time on own

Overall, readers are instructed to please the “self,” rather than a male partner. This emphasis on pleasing the self also appears in the sexual interaction style scripts, with a new emphasis on sexual exploration:

* sexual woman: lesbian and bisexual interaction styles; contraception advice; sexual performance advice

Also in the 1970’s, criticisms of the romantic relationship appear alone for the first time. However, while transformations in the messages during this decade constitute a paradigm shift,
messages in the romantic relationship scripts from the 1970’s represent a conflict, as both the

traditional and modern paradigms of feminine sexuality appear alongside one another:

* pleasing the self and a male partner with appearance: appearance to
make yourself and a male partner feel good; dressing the way a male
partner wants you to dress

* pleasing the self and a male partner with demeanor: taking care of own
needs and desires and being who you want to be; complimenting a male
partner, being receptive, and having domestic skills

Despite the new emphasis on pleasing the self, the traditional meaning of feminine sexuality
continues to appear, as readers are advised to create an appearance and demeanor to “his”
liking. Additionally, while a fully modern sexual interaction style is prescribed in the 1970’s,
for the first time critical scripts appear in the sexual interaction style scripts. This straddling of
the traditional-modern ideal also appears in the work theme scripts.

While work scripts also represent a significant shift in theme, they also straddle the modern-
traditional ideal. Specifically, both paradigms of feminine sexuality appear in scripts on the
effects of work on marriage:

* effect of work on marriage - other & self focused: contributes to marriage
by making you more interesting (“other” focused) and deters from
marital happiness by causing problems created by reversed gender roles
(“self” focused)

Similarly, prescriptions for demeanor at work also incorporate both the traditional and modern
paradigm. While traditional masculine demeanor is prescribed for the first time, the traditional
paradigm continues to be prescribed:

* traditional feminine demeanor - sexual: conflict between feminine nature (now
a sexual self) and public-worker self (now fully traditional masculine demeanor)

However, there are some differences between the themes of this period and earlier decades.
Specifically, traditional feminine demeanor themes shift from emphasizing caring,
understanding, and warmth, to emphasizing "sensualness," and "sexiness" at the office. Additionally, this new traditional feminine demeanor is combined with what might be thought of as a traditionally masculine demeanor, as readers are instructed to be "aggressive," "assertive," "confident," and "professional" at work. Thus, while the traditional meaning of feminine sexuality pervades the messages throughout this decade, there are some key differences between the themes of this period and those from earlier decades. Similarly to the 1940's and 50's, the reader is instructed to introduce this feminine self (i.e., her sensual self) to her public self (i.e., a traditionally masculine demeanor) at the office. However, unlike the 1940's and 50's, messages are contentious during the 70's, as readers are simultaneously told to conceal this sexual, sensual feminine nature at the office. Thus, while the structure of the message is essentially the same in the work theme scripts from the 1940's to the 1970's, the meanings are significantly transformed by the 1970's.

In this section, I will discuss these shifts in the messages of feminine sexuality in the work and romantic relationship theme scripts, highlighting the ways in which they straddle the modern-traditional ideal.

Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship: Contentious Messages, "Self-" and "Other-Oriented" Meanings of Feminine Sexuality

Situational grooming scripts in the 1970's undergo great change, as prescriptions for achieving beauty shift from a traditional, or "other" focus, to a modern, or "self" focus. The "secret to great looks" in the relationship scripts emphasizes not makeup, as in the 1950's, or hair styling, as in the 1930's, 40's, and 50's, or appropriate dress, as in the 20's through the
50’s, rather emphasis is on demeanor, or on achieving “beauty” through the appropriate attitude:

“...every woman is desirable and glamorous if she believes it. If you look after yourself and look your best, you will be happier...the secret to looking great is being happy.” (LHI, 1976)

Thus, beauty is achieved through being “happy,” “taking care of the self,” in short, through “self actualization.” However, the prescriptions for how to achieve “great looks” and, thus, keep your partner in the 1970’s are contentious, since some scripts continue to emphasize backstage preparations and exclusively traditional paradigmatic themes:

“...you should be soft and feminine (for him)...dress how he likes you to dress.” (LHI, 1973)

In addition to the appearance of both the traditional and modern meanings of feminine sexuality, these paradigms are also sometimes combined. Thus, messages in some scripts straddle the traditional-modern ideal. These scripts simultaneously emphasize both pleasing a male partner (i.e., the traditional paradigm) and pleasing the self (i.e., the modern paradigm):

“lose weight and see how much your husband likes the change...more importantly you will too.” (Mile, 1973)

This straddling of the traditional-modern ideal continues in the grooming vehicle messages in the backstage prescriptions for achieving the ideal appearance. Backstage prescriptions combine both a traditional (“other” focused) and a modern (“self” focused) meaning and, thus, grooming the body, dress, face, and hair is for the purpose of both the self and a male partner. One example of this would be the continued emphasis on body shape. This theme continues to document those prescriptions of the 1950’s that emphasize reducing diets and “healthy” eating. However, whereas body shape was important for “keeping” a man in the previous five decades,
by the 1970's it is for the purpose of suiting both the reader and her partner. Thus, while a
more "self-focused" orientation does emerge during this decade, the self-actualizing woman is
not the only prescription of the feminine sexual ideal.

Similarly to these situational grooming scripts, situation performance scripts also straddle
the traditional-modern ideal. While some are exclusively modern or traditional, for the most
part, both the traditional and the modern meanings of feminine sexuality are simultaneously
prescribed in these scripts.

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship: Ambivalently Modern

While the modern paradigm is also reflected in situation performance scripts in the 1970's,
readers continue to be presented with a traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality. Since
situation performance vehicle scripts emphasize the "other" on the one hand and the "self" on
the other, they reveal what appears to be an ambivalently modern meaning of feminine
sexuality. However, some demeanor prescriptions continue to straddle the traditional-modern
ideal, as readers are encouraged to both please the self and a male partner. Additionally, while
traditional demeanor themes continue to pervade scripts in the 1970's, new themes that are
consistent with a modern paradigm emerge during this decade:

"sexy is more than the dictates of media and society...some people who are
attractive don't seem it. They do all the right things, but still don't seem
attractive. What attracts (men) is a combination of life experiences with
family, friends...(people) with universal sex appeal are confident, open, warm,
self accepting, vital, spontaneous...so you can enhance your sex appeal by
by working on it." (LHJ, 1976)

As with most situation performance scripts, readers continue to be instructed in emotion
management. In this case, readers are required to engage in deep acting; that is, to "work on"
achieving a sense of confidence, warmth, and self acceptance so that they can enhance their “sex appeal.” However, in addition to the new prescriptions that recommend “confidence,” “honesty” and “self acceptance, prescriptions from previous decades, such as receptivity and domestic skills, also continue to appear. In addition, “sexiness” and “flirting” are also prescribed for the first time in the 1970’s:

“flirt with men, even if you are married...it makes you feel feminine.” (LHJ, 1973)

While the traditional continues to be reflected in the romantic relationship scripts, the emergence of the modern paradigm is also clearly apparent in the shift in emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship. While the romantic relationship continues to be central to her identity, the modern paradigm emphasizes the importance of this relationship for improving rather than justifying a woman’s existence:

“...you shouldn’t get married until well after college and after you have had a life on your own...marriage has changed and so have we...become your own person first, then marry.” (Mlle, 1973)

“...you need friends for a complete life...I am critical of those who say that their husband’s come before their friends...your husband is part of your life, not your whole life.” (Mlle, 1976)

Within these scripts, criticisms of the romantic relationship and cautionary tales continue to appear alongside one another. However, similarly to previous decades, the romantic relationship is still emphasized as important to a woman’s identity:

“...these women all have careers and they are all alone.” (Mlle, 1973)

“...women want a liberated man...perhaps we’re having a rough time finding one because we’re not sure what makes a liberated woman. We think only we are capable of running home...quick to criticize if it is not done our way...my friend is equal with her husband in salary, household chores, but she wants to be superwoman...liberation means a blurring of roles and identities and, as a consequence, men are feeling threatened because women are making them feel inadequate. Men are either not
masculine enough or they are male chauvinist pigs... It is a no win situation for men...and if women continue to emasculate men, then they will withdraw more and more from intimacy and we will be left with 'palship' instead of passion...men are willing to change, but they don’t know what women want.” (LHJ, 1979)

For the most part, romantic relationship scripts from this decade present an image that is ambivalently modern - one moment criticizing marriage and romantic relationships as stifling, and the next moment cautioning women against the dangers of remaining single:

“with all the new liberation going on marriage has become seen as a negative institution...some things your mother told you about getting a husband are true...as unliberated as it sounds, your market value decreases once you reach early middle.” (Mlle, 1970)

“the 50’s relationship was a fad not a human need.” (Mlle, 1979)

Thus, similarly to the 1920’s, 40’s and 50’s, the messages are contentious during this decade, with cautionary tales warning readers against the dangers of single life appear alongside scripts that criticize marriage. Thus, the importance of coupling is reinforced again in the 1970’s.

While romantic relationship scripts do indicate a shift toward a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality, for the most part, the messages are contentious, with themes straddling the traditional-modern ideal:

“...sophisticated woman of the world is in...a woman should be soft and feminine she should compliment her man, not compete with him. Don’t bother your husband with your problems raising the children, his job is much harder. Dress the way he likes...” (LHJ, 1973)

“...not feminine to swear...it turns men off...” (LHJ, 1979)

Thus, while at first it appears that a change in the prescriptions of appearance and demeanor occurs in the 1970’s - from “please him with your appearance” to “be confident...warm...open” to achieve attractiveness - the changes indicate strains only. Rather than exclusively modern, situation performance scripts, like situational grooming scripts, straddle the traditional-
modern ideal. However, prescriptions for sexual interaction style emphasize a distinctly modern orientation.

**Sexual Interaction Style: The Sexual Woman.** Consistent with the modern paradigm, there is a shift in the prescribed sexual interaction style in the 1970’s, from the asexual 40’s and 50’s, to the asexual-sexual twist of the 60’s, to an emphasis on the sexual woman in the 70’s.

Similarly to the 1940’s, the 70’s are a rejection of the previous sexual interaction style prescriptions. The 1970’s focus on sexual experience and this is consistent with the modern demeanor that is prescribed in the romantic relationship scripts:

“this couple’s troubles are sexual...she waited until marriage to have sex and now they think this is the reason they are having difficulties.” (LHJ, 1976)

The prescriptions for sexual exploration also encompass more than just heterosexual experience:²

“death of “till death us do part” has led to serial monogamy...since we are having more sex as a result, why not enjoy it with both sexes? Women say their bisexuality can be traced to feminism...learned to love women not compete with them...can’t smash patriarchy by participating in it.” (Mlle, 1973)

In addition, scripts in the 1970’s mark the first time that sex outside of marriage is mentioned. However, the 1970’s also offers a number of cautionary tales that describe the consequences of this increased sexual experience and exploration:

“adultery is beautiful, but complete permissiveness will destroy passion...there is no mystery anymore.” (Mlle, 1970)

“with all the new liberation going on marriage has become seen as a negative institution. But we think it’s a damned sensible one. Shacking-up is not such a great deal for women after all. Some things your mother told you

²While alternatives to heterosexuality that are presented in the 1970’s and 90’s are “positive,” they are also presented as oddities. For example, the cite from the 1970’s appears to encourage the exploration of sexuality, it also includes a psychoanalysis of “alternative” sexualities; one of these psychoanalytic approaches maintains that lesbianism and bisexual activity are pathological sexual interaction styles.
about getting a husband are true...as unliberated as it sounds, your market value decreases once you reach early middle age. A guy not married to you might move on...He doesn’t have built in obsolescence, but you do...when he realizes he can still get the swinging young stuff...right on sisters, but keep your eye on the road.” (Mlle, 1970)

These cautionary tales essentially amount to criticisms of the new sexual woman, and they appear only in the 1970’s and 80’s.

Contraception, which was first mentioned in the 1960’s, now becomes associated less with family planning in marriage and more with sexual exploration:

“...your hair might be damaged by the pill, and from that end of summer romance...” (Mlle, 1970)

In addition, the emphasis on the readers sexual nature is further prescribed through scripts that offer instructions on sexual techniques that focus on increasing the readers sexual arousal and pleasure during sexual activity. Combined, this focus on sexual experimentation, contraception, and sexual pleasure epitomize the sexual woman theme and are consistent with the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality.

While sexual interaction style scripts reflect a new meaning of feminine sexuality, the traditional continues to be represented in the work scripts of the 1970’s. While, similarly to messages in the 1960’s, work-grooming vehicle scripts emphasize a plethora of looks for the office, the traditional emphasis on work continues into the 1970’s.

**Situational Grooming at Work: Anything Still Goes**

The plethora of looks that readers are confronted with in the situational work-grooming scripts are consistent with prescriptions for general grooming during this decade.³ Specifically,

³See chapter 8 for a breakdown of general grooming themes for each decade.

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readers are told to look either sophisticated or modern at work:

"...you want an elegant business look." (Mlle, 1979)
"...the look of success gleams with new elegance and togetherness and this fall's working woman." (Mlle, 1973)

However, the modern look is often combined with the tailored/mannish look, not a general grooming code from this decade:

"How to update your work image to look confident, successful, polished." (LHJ, 1973)

However, while it was prescribed in the 1960's, and appears as a general grooming look during this decade, the seductress look does not appear in the work scripts in the 70's.

In addition to the plethora of looks, work-grooming scripts offering backstage preparation advice continue to increase through the 1970's. Similarly to the 1920's and 50's, readers are instructed on how to achieve an appropriate work look, with an emphasis on being "properly attired:"

"you need to look like a success at work..." (Mlle, 1979)
"...a wardrobe that means business, but still says you." (Mlle, 1979)

In addition to dress, the emphasis on face and body at work that were first mentioned in the 1950's returns again in the 70's:

"...ideas on where to keep beauty supplies at work." (Mlle, 1979)
"...makeup essential on the job." (Mlle, 1973)
"...you need to look your best to get a higher salary...be enthusiastic confident...exercise after work." (LHJ, 1976)

Finally, the office/after office look resurfaces in the 1970's:

"keep your makeup and a change of clothes at work so that you can switch to a nonsensible, nonprofessional look." (Mlle, 1979)
Additionally, a new theme emerges in the work-grooming scripts - youthfulness.

"...when you are old and baggy you need to move on to another job."
(LHJ, 1979)

"...if you are between 38 and 42 and you are re-entering the workforce...you need to look your best....cover your wrinkles." (LHJ, 1979)

While these themes do not fit neatly into either a traditional or a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality, work theme scripts on demeanor do. Similarly to grooming and situation performance scripts on the romantic relationship, work scripts on demeanor straddle the traditional-modern ideal.

Situation Performance at Work: The Sexy and Assertive Worker

While work-grooming scripts do not represent either a traditional or a modern focus, prescriptions for demeanor continue to straddle the traditional-modern ideal. Specifically, both a traditional feminine (i.e.,“understanding,” “friendliness”) and a traditional masculine (i.e., “assertive,” “confident”) demeanor are prescribed in the work scripts. Thus, there is a tension in work theme scripts, as readers are told to present both a masculine and a feminine demeanor simultaneously. However, while previous decades emphasize a traditional feminine demeanor (see 1930’s) that is characterized as “caring,” “thoughtful,” and “understanding,” the prescription is transformed in the 1970’s, reflecting a new emphasis on “sexiness,” and “sensualness.” However, this theme still represents an “other” focused style and is, therefore, consistent with the traditional paradigm.

Paradoxically, in some scripts readers are told to be neither too feminine nor too masculine:

"...once women had to be sweet and bland at work, but I think today we can be aggressive and still be feminine." (LHJ, 1976)

"...hair just touching your shoulders is good for work...you need makeup too, but don’t wear heels at work - you want a polished look." (Mlle, 1979)
While in other scripts readers are told to incorporate the traditional feminine with the traditional masculine demeanor; that is, to be “professional,” “confident,” and “assertive” and also “sexy” and “sensual.”

“...you should look upwardly competent, confident and upwardly mobile, but not outwardly so...you want a look that says take me seriously without losing the me part.” (Mlle, 1979)

“...daddies girls are more successful at their careers...but they are also more flirtatious and love the company of men.” (Mlle, 1979)

However, while both demeanors are options, similarly to previous decades, work scripts in the 1970’s emphasize the incompatibility between the traditional feminine demeanor and work:

“women fear career success because they know they can fall back on having a man protect them. Human fulfillment seems to be a contradiction to feminine fulfillment...conflict for women.” (Mlle, 1979)

“perfume at work needs to be different. one scent this fall is gentle and tender for your softer side. another is briskly confident. another is for the woman who is secure and professional in public and sensual and feminine in private.” (Mlle, 1979)

Work demeanor scripts during the 1950’s through the 90’s essentialize the feminine, expecting readers to be schizophrenic; that is, to be one person in public and someone else in private. Alluding to a tension that exists between a worker self and a feminine self, the periodicals’ maintain that women have essentially a feminine, or private nature. Thus, the message is that women find it difficult to exist in the public world of work because it negates their true feminine and, thus, sexual side.

In addition to the continued emphasis on the conflict between the feminine self and the worker self, messages on the effects of work on marriage, which disappeared in the 1960’s, reappear in this decade. Messages in this decade are mixed, with both “other-” and “self-” focused orientations presented simultaneously. These scripts maintain that work both
contributes to marital happiness by making the reader “more interesting,” but it also deters from happiness in marriage:

“a wife’s success at work can often cause marital problems because it signals a reversal of gender roles.” (Mile, 1979)

Therefore, similarly to the 1950’s, the 70’s work scripts emphasize that work makes a woman more interesting to a man and, thus, helps increase marital happiness; that is, the scripts reflect a *traditional*, or “other-focused” orientation. However, while the 1950’s scripts emphasize work as a barrier to marriage, scripts in the 70’s maintain that work can contribute to the deterioration of marital happiness. These scripts emphasize that reversed gender roles often threaten a marriage. However, since the emphasis in these scripts is on how work will affect a woman’s position in a marriage, these scripts are distinctly “self” focused.

Thus, while the themes do shift within each paradigm, the *traditional* paradigm invariably remains as a staple for prescribing feminine sexuality in this decade and in the next two decades. The presence of both the *traditional* and the *modern* paradigm in the scripts from this decade reflect a tension in the messages of feminine sexuality and this tension also continues throughout the next two decades.

Contradictions in the Meanings of Feminine Sexuality: The “Ambivalently Sexual Woman,” the 1980’s

The themes documented in Table 7.2 reveal that, while the *modern* paradigm of feminine sexuality continues to be represented into the 1980’s, the *traditional* paradigm also continues to appear in the messages during this decade. However, the paradigms are particularly confounded in the sexual interaction style scripts during the 1980’s. Messages concerning
sexual interaction style during this decade appear to reflect strains in the meaning of feminine sexuality, since all in one decade the "virgin," the "sexual," and the "asexual" interaction styles are prescribed, and sex and love are equated:

* sexual woman; virgin; asexual; love and sex equated: sexual innocence (i.e., no sexual experience outside of marriage); have as many sexual experiences as you can; women are unable to separate sex and love.

Moreover, when sexual exploration messages do appear, similarly to those messages in the 1970’s, the behavior is often criticized. Thus, unlike prescriptions in the 1970’s, by the 80’s the message is ambivalently sexual.

Similarly, demeanor messages also straddle the traditional-modern ideal, as an emphasis on pleasing both a partner and the self continue to appear into the 1980’s:

* pleasing self and a male partner with demeanor: independent, honest, confident, flirty, sexy

These prescriptions continue to include those themes from the 1970’s; that is, independence, honesty, confidence, and also flirting and sexiness. Moreover, while an emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship for improving rather than justifying a woman’s existence persists:

* romantic relationship improves existence: don’t need a man to have a good and happy life; don’t search for a man to marry cautionary tales and critical scripts are again combined to produce a mixed message in the 1980’s. This combination of cautionary tales and critical scripts reinforces the message that the romantic relationship contributes to a woman’s existence and, thus, the traditional meaning of feminine sexuality is still clearly present in this decade.

This straddling of the traditional-modern ideal also continues in the grooming scripts during this decade:
* pleasing self and a male partner with appearance: makeup exercise

However, while the messages are not significantly transformed between this decade and the 1970’s, the ways in which to achieve the feminine sexual ideal have shifted somewhat by the 1980’s. Specifically, whereas themes in the 1970’s emphasize beauty through a transformation in demeanor, grooming techniques in the 80’s emphasize grooming categories, such as makeup and exercise methods.

Overall, themes about work in the 1980’s are similar to those from the 70’s. Themes concerning the conflict between the “sensual” feminine self and the worker self (i.e., the traditional masculine demeanor) continue into the 1980’s, as does the emphasis on exercise and makeup for an appropriate office look. Furthermore, similarly to messages from the 1940’s, messages in the 80’s that combine the work and romantic relationship theme emphasize how work contributes to the downfall of marriage because they redirect a woman’s attention from her family to her work. Thus, these messages represent a return to the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality. Finally, messages on sexual activity at work reemerge during the 1980’s, and these represent the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality. These themes are “self” focused, emphasizing the effects of sexual activity on a woman’s career, rather than on her family or partner.

Thus, similarly to the 1970’s, messages in the 80’s represent a mixed bag, with both the traditional and modern meanings of feminine sexuality appearing both separately and together:

* traditional feminine demeanor - other & self focused: conflict between feminine nature (i.e., sexual self) and public-worker self (i.e., “aggressive,” “confident,” “professional” self); sexual activity at the office detracts from career opportunities (i.e., self focused)

* effect of work on marriage - other focus: deters from marriage, creates too many conflicts for women

204

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I will now discuss the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1980’s as they appear in both the romantic relationship and the work focused scripts, highlighting when they are stressing a modern versus traditional paradigm.

_Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship: Contentious Grooming Messages_

The straddling of the traditional-modern ideal continues in the situational grooming vehicle messages of the 1980’s. Thus, the messages appear contentious, at one time prescribing a distinctly modern paradigm, and at another a distinctly traditional paradigm.

The _modern_ emphasis on creating an appearance to please oneself continues:

"However men feel about muscles and women being in shape, women find that the self-mastery and energy that flows from being in shape makes them feel sexier and since feeling it and being sexy go together, I think men will learn to look at a finely shaped woman’s bicep with real appreciation.” (Mlle, 1980)

However, while the message at first seems critical, the script ends with an emphasis on expressing sexuality in the hopes that men will “come around” to liking this new expression of “sexiness.” Moreover, the _traditional_ paradigm also appears:

"...men prefer blondes, no taller than 5ft 6 inches, and a B-cup.” (Mlle, 1986)

In addition to these specific backstage prescriptions, others also appear, with an emphasis on exercise for the body appearing in the romantic relationship scripts for the first time. Other backstage preparations from previous decades are also mentioned. For example, makeup as a backstage preparation is consistent with scripts from the 1950’s, with emphasis on makeup as a method for attracting and keeping a partner:

"when your boyfriend spends the night...don’t let him see you without make-up...wear makeup to bed, but to avoid the stale makeup look in the morning.” (Mlle, 1986)
Consistent with those meanings of feminine sexuality from the 1970’s, the emphasis is on both pleasing the self and a partner with appearance. Thus, the traditional-modern ideal continues to be prescribed into 1980’s. Moreover, these contentious messages also appear in the situation performance vehicle scripts.

Situation Performance in the Romantic Relationship: Persistent Tensions

The tensions between a modern and traditional demeanor continue in the interaction style vehicle scripts in the 1980’s, as cautionary tales and critical scripts appear alongside scripts that criticize appear alongside one another:

“the man shortage we have been hearing about is hype...some researchers say the educated woman is doomed to never marry, but this is hype. But if you do want to get married you must lower your standards...marriage isn’t so great anyway...sick of women who are desperate to marry. Look at the divorce statistics! It’s not so great to be married.” (Mlle, 1986)

Like those scripts from the 1970’s, several of these scripts contain messages that emphasize the importance of the romantic relationship for contributing to or improving a woman’s life rather than justifying it. However, similarly to the 1970’s, messages in the 80’s contain many contentious messages, at one moment criticizing the emphasis on romantic relationships (modern paradigm) and the next cautioning women on the dangers of remaining single and, thus, reinforcing the importance of the romantic relationship for constructing the identity of readers (traditional paradigm):

“The independence of being unmarried can lead to problems because couples who live together fight less because they perceive the conflict might lead to problems.” (Mlle, 1986)

Also straddling the traditional-modern ideal, prescriptions for demeanor that encompass both traditional and modern meanings of feminine sexuality continue to appear in the 1980’s.
Thus, prescriptions such as “domestic skills,” “receptivity,” “flirting” and “sexiness” appear alongside themes that emphasize “confidence,” “independence,” “honesty” and “trustworthiness.” Readers in the latter category are informed that not speaking-up, or not voicing a grievance over their displeasure with a relationship may lead to sexual dysfunction, and that “honesty is the best policy” in a relationship “if you want it to last and be meaningful.” However, in addition, readers are also presented with themes that are exclusively traditional, such as the continued emphasis on domestic skills, submission, and being interesting:

“...work on interests outside of the home...take care of yourself so that he will want to be with you.” (LHJ, 1983)

Finally, interaction style vehicle scripts also straddle the traditional-modern ideal, with prescriptions emphasizing both pleasing the self and a male partner with appearance and demeanor. Thus, similarly to the 1970’s, scripts prescribing demeanor and appearance in the 1980’s reveal a tension, with the traditional appearing alongside the modern:

“you should wear sexy things for him if he asks you to...even if you don’t want to.” (LHJ, 1989)

“...she is strong, but this is unattractive in a woman...Motherhood can pull your life together.” (LHJ, 1980)

Overall, since almost all themes straddle the traditional-modern ideal, messages in the 1980’s appear to reveal more ambiguity than those in the 70’s.

Sexual Interaction Style: The Virgin, Asexual and Sexual Woman. The tensions between the traditional and modern paradigms continue to be evident in the sexual interaction style scripts in the 1980’s, since both traditional and modern sexual interaction styles are prescribed.

Similarly to the 1940’s and 70’s, the 1980’s sexual interaction style themes represent a break with previous prescriptions. While the most often mentioned style is for sexual
exploration, prescriptions for sexual interaction in the 1980’s include a complex combination of the virgin, asexual, and sexual themes.

Consistent with the 1920’s prescriptions for sexual interaction style, the reader is advised to be chaste, but not *virginal*:

> “some reasons for being abstinent...some women who have casual sex don’t like themselves...they get thin...nervous.” (Mlle, 1980)

and also to be *asexual*:

> “...men’s thoughts on sex are based on their biology and an instinct to procreate therefore they can separate sex and love...men often see their wives as saintly...as the Madonna. If you are in this marriage, you can make it work by repressing any sexual feelings you might have...discuss sex with him...emphasize that you can both be sexual beings.” (LHJ, 1986)

Similarly to previous decades that prescribed an asexual theme, the prescription in the 1980’s emphasizes both sexual control and also connects sex and love.

In addition to the virgin and asexual theme, messages in the 1980’s continue to emphasize the sexual woman theme that first emerged in the 70’s:

* sex outside of marriage
* contraception as a means to “worry-free” sexual encounters
* advice on sexual techniques to enhance the readers own pleasure

Apart from the disappearance of prescriptions for sexual experiences other than heterosexual, the 1980’s *sexual woman* interaction style is consistent with the prescriptions from the 1970’s. Therefore, similarly to the 1970’s, the 1980’s *sexual woman* interaction style emphasizes sexual knowledge through experience. Unlike the 1940’s-60’s emphasis on acquiring information through books, the prescription for sexual behavior in the 1980’s is exclusively focused on actual experience:
“Some of us are monogamous, and then the novelty wears off...It’s ok to have a cheap fling now and then.” (Mlle, 1983)

“being single is fun...now, however, casual sex is frowned upon...now you are only supposed to have sex when you are in love, but I believe you can be happy in a variety of lifestyles.” (Mlle, 1989)

Similarly to the 1970’s, the 1980’s presents a number of cautionary tale scripts that advise against sexual exploration. Like those scripts from the 1970’s, the messages amount to a criticism of the sexual woman theme. Unlike the scripts from the 1970’s that advise the reader against “casual sex,” however, cautionary tales in the 1980’s incorporate a lesson from the 1950’s and 60’s that equate sex and love. These scripts that equate sex and love are combined with cautionary tales that maintain that women should avoid “casual sex” because they are incapable of separating sex and love and, as a consequence, are more vulnerable in “casual” relationships. Therefore, while the equating of sex and love in the 1950’s and 60’s reinforces the prescribed asexual interaction style of those decades, in the 1980’s the connection between sex and love is presented in the form of cautionary tales that advise readers against “casual sex:”

“...men can separate sex and love...but women have a difficult time doing this.” (LHJ, 1986)

“...it is unpleasant to contemplate the possibility that women have a difficult time having sex without love, but I don’t know any women who have been able to do it.” (Mlle, 1980)

Consistent with the modern paradigm, some of these scripts emphasize the “self,” whereas earlier traditional paradigm decades emphasize the “other.”

“good to fight in a relationship...don’t bottle things up or it won’t last. holding it in will lead to nagging, which may lead to the end of the relationship...never saying “no” or what is on your mind may lead to you having no orgasm.” (Mlle, 1980)
This emphasis on "self" is also consistent with the situation performance vehicle scripts form this decade.

Unlike the 1960's, but similarly to the 70's, the increased attention to contraception and abortion is connected to prescriptions for a sexual interaction style that emphasizes the readers sexual nature. In these scripts, contraception becomes a means to engage in sexual activity without fear of pregnancy or disease.

While emphasis on contraception is favorable, abortion receives a mixed bag of comments in the 1980's:

"abortion has always been a part of women's lives...my grandmother had one in the 1920's. My friend and I 100% support a woman's right to choose...but she said nothing could have prepared her for how physical pregnancy would be...the unmistakable body signals. She says she never could have imagined the reality of the abortion itself...the pain, and the routiness of the doctors and nurses. She imagined that she would feel sorrow and regret over what might have been after the abortion, but she said she felt physically battered, deeply shocked, as if an immense violence had been committed inside of her." (Mlle, 1983)

While there are only two scripts on abortion that appear in the 1980's, both contain mixed messages. On the one hand "supporting" abortion rights, and on the other emphasizing the morality of the issue. The author cited above goes on to say that she supports safe, legal abortion, saying that "those who oppose it should be spending their time promoting birth control so that it wouldn't be necessary." But, nonetheless, her emphasis on the "violence" of abortion attaches a negative connotation to it. The other script encourages moralizing the "choice platform" by denouncing women who use abortion as birth control. Thus, overall, the message on abortion is a mixed one.
Issues of feminine sexuality also emerge in the work-grooming vehicle scripts in the 1980's. Both appearance and demeanor continue to be prescribed in the periodicals, and the themes reflect implicit as well as explicit messages concerning sexuality that are tied to both paradigms.

Situational Grooming at Work: A “Mixed Bag” of Looks

Similarly to the 1970's, work-grooming scripts continue to offer many options for the office look. However, also consistent with previous decades, work-grooming prescriptions only loosely correspond to both the general grooming prescriptions that are outlined in chapter 8, and the two paradigms of feminine sexuality. Since they do not correspond directly to the general grooming prescriptions that are outlined in chapter 8, the messages constitute a “mixed bag” look.

Consistent with the general grooming themes, work-grooming messages in the 1980’s prescribe a tailored/mannish and classically feminine look. The “appropriate” attire at work in the 1980’s also continues to emphasize a sophisticated look, but this is combined with the tailored/mannish look:

“add chic to work look and adds confidence.” (Mlle, 1986)

“look professional at work. (Mlle, 1989)

And prescriptions for the properly attired, tailored/mannish look at work that began in the 1920’s, then resurfaced again in the 50’s and 70’s, continues to be emphasized in the 1980’s:

“the work worthy look...polished...how to achieve on a small salary.” (Mlle, 1986)

This idea of being “properly attired” for work is further reinforced by backstage preparation scripts that emphasize an office/after office look:
“...need attitude adjustment on the weekend after the work week...wear something strong over something supple.” (Mlle, 1989)

“...change wardrobe around after work...add belts, remove your jacket for an after work sexy look.” (Mlle, 1986)

“...warm, rosy glow by day...for night, sophisticated, brighter, more unusual.” (Mlle, 1980)

These scripts first appeared in the 1950’s, and then reappeared in the 1970’s. But, similarly to the 1970’s, they emphasize “sensualness” and “sexiness.”

Other backstage preparations of the 1950’s and 70’s also continue into the 80’s, as face and body shape are emphasized:

“try to avoid the food cart at work so that you don’t ruin your diet.” (Mlle, 1980)

“makeup musts for work (the bare essentials): foundation, powder, lipstick, blush, eyeshadow, mascara....” (Mlle, 1980)

While readers in the work-grooming scripts of the 1950’s are advised to be “slim,” by the 1970’s they are instructed to achieve this ideal through exercise. However, by the 1980’s, the theme is diet and exercise. Additionally, makeup, not mentioned prior to the 1950’s, has become a work “essential” by the 1980’s.

While work-grooming vehicle scripts do not directly correspond to either the traditional or the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality, they do highlight the emphasis on appearance and, thus, reveal an emphasis on feminine sexuality in the work theme scripts. However, situation performance themes do directly correspond to the paradigms of feminine sexuality.

*Situation Performance at Work: Work as Conflict*

Work scripts on situation performance in the 1980’s focus on prescriptions for a feminine demeanor. However, similarly to the romantic relationship theme scripts from this decade,
work themes straddle the *traditional-modern* ideal, with prescriptions for both traditional feminine and masculine demeanor appearing simultaneously. Like those from the 1970’s, work demeanor themes in this decade present work as a conflict for women.

Themes in the 1980’s continue to emphasize the conflict between the feminine self and the traditional masculine self. Essentially, this juxtaposition places the *traditional* paradigm (i.e., the traditional feminine self) against the *modern* paradigm (i.e., the traditional masculine self). While this debate first emerged in the periodicals in the 1950’s, themes in this decade continue to reflect those themes of the 70’s; that is, they emphasize a feminine nature that is “sensual,” and “sexy.” Thus, presentations of women at work continue to focus on sexual metaphors and meanings of the traditional feminine demeanor in the 1980’s. In these scripts, women’s feminine and, thus, sexual self, is continually juxtaposed with the traditional masculine self. Thus, the *traditional* and the *modern* are presented as juxtapositions that present a conflict for women:

> “the new drug users are middle class women... nice girls. Why are they turning to drugs?..hard time switching from their assertive side to their feminine sexual side after work.” (Mile, 1986)

Similarly to the 1970’s, in addition to instructing readers to present either a feminine or a masculine demeanor, or a combination of both, scripts in the 80’s emphasize controlling or containing feminine sexuality in the workplace:

> “...want a perfectly polished work worthy look... you can change your wardrobe around for an after work sexy look.” (Mile, 1986)

Themes emphasizing that women are primarily sexual in nature are the cornerstone of the conflict over women and work in these scripts; but there is a paradox here. Similarly to those
messages in the 1970’s, in the 1980’s the private self is introduced to the public sphere as a buffer between the two worlds:

“traditional womanly virtues can work at the office. If you are an ambitious, nice girl...you say “hello” to workers, and you don’t like firing people...you you need not play the ice queen. It’s okay to be yourself. Let your traditionally womanly virtues like compassion, sensitivity, intuitiveness can work well as you attempt to move up the ladder. Women have acquired enough power to carve out their own image.” (Mile, 1983)

Also similarly to those themes in the 1970’s, the reader in the 1980’s is given several contradictory options for a work self: feminine with the professional concealed, or professional with the feminine concealed:

“traditional feminine virtues can work well at the office.” (Mile, 1983)

“...women have a difficult time switching from their assertive side to their feminine sexual side after work.” (Mile, 1986)

Within each of these, readers are instructed in emotion management techniques and, for the most part, the techniques involve surface acting. Therefore, rather than instruct readers to become “aggressive,” or “friendly” and “understanding,” the themes presented emphasize giving the appearance of “friendliness.” Hence, surface acting is called for.

Unlike messages on the effects of work on marriage in the 1970’s, messages in the 80’s emphasize the negative effects of work on romance. By the 1980’s work is seen to be associated with a host of marital problems, including extra-marital affairs and drug abuse. The former is said to be the consequence of the stress that women experience at work, and the latter is attributed to women working and, hence, denying their feminine (sensual) side. Overall, the themes emphasize that work causes too many conflicts in women’s lives, especially in their relationships. For the most part, these messages are “other” focused and, therefore, reflect the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality:
“men want a gorgeous, stunning wife and her income, but you can’t wear sexy clothes to the office.” (LHJ, 1983)

Finally, not mentioned since the 1950’s, sexual behavior at the office resurfaces in the 1980’s. Beginning in the 1980’s, readers are presented with scripts that warn against the dangers of an office romance, implying that romance is a risk that women must face if they “choose” to work. However, since the emphasis is on the direct effects of such behavior on the reader, the emphasis in the following example reflects a modern focus:

“men require different roles of their employees...the sexpot, wife, mother, daughter, girlfriend (or just the flirt), but you are in real trouble if you begin to perform one of these roles. Sex with the boss will ruin your career.” (Mile, 1980)

Overall, similarly to the 1970’s, messages in the 80’s continue to reflect both the traditional and the modern paradigms of feminine sexuality. While some messages are exclusively modern and others traditional, many of the messages combine both meanings of feminine sexuality. These strains between the traditional and the modern paradigms of feminine sexuality also continue into the 1990’s.

The Third Shift in the Meanings of Feminine Sexuality: The “Modern Woman” of the 1990’s

In this final decade, the messages of feminine sexuality continue to straddle the traditional-modern ideal. However, the themes of feminine sexuality in the 1990’s represent a departure from the two previous decades. Specifically, significant shifts in the themes of feminine sexuality occur in the prescriptions for demeanor and sexual interaction style in this decade.

Overall, while the traditional paradigm continues to appear, the messages of feminine sexuality in the 1990’s are more fully modern. For example, there is an increased emphasis on
the romantic relationship as improving or contributing to a woman’s existence, on pleasing the self with both appearance and a certain demeanor, and on a sexual interaction style that is “self” rather than “other” focused. Thus, a more modern woman emerges in the messages of the 1990’s. But similarly to the 1970’s and 80’s, the traditional meaning of feminine sexuality continues to pervade the messages of this decade. Thus, the messages continue to reveal tensions in the meanings of feminine sexuality, as both a traditional and a modern paradigms are represented into the 1990’s:

**Modern:**
* romantic relationship improves existence: a woman does not need a man to support her or give her life meaning, but it is nice to have a man in your life
* pleasing self with appearance: should nourish the body, take care of it for your own health
* pleasing self with demeanor: only look after him if you want to, if you feel like it, and if he appreciates it; be who you want to be, confidence, and self awareness
* sexual woman: sex is necessary for a woman’s happiness and well-being

**Traditional**
* pleasing a male partner with demeanor: fun
* pleasing a male partner with appearance: pretty

The emphasis on the romantic relationship as contributing to a woman’s existence continues to be reinforced by a combination of cautionary tales and critical scripts in the 1990’s. Additionally, criticisms of the relative importance of the romantic relationship also continue to appear. While situational grooming vehicle messages do not mention makeup in the 1990’s, the emphasis on a slender body and the reducing diet for achieving that body shape also continue to appear in this decade. Finally, while “flirtiness” and “sexiness” disappear as options during the 1990’s, the emphasis on confidence, openness, and self awareness are still prevalent.
themes in the 1990's. However, prescriptions for a new demeanor that fit neither an "other" or a "self" focused orientation emerge during this decade.

Messages on sexual interaction style in the 1990's also depart from those in the 80's. In fact, themes and meanings from the 1990's resemble those of the 70's, as sexual interest/activity, and sex education are prescribed during this period. However, unlike themes in the 1970's and 80's, for the first time, the sexual woman theme goes uncriticized.

Other theme departures from those of the 1980's are found in the work focused scripts during this decade. Specifically, the conflict between the "sensual" self and the worker self that appeared during the 1970's and 80's disappears by the 90's. Furthermore, conversely to previous decades, the emphasis in the situation performance vehicles in the work theme scripts stress sexual activity at the office. In these scripts the reader is instructed to avoid such experiences because they will detract from her career. Given these messages as a whole, the image of feminine sexuality is more modern than traditional in the 1990's. However, similarly to previous decades, messages concerning the effects of work on marriage continue to straddle the traditional-modern ideal into the 1990's.

Finally, work theme scripts also depart from prescriptions from the 1980's, as "self" is emphasized over the "other." However, despite this shift to what appears to be a more fully modern paradigm, the traditional paradigm continues to appear. Thus, as in all other decades, the traditional paradigm remains as a perennial meaning of feminine sexuality. In this next section I will document the themes of feminine sexuality from the 1990's, and will highlight the ways in which they reinforce or depart from the modern and the traditional paradigms.
Situational Grooming in the Romantic Relationship: The Declining Significance of Appearance

Overall, like the 1960’s, the 90’s are critical of the grooming approach to keeping a man. Messages in the 1990’s emphasize that grooming alone is inadequate and that a certain demeanor is the crucial ingredient to both getting and keeping a man:

Q: “I am slim and pretty, but my overweight friend gets all the dates...
A: “men are initially attracted to looks, but nice means more than a hot body in the end to a man...a sense of fun supersedes a sense of style...'perfect’ may intimidate some men.” (Mlle, 1996)

However, grooming continues to be prescribed from both a traditional and modern perspective. Grooming scripts in the romantic relationship continue to reflect a traditional meaning of feminine sexuality, with an emphasis on creating an appearance that will suit a male partner:

“I was worried that I wouldn’t get a boyfriend because I wasn’t pretty enough.”
(LHJ, 1996)

However, since an emphasis on pleasing the self also appears during this decade, the modern paradigm also continues to be reflected in the themes of feminine sexuality in the 1990’s. For example, backstage prescriptions for achieving the “narrow” body, the prescribed body shape during the 1990’s, emphasize exercise and the reducing diet. However, the emphasis is on “self” rather than pleasing another:

“biking for achieving a good (healthy) body.” (Mlle, 1990)
“don’t let food control your life...nourish your body in other ways...exercise.”
(LHJ, 1996)

The 1990’s body shape prescriptions resemble those of the 1940’s. That is, rather than offering advice on how to achieve it, emphasis is placed on the ideal shape; in this case, a “slim, pretty
“Perfect woman is the ditz...she is a little shallow, a bad driver, and vain. Her shallowness speaks to his own boyishness, which may be why intelligent women don’t like them. She is flagrantly feminine...makes other women afraid men won’t like them because they are smart. The fluffball is fun...but this is not a criticism of the modern woman...the fluffball is just more fun to be with.” (Mile, 1990)
Since messages in the 1990’s emphasize demeanor over appearance, emotion management is
called for. In this script readers are encouraged to participate in deep acting; to become more
fun, rather than giving the appearance of being more fun.

Thus, while appearance is evidently important to “getting” a man, it is not the most critical
ingredient. However, with the exception of the 1960’s and the 90’s, readers are instructed
throughout these eight decades that appearance is as important as demeanor. While
appearance is de-emphasized in the 1960’s, this script from the 90’s represents the only other
time over these seventy-six years when demeanor is recast as more important than appearance.

The emphasis on demeanor combines both traditional and modern meanings, with
prescriptions that emphasize pleasing a male partner or pleasing the self:

“some women think they still need to wait on a man...do it only if and when you
want to, and only if it is appreciated.” (Mlle, 1990)

Additionally, the emphasis on the relative importance of the romantic relationship in the 1990’s
also combines both traditional and modern meanings. While the romantic relationship
continues to be important for structuring a woman’s life in the 1990’s, the emphasis centers on
the ways in which romance improves rather than defines or justifies a woman’s existence.
However, messages concerning the importance of the romantic relationship continue unabated
into the 1990’s:

“I used to think singles had all the fun and that you were dead when you were
married, but I found out that’s not true.” (Mlle, 1990)

“...I worried about not getting a husband because of my appearance.” (LHJ, 1996)

Contributing to this tension between the traditional and the modern, both cautionary tales
and critical scripts appear in the messages on the romantic relationship in the 1990’s. The
critical scripts chastise women who “need” to be in a romantic relationship:
"...you can be happy without a man in your life...you shouldn’t have a man take care of you, you should take care of yourself...only you, not a man, can make you happy." (LHJ, 1996)

and these scripts appear alongside cautionary tales that continue to reinforce the importance of the romantic relationship for women. Similarly to the 1980’s, critical and cautionary tale messages appear both together and separately. Thus, contentious messages continue to pervade romantic relationship scripts throughout the 1990’s. Similarly to the 1970’s, however, contentious messages disappear in the sexual interaction style scripts during this decade.

**Sexual Interaction Style: The Sexual Woman.** The modern sexual interaction style that first appeared in the 1970’s reemerges in the 90’s:

"...wanted to save herself for marriage, but she now thinks that is silly because nothing magical happens when you marry." (LHJ, 1990)

"...advice on how to discuss birth control with someone you are about to sleep with...(discuss before you become sexually aroused).” (Mlle, 1990)

“one of the six things that make women happy is a good sex life.” (LHJ, 1993)

Also similarly to the 1970’s, scripts on options other than heterosexuality are affirmed once again in the 90’s:

“I thought I was a lesbian because I liked the look of a girl, and initially it scared me, but once I admitted the attraction the fear was gone.” (LHJ, 1996)

Finally, scripts on contraception and sex techniques continue into the 1990’s, reinforcing the emphasis on self pleasure that began in the 70’s:

“many people don’t like the current options (for contraception). Other countries have the latest technology, but we don’t. RU 486 is controversial in the U.S. and this has prevented it from being made available here...it is free in England and should be here....women need more options...” (Mlle, 1990)
However, cautionary tales that appeared in the 1970’s and 80’s are absent in the 90’s. Thus, sexual interaction style prescriptions appear to be more fully modern in the 1990’s. This “fully modern” message continues in the work scripts in this decade.

_Situational Grooming at Work: Return of the Sophisticated Look_

Backstage preparations at work continue to emphasize the themes of the 1950’s, 70’s, and 80’s; that is, face and body shape:

“...how to dress to look slimmer at work...drink lots of water for good skin and pamper yourself everyday because stress can make you look bad.”

(LHJ, 1996)

However, the previous emphasis on a work and after work look disappear by the 1990’s, as do prescriptions for achieving a “properly attired” or “work worthy” look. The look that is prescribed during this decade is the sophisticated look; the look that is consistent with the general grooming codes during this period. This more fully modern prescription is also present in scripts on demeanor at work. However, work demeanor messages continue to straddle the traditional-modern ideal.

_Situation Performance at Work: “Self-” and “Other-Focused” Messages_

While the prescriptions for work-grooming represent a return to earlier decades, situation performance vehicle scripts in the 1990’s still reflect the contentious messages of the 70’s and 80’s. Despite that the conflict between the feminine self and the worker self disappears in the 1990’s, and that more emphasis is placed on a modern paradigmatic approach to the effects of work on marital happiness, the traditional paradigm continues to pervade work scripts.

Similarly to messages in the 1980’s, work scripts in the 90’s focus on the negative effects of work on marriage:
"...she works, but she used to be a full-time homemaker...her husband is jealous of her new life." (LHJ, 1996)

In the 1990’s, work scripts associate a host of marital problems with women’s work force participation. Overall, the message that work causes too many conflicts in women’s lives, especially in their relationships, continues into the 1990’s:

"stress may be the reason more women are cheating. Women are cheating not because their lives are empty but because they are too full with work and kids. Reduce stress by getting husband to help with housework...have a couple centered rather than child centered relationship...make your marriage more important.” (LHJ, 1993)

However, unlike messages in the 1980’s, work scripts in the 90’s maintain that work may also contribute to marital stability. While scripts in the 1930’s, 50’s, and 70’s maintain that work contributes to marital happiness, by the 1990’s work contributes to marriage in a different way than in previous decades. Whereas previously work was viewed as contributing to marriage because it made a woman more interesting, by the 1990’s work contributes to marital stability based on the fear of reprisal from an “independent woman:"

"women’s equality with men discourages infidelity because men know they can’t get away with infidelity with a modern woman. One man said his first wife was too trusting and traditional, but his second wife would never let him get away with it.” (LHJ, 1996)

However, despite the different themes, the meaning is ultimately the same. That is, since they continue to emphasize the effects of work on relationships, the meaning continues to be “other” focused.

On the other hand, work scripts on sexual behavior at the office reflect a different meaning than in the 1980’s. Whereas the meaning of feminine sexuality in the 1980’s is “other” focused, warning readers that working relationships may become sexual and, as a consequence,
may put marriages in jeopardy, by the 90's the meaning is distinctly modern. Rather than emphasize the effects of sexual behavior at the office on “others,” work scripts in the 1990’s center on the threat that this activity may pose to a successful career:

“I was involved with a married man and I broke it off because it sidetracked my career.” (Mile, 1990)

Thus, similarly to the romantic relationship theme scripts, messages on the effects of sexual behavior at the office are mainly “self” focused in the 1990’s.

Overall, while messages in the 1990’s represent more modern meanings than in previous decades, the traditional paradigm continues to pervade the cultural messages of feminine sexuality into this decade. Thus, since it spans all eight decades, the traditional paradigm might be thought of as a perennial meaning of feminine sexuality in these periodicals.

Summary and Conclusions: Multiple Themes and Perennial Meanings

In this chapter I have documented the themes of feminine sexuality as they appear between 1970 and 1996. In addition to describing these themes, I have documented the emergence of a second meaning of feminine sexuality - the modern paradigm. This paradigm is characterized by the following:

* romantic relationship as improving/contributing to a woman’s existence; told through cautionary tales and criticisms combined; and cautionary tales and criticisms that appear alone
* pleasing the self with appearance
* pleasing the self with demeanor (honest, confident, self aware, happy)
* sexual interaction style that emphasizes sexual experimentation and exploration
* traditional masculine demeanor, such as confidence, aggressiveness, assertiveness
* “self” focused orientation on the effects of work on marriage
While the traditional paradigm is "other" oriented, or focused on others, the modern is focused on "self." However, rather than replacing the traditional, meanings of feminine sexuality between 1970 and 1996 straddle the traditional-modern ideal. Thus, the traditional paradigm still remains as a perennial message of feminine sexuality into the 1990's.

Similarly to the themes within the traditional paradigm, the themes of feminine sexuality also shift within this new paradigm. I have summed those messages from the 1970's as capturing a self actualizing woman, since prescriptions for demeanor emphasize a "self" focus for the first time. However, both traditional and modern meanings appear in grooming and demeanor vehicle scripts and, thus, there is a tension in the messages of the 1970's. Thus, while the "self" focused paradigm emerges, the feminine sexual ideal is, at best, ambivalently self actualizing.

This tension in work and romantic relationship theme scripts persists into the 1980's. However, unlike the decade before or after it, messages in the 1980's are more clearly ambivalent and contentious. Since the traditional and the modern paradigms are combined and presented in myriad ways, messages in the 1980's appear to be in greater flux than those in the preceding or following decade. For example, in the 1980's, readers are presented with a confusing mix of sexual interaction style messages ranging from asexual, the virgin, and the sexual woman. In addition, criticisms of abortion and contraception abound in the 1980's. While the traditional and modern meanings of feminine sexuality also appear in the work and romantic relationship scripts in the 1970's and 90's, they do not appear as abundantly as they do in the 80's. Thus, messages from this decade are characterized as ambivalently sexual.
While themes between the 1970's and 80's do differ, they do not represent a transformation in the meaning of feminine sexuality. However, the messages in the 1990's do represent a clear departure from those in previous decades. While messages continue to straddle the traditional-modern ideal during this decade, the meaning of feminine sexuality in the 1990's is more fully “self” oriented and, thus, the modern girl emerges. New themes on demeanor, such as “fun loving” and a “sense of humor” emerge in the 1990's, while other themes that characterized an “other” oriented paradigm disappear. Specifically, the emphasis on the conflict between traditionally feminine virtues and workforce participation disappear, as does the “other” oriented emphasis on the effects of work on marriage. However, while the cultural messages are transformed in the 1990's, the traditional meanings of feminine sexuality still persist; for example, readers are still instructed to please a male partner with appearance and demeanor. Therefore, just as with the messages from the two previous decades, while the reader is presented with an image of the feminine sexual ideal as a “modern girl,” the message is clearly ambivalent. Hence, the traditional paradigm is a constant in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality.

Both these three minor shifts in themes and the major transformation from a traditional to a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality correspond to patterns in the general grooming themes and grooming categories (body, dress, face, and hair) of feminine sexuality. That is, while the grooming themes and their categories can not be defined as either “other” or “self” focused, they do reflect patterns that loosely correspond to these minor and major shifts in the messages of feminine sexuality.
Since the *grooming* vehicle scripts are communicating a different messages than the *situation performance* and the *situational grooming* vehicle scripts, they are discussed separately from these scripts. However, while I do not advocate viewing these vehicles as separate or isolated messages, the *grooming* vehicle scripts do appear this way in the periodicals and this does make it difficult to place them within the “other” and “self” oriented paradigms of feminine sexuality. Similarly to the themes I have discussed in this chapter, while the *grooming* themes do change over time, some themes are relatively constant over time. In the next chapter I will document the *grooming* themes and the ways in which they correspond to the minor and major shifts in the messages of feminine sexuality that I have discussed in this chapter.
CHAPTER VIII

EMERGENT THEMES AND PARADIGMS OF FEMININE SEXUALITY: PART III

Introduction

In the last chapter I document the emergence of a second paradigm of feminine sexuality; the modern or "self-oriented" paradigm. In addition to documenting the themes and their transformations within this paradigm, I also document the continuing presence of the traditional paradigm; that is, the paradigm that spans all eight decades included in this sample.

In highlighting the themes that appear within these competing paradigms of feminine sexuality, I have focused on appearance and demeanor scripts that are situationalized around either considerations of work or the romantic relationship. However, as I discussed in chapter 6, appearance themes also appear in scripts that focus exclusively on unsituationalized grooming; that is, scripts that are not centered on either work or the romantic relationship, but are general prescriptions for appearance. While these themes only loosely correspond to the transformation from a traditional to a modern paradigm, there are clear patterns in the organization of the grooming themes. As I document in chapter 6, certain themes are more popular in certain periods than in others, such as the girl next door and the virginal looks prior to the 1960's, and the natural and modern looks after this period. However, other themes, such as the sophisticated and tailored/mannish looks, appear perennially.

In this chapter I document the grooming themes that appear over the last seventy-six years.

In doing so, I highlight the ways in which the looks correspond to the paradigms of feminine
sexuality. Furthermore, in documenting the *grooming* themes over the last eight decades, I will show that, despite shifts in the paradigms of feminine sexuality, there is a remarkable constancy in these themes over time.

_Grooming Vehicle Messages Over Eight Decades_

Both the general *grooming* themes and *grooming* categories (i.e., body, dress, face, and hair) loosely correspond to both the major and minor shifts that occur within the situationalized *grooming* and *interaction style* vehicles. However, I emphasize a “loose” correspondence because the themes do not correspond directly to an “other” or “self” focused paradigm, and nor does the major theme shift occur in the 1970’s, as in the situationalized vehicles. Rather, shifts in *grooming* themes occur in the 1940’s, and the 1960’s, with a minor shift also occurring in the 1970’s. Thus, they also loosely correspond to the more minor shifts that were documented in the two previous chapters.

Table 8.1 documents the most frequently mentioned *grooming* themes, and the backstage technique that correspond to them, for each decade. Table 8.2 places these themes within the paradigms of feminine sexuality, revealing a pattern between the *grooming* themes and the paradigms. Some of the most frequently mentioned *grooming* themes span the _traditional-modern_ ideal, such as the _sophisticated_ and the _tailored/mannish_ looks, which appear in almost every decade. However, other looks correspond to the shift from the _traditional_ to the _modern_ paradigm. Specifically, the _classically feminine_ and the _virginal_ looks appear mainly during the early period of the _traditional_ paradigm (i.e., the 1940’s and 50’s), while the _seductress_ and _natural_ looks appear mainly after the 1960’s. On the other hand, the _modern_ look appears almost exclusively in the _modern_ paradigm, with only one mention of this theme.
Table 8.1  Grooming Themes and Categories from 1920 to 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECADE</th>
<th>Grooming Theme</th>
<th>THEMES</th>
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| 1920's | Mannish/Tailored & Sophisticated | Body: slender through “hiding it”  
Dress: well presented by day, frilled by night  
Hair: curled and short |
| 1930's | Mannish/Tailored & Sophisticated | Body: slender through “hiding” and “losing it.” calorie counting  
stretching exercises  
Dress: well presented by day, formal & bustled night  
Face: makeup; soft  
Hair: short, curly; shiny and clean |
| 1940's | Classically Feminine, Virginal & Mannish/Tailored | Body: narrower through “hiding” and “losing it.” calorie counting, stretching exercises  
Dress: tight, accentuate figure  
Face: makeup; fresh-faced look; light makeup  
Hair: short, curly; up for glamour |
| 1950's | Classically Feminine & Mannish/Tailored | Body: curvy through “hiding” and “losing it.” More emphasis on “losing.”  
Calorie counting, reducing diet, and stretching exercises.  
Dress: tight, accentuate figure  
Face: makeup; heavy and light  
Hair: color |
| 1960's | Sophisticated & Natural | Body: not mentioned  
Dress: loose, natural, comfortable, boxy, swingy  
Face: makeup; natural or light; tanned face  
Hair: short |
Table 8.1 Grooming Themes and Categories from 1920 to 1996 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECADE</th>
<th>Grooming Theme</th>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>Grooming Category/Backstage Technique</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970's</td>
<td>Modern, Natural, Seductive, &amp;</td>
<td>Body: voluptuous figure through “losing it.” Reducing diet, impact exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
<td>Dress: combines 1940’s/50’s “tight” with 60’s “comfortable,” “swingy”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Face: makeup; soft or strong</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hair: color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980's</td>
<td>Mannish/Tailored &amp; Seductive</td>
<td>Body: slender and healthy through “losing it.” Reducing diets, impact exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dress: combines 1940’s/50’s “tight” with 60’s “comfortable,” “swingy”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Face: makeup; soft and natural</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hair: long; untamed; wild; controlled, messy look</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990's</td>
<td>Sophisticated &amp; Natural</td>
<td>Body: narrow/waif and healthy through “losing it.” Emphasis on exercise</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Dress: easy, comfortable</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Face: makeup; natural, soft look; or tan</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Hair: controlled, messy look</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TRADITIONAL</td>
<td>MODERN</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grooming:</strong></td>
<td>&lt;--- Mannish/Tailored ---&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;--- Modern ---&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&lt;--- Sophisticated ---&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;--- Seductive ---&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&lt;--- Classically Feminine ---&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;--- body:</td>
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<td>&lt;--- Virginal</td>
<td>&lt;--- slender ---&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Natural</em></td>
<td>healthy ---&gt;</td>
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<td><em>Seductive</em></td>
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<td><strong>body:</strong></td>
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<td>&lt;--- slender ---&gt;</td>
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<td>healthy ---&gt;</td>
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<td>loose, boxy ---&gt;</td>
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<td>&lt;--- frilled, tight</td>
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<td><strong>face:</strong></td>
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<td>&lt;--- short, neat</td>
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<tr>
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<td>untamed, long ---&gt;</td>
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appearing prior to the 1970's. In addition to the grooming themes corresponding to shifts in the paradigms of feminine sexuality, they also correspond to the more minor shifts in prescriptions. For example, grooming themes shifts correspond to shifts that occur in the situationalized vehicles around the 1940's, and again in the 1960's. However, while these changes correspond to more minor shifts in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality that I document in the two previous chapters, the themes do reveal a remarkable constancy, with some themes spanning all eight decades.

Finally, while Table 8.2 also documents that the prescriptions for grooming categories also correspond to shifts in the meanings of feminine sexuality, there is also a constancy in these messages. Specifically, while the body category emphasizes a "healthy" body during modern paradigm decades and a "slender" body during the early traditional paradigm decades (i.e., 1920's through the 1960's), emphasis is placed on weight proportions across all eight decades. While the ideal body shape does shift somewhat over each decade, the "slender" body is prescribed during every decade except the 1950's and 70's, which emphasize a "curvy" body.

Similarly, the dress category reveals very little change, with only three styles prescribed over all eight decades. Specifically, these styles correspond to the "loose" and "comfortable" style, which appears in the modern paradigm decades (1960's-90's), a "formal" style, which appears during the 1920's and 30's and, finally, a "tight...to accentuate the figure" style that appears equally in both the traditional and modern paradigms (1940's-50's, and 1970's-80's). Furthermore, the face category reveals a similar constancy, with prescriptions for makeup appearing in almost every decade. Finally, the hair category appears to correspond with the patterns in the paradigms, with prescriptions for "long" and "untamed" hair appearing only in

233
the 1980’s and 90’s, while “curls” are prescribed in the early traditional paradigm decades. Thus, just as with the general grooming themes, there is a constancy in prescriptions for the grooming categories of body, dress, face, and hair. However, while the themes and their categories remain relatively constant over time, the backstage prescriptions for achieving them are transformed over the decades. I turn now to a documentation of these themes, categories, and backstage prescriptions for achieving the ideal appearance.

The “Tailored/Mannish and “Sophisticated” Look of the 1920’s

As Table 8.1 reveals, the 1920’s look is tailored and sophisticated, a look which spans all eight decades. Table 8.1 also reveals that the grooming categories that appear during this decade are body, dress and hair. Backstage prescriptions for the 1920’s correspond to a pattern that is found only in early traditional paradigm decades.

Grooming Themes: The “Professional” and “Mannish” Look

As Table 8.1 documents, the most frequently appearing grooming theme in the 1920’s is the tailored/mannish look, closely followed by the sophisticated look. These looks are sometimes combined in the 1920’s, but mostly they are presented as separate looks, with the tailored/mannish look highlighting a no-nonsense, professional, and mannish image:

“want to achieve a businesslike neatness.” (LHJ, 1923)
“...be gayer, smarter, businesslike.” (LHJ, 1923)

while the sophisticated look, emphasizing elegance and soignée, is often combined with other looks:

“sophistication, smart, chic, formality is back” (1929)
(sophisticated and tailored/mannish)
“flowing with ruffles...young, dashing, and elegant.”
(sophisticated and romantic)
(LHJ, 1929)

The grooming categories of body, dress, and hair are also a focus of the grooming vehicle scripts in the 1920’s. In these scripts, the body is dissected into parts that include the face, hair, and body shape and this continues throughout all eight decades. In grooming category scripts on the body, dress, and hair, emphasis is on a “slim” body, a “well-presented” dress, and a curly hair style. In addition, within these scripts the reader is presented with backstage techniques for how to achieve these looks.

Backstage Preparations. The backstage techniques for achieving the grooming looks in the 1920’s are found only in the early traditional paradigm decades and center on body, dress, and hair. Readers are advised that their clothing should be well-groomed or sophisticated by day, and bustled and frilled at night. Thus, the body is divided in these scripts into a nighttime and a daytime body, whereby readers are provided with backstage techniques for transforming themselves from a daytime to evening look:

“...not suitable for everyday use, but when going to a party or wanting to feel soignée...lots of curls.” (LHJ, 1929)

In addition, readers are advised that their bodies should be slim, which should be achieved through the “hiding it,” or the corseting or the girdled method:

“hide your figure flaws... flabby arms should be covered with longer sleeves...wear longer dresses if you have heavy calves...special attention should be paid to the corset. It should be fitted...you shouldn’t feel corseted, but supported.” (LHJ, 1926)

“neatness is the new look...new is simple, with interesting colors and lines...but the new look goes with girdles.” (LHJ, 1923)
Finally, backstage technique scripts advise readers on hair preparations, prescribing short, and curly hair that is achieved through wearing nighttime curlers:

"the bob is a little longer...curls go with the new bob."

(LHJ, 1929)

While there is no direct mention of the face, this category is alluded to in backstage preparation scripts. Specifically, it is alluded to through an emphasis on a "youthful" appearance, which, in part, involves the face.

In the 1920's, the tailored/mannish look is "businesslike," "tailored," a "no-nonsense look," but this look undergoes revision by the 1930's. Furthermore, while they are also similar, the grooming categories also undergo revision, as different backstage techniques are proposed in the 1930's.

A New Meaning to the "Tailored" and "Sophisticated" Look: The "Smart" Look of the 1930's

Table 8.1 documents the themes and backstage prescriptions for the grooming vehicle from the 1930's, revealing several similarities between this decade and the 1920's. However, the meanings attached to these themes shift in the 1930's; albeit that the meaning still corresponds to patterns in the early traditional paradigm decades. The tailored/mannish and sophisticated looks, while still prescribed during the 1930's, become less "professional" and "mannish" and more "smart" and "polished." In addition to the different meanings attached to the grooming themes, the backstage prescriptions for achieving those themes also change in the 1930's.

Grooming Themes: The "Smart and Polished" Look

The tailored and sophisticated looks of the 1920's continue in the 1930's. However, while
at first it appears that these two decades are prescribing similar ideals of feminine sexuality, contextualization of the scripts reveals that they are communicating different meanings with the same theme. The "professional" and "mannish" look of the 1920's undergoes drastic revision by the 30's, with a new meaning emphasizing a "smart" and "polished" look. Thus the 1930's well-groomed look is a rejection of the 20's "tailored," "professional," "businesslike" look, with the well-groomed woman of the 1930's being described anew as "smart," "formal," "simple," "neat," as in the following example:

"Simple formality for the evening." (LHJ, 1930)
"...you should be smart, neat, and formal...simple." (LHJ, 1930)

While there is one reference to a mannish look in the 1930's ("look is mannishly feminine." LHJ, 193), the 1920's tailored look is perceived as "mannish" and criticized as a consequence:

"clothes were mannishly tailored, but move away... to show charms." (LHJ, 1930)
"away from the uniform look...more individual look." (LHJ, 1933)

Thus, the meaning of the tailored look has shifted by the 1930's. Additionally, while the sophisticated and tailored/mannish looks are mainly presented as opposing looks in the 1920's, they are mostly combined by the 1930's, as readers receive instruction on how to achieve a sophisticated and tailored look.

Beginning in the 1930's, all four of the grooming categories are addressed in the grooming vehicle scripts - body, dress, face, and hair. Thus, just as with grooming scripts in the 1920's, grooming vehicle scripts continue to carve the body into parts, treating each "part" separately from the other. Similarly to the 1920's, 30's grooming vehicle scripts emphasize a slim body.
However, conversely to the 1920’s, there is a change in the nighttime look in the 1930’s, as the “frills” for the nighttime look disappear. Additionally, the 1930’s departs from the 20’s in that it emphasizes the face for achieving the *grooming* look; the prescription is for a “fresh-faced” look. While hair should still be short and curly in the 1930’s, there is a greater emphasis in this decade upon backstage techniques for achieving this look.

**Backstage Preparations.** Backstage prescriptions in the *grooming* vehicle scripts continue the 20’s emphasis on the corseted body, but add that the “slender” figure may also be achieved through a “healthy diet,” stretching exercises, and “calorie counting.” Thus a new emphasis emerges in the 1930’s; from the 1920’s emphasis on “hiding it” to the combined emphasis on both “losing” and “hiding” it in the 30’s:

> “take care of what you have...stretching exercises and eat a good diet of fruits and vegetables and drink lots of water for a nice figure.” (Mlle, 1939)

> “you should be calorie conscious...you need to get all of your vitamins without getting too many calories.” (LHJ, 1930)

While the 1920’s prescription for “slenderness” continues, backstage techniques prescribe more precise figure proportions by the 30’s. In the 1920’s, readers were simply instructed to be “slender,” but by the 30’s they are instructed to possess certain figure proportions:

> “...small tight waist, high bosom, rounder hips for this fall.” (Mlle, 1939)

Additionally, the emphasis on youthfulness from the 1920’s continues into the 1930’s, as readers are advised to “take care of their body” in the hopes that it will be “preserved” and, therefore, they can remain “youthful.” Also similarly to the 1920’s, readers are instructed to clothe the body so that it is well-presented by day and, again, “bustled” for the evening. However, the evening “frills” that were prescribed in the 1920’s disappear by the 1930’s, as
readers are told that frills detract from an "appearance of self-reliance." However, prescriptions for a daytime and nighttime look continue into the 1930's:

"Simple formality for the evening." (LHJ, 1930)

Conversely to the 1920's, backstage preparation scripts emphasizing the face emerge in the 1930's. The face scripts advise the readers to wear makeup and, similarly to the body scripts, to "take care of your skin so that you can retain a youthful glow later in life." Additionally, readers are instructed that their skin should be "white and soft, with rosy cheeks," and that this can be achieved through stretching exercises and eating "proper" foods.

Finally, while backstage techniques for hair also continue into the 1930's, emphasis is not on a certain look, such as the curly look of the 1920's, but on treatment. During this decade, readers are instructed to wash their hair once a week, and to keep their hair "short," "shiny," and clean.

Despite some differences in backstage prescriptions, themes in the 1930's are more similar than dissimilar to those from the 1920's. What is critically different about these two decades is not the themes, but the meanings of those themes. By the 1940's, however, the themes are dramatically transformed. Readers in the 1940's are presented with both new grooming themes and categories. Additionally, the backstage techniques for achieving these new looks are also transformed by the 1940's.

A shift in Grooming Themes: from "Tailored" and "Sophisticated" to the "Ultimately feminine" Look of the 1940's

As Table 8.1 documents, by the 1940's, there is a definite shift in the grooming themes and the backstage prescriptions for achieving the ideal feminine sexual image, and this corresponds
to the shift in the situationalized messages of feminine sexuality. For the first time, the *tailored* and *sophisticated* looks become less significant than other *grooming* themes:

* from a *tailored, sophisticated* look to a *classically feminine, girl next door* look

Together, the most frequently mentioned looks of the 1940's represent an *ultimately feminine* look, as emphasis is placed on accentuating a woman's "femininity." Unlike the themes that are prescribed in the 1920's and 30's, Table 8.2 documents that these looks correspond to a *traditional* paradigm pattern; that is, they are mainly found prior to the 1970's. In addition to a transformation in the *grooming* themes, the *grooming* categories and prescriptions for how to achieve these looks also shift in the 1940's. However, there are also some constant themes. Specifically, prescriptions for face and hair are identical to those from the 1920's and 30's, the nighttime-daytime look continues to be prescribed, and a "slender" body is also emphasized.

* the nighttime look is glamorous as opposed to the formal and bustled look of the 1920's and 30's.
* for the first time, an all-day look is prescribed.
* dress is for accentuating the figure, rather than being "well-presented."

I will now discuss these changing themes and highlight some constant messages in this decade.

* *Grooming* Themes: "Decorative and Sweet"

The 1940's sees a complete turn around in the themes of feminine sexuality. The themes that are prescribed are those that appear mainly during the early part of the *traditional* paradigm decades: the *classically feminine* and the *girl next door* looks. Together, these themes capture an image of the feminine sexual ideal as decorative and sweet, or as *ultimately*
feminine. However, while other themes are also prescribed, including the popular tailored/mannish look of the 1920's and 30's and the virginal look, these are peripheral looks that do not compare with the popularity of the girl next door and the classically feminine looks of this period. The reader during this period is instructed to be either virginal:

“hats are darling...with a tied bonnet. makes a girl look fragile, fluttery.” (Mlle, 1946)
“wear schoolgirl cuffs on your shirts” (Mlle, 1940)
“...look fresh...put ribbons in your hair (LHJ, 1946)

or classically feminine:

“...makeup makes you look lovelier.” (LHJ, 1946)
“...you should be (piquant) and decorative.” (LHJ, 1949)
“...your look should be soft.” (Mlle, 1946)

or classically feminine combined with the girl next door look:

“...creamy colored skin and shiny curls...” (Mlle, 1940)
“...fresh faced look is in.” (LHJ, 1949)

or the tailored/mannish look:

“be patriotic, buy only what you need. versatile clothes this year suite like a uniform..you will wear it morning until night. The look this fall is feminine.” (Mlle, 1943)

All of the grooming categories, body, dress, face, and hair, also continue to receive attention in the 1940's. Similarly, to the 1930's, prescriptions for the body emphasize “slenderness” in the 40's. But by the 1940's, themes concerning dress emphasize something other than “well-presented.” Rather, dress prescriptions emphasize wearing clothes that compliment and accentuate the “slim figure.” However, as in the 1930's, makeup continues to be prescribed, as does the emphasis on hair styling. What is also critically different between the themes of the 1940’s and the two previous decades is the way the looks are achieved.
Backstage Preparations. Similarly to the 1930's, grooming vehicle scripts in the 40's continue to emphasize the body, face, and hair in their backstage techniques. Additionally, prescriptions for the transformation of appearance from a daytime to nighttime look also continues into the 1940's:

"transform your look to be glamorous in the evening...pull your mane up and put it in a taffeta bow." (Mlle, 1946)

but for the first time there is also mention of an all day look:

"you should be patriotic...buy only what you need and when you need it...buy one jacket that is versatile because you will wear your suit like a uniform, morning 'till midnight, week in and week out." (Mlle, 1943)

Scripts in the 1940's continue to emphasize a "slim" figure and advise that this can be achieved through either corseting or through a reducing diet. However, readers are advised to "get slimmer" for the purposes of saving on corsets during the war period. Similarly to the 1930's, therefore, readers in the 40's are advised to "lose it" rather than "hide it."

"...need to conserve and I am making a special plea to save the lives of corsets. As dresses grow slimmer and trimmer, so must you, dear." (Mlle, 1943)

Also similarly to the 1930's, the techniques for "losing it" in the 40's focus on stretching exercises, ballet and "calorie counting," with most of the emphasis on eating a "proper diet" and stretching regularly. However, similarly to the 1920's and 30's, there is still an emphasis on "hiding it" in the 1940's. Additionally, the ideal body proportions are similar to those from the 1930's, as readers are instructed to achieve "narrow" proportions: "miniature waist, slim hips, slender thighs and supple lines" (LHJ, 1946)
In addition, changes in body shape are connected to changes in dress in the 1940’s, as readers are advised to wear tighter, straighter dresses and skirts that accentuate the figure and, for the first time, to wear heels:

“...casual look is out...now you should be well turned out, not functional clothing, but tailored. Cut to make you feel feminine and appealing...long fitted coats...coats that hang soft, with a torso hugging jacket worn over a long skirt, or a dress that accentuates your figure...elegant, after dark pumps...sweet and darling pumps by day have a smaller heel...nothing is as flattering as a high heeled viz.” (Mlle, 1946)

but dresses should cover the knees:

“don’t wear skirts above the knee...neither women nor men have pretty knees.” (LHJ, 1940)

Backstage techniques for achieving the “youthful” look that is prescribed in the 1920’s and 30’s continues in the 40’s, as “shorter” and curlier hair styles are suggested, with emphasis on softness to give the impression of youth:

“put your hair up so that your curls look soft and young.”
(LHJ, 1946)

And, finally, there is a continued emphasis on makeup in the 1940’s. However, while makeup is suggested, it is recommended that it be softer, or more “natural” because, similarly to the 1930’s, the “fresh-faced” look is “in:”

“a fad that is dying an unwept death is painting another movie stars lips over your own. It was a silly fad, but now it is the fashion to wear your mouth in preference to a celebrities. Build up a thin mouth, but key-down a heavier mouth - make your mouth more gentle.”
(Mlle, 1949)

“a natural, fresh faced look is in...subtler makeup.” (Mlle 1943)
Therefore, while “light” makeup continues to be prescribed as a backstage technique, and “looking young” is emphasized through makeup and slimming techniques, several grooming themes and their backstage techniques do depart from previous prescriptions in the 1940’s.

Similarly, to themes from the 1940’s, themes in the 50’s continue to represent both a departure from and a continuation of past messages. Overall, themes in the 1950’s continue to reflect those from the 40’s. However, the backstage techniques for achieving those looks are transformed somewhat by the 1950’s.

The “Gracefully Decorative and Sweet Woman:”
Grooming Themes in the 1950’s

As revealed in Table 8.1, the themes in the grooming vehicle scripts for the 1950’s do not represent a radical shift in the messages of feminine sexuality. Consistent with themes from the 1940’s, the nighttime look continues unabated in the 1950’s. Furthermore, the emphasis on the nighttime look in the 1950’s is consistent with the prescription from the 40’s. While the prescription is for “glamor” in the 40’s and “bareness” in the 1950’s, the difference between these prescriptions may be minimal, especially when compared with the more dramatic shift from the “formal, frilled” or the “formal, simple” nighttime look of the 1920’s and 30’s.

The emphasis on the classically feminine look remains in the 1950’s. However, like the twists in the meaning of the sophisticated and tailored/mannish look between the 1920’s and 30’s, the classically feminine look is represented somewhat differently by the 50’s. Finally, while the emphasis on “decoration” and “sweetness” continues, “grace” and “charm” are also added to the equation in the 1950’s. However, just as with messages from the 1940’s, Themes in the 50’s continue to reflect some of those prescriptions from the past and, while
some shifts in backstage techniques emerge, the themes remain relatively constant. However, in addition to these slight shifts in the themes, there are some more critical twists in the themes of the 1950’s.

While dress scripts continue to emphasize a slender figure in the 1950’s, scripts from this decade are critical of what is perceived to be the “too narrow physique of yesterday.” In the 1950’s there is an emphasis on “slender *curves,*” and these should be achieved more and more as a result of “losing it” rather than “hiding it.” Furthermore, another twist involves the preparation of the face. While makeup should be worn “light” in the 1940’s, there is a new emphasis on either a “light” or “heavy” makeup as a way to achieve beauty in the 1950’s.

Finally, the treatment of two other themes distinguishes the 1950’s from the three previous decades. First, while readers continue to be advised to keep their hair “looking natural,” “natural” has been transformed by the 1950’s to include hair coloring; and, second, the emphasis on youth of the 1920’s-40’s also disappears from the backstage technique scripts during the 1950’s. However, despite these differences, the messages of the 1950’s are more similar than dissimilar to those of the 1940’s. Overall, the differences that do exist are mainly backstage differences; that is, rather than the themes changing, it is the way in which to achieve the ideal that has changed by the 1950’s.

*Grooming Themes: Pretty, Rosy, and Graceful*

The *classically feminine* look continues in popularity into the 1950’s. Additionally, a runner-up to this look that has appeared in every decade thus far, is the *tailored/mannish* look. However, the *classically feminine* look far outweighs any other *grooming* themes from this decade. Furthermore, this look is different to the “wholesome” and “sweet” look of the 40’s.
While the classically feminine woman of the 50's is still “fresh...pretty...soft...rosy...” she is also an example of “grace...charm...warmth,” and she is also “curvy” and “slim:”

“...be soft and pretty...” (LHJ, 1956)  
“should be pretty, soft, and rosy in the morning.” (Mlle, 1950)  
“makeup adds warm loveliness to your face...more grace.” (Mlle, 1953)  
“...you should look like a woman...curvy.” (Mlle, 1956)  
“show your soft...silhouette...an easy slenderness rather than too narrow is the look.” (LHJ, 1950)

The grooming categories of the 1950’s represent a departure from previous decades. While a slim body is still prescribed, as in the three previous decades, a new emphasis on “curviness” emerges, as the “too narrow” figure of previous decades is criticized. However, prescriptions for dress in the 1950’s continue to mirror those of the 1940’s, as readers are advised to “accentuate the figure.” While prescriptions for face continue to emphasize the importance of makeup, there is a new emphasis on “heavy makeup” in the 1950’s. Finally, while the daytime/nighttime look continues to be prescribed in the grooming vehicle scripts, the new emphasis is on a “barer” nighttime look. Thus, while this category is perennially prescribed, prescriptions for achieving the nighttime look change over the decades; that is, from a formal, frilled look in the 1920’s, to a formal, simple look in the 30’s, and a glamorous look in the 40’s. In addition to these minor shifts in grooming themes, backstage techniques in the 1950’s also reveal some changes from previous decades.

Backstage Preparations. Prescriptions for backstage techniques for achieving the grooming look continue to emphasize the “slender” body, but 1950’s scripts are critical of the “too narrow silhouette” of previous decades, and now instruct readers to “look like a woman -
curvy” (Mlle, 1946). However, this prescription is rare, appearing only once more in the
1970’s. The perennial prescription, on the other hand, is for “slenderness.”

While corseting and girdling are still the prescribed techniques for achieving this look, there
is continued emphasis in the 1950’s on “losing” rather than “hiding it.” While scripts in the
1940’s only allude to how this loss was to be accomplished, scripts in the 1950’s are more
explicit, advising “reducing diets” and exercise:

“today there are machines to lose weight by...” (Mlle, 1956)
“...if you are not slim enough, then you must either diet or get
a girdle.” (Mlle, 1950)
“cutting fat is good for the figure.” (Mlle, 1959)

Whereas in previous decades, exercise meant “stretching,” backstage techniques in the 1950’s
now include the use of machines. However, there is still an emphasis in these scripts on
“good” posture,” “stretching exercises,” and corseting to achieve the “new” slim, curvy body
shape.

Furthermore, backstage body techniques continue to prescribe a transformation of the body
from daytime to evening:

“figures are the fashion today...we are showing more body
so get slimmer...but barer in the pm.” (Mlle, 1950)

and body scripts focused on clothing continue to reflect those prescriptions from the 1940’s,
emphasizing tight clothing, and high heels:

“heels give elegance...and they give you a different stance,
because they throw your weight forward.” (Mlle, 1956)
“clothes for work are narrower slimmer, but curvy...just wide
enough sit in.” (Mlle, 1950)
“slim dress, but sittable.” (Mlle, 1950)
And, finally, hats and short hair, first mentioned in the 1920’s, continue to be mentioned in the 1950’s:

“wear a bowler, tailored with a veil.” (Mlle, 1950)
“...big hats for pretty, spoiled look of pre-WWI days (Mlle, 1956)
“softened...hair is short, parted, with one big curl. This hair is angelic, feline and feminine...gracefulness.” (Mlle, 1956)

However, unlike in previous decades, readers are advised to color their hair in the 1950’s:

“color brown hair to avoid looking mousy. Curls should be soft, natural looking.” (Mlle, 1959)
“natural hair color is in, but dye it to avoid the mousy look.” (Mlle, 1950)

Hair coloring is perceived and presented as “natural,” however, just as the ideal hair style is presented as “natural” in previous decades.

One final similarity with backstage techniques from previous decades concerns the face category. The 1950’s scripts that prescribe backstage preparations for the face continue to emphasize the importance of makeup, but the techniques have changed somewhat since the 1930’s-40’s prescriptions for “light,” “subtle,” “natural” makeup. By the 1950’s, makeup techniques include previous prescriptions for “light makeup,” but they also depart from these prescriptions, advising “heavy makeup:”

“make up can give you brilliant good looks when without it you are just dull passability. cosmetics make any girl prettier.” (Mlle, 1950)
“soft makeup adds warm loveliness to your face...give you more grace.” (Mlle, 1953)
“heavier makeup with feminine, above the knee, dresses.” (Mlle, 1959)

For the most part, grooming themes and backstage techniques in the 1950’s continue to reflect those prescriptions of the 1940’s. Overall, themes in the 1940’s and 50’s represent a
departure from the 1920’s and 30’s. However, despite these departures, I have shown that there is some constancy in the themes over these four decades. Similarly, while the grooming themes are once again transformed in the 1960’s, some constant messages remain.

A Second Shift in Grooming Themes: from “Ultimately Feminine” to the “Natural Woman” of the 1960’s

As Table 8.1 documents, the second major shift in the grooming vehicle scripts occurs in the 1960’s. Just as with the first shift that occurred in the 1940’s, this shift also corresponds to the transformation in the situationalized messages. Since themes from the 1940’s and 50’s virtually disappear from the grooming messages from this period on, the second shift in the grooming themes is particularly significant. Specifically, this shift is characterized as a shift away from the ultimately feminine prescription of the 1940’s and 50’s to a new emphasis on the natural woman. However, one theme from the 1920’s and 30’s reappears - the sophisticated look. Thus, the themes combine the modern and traditional paradigms during this decade.

Similarly, the grooming vehicle scripts from the 1960’s represent a transformation in the backstage prescriptions for achieving the ideal feminine sexual image. Beginning in the 1960’s, not only do grooming themes shift to a natural and sophisticated look, dress prescriptions are significantly transformed as the “boxy,” “loose” dress replaces the “tight...to accentuate the figure” look. Additionally, prescriptions for the face are also significantly transformed as the “tanned” look emerges as an option for the first time in the messages of feminine sexuality.

While shifts in the grooming themes during this decade represent a significant departure from earlier themes, some themes remain constant. While new themes emerge during this
decade, old themes reemerge, as the sophisticated look from the 1920's and 30's is prescribed anew in the 60's. Furthermore, the emphasis on youth and the daytime-nighttime look also remain into the 1960's.

While body shape and face were the grooming categories for achieving youth in previous decades, the body category disappears in the 1960's. The emphasis on youth does not disappear, however. Rather, the grooming category for achieving youth switches from body shape and face to dress in the 1960's. However, perhaps the most important point is that, with the exception of the 1950's, an emphasis on achieving a youthful look appears in every decade. Thus, perhaps the perennial emphasis on youth and its connection with ideas about beauty is more important than the way in which it is achieved. Finally, also reinforcing prescriptions from previous decades, the daytime-nighttime look also continues to appear into the 1960's. Similarly to the emphasis upon youth as a way to achieve beauty, the daytime/nighttime look appears in every decade, but in the 1960's the look mirrors the 1950's emphasis on “bareness.” Thus, since some old themes reemerge and some grooming category messages continue to emphasize themes from the past, cultural messages in the 1960's begin to reveal a perennial message of feminine sexuality.

Grooming Themes: “Sophisticated” and “Natural”

Corresponding to the shift in situational scripts during this decade, grooming themes also shift around this period. However, while the natural look increases in frequency during the 1960's, the sophisticated look, a look that appears in the four previous decades, also continues to be prescribed. These themes are sometimes combined, but mainly they are presented as opposing looks:
“natural is in. add highlights to natural color, rather than changing it.” (Mlle, 1963)

“for elegance (and all should strive for this) wear closed toe shoes, low or high heeled, but elegant and chic.” (LHJ, 1960)

When natural and sophisticated looks are found together within a script, they are almost always combined with other themes, such as in the following example that combines a sophisticated, natural, modern, and seductress look:

“A new sleek, self assertive look for healthy, saucy looking hair.” (LHJ, 1969)

or this example that combines sophisticated, natural, and modern:

“The look is smart, sleek, unfussed, simple, and strong.”
(Mlle, 1960)

In addition to this shift in the general grooming themes, the grooming categories also represent a shift in theme. For the first time, body disappears from the grooming vehicle, as all emphasis becomes focused on dress. Consistent with the general grooming theme and its emphasis on the natural look, prescriptions for dress emphasize “comfort” and “easiness” during this decade. However, messages about face and hair also continue to be prescribed. Similarly to the prescriptions for the “soft,” “light,” and “fresh face” of the 1930’s and 40’s, readers are advised to have a natural look to their faces in the 60’s. Unlike any other decade, readers are informed that the “tanned” look is attractive, although the “pale” face is also still prescribed as an ideal look for the face. Finally, in addition to a shift in the general grooming theme and its categories, there is a shift in the backstage prescriptions for achieving these new looks.
Backstage Preparations. While 1950’s backstage preparations represent a transformation in techniques, the 60’s represents a significant break with previous prescriptions. Beginning in the 1960’s, body scripts focus exclusively on how to dress the body rather than on its shape. However, while body prescriptions disappear in this decade, they appear in every decade hereafter.

Similarly to the 1950’s, the prescriptions for dress represent a transformation in backstage techniques, as readers are instructed to move away from “tight” clothes and “high heels” to “loose” clothing and “clunky” shoes. This overall transformation in dress is captured in one script that maintains that the 1960’s “replaces formality with semiformality.” Furthermore, whereas body shape and face were important for achieving youth in the 1920’s through the 40’s, and beauty in all of the previous decades, dress becomes the critical component for achieving youth and beauty in the 60’s. Therefore, while body shape prescriptions have disappeared, youth and beauty have not. Rather, they are merely prescribed through other types of scripts:

“wool is young looking.” (LHJ, 1960)
“the sport look is flattering, ageless...a bold look.” (LHJ, 1963)
“...a childish, chin-strapped hat for cool fall days.” (Mlle, 1966)

Other similarities, like the continued emphasis on youth, include the continuation of the split between the daytime and evening looks, whereby readers are advised to transform their appearance for the evening:

“shoes should be bare, black and sexy for the evening.” (Mlle, 1963)

Additionally, there is a continued emphasis on backstage techniques for the face for achieving an “attractive” appearance. Similarly to other decades, these scripts continue to emphasize the
importance of make-up for achieving "attractiveness." However, unlike previous decades, prescriptions for the "attractive" face include a return to the "natural," but "made-up" look of the 30's and 40's:

"...suggest you wear makeup so that it looks subtle." (Mlle, 1966)

"subtle...more natural looking eye makeup." (Mlle, 1966)

but also a new theme in face emerges, when, for the first time, a combination of looks are prescribed. These include the "natural," "tanned," or "pale" look:

"use face paks for cleaner, paler skin." (Mlle, 1960)

"...how to stay golden and not pasty pale." (Mlle, 1966)

Finally, prescriptions for hair styling still emphasize the "short" style.

Thus, similarly to the shift in situational vehicles in the 1970's, messages in the 1960's represents a major transformation in themes and backstage techniques for achieving the ideal feminine sexual image through work on appearance. However, while this transformation does not directly correspond to either a traditional or modern paradigm, the timing of the shift might be considered more consistent with the modern meaning of feminine sexuality.

In sum, messages in the 1960's transport readers from the tailored, sophisticated look of the 1920's and 30's, and the classically feminine, girl next door, and virginal look of the 1940's and 50's, to a natural, and sophisticated look. Overall, the messages emphasize a rejection of what they perceive to be the "formal look of the past." While these new themes that emerged in the 1960's continue into the 70's, the old themes also continue to be prescribed.
The Third Shift: Emergence of the “Seductive Woman.”

Grooming Themes in the 1970’s

While situational messages shift significantly shift around this period, the grooming themes of the 1970’s represent a continuation of those themes from the 60’s. However, as Table 8.1 documents, while the sophisticated and natural looks continue to be prescribed, new themes also emerge; those themes are the seductive and modern looks. However, perhaps since it coincides with the emergence of the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality in the situationalized vehicles during this decade, the emergence of the seductive theme does appear to represent a somewhat significant shift in the grooming themes of feminine sexuality.

With the exception of the emergence of the seductive look, the 1970’s represents a return to themes and backstage prescriptions from earlier decades. Specifically, the distinction between the daytime and nighttime look, and its emphasis on “bareness” and “glamour” continues in the 1970’s, while body shape themes represents a return to the 1950’s, with a renewed emphasis on “shapeliness.” Furthermore, dress themes represent both a continuation of those themes from the 1960’s that emphasize “comfort,” and a return to themes of earlier decades. Finally, face and hair scripts continue to emphasize makeup and hair styling, prescriptions that began in the 1920’s and 30’s. Finally, face and hair themes are reminiscent of those from the 1940’s and 50’s, as readers are instructed to apply their makeup for either a “soft” or “strong” effect, and to style their hair to achieve a more youthful appearance. Therefore, unlike the emergence of new themes in the 1940’s and then again in the 1960’s, the 1970’s represents a return to themes of the past. However, some of the backstage techniques for achieving these looks are transformed in the 1970’s. For example, backstage techniques for achieving the 1950’s “curvy” shape are new. Unlike readers in previous decades, readers in the 1970’s are
instructed to achieve the “curvy,” “voluptuous” body exclusively through “reducing diets” and impact exercise. I turn now to a discussion of these new backstage techniques, the continuation of old themes, and the emergence of the new grooming themes of the 1970’s.

Grooming Themes: The “Sexy” Look

The sophisticated look of the previous five decades continues in popularity into the 1970’s, closely followed by two new looks - the seductress and the modern look. While it is not the first time that either of these new looks are mentioned, it is the first time that they appear in such frequent numbers. While various combinations of the 1970’s sophisticated, seductive and modern looks are found within the scripts, all three are only once combined together:

“...new sleek, self assertive look...healthy, saucy hair.” (LHJ, 1973)

However, it is more usual to see various combinations between the three:

“...sleek, with a low plunging neckline.” (Mlle, 1976) (sophisticated and seductive)

“...women with fashion savvy. Pure verve...in slinky high heels.” (Mlle, 1976) (modern and seductive)

“latest fashions are elegant and self confident and these are the attitudes to pick up on to carry the fashion.” (LHJ, 1973) (sophisticated and modern)

Therefore, the main look available in the 1970’s is either a sophisticated-seductive, a modern-seductive, or sophisticated-modern woman; that is, the most frequently appearing look is often a look from the past - the sophisticated look. However, since these themes often appear alone, the most frequently appearing looks also include the sophisticated, seductress, or the modern themes:
"...you want an elegant business look." (Mlle, 1973)

"glamorous glitter and shine for the evening."
(LHJ, 1979)

"short hair, very cool...very self assured." (Mlle, 1976)

Grooming categories in the 1970’s also reveal the constancy of some grooming category messages, with scripts resembling those from previous decades. Once again, body scripts begin to emphasize a “voluptuous,” or “curvy” body shape that is reminiscent of the body scripts from the 1950’s. Also similarly to the 1950’s, grooming vehicle scripts from the 1970’s reject and criticize the perception of a “too narrow,” or “waif like look,” as readers are instructed to achieve a “shapelier,” and “curvier” body:

"...you want a shapelier you." (LHJ, 1970)

"...the poor waif look is out and the sophisticated woman of the world is in..." (LHJ, 1973)

However, since there is an absence of information on body shape in the 1960’s, this recognition and subsequent rejection of the 1960’s body shape as “waif like” is not supported by this data. Nonetheless, this return to a “more voluptuous” figure is reminiscent of the 1950’s emphasis on “curves.”

Dress for the body also incorporates prescriptions from a distinctly traditional paradigm decade - the 1950’s. Readers in both the 1950’s and 70’s are instructed to “accentuate their curves,” and to “look like women.” However, dress prescriptions from the 1960’s continue into the 70’s, as readers are instructed to dress in a “less complicated, less formal style.” Face and hair scripts in the 1970’s also continue to reflect prescriptions from earlier decades, as readers are instructed to wear makeup and to style their hair for a youthful look. Thus, the
messages are essentially the same as those from the 1950’s and 60’s. However, some of the backstage techniques for achieving these looks are transformed in the 1970’s.

**Backstage Preparations.** For the most part, backstage techniques for achieving the *grooming* looks represent a return to prescriptions of the past. For example, the distinction between the daytime versus the nighttime look, with its emphasis on “bareness” and “glamour” that began in the 1940’s, continues in the 1970’s:

> “glamorous glitter and shine for evening, and curve conscious by day.” (LHJ, 1979)

However, while body shape scripts disappear in the 1960’s, there is a resurgence of these messages in the 1970’s. While these themes represent a return to the 1950’s emphasis on “curves,” the backstage techniques for achieving this shape shift by the 1970’s. Conversely to the 1950’s, by the 70’s the emphasis in backstage prescriptions for achieving the “voluptuous” figure is on “losing it” through the reducing diet and impact exercise:

> “...ice cream diet for losing weight...if you want a shapelier you, you also need to do exercises.” (LHJ, 1970)
> “...calisthenics for a better body image.” (Mlle, 1979)

Dress in the 1970’s combines prescriptions from both the 1950’s and 60’s and, thus, both semiformality and formality are prescribed. Readers are advised that the overall look is “less complicated,” “more comfortable,” and “natural,” prescriptions reminiscent of the 60’s. However, readers are also presented with scripts that resemble dress themes from the 1950’s, as they are instructed to wear high heels and to cover themselves so that they are less exposed.

Furthermore, 1970’s backstage technique scripts continue to emphasize the importance of youth. Similarly to the themes of the 1940’s, youth is achieved through *grooming* of the hair in the 70’s. However, whereas in the 1940’s the youthful look for hair was “curly,” by the 70’s it
is achieved through a different hair styling technique; specifically, hair coloring, a prescription first mentioned in the 1950's. Finally, face scripts also resemble some themes from previous decades, as readers are instructed to achieve either a "soft" or "strong" look to their makeup; specifically, this prescription is reminiscent of those from the 1950's, which suggested either "light" or "heavy" makeup.

In sum, since the seductive and modern looks are prescribed for the first time, messages in the 1970's do reveal some shift in grooming themes. However, overall, the themes represent a return to the themes of the past. Similarly to the 1970's, grooming vehicle scripts in the 80's also represent a return to prescriptions from previous decades. Overall, while some new themes and backstage techniques emerge in the 1980's, these shifts do not represent a significant departure from the themes of earlier decades.


As documented in Table 8.1 the grooming vehicle scripts from the 1980's represent a combination of themes from earlier decades and, as a consequence, a plethora of looks are prescribed. As Table 8.1 documents, the 1980's continues to emphasize the seductive and modern looks of the 1970's, the tailored look of the 1920's, the classically feminine look of the 1940's and 50's, and the natural look of the 1960's. Furthermore, prescriptions for attaining the ideal body shape in the 1980's reflect the 70's emphasis on reducing diets and impact exercise. Also similarly to the 1970's, the dress scripts continue to emphasize a look that combines the look of the 50's with that of the 60's. Additionally, the distinction between a daytime and nighttime look also continues into the 1980's, as the "glamorous" theme that
began in the 40's continues to appear in the 80's. Finally, the 1980's also represents a return to the “fresh-faced” look of the 30's and 40's. However, while themes in the 1980's do continue to reflect those from the 70's and earlier decades, they also represent a departure from those themes, with some new looks and backstage preparations emerging during this decade. Specifically, new body and hair themes emerge, and the perennial emphasis on youth disappears:

* hair scripts emphasize both short and, for the first time long hair. Additionally, these scripts emphasize a “messy, but controlled look: an out there look.”

* body scripts stress a “healthy” body, rather than a “slim” (20’s, 30’s, 40’s) or “curvy” (50’s, 70’s) body.

However, while there are some new themes in the 1980’s, this decade does not represent a significant shift in the meanings of feminine sexuality.

**Grooming Themes: Looks of the Past Revisited**

While the *seductress* theme of the 1970’s increases in prominence as the look to possess in the 80’s, the *tailored/mannish* look also reappears in the 1980’s. But while the 1920’s *tailored* look combines a “tailored” and “businesslike” look with *sophistication*, the 80’s version adds a *seductive, natural* or *classically feminine*, but *modern*, touch to the businesslike look. However, while the *tailored* look is combined with each of these themes, and the *natural* and *classically feminine* themes are occasionally combined with one another:

“soften up the classics.” (*tailored* and *classically feminine*) (Mlle, 1980)

“softer, feminine trouser suits...subtle makeup...polished... and healthier hair.” (*natural, classically feminine, and tailored*) (LHJ, 1986)
the seductress theme mostly appears alone:

“at night...pale skin, vivid lips...voluptuous.” (Mlle, 1986)
“be a femme fatale...a red hot glamour girl.” (LHJ, 1989)

the only look that the seductress theme is combined with is the tailored/mannish theme:

“wear a manly tie around your waist or neck...and a man style coat...add a flirty fedora.” (Mlle, 1989)
“...you want a polished, glamorous look with a tiny waist.” (tailored and seductive) (LHJ, 1986)

The 1980’s classically feminine look at first appears similar to that found in the 1940’s. There is an emphasis in these scripts on “softening/softer/soft,” or “prettiness,” but an interpretation of these scripts as epitomizing the girl next door “look” are misleading. When interpretation is disconnected from the combination of themes that accompany them, these classically feminine scripts do appear to be descriptions of the girl next door theme. However, the classically feminine scripts are combined with the tailored/mannish theme and, thus, this adds a new meaning to the classically feminine look. These scripts emphasize “softening” the “masculine look” or the “professional look” and, hence, they do not embody the girl next door look of the 1940’s. The look is not the “fresh faced girl” of the 1940’s, but the “tailored,” “sophisticated,” “self assured woman” of the 80’s. However, this is softened with lots of “feminine touches:”

“men’s wear look is in, but avoid looking too masculine...tailored and sophisticated with heels for a feminine touch.” (LHJ, 1983)
“work image...confident, successful, polished. Soften features with a shorter cut and the right makeup.” (LHJ, 1980)

The grooming category prescriptions also represent a continuation of and a departure from prescriptions from the 1970’s and earlier decades. Rather than emphasize either a “slender” or
a "curvy" body shape, messages in the 1980's stress a "healthy" body. This emphasis is new in
the body scripts, since all previous prescriptions stress "thinness," or "voluptuousness."
Additionally, hair scripts represent a departure from previous decades, as the "controlled,
messy" look takes precedence over the "neat" and "styled" look of previous decades.
However, dress scripts in the 1980's reflect those messages from the 1970's, as readers are
instructed to wear clothing that is "comfortable," "loose," "boxy" or "tight" for the purpose of
"accentuating the figure;" that is, like prescriptions from the 1970's, themes in the 80's
continue to resemble dress themes of the 1950's and 60's. Finally, unlike the 1970's, the 80's
face scripts represent a return to the "fresh-faced" look of the 1930's and 40's, as readers are
instructed to apply makeup to give the appearance of a "natural," or "non made-up" look. For
those themes that represent a return to earlier decades, the 80's does not offer any new
backstage prescriptions.

Backstage Preparations. With only a few exceptions, backstage techniques for grooming in
the 1980's represent a continuation of the themes that began in the 50's. "Reducing diets" and
exercise, first mentioned in the 1950's and then again in the 70's, continue to be emphasized as
necessary for achieving the ideal figure in the 1980's:

"...not just dieting to look good...staying healthy is whole
way of life..exercise and eat right." (Mlle, 1980)

"low calorie easy meals for busy weeknights" (LHJ, 1986)
as does the emphasis on the distinction between a daytime and nighttime look, which continues
to emphasize the "glamorous" look which began in the 1940's:

"change hair after work...shed corporate control look
for a glamorous look." (Mlle, 1989)
But by the 1980's, exercise and “reducing diets” become reinterpreted. Rather than dieting to lose weight, a new emphasis on “healthy lifestyles” appears during this decade and continues through to the 1990’s.

Similarly to the 1970’s, backstage techniques for dress continue, as a combination of the 50’s and 60’s prescriptions reappear in the 80’s:

“...feminine means it is tight, but softer.” (LHJ, 1986)
“add feminine features to the menswear look...heels.” (LHJ, 1983)
“...clothes are bolder...more fitted for a feminine look” (Mlle, 1986)
“menswear look is in...loose...easy.” (LHJ, 1983)
“...one look is ‘boy crazy’...if you are sporty and like menswear...loose...” (LHJ, 1989)

Backstage techniques in the 1980’s also depart from the prescriptions of the 50’s and 70’s. While hair coloring and short hair are still prescribed, long hair and a “controlled, but messy...out there look” also becomes an option for the first time during the 1980’s. Additionally, while face scripts continue to prescribe makeup as a necessary technique for achieving “attractiveness,” scripts in the 1980’s also represent a return to the 1930’s and 40’s, when prescriptions were for a “fresh faced” look:

“...want soft, pretty shimmer to your face.” (Mlle, 1983)
“subtle, softer makeup” (LHJ, 1986)
“...you want a glowing skin.” (Mlle, 1983)
“...want a warm, rosy glow.” (Mlle, 1980)
“no nonsense makeup to look sparkling clean and healthy.” (Mlle, 1986)
A final distinction between the backstage technique scripts during this and previous decades is the 1980’s lack of emphasis on youth. While the 1950’s did not mention the importance of youth and how to achieve it, every decade prior to the 1980’s has prescribed a youthful appearance.

Continuing to represent a theme that emerged in the 1970’s, grooming prescriptions in the 80’s continues to emphasize the seductive and modern looks. However, while messages in the 1980’s also depart from the themes and backstage prescriptions of the 1970’s in some areas, essentially messages in this decade represents a continuation of those themes of the past. Just as with the 1970’s and 80’s, messages in the 90’s also incorporate messages from previous decades.

**The Return of the “Natural Woman:”**

**Grooming Messages in the 1990’s**

As documented in Table 8.1, the themes from the 1990’s represent a continuation of those messages and the backstage prescriptions from the 80’s. However, similarly to the 1970’s and 80’s, themes in the 90’s also incorporate prescriptions from earlier decades; in this case, it is the themes from the 1960’s that reappear in the 90’s.

Overall, themes in the 1990’s represent a continuation of themes from the 80’s and a return to those of the 60’s. Even the body is dressed in the “easy,” and “comfortable” fashions of the 1960’s, a prescription that is also present in the 80’s. Furthermore, since face themes emphasize a sun-tanned glow and a fresh, but well-made up face, themes on face in the 1990’s continue to reflect those from the 1960’s and 80’s. Similarly, grooming category themes of hair and body also resemble messages from the 80’s, with an emphasis on an
“untamed...controlled messy” look for hair and on “health” for the body. However, although they do emphasize impact exercise, messages in the 1990’s do not stress the reducing diet that is so prevalent in body grooming scripts in the 70’s and 80’s. I will now highlight this combination of messages from the 1980’s and 60’s that marks the grooming themes in this decade.

**Grooming Themes: A Twist on the “Natural Woman” Look of the 1960’s**

The 1990’s is a return to the 60’s look as, once again, the natural and the sophisticated looks reappear as important themes of feminine sexuality. Similarly to the 60’s, these looks are sometimes combined to achieve a sophisticated, but natural look:

“new hair is chic, but loose and casual.” (Mlle, 1996)

“sophisticated, but also comfortable and casual.” (LHJ, 1990)

but, more often, they appear as opposing looks, or are combined with other looks.

On its own, the natural look is also similar to the 60’s look of naturalness:

“...look is casual...” (Mlle, 1990)

“...hair should be shiny...natural.” (Mlle, 1993)

But the natural look is combined with different themes than in the 60’s, giving it a somewhat different meaning in the 90’s. Specifically, the natural look of the 90’s is often combined with the classically feminine look:

“...sporty look with plenty of social grace.” (Mlle, 1990)

“This falls fashion is wearable...comfortable...fresh and feminine.” (LHJ, 1993)

In other words, the look is often natural and classically feminine, or natural and sophisticated.
The sophisticated look of the 1990’s mirrors that of the 60’s by emphasizing a combination of looks - the sophisticated-natural look, sophisticated-seductive look or a sophisticated-modern look. For example, readers are told that they can be “chic” and “glamorous” at the same time (if they wear gold), or that they can be “elegant,” “racy,” and “passionate” (in red lipstick) all at once. While the seductive look is combined with the sophisticated look, this look all but disappears in the 1990’s, with fewer scripts prescribing the seductive theme than when it was first offered as a look in the 1940’s.

The grooming categories in the 1990’s represent a combination of prescriptions from the 1960’s and the 80’s. Specifically, while the body scripts emphasize the “waif” look, a look not mentioned since the 1940’s, the dress scripts emphasize the 60’s theme on “comfort,” “naturalness,” and “easiness.” Additionally, the makeup look of the 1960’s and 80’s continues into the 90’s. Finally, the 1980’s hair scripts that emphasized a “controlled, messy” look also continue into the 1990’s. Additionally, with only a few exceptions, the ways in which to achieve these looks are similar to the backstage techniques offered in the 1980’s.

Backstage Preparations. Grooming themes in the 1990’s incorporate backstage techniques from several previous decades. While there is a continuation of the emphasis on a “slim” body shape, by the 1990’s the “waif” look is the ideal figure to achieve. And, while scripts from the 1970’s reject the “waif” look of the 1960’s, scripts from the 1990’s reject what is perceive to be the “sophisticated, voluptuous” look of the “80’s.” Conversely, themes in the 90’s embrace the “androgynous waif look.” The “sophisticated,” “voluptuous” look of the 80’s is criticized in the 90’s as “impossible to achieve,” while the waif look is presented as a “healthy” and “natural” look:
“the waif look has taken the center stage from the super models...these women were too plastic and perfect looking...all silicone, gloss, and glamour...the look now is a child like figure...a natural, real body.” (Mlle, 1993)

However, this backlash against the 1980’s “sophisticated,” and “voluptuous” look is not supported by my data from the 80’s. Nonetheless, the look of the 1990’s is “narrow,” which is similar to the 1930’s and 40’s look. This was the look that was criticized in the 1950’s, when the “curvy” look became the ideal body shape. However, messages in the 1990’s do retain the 80’s an emphasis on a “healthy” body, which is achieved through exercise:

“exercise to be strong, slim, and flexible...to be health.” (Mlle, 1996)

Backstage techniques for achieving this body shape focus exclusively on exercise, rather than on the “reducing diet,” which was first mentioned in the 1950’s. The 1990’s also retains the “controlled, messy” hair look of the 80’s:

“natural looking makeup goes with loose, easy clothes and uncomplicated hairstyles...even untidy, but controlled messy.” (Mlle, 1993)

While dress prescriptions in the 1970’s and 80’s incorporated both the 40’s and 60’s look, dress in the 90’s represents a return to an exclusively 60’s emphasis on “easiness,” “naturalness,” and “comfortableness:”

“fashion has either been to trendy or too silly, but this fall it is wearable, comfortable, flattering and for everyone...” (LHI, 1993)

Similarly to the 1980’s, the “natural,” “fresh-faced” look of the 1930’s continues into the 90’s:

“cheeks are rosy this year...makeup should be transparent.” (Mlle, 1993)

However, unlike the 1980’s, prescriptions in the 90’s also represent a return to the 60’s emphasis on the “growing summer tan:”

“...keep the glow of a summer tan.” (Mlle, 1990)
Finally, unlike any decade before it, the 1990’s backstage technique scripts do not emphasize a distinction between a daytime and a nighttime look. Furthermore, similarly to messages in the 1950’s and 80’s, neither do they mention the importance of youth in backstage preparations for achieving “beauty.”

Despite some differences, similarly to the two previous decades, messages in the 1990’s represent a return to themes from previous decades. However, it is the themes from the 1960’s that are most represented in the messages of this decade.

Summary and Conclusions:
The Relative Constancy of Grooming Choices Over Eight Decades

In this chapter I document the grooming themes and their categories that appear over the last seventy-six years. I show that, despite shifts in grooming themes, categories, and backstage prescriptions, there is a remarkable constancy to grooming messages over time, with some themes appearing perennially.

While these messages only loosely correspond to the transformation from a traditional to a modern paradigm, there are clear patterns in the organization of the grooming themes. As I document in this chapter, certain themes are more popular in certain periods than in others, such as the girl next door and the virginal looks prior to the 1960’s, and the natural and modern looks after this period. Moreover, these shifts coincide with the minor and major shifts in the situationalized messages of feminine sexuality.

Since they do not correspond to an “other” or “self” focused paradigm, grooming themes only loosely correspond to the paradigm shifts that were documented in chapters 6 and 7. For example, the classically feminine and virginal looks appear frequently in the traditional
paradigm decades, whereas the seductive, modern, and natural looks appear more frequently after the 1960's. Other looks, such as the tailored/mannish and the sophisticated looks, appear frequently in almost all decades. However, while certain looks appear in higher frequency in certain decades than in others, almost all the themes appear in every decade. Therefore, whether the looks appear perennially or mainly in one period or another, seems less interesting than the fact that the choices are limited, with only ten looks appearing over all eight decades. However, the grooming themes do reflect similar shifts to those that occurred in the situationalized vehicle scripts that I document in the two previous chapters. Specifically, shifts in grooming themes occur in the 1940's, 60's and then again in the 70's. Thus, they loosely correspond to the more minor shifts in the messages of feminine sexuality that I document in chapters 6 and 7.

Finally, Table 8.2 also situates the grooming categories within the context of the paradigms, revealing that certain themes loosely correspond to certain paradigms of feminine sexuality. Specifically, the “healthy” body appears only during modern paradigm decades, such as the 1980’s and 90’s, whereas the “slender” body is prescribed mainly during the earlier traditional paradigm decades. The curvy body is prescribed only twice, once during an early traditional paradigm decade (the 1950’s) and then again at the beginning of the modern paradigm decades (the 1970’s). Similarly, dress scripts also loosely correspond to the paradigms of feminine sexuality, with the “loose, comfortable” style appearing mainly in the modern paradigm decades (1960’s-90’s). On the other hand, the “formal” style is prescribed only during the traditional paradigm oriented 1920’s and 30’s. Finally, the “tight...to accentuate the figure” style appears equally in decades that fit both the traditional and a modern paradigms of
feminine sexuality (1940’s-50’s, and 1970’s-80’s). Hair scripts also reveal a pattern that corresponds to the paradigms of feminine sexuality. Specifically, “long” and “untamed” hair is prescribed in the 1980’s and 90’s only; that is, only during modern paradigm decades. On the other hand, “curls” are prescribed in early traditional paradigm decades. Finally, while face scripts reveal very little pattern with the paradigms of feminine sexuality, with “light” or “natural” and “heavy” makeup prescribed within both paradigms, the “tanned” look emerges mainly in the modern paradigm decades (1960’s-90’s). However, just as with the grooming themes, documentation of the grooming categories reveals a remarkable constancy in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality, with only a handful of prescriptions appearing between 1920 and 1996. In sum, I have shown in this chapter that, while backstage techniques for achieving the looks do change over time, prescriptions for grooming themes and their categories change very little over these eight decades.

In addition to this handful of prescriptions, another constant in the grooming themes is the emphasis on dissecting the body into arbitrary parts, such as body, dress, face, and hair. This carving of the body into parts might be linked to another separation that I discussed at the beginning of this chapter; that is, the separation between scripts on general grooming and situational grooming and situation performance. Thus, in addition to the constant messages that I have discussed in chapters 6 through 8, the treatment of the body within the grooming vehicle scripts and the separation of these messages from situationalized grooming and demeanor uncovers a perennial metaphor of feminine sexuality. Spanning all eight decades, this metaphor indicates a view of self and body as fragmented or separate. I turn now to a discussion of this perennial message in chapter 9.
CHAPTER IX

METAPHORS OF FEMININE SEXUALITY:
THE FRAGMENTATION AND ALIENATION OF
BODY AND SELF

Introduction

In chapters 6 through 8, I document the paradigms of feminine sexuality and the themes that compose them. In these chapters, I reveal that, while themes do change over time, there is a striking constancy to the meaning of feminine sexuality. While documentation of the situationalized *grooming* and demeanor messages in chapters 6 and 7 reveals a shift to a *modern* paradigm that occurs around the 1970’s, the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality remains as a theme into the present decade. While documentation of the unsituationalized *grooming* themes in chapter 8 reveals that prescriptions for how to look do not directly correspond to these paradigm shifts, perennial messages were also uncovered in these themes. In addition to this constancy in the themes of feminine sexuality, two overarching metaphors emerge within these message carriers of feminine sexuality. These perennial metaphors, which cut across both the *traditional* and the *modern* paradigms of feminine sexuality, center on an issue of *separation* or *fragmentation*; that is, the separation of *grooming* from situationalized *grooming* and demeanor scripts and, in the *grooming* scripts, separation of body parts into units.

One metaphor is the continual *construction of selves*, whereby readers are asked to try on different types of looks and personalities. However, at the same time, readers are also
instructed to locate their “essence,” their “true” self, and a look to match. Additionally, readers are instructed to be schizophrenic, to be one type of person by day and another by night.

Connected to this metaphor is another that I refer to as the *fragmentation of selves* metaphor. An emphasis on creating a situationally dependent self and appearance (i.e., the *construction of selves* metaphor) means that the body and self become separated or fragmented from one another in the scripts. Specifically, the body is fragmented from the “self,” and readers are instructed to “find” themselves by dividing the body into parts; that is, in finding the “right” hair style, dress, or makeup to match their personality, or in changing their personality to achieve a certain “look.”

*The Perennial Construction of Selves*

Spanning both paradigms, the *construction of selves* is a perennial metaphor within the messages of feminine sexuality. There are three issues that emerge within this metaphor, as readers are told to create a look and a self: 1. readers are instructed to try on different looks and different personalities; 2. then again, readers are told that they possess a unique self and look, but that these two elude all women and so it is a continual battle to find that look and self that is truly a woman’s own; 3. finally, this “true” self and look present a

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1 The construction of selves metaphor spans the life course, as both the more mature audience in *Ladies Home Journal* and the younger audience in *Mademoiselle* are presented with scripts that prescribe an idea of self and look that are ephemeral and yet essentialized at the same time. However, the specific prescriptions for the looks and the selves are life course dependent, and this is outlined in Appendix E. Similarly to the messages within the *construction of selves* metaphor, the *fragmentation of selves* metaphor also spans the life course, with readers in both LHJ and Mlle receiving instruction on both fragmentation of the self from appearance and the body from itself.
tension for readers, since they are instructed to expose the “true” self and the self that requires backstage techniques and emotion management situationally. Furthermore, this split personality expectation is perennially fueled by the prescription for the ideal self, and this invariably incorporates either the traditional or the modern meanings of feminine sexuality.

The Myriad ways of Looking and Being. To achieve a particular style of impression management through grooming or interaction style, women are instructed to not only craft a “look,” but to develop an “attitude to match it.” There is a perennial theme throughout all of the decades within the grooming and interaction style vehicle scripts that suggests to the audience that they can “try on” different personalities and looks through controlling and manipulating their appearance:

“how you wear a dress can make you dramatic or innocent, or just well groomed...you can be any of these.” (Mlle, 1936)

“men like a simple look in dress...we hate tummies, so you should wear a girdle...you are lucky that you can buy a personality with your clothes.” (LHJ, 1940)

“the different looks this Fall... a 30’s art-deco look can be achieved by wearing long, thin coats...or a chubby fur jacket can be worn for a 40’s influence.” (Mlle, 1966)

“new makeup and hairstyle can reveal a new you...the sexy look...long, untamed curls...the dramatic look...short hair.” (LHJ, 1989)

and control and manipulation of demeanor:

“today sex is enjoyed by women...the good wife pleases her husband...she is womanly, not ambitious...we need to be as interesting as the career woman and as womanly as the house-wife.” (Mlle, 1956)

“it is not feminine to swear, it turns men off...be feminine, romantic.” (LHJ, 1979)
“the latest fashions are elegant and self confident and these are the attitudes to pick up on to carry the fashion.” (LHJ, 1986)

“the fluffball is fun...men love her...she is a little vain and shallow...the modern woman is smart and serious.” (Mlle, 1990)

Readers are told they can look “elegant and demure,” “an engenue,” or a “kitten in a cat’s body,” that the choice is all theirs, and that the choice depends on the mood or demeanor they want to create:

“avoid frills, they are not associated with dignity.” (LHJ, 1926)

“if you want to feel soignée, add curls.” (LHJ, 1929)

“the different moods of wedding clothes...sentimental, demure, or elegant, for whatever mood you want to create.” (Mlle, 1943)

“for polished, professional look, no makeup or heels.” (Mlle, 1979)

“if you feel romantic one day and racy the next you can still look like a lady...you can dress sexy and still look like a lady at work.” (Mlle, 1983)

However, since women are simultaneously told that the choice is not theirs, that each woman has her own look and personality and that she should attempt to understand what that look and personality is and then “make the best of it” and not attempt to deviate from it once it is found, there is also a contradictory message being conveyed here.

Search for the Sincere Self. Many grooming and interaction style texts are devoted to “finding (your) look,” which is presented as a very mysterious, spiritual as well as physical process. The reader is told that every woman has her own essence which “captures” who she really is, and that it is every woman’s responsibility to find that fit between her essence, her self or personality, and her physical self, or appearance:
“the woman who is sophisticated should wear gray...the
woman who is elegant should wear long skirts and she
should show more body.” (LHJ, 1929)

“...her gowns will indicate her new found freedom has
been laid aside and that elegance and grace, and all her
provocative attributes have again resumed.” (LHJ, 1930)

“the Russian woman is the antithesis of the American
woman in her soignée, ever well-made up self.” (LHJ, 1943)

“...women have a housewifely, domestic side...show a
little of this to a man that you are interested in.” (LHJ, 1953)

“the modern woman is independent and career oriented and
her clothes are elegant and simple.” (LHJ, 1976)

If the look and the self do not match, she is instructed to “work on” matching either her
essence with her physical presence, or physical presence with essence:

“...so many different houses of fashion to choose from
today that you can find clothes to fit your personality...
high breasts and a plunging neckline for the femme fatale.”
(Mlle, 1960)

“...red lipstick, nails and cheeks make you feel elegant...
red used to be considered too racy, but now anyone
can wear it...very passionate color and so not for the
beauty lightweights...it signals passion and aggressiveness
and so may make the shy types feel like a dragon lady.”
(Mlle, 1990)

This picture is complicated further by scripts that inform the reader that there are several
different “looks” that are essential to a complete repertoire, or being a “complete woman.”

The Schizophrenic Self. The “complete woman” is instructed to be schizophrenic,
being one type of person at one time, then a different person at another time. These
different types that the reader should be are the sincere or the true self, and the cynical
self, or the self that utilizes backstage techniques and emotion management to achieve the
“right” look and self.
This prescription for schizophrenia is most noticeable in work focused scripts, whereby readers are instructed to possess one type of self and look at the office and yet another for after the office. The *sincere self* is rarely prescribed in work focused scripts. For the most part, the cynical self is presented in these scripts, with the “true” self being contained at work and released after work:

"...one scent this fall is gentle and tender for your softer side...another is for the woman who is secure and professional in public and sensual and feminine in private.” 
(Mlle, 1979)

"How to up-date...image to look confident, successful, polished at work.” (LHJ, 1976)

"...hair should touch shoulders for a work look...for polished look you need makeup, but no heels at work. Keep your makeup and a change of clothes at work so can that you can switch to a nonsensible, nonprofessional look for after work.”
(Mlle, 1979)

"...how to achieve a work worthy look...it should be polished.”
(Mlle, 1976)

"...need an attitude adjustment on the weekend after the work week...wear something strong over something supple - this is sexy. Reveal your softer side.” (Mlle, 1986)

"...the new drug users are middle class women...nice girls. Why do they take drugs?...they have a hard time switching from their assertive side to their feminine sexual side after work.” (LHJ, 1986)

Notice that the emphasis in these scripts is on creating a look or a self to fit the work environment, whereas the after work look and self is presented as “natural,” or sincere.

Furthermore, as documented in chapters 6 through 8, these scripts also prescribe a daytime and a nighttime look and self. However, conversely to the work focused scripts that divide the sincere self and the cynical self, the daytime/nighttime scripts do not address a difference between the day and night self and look. Rather, they prescribe a
transformation between the two. Several of these cites have already been documented in this chapter and in chapters 6 through 8. Thus readers in all decades are instructed to possess an inner or “true” self and an outer or cynical self that is situationally dependent.

In addition to the situational dependence of her appearance and self, the reader is told that the complete woman has a variety of scripts for how to look and be in her repertoire. The complete and, thus, ideal woman is both the “good girl” and the “bad girl,” that is, she embodies the qualities of both the good girl (i.e., “yielding,” “submissive,” “receptive,” “friendly,” “domestic”) and, depending on the decade in which it is defined, she is also the bad girl (“glamorous,” “beautiful,” “fun to be around,” “wild,” “independent,” “sexy”). Occasionally one is heralded over the other, but for the most part both are considered to be essential to a woman’s repertoire. The audience is informed that, while the former will “catch a husband,” only the latter type will be able to keep him. Therefore, a “good wife” needs to be both:

“be the beautiful ideal that he thought he married....
don’t show your temper...bring reality to his eyes slowly.” (Mlle, 1939)

“...the perfect housewife and mother looks like a model...she has a small waist, pretty blonde hair, and a captivating smile...she also sews and this impresses her husband who sees big savings on their budget.” (LHJ, 1953)

“...it is not enough for a wife to be genteel and feminine
...the madonna...she must also be experimental in bed.” (LHJ, 1979)

“The perfect woman is the ditz...she is a little shallow,
vain, fun and flagrantly feminine.” (Mlle, 1990)
Connected to this metaphor of the *construction of selves* is an issue I refer to as "fragmentation," whereby bodies are not only crafted to produce the right "look," but also where they are isolated and disconnected from selves.

**The Fragmentation of Appearance and Self**

The messages about feminine sexuality in these periodicals separate appearance from self. Specifically, categories of the *grooming* vehicle scripts, *body, face, and hair*, more often appear separately from one another. For example, *grooming* categories (i.e., *body, dress, face, and hair*) are discussed as separate parts that require individual control and manipulation in order to achieve the right image of feminine sexuality, as in the following examples:

**body:**
- "good grooming and posture make you prettier." (LHJ, 1950)
- "for beauty after summer...stretching gives you better torso proportions" (Mlle, 1960)

**dress:**
- "silhouette dresses for a glamorous look." (LHJ, 1946)
- "the look is subtle, softer, natural." (Mlle, 1963)

**face:**
- "feminine means softer makeup." (LHJ, 1986)
- "find out what’s wrong with your face and how to make it look right...don’t draw on a false lip-line, but make full lips thinner and thin lips fuller with a lip-pencil (Mlle, 1983)

**hair:**
- "longer bob for increased formality and femininity." (LHJ, 1929)
“for a glamorous look for evening locks should be soft and young.” (Mlle, 1946)

Thus, appearance is fragmented, or carved up into pieces in these scripts. However, grooming vehicles are not only separated from one another, but also from interaction style vehicles, highlighting the alienation of appearance from self in these periodicals. Furthermore, when grooming and interaction style vehicles are combined, far from approximating some connection between the two, the separation between appearance and self is epitomized within these scripts. In such scripts, appearance and self are seen as something that must be molded to achieve the appropriate feminine image:

“...should look competent, confident, and upwardly mobile, but not outwardly...you want a look that says take me seriously without losing the me part.” (Mlle, 1979)

This example highlights the disconnection between appearance and self, maintaining that, while her appearance should exude competence, her behavior should be something other than “competent, confident, and upwardly mobile...serious.” Women in these scripts on work and dress are simultaneously told to “look” one way and “act” another way.

**Alienation from Appearance and Self** The fragmentation of appearance from self is a perennial theme that essentially results in an alienation from oneself. Appearance and self are divided and then alienated from the reader as she is told to “try on” different looks to

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2 The term “fragmentation” is borrowed from Emily Martin, who uses it to refer to the separation of women’s bodily activities from self that emerges as a result of early Western scientization of the body. Martin also uses the term “alienation,” which she has borrowed from Marx’s ideas on the separation of the worker from his/her product of work. I am applying this term similarly to Martin, maintaining that if aspects of the self and body are separated from one another, then the cultural message is that the self and body are not one and the same, but alien and, thus, in perpetual conflict.
transform either her personality or appearance and, thus, her very self. Appearance in these periodicals becomes disembodied for the reader; it is not something that is part of her, but rather something outside of her that can and should be manipulated in order to achieve the appropriate look and self. The disconnection between appearance and self conveys a message that both the body and the self are not only manipulable and controllable, but must be controlled and manipulated in order to achieve the appropriate sexual image, which is accomplished through a sculpting and molding of both appearance and self. There are many examples of this sculpting and molding that divides appearance and self, alienating appearance from self:

"Street clothes are more elegant....no frills because they detract from her appearance of being self reliant and able to take care of herself. This is a distinction she has won not without difficulty and she does not wish to give it up." (LHJ, 1930)

"Use a wig to change who you are...you can become a short haired, sweet blonde." (Mlle, 1990)

These examples highlight how appearance is carved up and then fragmented from self. Appearance, rather than "naturally" achieved, is presented as something to try on, to control and manipulate, to help in transforming both appearance and the self.

**Alienation from self.** Similarly to the *grooming* vehicles, the *interaction style* vehicles carve the self up, telling the reader to be her "true" (i.e., "feminine") self at one moment, to be another self at home, and yet another at work. These different selves are not an amalgam or even a splintering of the core self, but separate and distinct aspects. The self and all its variations is described as in need of not only compartmentalization, but, in some situations, containment. The core self is considered to be virtually uncontrollable, but with
effective impression management and emotion management, this self can be contained and a more appropriate self brought forward.

These variations of self are *situation performance* specific, and are almost always in conflict with one another; for example, one self is called upon to be fully expressed, while another requires containment. While the *grooming* vehicles divide the different parts of the self only to pull it all together again, in the *interaction style* vehicles the self is permanently compartmentalized because the core self can only find true expression through "femininity."

**Summary and Conclusions**

In this chapter I have documented the overarching metaphors in the meanings of feminine sexuality. These metaphors represent my interpretations of some of the perennial messages that I have documented in chapter 6 through 8. One metaphor that spans both periodicals and the *traditional* and the *modern* paradigm of feminine sexuality is what I refer to as the *construction of selves* metaphor, whereby readers are advised to search for the *sincere self* and to present a *cynical self* that is situationally evoked and achieved through impression management. This metaphor is connected to a second overarching metaphor that I refer to as the *fragmentation of selves*, or the separation of appearance and self. The *fragmentation of selves* refers to a separation between the scripts on appearance and self, whereby readers are advised to work separately on molding both, which culminates in an alienation between the two. Thus, in sum, these metaphors emphasize segmenting body parts and isolating body from self in order to achieve the "ideal" sexual image, be it *traditional* or *modern.*

280

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The continuity in the meanings of feminine sexuality that I document in chapters 6 through 8 appear to be further reinforced by these metaphors that span both paradigms of feminine sexuality. That is, in addition to the perennial meanings of feminine sexuality that I document in chapter 6 through 8, the very construction of the messages themselves reveal constant metaphors of feminine sexuality.

The documentation of these messages in chapter 6 through 8, and the interpretations I offer in this chapter for the ways in which the messages are constructed do answer some of the central questions of this study; specifically, we can now discuss and give names to the shifts in themes and meanings of feminine sexuality. Furthermore, based on this documentation of the themes, the meanings of feminine sexuality, and the interpretations of their organization we know that, while the themes do shift, the meanings of feminine sexuality change very little. But this documentation does not answer questions pertaining to the evolution of these messages. Rather, they lead us to more questions - What explains the emergence of the modern paradigm and the more minor shifts in the themes of feminine sexuality? What explains the perennial presence of the traditional paradigm and, as a consequence, the tensions and contradictions that are produced when both paradigms are prescribed simultaneously? One basic sociological paradigm maintains that cultural messages reflect social structural arrangements. Indeed, conventional wisdom would also lead us to believe that cultural messages of the feminine might reflect women's social status. Since the messages in women's popular periodicals are prescribing a behavior that is gendered, it seems plausible to expect that the development and changes in the messages of feminine sexuality might reflect the social structural arrangements that have organized
women's lives over the last seventy-six years. However, in addition to considering social structural arrangements, other events that characterize each decade will also be brought to bear on the interpretation of the messages of feminine sexuality. With this in mind, interpretations for the evolution of these messages now follows in chapter 10.
INTERPRETATION OF THE THEMES AND PARADIGMS
ON FEMININE SEXUALITY

Introduction

As documented in chapters 6 through 9, the themes of feminine sexuality reveal both change and constancy. That is, while the traditional paradigm is a constant, there are also shifts in the meaning of feminine sexuality; specifically, the emergence of the modern paradigm in the 1970’s. In addition, the themes within the two paradigms also shift over time. These more minor shifts in the messages of feminine sexuality occur around the 1940’s, 60’s, and 90’s. This chapter is devoted to explaining the evolution of these paradigms and the themes within them.

Since I have documented both shifts and a striking consistency in the messages of feminine sexuality over time, interpretations for both these transformations are required. In explaining these bifurcated messages, that is, both the constant and shifting messages of feminine sexuality, I will offer interpretations for the three critical issues that are documented in chapters 6 through 8:

* the perennial presence of the traditional paradigm, and the tensions in meanings that emerge in the 1970’s through the 1990’s, as both the traditional and the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality are prescribed

* the transformation from a traditional to a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality

* minor shifts in the meanings of feminine sexuality that occur in the 1940’s, 1960’s and, finally, in the 1990’s
Thus, in this chapter I offer some interpretations for the transformation from a *traditional* to a *modern* paradigm of feminine sexuality. In addition, I also offer interpretations for the constancy of the *traditional* paradigm, and for the tensions that emerge when both paradigms are prescribed within the same decades (i.e., the 1970's through to the 1990's). Finally, I also offer interpretations for the more minor shifts that occur in the 1940’s, 60’s, and 90’s.

**Interpretations for the Themes on Feminine Sexuality**

Social patterns in marriage, divorce, fertility, and work force participation rates in the United States have unarguably transformed the lives of American women. While the transformations have been experienced differently by different groups of women based on race, age, and socioeconomic position (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 1982, 1990; Lerner, 1971, 1972), American women living in the twentieth century have seen their lives transformed by the events in both this century and those of the late nineteenth century (Cott, 1979; Chafe, 1972; Degler, 1980; Woloch, 1994). Some sociologists have posited a correspondence between social structural arrangements, cultural prescriptions and expectations for motherhood, work, and sexuality. Thus, they take the position that cultural expectations, and the changes therein, are associated with social structural arrangements and transformations. As an item of material culture, they concede that the popular periodical for women is one cultural artifact that both reflects social structural arrangements and creates expectations for feminine behavior and, hence, shapes the consciousness of the readers. Therefore, given this basic sociological paradigm, it might be expected that the themes of feminine sexuality would correspond with social structural arrangements. For example, given the structural arrangements of the 1920’s, it be might expected that *grooming* and *interactional styles* will reflect the increase of women
into the paid labor force, the declining fertility and marriage rates, and increasing divorce rates. However, as I will shortly document, the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1920's are much more complicated and their evolution much more complex than this simple paradigm would lead us to believe.

If an understanding of these cultural messages is to be achieved, other considerations must also be brought to bear on an explanation of their evolution. Since the very inception and structure of the popular periodical has been driven by economic interest, audience profile and producer interests might be one consideration for understanding the evolution of these messages. For one thing, the producers of women's periodicals have a vested interest in creating a periodical that will sell to many different types of women. However, given their reliance on the advertising industry that I have documented in chapter 5, the types of women that they need to attract are, first and foremost, viable consumers. After attracting the appropriate audience, the periodicals must create an environment in the periodical that ensures that the readers will return each month. Certainly the anxiety that is created by the presence of contradictory messages, such as the simultaneous appearance of cautionary tales and critical scripts, ensures a steady supply of readers who return to the periodicals every month for assurance. Furthermore, this anxiety is heightened by scripts that emphasize emotion management, ensuring that readers will return in order to learn the latest techniques on "how to get him to marry you." Finally, the emphasis on backstage techniques not only ensures that readers will return to discover the latest "makeup techniques" and "fashions," but simultaneously ensures the periodicals of their advertising base, as advice articles include backstage tips for applying Maybeline's "latest colors."
Arlie Hochschild has said that women might be more susceptible to messages in advice books for several reasons. First, since a positive sense of femininity is important in this culture for women to feel good about themselves, then perhaps gender codes matter more for women. Additionally, while we all do engage in backstage techniques and emotion management, we do not do it equally. Specifically, as subordinates, women are required to engage in these activities more often than are men. Thus, women perhaps feel a greater need to turn to these periodicals for advice on how to achieve an appropriate degree of femininity. Thus, in creating anxiety, and in offering a plethora of backstage techniques, the producers are ensuring a stable audience. However, as useful as this information is for helping us think about these messages of feminine sexuality, it is not useful for explaining or interpreting the evolution of these messages as they emerge over time. Rather, other considerations, such as cultural, social, economic, and political organization are necessary for this level of interpretation and understanding.

In addition to structural organization, in this chapter I will bring political, legislative, and social arrangements, and laws and technology concerning reproduction to bear on explaining the paradigm shifts, the constancy of the traditional paradigm, and the more minor shifts in the meanings of feminine sexuality. These considerations will also be relied upon to offer interpretations for the tensions in the meanings of feminine sexuality that emerge in the later decades in this sample.

Since they both reflect and transform the social structural arrangements of women’s lives (May, 1988), politics and the legislative decisions are exigent considerations for unraveling these cultural messages. Therefore, political and legislative concerns will be considered in the
attempt to explain the evolution of these messages of feminine sexuality. In considering political and legislative issues, other events that are directly linked to political arrangements will also be relied upon for explaining these messages. Specifically, both social movements and developments in reproductive laws and technology are directly linked to political and legislative concerns (Gordon, 1990; May, 1988) and, thus, shall also be brought to bear in explaining the evolution of these cultural messages.

The 1920’s and 1930’s:
Similar Themes, Structural Disparity

The 1920’s and 30’s represent two decades that are very different structurally. However, they do share similar themes of feminine sexuality. Both emphasize the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality that continues throughout all eight decades included in this sample. The traditional paradigm, which is documented in chapters 6 through 8, is defined by the following key features:

**Traditional:**
* romantic relationship justifies a woman’s existence
* demeanor and appearance crafted for a male partner
* virgin, and asexual interaction style
* traditional feminine demeanor at work: friendly, nurturant
* effects of work on marriage - “other” focused

If cultural messages reflect social structural arrangements, as both the basic sociological paradigm and conventional wisdom maintain that they do, then we might expect a transformation in the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality between the 1920’s and 30’s. However, no such transformation occurs. I shall first present my interpretations for the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1920’s, and then the 1930’s.
Messages of Feminine Sexuality in the 1920’s: Inconsistency with Structural Arrangements?

As documented in chapter 4, structurally the 1920’s is characterized by a steady increase in the female participation rate into the paid labor force, in the number of married women professionals, and the number of women enrolled in college, combined with a very slight increase in age at first marriage, and a decline in fertility rate. Given that the modern paradigm emerges during the 1970’s and that this decade shares the same directional structural shifts as the 1920’s, it appears inconsistent that messages in the 1920’s present readers with traditional paradigmatic themes of feminine sexuality. For example, since women’s increased participation in the paid work force is accompanied by an increase in sexual activity for women (Chafe, 1972; Cott, 1979; Woloch, 1994), it seems inconsistent to prescribe a virgin sexual interaction style during a period when white, middle-class women were entering the work force in unprecedented numbers. Additionally, we might also not expect to see cautionary tales in a period of declining marriage rates; that is, we would expect these prescriptions when the marriage rate is increasing. However, this message appears inconsistent only if we maintain that culture is an epiphenomenon of structure, rather than a complex product of political, social, and economic arrangements.

The themes of feminine sexuality that correspond to the traditional paradigm in the 1920’s are as follows:

* romantic relationship justifies her existence: gives a woman her identity told through cautionary tales and criticisms combined
* pleasing a male partner with appearance: slim body, mannish/ tailored & sophisticated
* pleasing a male partner with demeanor: mysterious
* sexual interaction style: the virgin

288
I will argue that explanations for the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality that pervade the messages of the 1920's lies in the following:

* the type of women employed
* the women's movement

**The Glorification of the Mother Role for Women: Politics in the *Ladies Home Journal***

An emphasis on the romantic relationship for justifying a woman's existence, on her "mysterious" nature, on chastity, and on cautionary tales can be explained by the emphasis on the importance placed on the mother role for women during this period, rather than on the structural arrangements organizing women's lives. However, while emphasis on the mother role for women was reinforced by both political rhetoric and legislative action, a competing political ideology that unsettled Victorian ideas of femininity emerged during this period. This ideology de-emphasized the importance of the mother role for women's lives, stressing the importance of the economic role for fulfillment, and those that backed it fought for legislative action to transform women's lives. Therefore, amidst the structural changes occurring in women's lives during this period, the 1920's is also marked by significant transformations in political issues concerning women's social status. However, despite this period of significant structural and political upheaval, the situationalized vehicle messages of feminine sexuality that are documented in chapter 6 remain consistent. Furthermore, rather than reinforce those messages of the political groups bargaining for social change for women, the messages in *Ladies Home Journal* consistently reinforce the political camp renouncing paid work for women. Specifically, the messages reinforce an emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman's existence and stress the "mysteriousness" of womanhood.
Furthermore, while the messages appear consistent with one another, they do contradict the structural arrangements of women’s lives during this period.

**Cautionary Tales in an Era of Calm.** The appearance of cautionary tales combined with criticisms of the romantic relationship appear to contradict the structural arrangements of the 1920’s. Given that marriage rates remain stable during this decade, it is surprising to see cautionary tales. Rather, we might expect such messages during periods when marriage rates are increasing and, thus, they would then be reflecting structural change. On the other hand, criticisms of marriage might be expected when fertility rates are low and work force participation high, since during such periods women have less economic reason to remain in an unhappy marriage. Additionally, we know that during such periods divorce rates begin to increase. In fact, these arrangements precisely describe the structural organization of women’s lives in the 1920’s. Thus, since we might not expect them in such a period, the cautionary tales appear to reflect a tension between structural arrangements and the cultural messages. On the other hand, while the cautionary tales do not reflect structural arrangements, they perhaps reflect political and legislative concerns that emphasized the wife and mother role for women. Also reinforcing these concerns is the emphasis on chastity.

**Chastity Themes During the “Sexual Revolution.”** In addition to the appearance of cautionary tales during a period of stable marriage rates, a chastity theme appears during a period when white women are entering the paid labor force in increasing numbers. This theme seems inconsistent when we consider that, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, female labor force participation has meant an increasing contact between women and men. Previously separated by their concentration in the private world of home and family,
white women’s social contact with men in the public world of paid work is said to have resulted in a weakening of the social rules that dictated a rigid social distance between the sexes (Chafe, 1972; Degler, 1980; Gordon, 1980; Ladner, 1971). In addition to financial independence as a result of her new role as “worker,” new sexual freedoms were also the consequence of a narrowing social distance between the sexes. In fact, all four historical peaks in women’s labor force participation rates in this century (1910’s, 1920’s, 1940’s, 1950’s-60’s) are associated with an increase in female pre-marital sexual activity (Chafe, 1972; Degler, 1980; Gordon, 1980; Kessler-Harris, 1982, 1990; May, 1988; Taeuber, 1991; ).

This message of female chastity and the emphasis on mystery in the 1920’s at first appears inconsistent with what we know about the social structural arrangements of women’s lives during this decade. We know that women were engaging in pre-marital sex at about the same rates as men during the 1920’s, and this has been attributed to increased contact between women and men who previously never had the opportunity to interact with one another. White, middle-class women did not have much opportunity to find work that fit their class and gender until the 1920’s, when a shift toward large business enterprise created a niche for the white, middle-class woman. As a consequence of this economic shift, for the first time, almost all white, middle-class women worked prior to marriage. This shift, which led to the “sexual revolution” of the 1920’s, allowed for increased contact between women and men, which weakened the social distance that had previously ensured chastity. While the audience for Ladies Home Journal were then, and still are, predominantly married with children and, thus, did not work in the paid labor force, these women were exposed to the world of paid work. Therefore, the readers of Ladies Home Journal did have contact with men outside of the
home. Hence, they were likely to have participated in the “sexual revolution,” and so the message of mystery and chastity in interaction style appears to contradict this experience. But while new ideas on sex were responding to and at the same time challenging Victorian sexual morality, both public and political forces alike prescribed a different morality for wives and mothers.

“Conservative” Politics in the Messages of *Ladies Home Journal*. During this decade, the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in *Ladies Home Journal* upheld the legislatively enforced emphasis on the mother as the “moral glue” of society. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that the readers of *Ladies Home Journal* were presented with prescriptions that appear to contradict the “sexual revolution” of the 1920’s. Reverence for motherhood in the 1920’s was reflected in legislation, and mainstream feminist concerns. While the nineteenth amendment was ratified in 1920, perhaps signaling a new public and political philosophy concerning the role of women in society, the ‘old’ order politicians’ efforts contradict this new wave. The political focus continued to emphasize women’s roles as wives and mothers through the implementation of protective legislation during this decade. However, mainstream feminists focused their attentions on protective legislation also, maintaining that women’s “freedom” could only be attained through economic equality with men. Thus, they endorsed legislation that enforced the Sheppard Towner Act and a minimum wage law for improving wages for women who performed work classified as “women’s work.” The idea behind this protective legislation represented the equality that mainstream feminists sought, since both they and the “flappers” continued to maintain that women were first and foremost wives and mothers and deserved “fair” treatment because they represented the “moral order” in society.
It is this political forum that is represented in the pages of *Ladies Home Journal*. Prescribing chastity, emphasizing the romantic relationship as central for her identity, and cautioning women against remaining single and, finally, stressing the differences between women and men (i.e., her "mysterious" nature) all represent both the mainstream political and feminist view of feminine sexuality.

On the other hand, challenges to the mainstream agenda also emerged during this period. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was sought and, since it did not allow a woman to freely bargain with her employer over the value of her work, protective legislation through minimum wage laws were ruled unconstitutional. Thus, the 1920's can be characterized as a period of political tensions, and perhaps it is these tensions that explain the contradictions between the themes and the structural arrangements in society. The emphasis on cautionary tales, stressing the importance of marriage for women, on "mystery" and "chastity" and the lack of emphasis on work interaction styles are consistent with political and legislative concern with women's roles as wives and mothers. But the fact that women were more likely to engage in pre-marital sex as a consequence of increased contact with men indicates that the emphasis on chastity in *Ladies Home Journal* is perhaps best understood as a tension between the emergence of new structural and political arrangements.

While mainstream political strategies appear to be reflected in the messages of the situationalized vehicles that I document in chapter 6, the *grooming* vehicles that are documented in chapter 8 appear to contradict this organization and, thus, also the situationalized vehicle messages. Unlike the situationalized vehicle messages, the *grooming*
themes appear to recognize the role of the “new” woman by stressing an appearance that is fitting with her new status as voter and worker in society.

**Women Working and Voting: The Masculinization of Appearance**

While the situationalized messages in the 1920’s appear to reflect the political tensions of the day, *grooming* vehicle messages appear to reflect the social structural arrangements organizing women’s lives, especially their new role as workers. Coinciding with white, middle-class women’s increasing numbers in the paid labor force, scripts emphasizing “mannish neatness” and “professionalism” appear in the *grooming* vehicle messages of the 1920’s. Whereas prior to the 1920’s, college educated women were more likely to remain unmarried, college educated women in the 1920’s were just as likely to marry as other women. Even after marriage, these women went on to work as professionals. However, to say the decade was characterized as the rise of the professional woman would be an overstatement, as most college educated women, the readers of *Ladies Home Journal*, did return to the private sphere after marriage. However, given that women were working in unprecedented numbers since before the end of the nineteenth century, the *grooming* prescriptions that focus on a *mannish/tailored* look and the *traditional* paradigm at first appear consistent with structural arrangements. But, while it helps explain the persistence of the *traditional* paradigm, the type of women working during this period belies this explanation.

Female participants in the middle-class paid labor force during this period were mainly single women. And, despite the growing number of women in the professions during this period, most middle-class women continued to be employed in “women’s work.” Furthermore, for the most part, married women who worked during the 1920’s did so because
of economic need, not self expression or ambition. Since the biggest change in female work
force participation rates had occurred 20 years previously (Chafe, 1972), when white, middle
class women who were single had entered the public world of work in record numbers, the
upsurge in female employment in the paid labor force in the 1920’s did not represent a radical
transformation in women’s economic role. Thus, there was no impetus for change in the
messages of feminine sexuality within *Ladies Home Journal* during this period. However,
during this decade there begins to be a shift in perception and ideology concerning the “nature
of woman” (Chafe, 1972; Woloch, 1994) that might have been precipitated by significant
political transformations:

* In 1918, Wilson urges for ratification of the nineteenth amendment
* the ERA is first proposed in 1923
* the National Women’s Party is organized as a splinter group of the
  League of Women Voters, both of which are groups with political
  as politicians avidly court the “women’s vote”
* white middle class women, previously thought of as too delicate and
  refined for work in the public sphere, join the ranks of the paid labor
  force.

All of these activities, voting, working for pay, equal rights and equal pay, as opposed to
protective rights and the minimum wage, were perceived as masculine activities during the
1920’s. Thus, the *mannish/tailored* look perhaps makes sense during this period. In
prescribing the *mannish/tailored* look, the periodicals appear to be conveying the message that,
since they are behaving like men, women should look like them. That is, the *mannish/tailored*
look perhaps signifies women’s new role as voter and worker. Thus, while *Ladies Home
Journal* readers do not fit the profile of the working woman, the prescription for
“masculinization” does make sense when the political landscape is fleshed out.
Competing Political Ideologies, and Structural and Political Tensions Produce Contentious Messages of Feminine Sexuality

Overall, I have attempted to show that the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality that pervades the messages in this decade cannot be explained by structural arrangements alone. Rather, sometimes the messages reflect the tensions of the political climate, such as the situationalized vehicle messages stressing chastity and the appearance of cautionary tales that reflect the "conservative" and mainstream feminist agenda. At other times, the messages appear to reflect both the structural shifts and the political tensions of the 1920's. Specifically, these arrangements are reflected in the grooming vehicle messages that prescribe a manish/tailored look, which appears to reflect this era of social reform and women's work force participation.

Tensions and Contradictions Between Vehicles. Overall, while situationalized vehicle messages are consistent and do not reflect the tumultuous times, the cautionary tales and critical scripts, along with an emphasis on female chastity, appear to reflect tensions between structural arrangements and competing ideologies. Tensions also emerge in the grooming vehicle scripts as both a manish/tailored and a sophisticated look are simultaneously prescribed. Finally, the grooming and situationalized vehicles appear to contradict one another. Specifically, while the grooming scripts appear to reflect the shifting political and structural environment as readers are presented with "masculinized" grooming themes during this period, the situationalized vehicle messages do not reflect such change. However, no such tensions or contradictions emerge in the 1930's.
The 1930’s:
Structural Difference and Recurrent Themes
of Feminine Sexuality

The 1930’s represents both a structural and political transformation from the 1920’s. The Great Depression begins to cause shifts in the social structural arrangements of society, with age at first marriage increasing and, as a consequence, marriage, fertility, and divorce rates declining. However, while fertility rates continue to decline throughout the 1930’s, by the mid to late 1930’s both marriage and divorce rates begin to increase again. Additionally, work force participation rates also take a dramatic turn in the 1930’s, as women in all occupations, professional and otherwise, are dismissed from their jobs due to the depression. If cultural messages only reflect social structural arrangements, then conventional wisdom might lead us to anticipate certain messages to increase or emerge in such a decade:

* chastity: an increased social distance between men and women as a result of women returning to the home
* criticisms of marriage: an increase in the divorce rate would perhaps coincide with an increase in criticisms of the romantic relationship for fulfilling women

Certainly significant structural changes occur between the 1920’s and 30’s, and this might lead us to expect prescriptions for demeanor and appearance to be transformed. In addition, given the structural changes that occur, we might also expect other messages to decline or disappear:

* cautionary tales: a decline in messages emphasizing marriage as justifying a woman’s existence as the marriage rate declines, and a subsequent decline in cautionary tales warning women against the dangers of remaining single
* the effects of work on marriage: a decline in any grooming or demeanor messages at work, or an emphasis on the effects of work on marriage

297
However, while the themes in the situationalized themes in the 1930’s are consistent, they do not completely fit with these expectations:

* romance justifies existence: gives woman her identity, adds meaning to life. Cautionary tales and criticisms disappear
* grooming: tailored and sophisticated
* demeanor: motherly and yielding
* sexual interaction style: virgin and asexual
* demeanor at work: friendly, soft, warm
* effects of work on marriage: work contributes to marital happiness by making a woman more interesting

Thus, there are both some contradictions and some confirmed expectations between what we might expect if social structural arrangements alone predict cultural messages. Specifically, while chastity continues to be prescribed during this decade, a new emphasis on asexuality emerges, new themes on demeanor appear, and cautionary tales disappear. Furthermore, prescriptions for grooming appear unchanged, criticisms of the romantic relationship do not emerge and, for the first time, work themes appear. Therefore, considerations other than social structural arrangements need to be brought to bear on the messages of feminine sexuality from the 1930’s.

I argue that it is the following political events that perhaps contribute to the messages of feminine sexuality in the 1930’s:

* end of the women’s movement and a reaffirmation of the mother and wife role as central for women
* the Great Depression and white middle-class women’s return to the home

When the economic, cultural, and political events of the 1930’s are considered together, the persistent chastity theme, the disappearance of cautionary tales, and the emphasis on the
positive effects of work on marriage make sense. Overall, rather than shifts in social structural arrangements, I will argue that it is perhaps the events of the Great Depression that best explain these themes. Specifically, it was the Great Depression and its effects that was responsible for the failure of the 1920’s women’s movement. As a consequence of the depression, focus shifted from women’s rights to survival in the 1930’s. In addition, the depression led to white middle-class women’s return to the home, and an upsurge in mainstream feminist and “conservative” politics. I will draw on these events to explain both the shifts and persistent themes and meanings of feminine sexuality during this decade.

A Singular Ideology and a Singular Message

Consistent with the need to conserve jobs, and to encourage women to stay in the home, the depression meant the end of the liberation politics of the National Women’s Party, and a renewed commitment to a mainstream feminist political agenda. Thus, while the 1920’s was marked by competing political ideologies on gender relations, the 1930’s was focused again on promoting women’s roles as wives and mothers. This emphasis on her role as wife and mother as the source of her patriotism meant that employed women, since they were denying an American family the right to a breadwinner, were viewed as unpatriotic. What this ideology overlooked was the financial need of women who were divorced, widowed or abandoned, or unable to survive on the wages of one family member. The latter of this category were more often black women. Thus, since “real” women worked in the home, and black women were more likely to work during the depression, black women sacrificed their right to be seen not only as patriotic, but also as “feminine.”
Coinciding with this message is the rejection of women's political identity, as the National Women's Party and the League of Women Voters increasingly found themselves ousted from critical political issues in Washington during this period. As a consequence, a movement towards "women's concerns" in politics reemerged in the 1930's and, thus, "equality" became de-emphasized once again. As a result of these political shifts, women's identity as workers and voters became recast in the 1930's. Furthermore, reinforcing and molding this renewed emphasis on women's roles as wives and mothers were legislative attempts to return women to the home. Specifically, federal and state government created legislation to oust women from the paid labor force, public comments were made by politicians asserting that women belonged in the home, the Women's Bureau announced that "wives who work are a menace to the health and happiness of homelife," and, finally, legislative efforts, such as the bills introduced in almost every state to restrict the employment of married women also helped bolster negative public opinion towards married women workers. This negative public opinion can be seen in a 1931 National Education Association study, revealing the degree of negative sentiment towards married women working, as 82 percent of those polled said that married women should not work. Furthermore, a Gallup Poll study in the same year reported that 77 percent of employers maintained that they would refuse to hire a married woman. Finally, college enrollment, which began a decline in the late 20's, continued to emphasize the importance of teaching women home economics and interior decorating, rather than providing them with an education that they would be unable to use; that is, science, engineering, business, and the humanities.

The Absence of Critical Scripts. Given this deemphasis on her role as worker, the absence of critical scripts in the 1930's makes sense. While divorce rates climbed during this period,
they did not reflect either a long term shift or a larger ideological change. Therefore, perhaps criticisms of the marital relationship do not appear during this decade for two reasons. Firstly they did not appear because the wife and mother role was still viewed as a woman's primary role; and, secondly, because it has been interpreted as a reaction to an economic crisis rather than to social change as in later decades, the rising divorce rate reflected immediate conditions rather than a trend. The absence of cautionary tales might be explained similarly. For example, in periods when political ideologies emphasize and reinforce women's roles as wife and mother through legislation, cautionary tales might be unnecessary in such a climate. In addition to the economic crisis that resulted in women returning to the home, the political and legislative emphasis on the wife and mother role might also help to explain the message of chastity in these scripts.

The Chaste and Asexual Woman. The emphasis placed on her role as wife and mother are consistent with the persistent message of sexual purity and the new emphasis on asexuality that appears in the 1930's. These scripts are critical of the "sexual revolution" that occurred in the 1920's (Degler, 1980; Gordon, 1980), maintaining that "all this talk about sex is making girls nervous on their wedding night." The female author in this script posits that romantic "love should come naturally on your wedding night....consulting books and girlfriends on what to expect or do will inhibit this process." Since it is an explicitly critical response to the documented increase in women's pre-marital sexual activity following WWI, this script reflects the tension between women's actual experiences and cultural expectations. Even with the introduction of Mademoiselle, the first periodical to develop a format for the "working girl," the emphasis on chastity continues. But, perhaps more importantly, this rejection of the 1920's
"sexual revolution" reflects social structural transformations, as women return to the home and, as a consequence, their contact with men is significantly reduced.

Given the dramatic transformations that occurred in the American economy beginning in 1929, and the consequences for women and the family, it is perhaps not surprising to see a continued emphasis on chastity and the emergence of the asexual theme during the 1930's. One consequence associated with the depression is the shift in the ratio of women in the paid labor force, an increase in age at first marriage, and a decline in marriage and fertility rates (May, 1988; Taeuber, 1991). Of course, these transformations reflect "traditional" expectations, whereby men are expected to support families after marriage. However, since so few could support a family during this period, age at first marriage increased, causing both marriage and fertility rates to drop. Added to this, the emphasis on sexual disinterest and chastity also coincide with women returning to the home and the end of the sexual revolution.

Since some authors maintain that women's sexual activity is consistently connected with perceptions of national and community stability, the emphasis on virginity at a time when the economy is in trouble makes sense. Added to this, a new emphasis on sexual disinterest might also make sense. In this case, rather than creating a representation that contradicted actual experience, this new cultural message could be said to be reflecting a patriotic image of feminine sexuality.

Thus, while virginity is prescribed in both the 1920's and 30's, themes and the traditional meaning of feminine sexuality in the 20's perhaps reflect tensions between social structural arrangements and political organization, whereas in the 30's messages about virginity and asexuality complement both structural and political arrangements. Another theme that is left
over from the 1920’s is a grooming prescription and, similarly to themes on chastity, this theme seems to make sense in light of the social structural and political arrangements of the day.

The Tailored Woman Reinterpreted. Despite the continuation of the mannish/tailored look into the 1930’s, this look is reinterpreted and reinforces the overall message of feminine sexuality within this decade. Thus, there is essentially a change in the grooming prescriptions during this decade. By the 1930’s the “mannish” aspects of the tailored look are criticized and the look is reinterpreted as “frugal,” “simple,” “no-nonsense.” Therefore, the look reinforces the overall themes from this decade.

The themes of feminine sexuality during this decade consistently reinforce the wife/mother role and this is consistent with the political ideology of the day. However, one message appears inconsistent with this overall emphasis, as the worker role is prescribed.

The Positive Effects of Work on Marital Happiness: A Contradiction of Structural and Political Arrangements

A message that appears to contradict the structural arrangements of women’s lives during the 1930’s are the messages focused on work. These messages offer readers advice on work-grooming and, in addition, these scripts emphasize the positive effects of work on marital happiness. In a period when women are essentially ordered to return to the home, readers not only see themselves cast as workers, but they are informed that work will improve their marital relationship. This emphasis on work appears to represent a tension between the cultural messages of feminine sexuality and the political and structural arrangements of the day. Since it is unlikely that a married woman would be able to find employment during this period, and since political, legislative, and public sentiment is in agreement with these arrangements,
perhaps proposing a *work-grooming* style poses no threat to the prevailing arrangements in society during this time.

Consistency in the Messages of Feminine Sexuality

While messages in the 1920's appear to deny both the structural changes occurring in women's lives and the "new" political outlook, messages in the 1930's affirm the new structural organization. However, after an economic crisis forces structural change, the competing political ideologies of the 1920's disappear, and a renewed emphasis on mainstream politics ensues. Thus, the messages of the 1920's and 30's appear similar because they appear to be representing the same political ideology; that is, mainstream feminist, and conservative politics. Furthermore, while the 1920's are marked by both contentious themes or by messages that contradict structural arrangements, the 1930's contain very few contentious messages or messages that contradict either structural or political arrangements. I have argued that perhaps both structural and political organization might explain this consistency in the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1930's. First, whereas the 1920's contained competing ideologies, the 1930's are marked by a singular ideology that emphasizes the wife/mother role for women; and, second, the 1930's is also marked by an economic crisis that necessarily mandated conservative social, cultural, and political change.

While the messages of the 1930's represent a consistency not seen in the previous decade, there is one theme that contradicts both structural and political arrangements and the general message of feminine sexuality during this decade. That message is the emphasis on the positive effects of work on the marital relationship.
While the _traditional_ paradigm remains as a perennial for constructing messages of feminine sexuality into the next decade, the themes are transformed. Additionally, while the directions of the structural arrangements are similar to those in the 1920’s and 30’s, the numbers are significantly transformed by the 1940’s. In this next section I will attempt to explain the reason for this shift in the themes of feminine sexuality in light of social and political change.

**The 1940’s and 1950’s:**

**A Shift in the Themes of Feminine Sexuality**

The 1940’s: The First Significant Transformation in the Themes of Feminine Sexuality

While the _traditional_ paradigm remains as a constant for constructing the meaning of the feminine sexual ideal into the 1940’s and 50’s, there is a transformation in both the themes and the social structural arrangements of women’s lives during this period. These shifts represent a significant departure from those themes and arrangements of the 20’s and 30’s. Similarly to the 1920’s, the 1940’s sees an upsurge in the number of women working in the paid labor force and a decline in age at first marriage. However, unlike the 1920’s, these events of the 1940’s coincide with an increase in the marriage rate and, subsequently, the fertility rate. Finally, the 1940’s is also characterized by an initial rising divorce rate, which then begins to decline significantly by the middle of the decade. If we were to posit some relationship between these events and the cultural messages of feminine sexuality, then we might anticipate an increase in, or emergence of the following messages:

* criticisms of marriage: an increasing divorce rate may indicate dissatisfaction with marriage and, therefore, the messages should reflect this
* sexual activity/exploration: while the direction of female labor force participation between the 1920’s and 40’s is the same, the sheer number of women in contact with men in the labor force increases dramatically at this time
the positive effects of work on marriage: since women are working in unprecedented numbers and, by the middle of the decade, marrying in unprecedented numbers, we might expect to see scripts on work and marriage reinforcing one another.

Given the social structural changes in women's lives since the 1930's, we might also anticipate shifts in grooming and demeanor prescriptions. The messages themselves, however, often belie these expectations:

* romantic relationship justifying existence: adult status & attractiveness achieved through marriage. Cautionary tales and criticisms combined

* grooming: classically feminine, virginal, slim, decorative

* demeanor: domestic skills, yielding, receptive, supportive, interesting, a partner in marriage

* sexual interaction style: asexual

* demeanor at work: friendly, warm,

* effects of work on marriage: contributes to the downfall of marriage

If we expect that cultural messages might reflect social structural change, then some of these messages do fit with our expectations. Specifically, given the shifts in the social structural arrangements in women's lives in the 1940's, we would anticipate the shifts in grooming and demeanor that appear during this decade and the emphasis on the positive effects of work on marriage. However, some of our expectations would not be met as an emphasis on asexual interaction style emerges, and also an emphasis on the negative effects of work on marriage surface, and critical scripts remain absent from the messages of feminine sexuality. While criticisms do appear in the periodicals, they are always combined with cautionary tales and, thus, the message is diminished. In such scripts where criticisms do appear, the romantic relationship is criticized at the same time that the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman's existence is affirmed. Similarly, we might not expect an "asexual"
interaction style, or an emphasis on the negative effects of work on marriage during a period of high divorce rates and an increase in women entering the paid labor force.

Just as with the messages of the previous two decades, messages of feminine sexuality in the 1940’s can not be explained only in terms of the social structural arrangements of the decade. Rather, there are important political, medical, and cultural considerations that might perhaps also help to explain the messages and their evolution between the 1920’s and the 40’s. Specifically, I will draw on the following events for explaining the evolution of feminine sexuality in the 1940’s:

* World War II, and the subsequent increase of women into the labor force
* The repeal of the Comstock law

Additionally, I will draw on these events to explain the persistence of the traditional paradigm amidst great social change.

Rapid Social Change and New Themes of Feminine Sexuality

While an increasing number of women entered the work force in the 1920’s and then again in the 1940’s and 50’s, the reasons for and degree of this increase and the type of women who joined the work force during these periods differed greatly between the 1920’s and 40’s. I will argue that these differences may perhaps help to explain both the persistence of the traditional paradigm.

1 Although it was short lived, the call to work during war time meant a transformation in the occupational sex segregation for black and white women alike. Whereas black women had previously been segregated in domestic service and laundering occupations, the war opened up new opportunities in industry, which meant improved pay and better working conditions. However, wage segregation between black and white women continued unabated throughout the war period and, of course, after. White women also experienced these changes wrought by the war, as they moved into occupations previously reserved for men. After the war, however, both black and white women were re-segregated into sex-typed occupations of the pre-war days.
paradigm and the evolution of the messages between the 1920’s and 40’s.

The median age of the female work force between 1900 and 1940 changed significantly. Whereas once the majority of the work force had been single and under the age of 25, by 1940, the new worker was married and the median age was 30. The new married female worker comprised 35% of all women employed in 1940, compared to 15% in 1900. This change in the social characteristics of workers is attributed to WWII, which increased the female labor force by 50%, moving women from a marginalized group in the work force to a primary source of labor. Thus, not only was the increase greater than ever before and the workers different, the impetus behind this revolution in the work force was fueled by a political concern and, thus, was considered a temporary solution to a crisis in both the government’s and the public’s view. Nonetheless this rapid social change in expectations for women coincides with a shift in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality, as cautionary tales and criticisms appear for the first time since the 1920’s, a new sexual interaction style emerges, a new grooming style, and new themes on the effects of work on marriage appear during the 1940’s.

Criticisms and Cautionary Tales: Reinforcing the Wife & Mother Role Amidst Social Change

The critical and cautionary tale scripts of the 1940’s appear to reinforce the decade’s overt political emphasis on marriage. These scripts emphasize the importance of the romantic relationship for women, while at the same time de-emphasizing a feminine sexual nature - a caution perhaps not needed prior to the repeal of the Comstock law, the law which banned the non-medical distribution of contraception. And, similarly to the 1920’s, given that the divorce rate peaked in the 1940’s, it is perhaps not surprising to see criticisms of marriage appearing during this decade. However, similarly to those messages in the 1920’s, critical scripts in the
40's contain mixed messages, whereby criticisms of marriage and warnings against remaining single appear simultaneously. But given the structural reorganization of divorce and marriage during this period, it is perhaps not surprising to see such mixed messages.

As with messages in the 1920's, criticisms of marriage in the 40's are accompanied by cautionary tales so that, in addition to criticizing marriage, the importance of it for women is affirmed. Similarly to the 1920's, a period of conflicting political ideologies, scripts combining cautionary tales and criticisms abound during the 40's. Two structural factors that the 1940's shares with the 20's is the growing female work force participation rate and the divorce rate. Thus, one explanation might be that, as women begin to experience economic independence and the divorce rate increases, cautionary tales reinforcing the importance of marriage are perhaps politically useful; they are certainly useful in a society at war, and also during a post-war period, when familial stability becomes tied to national security.

The last time there was a significant threat to the social order, emphasis was placed on the reader's chastity and her asexuality, and an interaction style that emphasized being "motherly." But by the 1940's, in addition to the continued emphasis on being yielding, domestic, subordinate, and receptive, the reader is told to emphasize not her "motherly" qualities but her "self" and her sexuality. However, themes of sexual innocence disappear by the 40's, and a benign sexuality is increasingly emphasized. That is, while her sexuality is recognized, and emphasis becomes placed on sexual knowledge for the purposes of pleasing a male partner, readers are instructed to control their own sexual nature. This new emphasis might be explained by the repeal of the Comstock Law, and political and legislative attempts to curb sexual activity among the young as a consequence of fears following the war.
The Comstock Law, Divorce and Work: Reinterpretations of Feminine Sexuality

I argue that it is contraceptive technology, divorce, and the new female work force that help to explain the shift from a “virgin/asexual” to an “asexual” interaction style. These three events contributed to great social change in the 1940’s and, perhaps as a consequence, led to a transformation in the prescribed sexual interaction style.

Certainly the means to prevent pregnancy, the increasing pool of divorced women, and increased contact with men in male segregated occupations meant that women had greater opportunity to engage in sexual contact that was virtually worry free and, therefore, could take place outside of marriage. In fact, that is just what they did (May, 1988). However, the themes that are presented to readers contradict this reality. Readers are presented with images that de-emphasize sexuality as they are instructed to look like the virgin (i.e., innocent and sweet), the girl next door (i.e., wholesome and old fashioned) and classically feminine (ladylike and gentle).

The repeal of the Comstock law was viewed by birth control advocates like Margaret Sanger as the beginning of legally “planned families” in America. Thus, birth control was supposed to be for married couples who were encouraged to “plan” their families, and not for couples who wanted to experiment sexually. Nonetheless, widely available contraception did mean that women could engage in sexual activity without fear of pregnancy outside of marriage, and they did. However, since public policy emphasized the appropriateness of contraception only within the bounds of the family, and political rhetoric also intoned that planned families were key to national survival in the era of the Cold War, it is not difficult to understand why pre-marital sexual activity was quickly followed by a wedding ceremony (May,
This emphasis on her asexuality is also reinforced in the grooming vehicle messages of feminine sexuality, which emphasize a virginal and classically feminine look.

The Virginal and Classically Feminine Look: Reinforcers of Asexuality. The grooming themes are also transformed in the 1940's and they appear to reinforce the asexual emphasis during this decade. The classically feminine theme of the 1940's and 50's represents a departure from the themes of the two previous decades. Both critical structural and political changes occurred between the 1920's and the 40's and, combined, these shifts perhaps help to explain the transformations in the themes of feminine sexuality during this period.

The fact that workers were more likely to be wives and mothers during this period may account for the emphasis on the traditional image of femininity during this period; that is, emphasizing femininity may have alleviated the anomie created by a sudden gender role reversal in the economy. Therefore, with their emphasis on the classically feminine and virginal looks, the grooming vehicle messages of this decade appear to reinforce the message of feminine asexuality.

Finally, however, there are some themes that at first appear to be inconsistent with the political rhetoric that the messages of feminine sexuality are reinforcing during this period. Specifically, work theme scripts emphasize the negative effects of work on marital happiness. However, closer inspection of the theme in light of the political concerns of the 1940's do reveal a consistency between theme and the political rhetoric of the 1940's.

The Negative Effects of Work on Marriage: Tensions Between Political Ideology and Social Change

Given both the government's call for employers to hire women and the rapidly increasing
marriage rate during this decade, it is surprising to see scripts emphasizing the negative effects of work on marriage. Given the unprecedented entrance of white, middle-class women into the paid labor force, this message presents readers with a perplexing dilemma. As the government encourages women to serve their country during a period of war by joining the paid labor force, the periodicals warn these same women of the risks they take when they go to work. Thus, while the cultural messages of feminine sexuality in the 1940's appear to consistently reflect political expectations for women, they also contradict some of the most central political messages of the day, and perhaps this reveals a response to rapid social change. However, I think there is perhaps a more likely explanation. This message cautioning women against the negative effects of work on marital happiness may reveal a more subtle warning to women; that is, these scripts may perhaps be consistent with political efforts to both encourage women to work, while at the same time warning them not to place work before marriage.

This may also be the reason for the emphasis placed on the “feminine, but professional” demeanor that is required of readers in the work theme scripts during this period. While readers in the 1930’s were instructed to be “feminine” at the workplace, readers in the 1940’s are told to present some, but not all of their “feminine self” at work; that is, there is a tension in these scripts from the 1940’s, whereby readers are instructed to be workers on the one hand, but to retain some of their feminine charms on the other. It seems consistent that a temporary work force, described as classically feminine and virginal in the romantic relationship theme scripts, should retain some of their “feminine charms” at the workplace.

Women had just become part of the primary work force in the 1940’s and, hence, they were a vital part of economic security during a period of significant social crisis. However, their role
was envisioned as temporary by politicians and the public alike. Thus, since work continued to be viewed as the domain of men, it perhaps makes sense that the themes do not emphasize a more professional or masculinized worker. Certainly appeals to her “femininity” at the workplace, as in the 1930’s, implies an uneasiness with women as workers. But since women were needed as primary workers during this period, cultural messages that transform the work personae to accommodate a “feminine” touch may have eased the transition from the 1930’s view of women as mothers and wives first. Furthermore, perhaps it is this persistent view of women as wives and mothers first that might help to explain the continued emphasis on a traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality.

Persistence of the Traditional Paradigm Amidst Rapid Social Change

Despite the repeal of the Comstock law and the increase in married women working, the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality persists into the 1940’s. However, tensions between structural and political arrangements might explain this persistent message of feminine sexuality. While women were becoming increasingly more financially independent, their participation in the work force was viewed as temporary. Certainly women’s entrance into the paid labor force was viewed as essential for national stability and security, but emphasis on women’s role in this new light was interpreted as a natural extension of her domestic role; that is, her role as wife to man became reinterpreted as “helpmate” to a society in need and, hence, a temporary solution to a social crisis. Thus, while women’s status was changing, the change did not correspond to any shift in gender ideology. Perhaps as a consequence of the continued gender ideology of the previous decades, no significant shift in the paradigm of feminine sexuality occurs during this period.
Cultural Messages Reinforcing the Political Rhetoric of the Day

While the themes are strikingly different by the 1940’s, similarly to previous decades, they consistently reinforce the wife and mother role for readers. What explains the shift in the messages between the previous two decades and the 1940’s is both structural change and a new political climate, and the resulting tensions that emerged between the two. The themes of feminine sexuality, like those of the 1920’s, deny the structural arrangements of women’s lives. Thus, the traditional paradigm remains. However, similarly to the 1930’s, the 40’s represents a period of social crisis and such periods are often characterized by a singular political ideology. Unlike the 1920’s and 30’s, the political ideology of the 1940’s was at odds with the structural arrangements of the day, and it appears that the cultural messages of feminine sexuality during this period consistently reinforce this political ideology. While the themes in the next decade represent a continuation of the traditional paradigm and some basic themes from the 1940’s, there are also some departures in those themes.

The 1950’s:
Themes of the 1940’s Revisited

In addition to structural similarity, the themes of feminine sexuality are strikingly similar during the 1940’s and 50’s. Rather than drastic shifts in the themes, the 1950’s is marked by additions to those themes:

* romantic relationship justifies existence: gives meaning to a woman’s life. told through cautionary tales
* grooming: classically feminine, and mannish/tailored
* demeanor: receptive, domestic, yielding supportive, family minded, smart
* sexual interaction style: asexual, love and sex equated
* demeanor at work: a conflict is proposed between a woman’s “feminine”
self and her "worker" self

* effects of work on marriage: work both contributes and deters from marital happiness; sexual behavior at work

Again, a thorough explanation for the emergence of these themes requires more than knowledge of the structural arrangements of the period. Given the structural arrangements of the 1940's and 50's, certainly some of these themes might be anticipated. For example, in an era when age at first marriage is declining and, subsequently, marriage and fertility rates are increasing, we might expect cautionary tales to appear. We might anticipate this message because periods of high marriage and fertility rates might correspond to cautionary tales, or warnings to women against remaining single in a climate favoring family over a single lifestyle. Additionally, the emergence of scripts on sex at the office are not unexpected in an era when white, middle-class women continue to enter the paid labor force in unprecedented numbers. However, the asexual interaction style that was first prescribed in the 1940's continues to appear in the 1950's, and this seems inconsistent with structural arrangements. Additionally, we might not expect to see the continued emphasis on the negative effects of work on marriage, or the emphasis on the conflict or anxiety that is produced as a consequence of work. Therefore, in addition to bringing the social structural arrangement of the period to bear on these messages, other arrangements must also be considered for a more complete understanding of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality.

While the structural arrangements and the messages of the 1940's and 50's are similar, the two decades are separated by a different political climate and this has consequences for the meanings attached to the themes and any interpretations of them. As the 1940's war rhetoric wanes and the Cold War era of the 1950's gets underway, differences in the messages between
the 1940’s and 50’s appear to reflect these political shifts. It is these political differences that also helps to explain the persistence of the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality.

Cautionary Tales and the Equating of Sex and Love: The Wife Role as the Pinnacle of Feminine Fulfillment

By the 1950’s, the marriage rate is at an all time high and the divorce rate an all time low, yet readers are still cautioned against remaining single. Furthermore, while cautionary tales appear combined with critical scripts in the 1920’s and 40’s, by the 1950’s these scripts appear alone. This persistence of cautionary tales in a decade with high marriage rates might best be explained by the Cold War rhetoric of the 1950’s. It was this rhetoric that maintained the importance of the family for national stability, and it appears to be reflected completely in the themes of feminine sexuality in the 1950’s. Also consistent with this rhetoric is the emphasis on an asexual interaction style.

The Woman who Equates Sex and Love as the Sexual Ideal. Whereas I have argued that the asexual theme of the 1940’s was tied to fears following the repeal of the Comstock Law and World War II, asexuality in the 1950’s is more tied to political rhetoric. Specifically, it is tied to the Cold War rhetoric. I maintain that it is this rhetoric that is perhaps responsible for the entrenchment of the asexual theme in these periodicals during this period. After all, in a climate where men and women had become accustomed to working along side one another, a new rhetoric may have been necessary. Perhaps a new ideology was required, one that could perhaps create a symbiosis between sex and love, thus ensuring chastity once and for all.

Sexual interaction style themes in the 1950’s, and then again in the 60’s and 80’s, equate sex and love for women. Sex and love are said to be inseparable for women during these
decades and, as a consequence, women are advised not to engage in "casual sex." This relationship between sex and love is consistent with ideas of women's sexuality as tied to their status as mothers and wives, which essentially desexualizes women, rendering sex a possibility for married women only. This association between sex and love for women was perhaps solidified by political rhetoric and legislative efforts to impede the availability of birth control and abortion for all but married women. While abortion was more widely available and much more accepted prior to the 1940's than in recent years (Gordon, 1980; Stage, 1979), it became increasingly more difficult to obtain during the 1940's, when the number of "therapeutic" abortions became regulated by administrative committees in hospitals.

Between the 1930's and the 1950's in America, women who were not married were expected to be chaste (Chafe, 1972; Cott, 1979; Gordon, 1980; May, 1988). Just as the so-called "sexual revolutions" of the 1920's and the 1960's-70's exerted pressure upon both men and women to "experiment" sexually, the pressures for women to remain chaste in the 1950's were both social and political. Prior to the development of the birth control pill in 1960, contraceptive methods relied heavily upon the cooperation of men and, therefore, engaging in pre-marital coitus was riskier for women who would certainly face community ostracism if they became pregnant.2 But it was political rhetoric and legislative efforts that began in the late nineteenth century and continued into the 1960's (Cott, 1979; Gordon, 1980) that had the biggest impact upon demonizing birth control and, hence, virtually ensuring female chastity in the 1940's through to the 50's. While legislative control of chastity was certainly weakened with the congressional repeal of the Comstock law, public rhetoric on birth control use centered on family planning for national stability and, hence, the expectation was that only

317

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married women would be sexually active (Degler, 1980; Gordon, 1980). Margaret Sanger's Planned Parenthood Federation of America reflected and reinforced this thinking on birth control by offering counseling to married women only on their responsibility in creating national stability through “planned families.”

Thus, by the 1950's the feminine sexual ideal was the asexual woman, the woman who equated sex and love. It is perhaps this ideology that is responsible for the disappearance of the virginal theme from the grooming vehicles of the 1940's. That is, the 1940's virginal theme in the grooming vehicles scripts may not have been necessary as a further precaution for ensuring chastity by the 1950's. By the 1950's the political ideology was well entrenched. Whereas the virgin look may have been necessary to curb the impulse to engage in pre-marital sex as a consequence of the new wide availability of reliable birth control and an increasing divorce rate, the 1950's need for chastity was based on national security and, as a consequence, required extra precautions. This extra precaution came in the package that equated sex with love. However, despite this emphasis on asexuality, sexual activity is mentioned for the first time in the work theme scripts during the 1950's.

Sex, Anxiety, and Unhappy Marriages: Tensions Between Structural and Political Arrangements

The emergence of sex at the office amidst scripts emphasizing asexuality and the equation of

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2 For the most part, prior to the development and distribution of the birth control pill in 1960, more reliable birth control techniques, such as condoms, the “rhythm method,” and coitus interruptus, relied heavily on cooperation from the man. Margaret Sanger reports that in 1915 she inquired of a group of poor women who lived in the neighborhood of her Brooklyn clinic, “why don’t you ask him to use a condom, or why not try the rhythm method,” the women responded with laughter, indicating that the requests had been made, but that the men were unwilling to comply.
sex and love seems inconsistent. However, when these themes are further contextualized with other work themes and in consideration of Cold War rhetoric, then messages about the sexual self at the office do begin to make sense.

Sex at the Office. The emergence of messages concerning sex at the office during this period at first appears to contradict Cold War rhetoric that emphasized asexuality. On the other hand, since women were continuing to enter the paid labor force in increasing numbers during this period, the emergence of a theme on sexual behavior at the office seems consistent with structural arrangements. However, closer inspection of these themes reveals a consistent emphasis on asexuality. Specifically, since the themes are cautionary tales that warn women against the dangers of sex at the office, they appear to be reinforcing a Cold War theme that stresses the importance of the wife and mother role over the worker role. I propose that the same argument helps explain the emergence of themes on the conflict between "feminine nature" and the paid work force.

The "Feminine-Private" Self and the "Public-Worker" Self: Perpetual Conflict and Anxiety. Another theme that appears to reinforce the Cold War rhetoric on femininity is the message that emphasizes the anxiety or conflict women experience when they work in the paid labor force. This theme stresses that women who work must subvert their "feminine nature" and, as a consequence, they are said to experience anxiety. Like the sex theme at the office, this theme appears to be connected with an ideology that views women's primary role as tied to something other than her role as worker. Thus, this theme also appears to be consistent with the Cold War rhetoric that emphasized the wife and mother role for women. Similarly, those
scripts that emphasize both the negative and positive effects of work on marriage also appear to be reinforcing this rhetoric.

The Negative and Positive Effects of Work on Marriage. While work is said to have a negative effect on marriage in the 1940's and a positive effect in the 1930's, it is said to have both a negative and positive effect in the 1950's. In light of the Cold War political rhetoric, these contradictory themes seem consistent with the political sentiments regarding women working during this period. Specifically, while attitudes regarding women's roles were clearly defined at the beginning of the decade they came to be increasingly questioned by the end. Thus, women's work underwent redefinition between the mid 1940's and early 1950's.

The 1950's continued to see a burgeoning of white, married women into the paid labor force (Chafe, 1972; Cott, 1979; Degler, 1980; Helly and Reverby, 1992; Kessler-Harris, 1990; May, 1988; Rothman, 1978; Thebaud, 1994; Weiner, 1985). Another difference between this worker and her 1920's and 1940's counterpart was her reason for working. While the majority of all women who worked for wages in the 1920's did so for financial reasons, many also maintained that work was a means to "self fulfillment and independence" (Chafe, 1982; Degler, 1980; Kessler-Harris, 1990). Similarly, in the 1940's, while the majority of women maintained that their work was for economic need and patriotism, many also said that they found work a source of self expression. Conversely, the 1950's worker was more likely to maintain that her work was a means for supplementing the family's income and, ultimately, for the purpose of improving the families standard of living (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 19990; May, 1988). Consequently, the woman who worked for the purpose of "self fulfillment and independence" was considered selfish and, as a consequence, a poor mother and wife (Chafe, 1972; Degler,
1980; Kessler-Harris, 1990; May, 1988). Therefore, for women who did work during this period, the only appropriate purpose or reason for work was family and home (Chafe, 1972; Kessler-Harris, 1990; May, 1988). Thus, scripts maintaining that work deters from marital happiness versus those that maintain that it contributes to it must be interpreted in light of these considerations. Specifically, working to fulfill family responsibilities became interpreted as “good” for the family, whereas work for ambitious purposes became interpreted as “bad” for the family.

Once their work was reinterpreted as a matter of family pride and responsibility, women returned to work in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s with a different purpose than before. Since it was believed that without familial harmony there would be chaos and turmoil in the streets of America, the Cold War political ideology dictated that family stability was at the heart of national stability. Thus, while women were allowed to return to work, the ideal woman did not work out of self interest, but, rather, out of concern for her family and country; that is, she was “other” oriented. Overall, this image of an “other” oriented woman is reinforced in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality in this decade, as the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality persists into the 1950’s. Thus, this paradigm reinforces Cold War rhetoric.

In sum, although the 1950’s does represent some twists in the themes of feminine sexuality, introducing sex in the work theme scripts, and emphasizing the anxiety that women experience by entering the paid labor force, overall the themes are similar to those from the 1940’s. Readers continue to be cautioned about both remaining single and working, and an asexual interaction style is prescribed in both decades. However, the political climate has shifted
somewhat by the 1950’s. Thus, I have posited different arguments for the messages of feminine sexuality that appear between the 1940’s and 50’s.

**Message Consistency with Both Structural and Political Arrangements**

Unlike messages from the 1940’s, some of the messages in the 1950’s appear to reflect both structural and political transformations and tensions. Specifically, the asexual interaction style, the emphasis on the conflict that emerges for women entering the paid labor force, and the negative effects of work on marriage seem inconsistent with structural arrangements. Since we know that during times of high employment for women there is an increase in female sexual activity, the continual denial of a feminine sexual nature during a period of high employment seems inconsistent. However, when these messages are considered in light of the Cold War rhetoric that upheld the wife and mother above all other roles for women, tying national security to women, then the prescriptions perhaps make more sense. Furthermore, I have argued that it is this ideology that is perhaps the reason for the continuation of the emphasis on a *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality.

There are also messages that do complement the social structural arrangements of women’s lives during this decade. Specifically, these messages are the cautionary tales on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence, and the emergence of sexual behavior at the office. These messages make sense when they are considered in light of structural arrangements, since it might be expected that high marriage rates would be accompanied by cautionary tales. Furthermore, it also makes sense that messages about sex at work would emerge during periods of high employment for women. However, I have also
argued that Cold War rhetoric seems relevant in helping to explain these messages of feminine sexuality during this decade.

Overall, when Cold War rhetoric is brought to bear on the messages of feminine sexuality during the 1950's, they appear consistent. However, there appears to be a tension between the structural arrangements of women's lives and the political ideology of the day during the 1950's, and the cultural messages of feminine sexuality seem to reflect this tension. Perhaps it is this tension that can help to explain the beginnings of a transformation in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality that occur in the next decade.

Around the end of the 1950's, ambiguity concerning women's roles begins to emerge. Carl Degler (1980) posits that this occurs around this period because of the changes wrought by women entering the work force. According to Degler, it is these changes in women's behavior that unconsciously led to a reinterpretation of women's roles. Despite Cold War politics that had emphasized her role as wife and mother, women's entrance into the work force had shaken preconceived notions of what femininity and feminine sexuality meant and, thus, had paved the way for a questioning of women's roles in society. However, while questions began to emerge about women's roles, a political ideology similar to that from the 1940's appears to have prevented any shift in gender ideology in the 50's. Thus, perhaps the persistence of the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality might be explained by this political ideology. In addition to the persistence of the *traditional* paradigm for constructing feminine sexuality, however, messages in the 1950's are also consistent; that is, rather than contradict one another, the messages within the vehicles appear to reinforce one another. While at first some of the messages do appear contentious during this period, such as the asexual woman who is sexual at
the office, I have argued that these themes can be easily explained once they are contextualized. However, during the next decade, they are not so easily explained away.

**The 1960’s:**
**The Second Transitional Period in the Themes of Feminine Sexuality**

Coinciding with political and structural change, the themes of feminine sexuality begin to reveal a second significant shift in the 1960’s. Moreover, the *traditional* paradigm of feminine sexuality also begins to reveal some strain, as new meanings begin to emerge. Since the 1960’s represents a period of rapid social change, these significant changes might be expected. Specifically, beginning around the early 1960’s, age at first marriage begins to increase for the first time in 20 years, marriage and fertility rates decline, and the divorce rate increases. However, one similarity between this and the two previous decades is the female work force participation rate. Continuing with the trend that began in the early 1940’s, wives and mothers continue to enter the work force in unprecedented numbers. Given these structural arrangements, we might expect the following messages to increase or emerge during such a period:

* critical scripts: Increases in divorce are often associated with period of high employment for women. Therefore, the two may reflect one another. However, during such a period we should expect to see an increase in criticisms about marriage, reflecting women’s newly found economic independence and their unwillingness to remain in unhappy marriages

* emphasis on sexuality at work and in the romantic relationship: Since women are continuing to enter the work force in unprecedented numbers and, consequently, their contact with men is increased, then we might expect an emphasis on the sexual self

and we might anticipate a decline or disappearance in the following themes:

* cautionary tales: A declining marriage rate means less pressure to be
coupled and, thus, fewer cautionary tales should appear during such a period

* effects of work on marriage: since by the 1960’s women are becoming a more permanent part of the work force, we might expect a decline in scripts that connect women’s work to activities in the private realm

Finally, since shifts in the social structural arrangements of women’s lives mean shifts in their social status, then we might also expect a transformation in demeanor and grooming prescriptions during such a period. While it may be impossible to say what that shift might be, a shift would nonetheless be expected.

The messages that do appear in the 1960’s both contradict and reinforce some of these expectations. Specifically, as might be expected, both cautionary tales and themes on the effects of work on the romantic relationship do disappear, but so too do critical scripts:

* romantic relationship justifies existence: a male partner is said to give meaning to a woman’s life, but no cautionary tales or critical scripts appear

And this is unexpected.

Additionally, while an emphasis on a feminine sexual nature does emerge, the asexual interaction style also continues to appear:

* sexual interaction style: the asexual-sexual twist

This new emphasis on a sexual self reveals the beginnings of a paradigm shift in the meanings of feminine sexuality, as the messages shift slightly from an “other” to a “self” focused orientation. However, while we might anticipate such a shift in a decade of significant structural change, this is the only message that reveals a shift from an “other” to a “self” focused orientation and, thus, the change does not represent a paradigm shift as such.
While a new emphasis on "self" pleasure emerges in the sexual interaction style scripts in the 1960’s, themes about sex at the office disappear. However, themes emphasizing the conflict for women who work continues into the 1960’s. Given the continued increase of women into the labor force, this message would not have been predicted:

* **demeanor at work**: women who work experience conflict and anxiety as a result of attempting to subvert their "feminine" selves

And, while **grooming** prescriptions are transformed during this decade, prescriptions for **demeanor** remain virtually identical to those from the 1950’s:

* **grooming**: the seductive "look" appears at the work place; the **sophisticated** and **natural** "looks" also appear

* **demeanor**: family minded

Thus, while some of the themes do complement structural arrangements, there are also some themes that appear to contradict one another. Furthermore, there are some contradictions that we might not expect. Specifically, the disappearance of cautionary tales complements the increase in age at first marriage, the declining marriage rate, and the increasing divorce rate. Additionally, the transformation in **grooming** also meets with expectations during a decade of social structural change. However, sexual interaction style scripts that simultaneously prescribe both an asexual and a sexual self reflect contentious meanings of feminine sexuality. Finally, there are several messages that contradict the social structural arrangements of the 1960’s. Specially, while change might be expected, there is no change in the prescriptions for **demeanor** during this decade. Additionally, the absence of critical scripts is also unexpected in an era of rising divorce rates. And, finally, the appearance of scripts emphasizing a conflict for women who work also appear to contradict these arrangements. Therefore, as with the messages in
previous decades, the messages of feminine sexuality are much more complicated than conventional wisdom or the basic sociological paradigm would lead us to believe. Other considerations, such as political and legislative arrangements, and developments in reproductive technology, might help to explain these messages. Specifically, I will argue that the following events might help explain these messages:

* persistence of the Cold War rhetoric
* the development of the contraceptive pill & the sexual revolution
* the Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Movement
* differences between the audience profiles of *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*

Family Minded Demeanor Amidst the "Sexual Revolution:" Tensions Between Competing Political Ideologies and Social Change

Demeanor themes in the 1960’s are singularly focused on one issue - family mindedness. This theme appears to make little sense in an era when age at first marriage is increasing for the first time in twenty years, and the marriage rate is declining and divorce rate increasing. However, when the political climate is considered, the message appears to be reflecting tensions between mainstream political ideology and social change. Specifically, it is the Cold War Rhetoric of the 1950’s that appears to continue to be reflected in demeanor themes in the 1960’s. This rhetoric, however, contradicts the shifts occurring in women’s social status during this period.

Furthermore, this continued reflection of Cold War rhetoric in the demeanor themes may also help to explain the absence of critical scripts during this decade. That is, perhaps Cold War rhetoric is informing these messages during the 1960’s. Therefore, since critical scripts violate this ideology, they do not appear in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality during
this period. However, while tensions between the Cold War rhetoric and social change continue to be reflected in the sexual interaction style scripts during this decade, contentious messages, or messages contradicting this ideology also begin to emerge.

The Asexual-Sexual Twist: Tensions between Structure and Competing Political Agendas

While asexuality is prescribed as the ideal sexual interaction style during the 1960’s, there is a new emphasis on sexual exploration during this decade. Consistent with Cold War rhetoric, women are placed on pedestals and proclaimed the “cradlers of the human race” in the 1960’s and, consequently, it is suggested that they remain chaste. Trustworthiness and integrity are the meanings attached to both chastity and motherhood during this period and, hence, both become symbols of one another. That is, chastity and “good” motherhood become inseparable. And, thus, since love and sex continue to be equated into the 1960’s, motherhood becomes the fulfillment of female sexuality.

Coinciding with these themes that emphasize asexuality, women were becoming increasingly seen as a permanent part of the work force by the 1960’s. As a consequence of this shift in perception of the feminine, a similar shift in perceptions of feminine sexuality also appears to emerge during this period. However, as with the 1940’s and 50’s, these scripts from the 60’s coincide with tensions between structural and political arrangements, as the Cold War rhetoric continues to emphasize the importance of the role of wife and mother for national stability. Thus, mainstream political rhetoric during the 1960’s appears to represent a resistance to structural change.

Unlike the 1940’s and 50’s, however, competing political ideologies were beginning to emerge in the early 1960’s. Specifically, while the Cold War rhetoric of the 1950’s continues
to be emphasized in the first part of the 1960’s, competing political ideologies, such as those within the equality movements, begin to challenge this rhetoric. Therefore, the contentious messages of sexuality that appear during this time might best be explained by both a tension between structural arrangements and mainstream political ideology, and also by the emergence of the equality movement’s rhetoric. What these shifts in themes amount to is the beginnings of a paradigm shift, as emphasis moves away from an “other” to the “self” oriented paradigm. However, this paradigm shift is only directly present in the sexual interaction style messages. What might explain the presence of the traditional paradigm alongside the beginnings of a new paradigm may be the competing political ideologies that allowed for society as a whole to question women’s assigned roles and status. However, the traditional paradigm remained unbudgeable in the 1920’s when competing ideologies had also vied for public approval. The difference between this decade and the 1920’s, however, may have to do with two critical events: women’s work force participation and the development of the birth control pill.

The “Pill.” In addition to the liberation politics that emerged in the 1960’s, and the recognition of women as a permanent part of the work force, the development and distribution of the contraceptive pill is almost certainly central to the messages of sexual activity in this decade. While contraception had become more widely available following the repeal of the Comstock law, it was the “pill” that made exploratory and experimental sexual activity ever more possible. Thus, the “pill,” which is said to have been pivotal to the “sexual revolution” of the late 1960’s (Gordon, 1990), is almost certainly connected with the messages that emphasize sexual exploration during this decade.
Overall, the sexual woman theme appears to be connected to a host of social, political, and economic shifts that occurred during the 1960's. Specifically, the increasing contact between women and men in the labor force, liberation politics, the development of the pill, and the increasing age at first marriage, which meant women had the opportunity to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage, most likely all contributed to this new theme that emphasized sexual activity. The fact that this theme appears alongside prescriptions for an asexual interaction style might be explained by the persistence of the Cold War rhetoric that emphasized the wife and mother role for women. Finally, the asexual-sexual twist may also be explained by a divergence in the messages between *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle* during this period.

As documented in Appendix F, beginning in the 1960's and continuing into the 1970's, the cultural messages of feminine sexuality begin to diverge in these two periodicals, and it is the messages in *Mademoiselle* that reflect the changes in the themes of feminine sexuality. While *Ladies Home Journal* continues to emphasize the asexual interaction style, it is the readers of *Mademoiselle* who are presented with both the asexuality and sexuality themes. Therefore, unlike the messages in *Mademoiselle*, the messages in *Ladies Home Journal* do not appear to reflect the tension between social structural change, the “pill,” liberation politics and the Cold War rhetoric. However, since contentious messages do appear in the grooming scripts in *Ladies Home Journal*, this explanation is perhaps useful for understanding the emergence of a “sexy” appearance at the work place.

**The “Sexy” Look**

While sexual activity disappears from the work theme scripts, a “sexy” appearance surfaces
for the first time in the 1960's, and this theme appears in both *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. However, similarly to the mixed messages concerning sexual interaction style, readers are presented with contentious messages for *grooming* at work. Simultaneously, readers are told they can either present an appearance that is consistent with the "femme fatale" or with a *sophisticated, mannish/tailored* look. Additionally, these shifts in grooming at work are inconsistent with general *grooming* themes, which emphasize a *natural* and *sophisticated* look.

Thus, similarly to the messages on sexual interaction style, prescriptions for *grooming* are contentious during this period. But perhaps the same explanation can be offered. That is, perhaps a combination of factors explain the emergence of the "sexy" look, including increased contact with men at work, the emergence of the "pill," the "sexual revolution," and liberation politics. Whereas the contentious messages concerning *grooming* might be explained by the tensions produced by the continued presence of Cold War political rhetoric in the midst of rapid social change.

**Contradictions Between the “Feminine” and the “Worker” Self: Tensions Between Cold War Rhetoric and Rapid Political and Social Change**

Scripts in the 1960’s continue to emphasize the conflict between the feminine self and the worker self. This idea expresses a tension between the *natural* and, hence, “feminine” self and the “new” self that women are required to be; that is, a worker. Despite the fact that work had become an inevitable part of women’s lives by the 1960’s, the feminine self and the worker self are presented in both the 1950’s and the 60’s as incompatible types. Thus, women are discouraged from work in these scripts.
Throughout the 1950's and 60's, women between 25 and 44 years of age represent the majority of women workers, with women aged 45 to 64 representing the next largest group. Additionally, many of these women were wives (from 15% in 1940 to 30%). But whereas the greatest growth took place among working-class women in the 1940's, by the 1950's and 60's it was middle-class women who were more likely to be employed. Furthermore, it was to these women that government Cold War rhetoric on family stability was aimed. Thus, just as with the asexuality theme, this theme seems inconsistent against the backdrop of social change that was occurring during this decade. But perhaps the presence of this theme can be explained as the result of a tension between social and political change; that is, while women's social status was certainly changing and political efforts to change women's social status were increasing, mainstream political ideology resisted shifts toward a transformation in perceptions of the feminine.

Messages of Feminine Sexuality: Tensions Between Political Ideologies and Social Structural Change

The 1960's represents a significant shift from previous decades in the messages of feminine sexuality, and also in structural and political arrangements. This shift represents the beginnings of a shift in the paradigms of feminine sexuality, as the emphasis shifts from an “other” to a “self” focused orientation. However, while this shift in the sexual interaction style themes begins to reflect a shift in the very meaning of feminine sexuality, the “other” oriented message still persists in this decade.

In addition to the sexual interaction style theme shifts, changes also occur in grooming prescriptions during this decade. By the 1960's, gone are the classically feminine,
tailored/mannish, and sophisticated looks, as the natural and seductive themes emerge. While some of the themes in the 1960’s do confirm social structural arrangements (i.e., the disappearance of cautionary tales), most do not; specifically, the sexual interaction style continues to be prescribed as asexual, there is an absence of critical scripts, the emphasis on a conflict between “feminine nature” and a “worker” self continues to appear and, despite significant social structural change, no subsequent change in demeanor emerges. I have argued that many of these messages appear to reflect a tension between social structural organization and competing political ideologies. Specifically, the persistent emphasis on the following themes reflects the resistance of Cold War rhetoric to rapid social change: 1. “family minded” demeanor, 2. asexual interaction style, 3. the conflict between “feminine nature” and entry into the work force and, 4. on the absence of critical scripts. Finally, I have also argued that the beginnings of a new paradigm of feminine sexuality might be explained by a combination of structural change, the emergence of the equality movements, and the development of the birth control pill. However, I have maintained that these rumblings of a new meaning of feminine sexuality may have been thwarted by competing political ideologies during this decade; specifically, the resistance of Cold War rhetoric to the equality movements.

Similarly to this period, themes in the 1970’s are significantly transformed. However, while messages in the 1960’s represent shifts in both the themes and meanings of feminine sexuality, the transformation in messages that occurs in the 1970’s is significant enough to constitute a complete paradigm shift.
The Third Shift:  
The Emergence of a New Paradigm of Feminine Sexuality

The 1970’s: The Modern Paradigm of Feminine Sexuality

By the 1970’s there is a watershed of change in the messages of feminine sexuality that constitutes a paradigm shift. However, the structural arrangements organizing women’s lives change very little between the 1960’s and 70’s. While the divorce rate peaks around the middle of the decade, the trends in age at first marriage, and in marriage and fertility rates continue to reflect trends established in the 1960’s. Finally, the trend in female work force participation for white, middle-class women that began in the 1940’s also continues into the 1970’s. Therefore, if structural arrangements alone can explain the messages, we might expect no change from the 1960’s; that is, an increase in critical scripts, the emergence of an emphasis on sexual activity in both the work and romantic relationship scripts, and a decline in cautionary tales. Finally, given the structural similarity between the two decades, we would not expect any shift in grooming or demeanor prescriptions to appear. However, just as with the messages from the 1960’s, structural arrangements alone can not adequately explain the evolution of the messages of feminine sexuality in the 1970’s.

While critical scripts do appear for the first time and an emphasis on sexual activity emerges during this decade, demeanor prescriptions are transformed in the 1970’s. Additionally, while sexual activity continues to be absent from the work theme scripts, a new emphasis on a “sexy” demeanor does emerge in these scripts. However, some themes that we might not expect continue to appear: cautionary tales continue to appear; themes on the effects of work on marriage reappear; and, finally, while prescriptions for sexual exploration emerge, scripts criticizing this sexual interaction style also appear.
* sexual interaction style: sexual self; criticisms of the sexual woman demeanor

* demeanor: confident, happy, self aware; and continued emphasis on family
domestic skills

* work demeanor: sexy, flirty

* romantic relationship justifies existence: cautionary tales

* effects of work on marriage: work both contributes to and deters from
marital happiness

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is not simply a change in themes that occurs in the
1970’s. Rather, the 1970’s constitutes a paradigm shift in the messages of feminine sexuality.

Whereas previously the messages of feminine sexuality emphasized an exclusively traditional, or “other” focused orientation, beginning in the 1970’s a modern, or “self” focused paradigm emerges. Thus, while themes in the five previous decades do shift from decade to decade, these decades all prescribe a feminine sexuality that I refer to as the traditional paradigm:

**traditional paradigm:**

- romantic relationship justifies existence
- pleasing a male partner with appearance
- please a male partner with demeanor: receptive, yielding
- virgin, virginal, and asexual interaction style
- feminine demeanor at work: friendly, nurturing,
- work contributes to marital happiness

The themes also change in the modern paradigm, but there is a consistent “self” oriented message that appears in the 1970’s and the decades that follow it:

**modern paradigm:**

- romantic relationship improves existence
- please the self with appearance
- please the self with demeanor: confident, self aware
- sexual self
- traditional masculine demeanor at work: confident, assertive
- work contributes to own happiness

335

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However, while the *modern* paradigm of feminine sexuality appears consistently in the next three decades, the message of feminine sexuality is not consistently *modern*. Throughout the next three decades, the *modern* paradigm is mixed with the *traditional*.

In order to explain the emergence of the themes in the 1970's, the evolution of the meaning of those themes from a *traditional* to the *modern* paradigm, and the persistence of the *traditional* paradigm, considerations in addition to structural arrangements must be brought to bear on their interpretation. Certainly, while structural arrangements seem to explain the shift to the critical scripts, the emergence of the sexual woman interaction style, and the “sexy” woman at the office, they can not explain the criticisms of the sexual woman, the shift in demeanor prescriptions, the cautionary tales that continue to pervade the messages of feminine sexuality in the 1970's, and themes emphasizing that work deters from marital happiness. Rather, a combination of considerations that include structural, political, and cultural organization, and developments in reproductive law and technology must also be brought to bear on the interpretation of these messages. I will argue that some of those issues that were useful for explaining the messages of feminine sexuality in the 1960's are also useful for understanding the messages in the 70's. However, there are also some new issues to be considered:

* women now a permanent part of the work force
* the Civil Rights Movement & the Women’s Movement
* legalization of abortion & the “pill”

The difference between the messages of the 1960’s and the 70’s rests on shifts in political ideology. The 1960's and 70's was a political time for American women, much as it had been in the 1920's. Some critical political events that mark the 1960's and 70's include the women's
rights movements, the “pill,” which led to a revolution in morals and manners in the U.S., the reintroduction of the ERA to the constitution, the first quotas bill. All of these signaled a renewed political activism for American women and Americans in general. However, what perhaps most distinguishes the 1970’s from the 60’s is the disappearance of Cold War rhetoric and the emergence of a new permissiveness in public and political ideology. For the first time since the 1930’s, these political transformations appear to reflect rather than contradict the structural changes that began in the 1940’s. Thus, the tensions between political ideology and social structural arrangements that appear to have influenced the messages of feminine sexuality in many of the previous decades seems to abate during the 1970’s. I will draw on these events in explaining both the shifting themes and meanings of feminine sexuality and the perennial presence of the traditional paradigm.

Shifts in Demeanor and the Emergence of Critical Scripts: An Indication of Shifts in Women’s Economic, Political, and Social Status

Shifts in demeanor from “family minded” in the 1960’s to “confident,” “honest,” “open,” and “self aware” in the 70’s are consistent with a paradigm shift from an “other” focused to a “self” focused orientation. In fact, romantic relationship theme scripts in the 1970’s emphasize not how romance justifies a woman’s existence, but how it can improve that existence. I argue that this shift from an “other” to a “self” focused orientation is probably explained by a combination of economic, social, and legislative concerns and developments in contraceptive technology, which culminated in a shift in gender ideology. I believe that it is this shift in gender ideology that is perhaps most responsible for the transformation in the meaning of feminine sexuality that occurs in the 1970’s:
Because of their involvement in the world of paid labor (1), women became seen as citizens and, therefore, deserving of rights (2). Added to this change in perception of women as citizens, the Civil Rights Movement helped the cause of women (3 - 5). But, as evidenced by the 1920's, an ideology alone could not transform women's lives and, thus, the messages of feminine sexuality. Rather, the evolution of a protest movement requires not only a rallying point and a collective recognition of oppression, but a political and social atmosphere that is conducive to change. All of these conditions were present in the 1970's, but only the first two were present in the 1920's and 60's. Thus, a political transformation in women's status and, subsequently, the messages of feminine sexuality, could not be accomplished during earlier decades.

In addition to being “confident,” “open,” and “self aware,” prescriptions also include being “flirty” and “sexy” in the 1970's, and this may be consistent with the both the sexual revolution of the late 1960's and the developments in contraceptive technology and the legalization of abortion. As a consequence of these events, which were made possible by the equality movements, an increased sexual expression is both permitted and encouraged culturally and socially. This argument might also help explain the emergence of messages on both the sexual self and critical scripts focused on the romantic relationship.

**Critical Scripts.** Similarly, the appearance of critical scripts might be explained by the consequences of these events that altered women’s political and social status. As I have stated
previously, since periods of high employment for women are often related to increasing divorce rates, the emergence of critical scripts during such a period is expected. However, while there have been several periods in which these structural relationships have emerged, the 1970's represents the first decade in which critical scripts emerge.

These scripts might be reflecting actual social structural arrangements; that is, they may be reflecting growing discontent as a consequence of increased economic power, but they might also be reflecting social and legislative changes and the availability of the “pill.” In addition to shifts in her social status, the equality movements of the 1960's, the “pill,” and the legalization of abortion are said to have led to an increased self consciousness and sense of freedom among many women. The 1970's represents a decade that is relatively unmarred by tensions between structural arrangements and political ideology and, in addition to this agreement between structure and politics contributing to and reinforcing a new gender ideology, this relationship may have been conducive to the emergence of the critical scripts during this period. I believe the same argument might explain the emergence of the sexual woman.

The Sexual Self: The sexual self, the sexual interaction style that is consistent with a “self” focused orientation, does not fully emerge until the 1970's. Perhaps it does not fully emerge until this period for the same reasons that I have given for the emergence of the critical scripts; specifically, it seems that perhaps the “pill,” the legalization of abortion, the sexual revolution of the 1960's, and the equality movements may help to explain this new theme. Scripts on sexual demeanor in the 1960's are not affected by these same events that transform the messages of the 1970's partly because of the persistence of the Cold War rhetoric and partly because these social and political events are not fully realized until the late 1960's. Specifically,
since the "sexual revolution" did not occur until the late 1960's, prescriptions emphasizing asexuality during this period are not entirely unexpected. In fact, the "sexual revolution" did not become fully realized until the 1970's (Gordon, 1990).

This emphasis on sexual exploration and experimentation that appears for the first time during the 1970's is perhaps what we would expect after the late "sexual revolution" of the 1960's and the development of the birth control pill. It makes sense that birth control technology and availability and ideas about female sexuality reflect and reinforce one another. Therefore, the development and availability of the "pill" perhaps reflects radical shifts in cultural expectations for female sexuality that are connected to the equality movements and to the legalization of abortion (Chafe, 1972; Cott, 1979; Degler, 1980; Gordon, 1980). This sexual self theme is even found in work theme scripts during this decade.

"Sexiness" at the Office

Similarly to the themes in the previous two decades, themes in the 70's continue to emphasize the conflict that women experience as a consequence of working. However, while this conflict between the "feminine" self and the "worker" self was attributed to the inconsistency between so called "feminine nature" (i.e., "friendly," "kind," and "nurturing") and the "public-worker" self, by the 1970's this nature is transformed. By the 1970's, this nature, in addition to being "confident," "assertive," and "aggressive," is also "sensual," "flirty," and "sexy." While the former prescriptions are consistent with a "self-focused" paradigm, the emphasis on "sexiness" and "flirting" represent a transformation in the traditional feminine demeanor.
This change may be explained by the connection established between the political and structural arrangements of this decade; that is, the more structural and political arrangements complement one another, the more consistent the messages. After all, the political seeds that were sown in the late 1950’s and the 60’s that made the transformations of the 70’s possible were thwarted in the 50’s and 60’s by competing political ideologies. However, by the 1970’s the Cold War ideology had been replaced by an ideology of equality. Thus, it might be expected that a transformation in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality might occur during this and not an earlier period.

Perhaps the reason the themes of feminine sexuality are transformed from caring, and empathetic, to sexy and flirty, might also be explained by the developments in contraceptive technology, the sexual revolution, and by the legislative turn of events that were propelled by those developments. However, a similar theme also appears in the grooming scripts in the 1960’s - the “femme fatale” look. This theme continues to be prescribed into the 1970’s.

Given these new themes and the events that coincide with them, the reemergence of messages that emphasize the effects of work on marriage during this decade are nothing less than perplexing. Given that women were viewed as a permanent part of the work force by this decade, themes emphasizing the connection between work and love appear to contradict both women’s experience and political sentiments of this period. However, since this theme continues into the next two decades, what is perhaps more surprising is the disappearance of this theme in the 1960’s.

Despite changes in white, middle-class women’s social status over the last eight decades, women’s work roles are perennially connected with their sexuality; that is, references to their
work roles are connected with their success or failure in romance. However, this connection disappears for the first time in the 1960's only to reappear again in the next three decades. However, while the connection between their work roles and their romantic lives disappears in the 1960's, it should not be forgotten that there is a continued emphasis during this decade on the conflict between a feminine self and a worker self. Thus, perhaps what is most significant about the appearance of the connection between love and work in the 1970's is the themes that emerge; that is, an emphasis on how work either contributes to or deters from marital happiness. In a period of high employment for women, and an increasing divorce rate, we might expect messages emphasizing the benefits of work on marriage. However, both negative and positive themes appear; that is, readers are told that work both contributes to and deters from marital happiness. As with other themes that appear to contradict the structural and political climate of the 1970's, perhaps the continued emphasis on how work deters from marital happiness might be a response to rapid social change. Specifically, the continued presence of a theme that emphasizes the negative effects of work on marriage might be a response to tensions resulting from the transformations in women's roles from "homemaker" to "breadwinner."

Persistence of The Traditional Meaning of Feminine Sexuality

Given my argument that the economic and the broad political and legislative transformations of the 1970's are connected with the transformation from a traditional to a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality, it is surprising to see the persistence of themes that neither reflect social structural arrangements or political change. Specifically, cautionary tales continue to appear, and inconsistent messages that inform readers to "please yourself" with both appearance and
demeanor appear alongside scripts that emphasize “pleasing him” with both appearance and demeanor. Additionally, themes that emphasize the effects of work on marriage reappear in the 1970’s. Finally, while messages emphasizing sexual exploration fully emerge in the 1970’s, these themes are often criticized, as readers are berated for “sexual promiscuity.”

While contentious messages also appear in the 1960’s, I have explained that these might be explained by the presence of competing political ideologies and tensions between these ideologies and structural arrangements. However, in the 1970’s, I believe those messages that continue to prescribe the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality might be reflecting tensions that have emerged in response to rapid social change. Gerda Lerner (1979) maintains that, when cultural messages neither reflect social structural arrangements nor the political ideology of the day, then they may be a response to the tensions resulting from transformations occurring in women’s roles.

Consistency and Contention in the Messages of Feminine Sexuality

The messages of feminine sexuality are transformed during this decade. Not only do the themes themselves shift between the 1960’s and 70’s, but the meanings of feminine sexuality are significantly transformed from an “other” focused to a “self” focused paradigm. In attempting to explain this shift, I have tried to show that a simple correspondence between cultural messages and social structural arrangements is insufficient for purposes of interpretation. Rather, in addition to social arrangements, other considerations must also be brought to bear on the interpretation of these messages.

In an attempt to explain these themes and the shift from a traditional to a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality, medical technology, economic, political, and legislative considerations
have been brought to bear on their interpretation. I have argued that these messages perhaps highlight a tension between rapid social change and shifts in women's social status and roles. These tensions not only continue into the next decade, they dramatically increase.

The 1980's and 1990's: Structural Similarity and Shifts in Meaning

While themes in the 1980's are not significantly different from those in the 70's, themes in the 90's represent the fourth transformation in the messages of feminine sexuality. However, structurally, the 1980's and 90's are similar. Both decades appear to represent a leveling off period as divorce rates, which peak in the early 80's, level off in the late 80's. Furthermore, age at first marriage, and marriage and fertility rates also stabilize in the mid 1980's. Finally, women's work force participation also stabilizes during this period. The trends in female work force participation established in the 1940's levels off at the end of the 1970's, with just as many single mothers working as married women with children. The increase in the numbers of women entering the paid labor force, however, continues unabated. Given these structural arrangements, there are some unexpected messages that appear in the 1980's:

* conflict between "feminine nature" and "worker"
* cautionary tales and critical scripts that appear separately
* work deters from marital happiness

The continued emphasis on the conflict that emerges for women who work would not be expected during a period of high employment for women, and we also might not expect to see critical scripts or cautionary tales during such a period. Despite these inconsistencies, the similarity between the structural arrangements of the 1970's and 80's might lead us to expect a continuation of those themes and meanings of feminine sexuality from the 70's. And, in fact,
the cultural messages of feminine sexuality in the 1980’s do share themes in common with the 1970’s:

* **romantic relationship improving existence**: cautionary tales and critical scripts appear separately

* **please him and self with appearance**

* **please him and self with demeanor**

* **sexual interaction style**: virgin, asexual, sexual

* **masculine demeanor at work**: “confident,” “assertive,” & conflict between “feminine” self and “worker” self

* **effects of work on marriage - other focused**: marriage deters from marital happiness because you can’t please your husband

Therefore, like the 1970’s, messages in the 1980’s continue to represent the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality. However, while messages in the 1970’s straddle the traditional-modern ideal, the modern paradigm was more prevalent in the 1970’s than in the 80’s. In the 1980’s, an increasing number of scripts straddle the traditional-modern ideal. Thus, an increasing number of scripts are contentious:

* **sexual interaction style**: the virgin, the asexual and the sexual woman are all prescribed

* **demeanor**: please him with domestic skills and please self with “confidence,” “self awareness”

* **appearance**: please him and please the self

Furthermore, while the messages do not represent a significant departure from those in the 1970’s, there are some theme shifts. Specifically, there is a shift in sexual interaction style themes, as all three sexual demeanors are prescribed during this decade. Additionally, like those messages from the 1970’s, messages on the sexual self are often criticized:

* **sexual interaction style**: virgin, and asexual interaction style; love and sex equated; sexual self is criticized
And these are themes we might not expect to see during a period of high employment for
women.

While the structural arrangements organizing women's lives are more similar than different
over the last thirty years, the political climate shifts considerably between the 70's and the 80's.
Therefore, while the contentious messages that appear in the 1970's were attributed to the
effects of rapid social change, messages that are contentious in the 80's are not so easily
explained. After all, the structural arrangements of the previous two decades stabilize during
the 1980's and, thus, rapid social change alone is an unlikely reason for either the shift in
themes or for the contentious messages that continue to appear in this decade. Considering
this, other issues must be brought to bear on the interpretation of both the shift in themes and
the contentious messages of feminine sexuality.

A political shift occurs between the 1970's and 80's, and I believe it is this shift that helps
explain the messages of feminine sexuality in this decade. This shift has often been referred to
as the "conservative swing," and it indicates the end of the reform era in politics that marked
the 1970's. This "conservative swing" that occurs in the 1980's is evidenced by the emergence
of such groups as the Christian Coalition, and the "Right to Life" movement. Coinciding with
this political shift, abortion laws became questioned anew, and the availability of some
contraceptives, such as RU-486, became criminalized within the boarders of the United States.
This political transformation coincides with a plethora of contradictory and contentious
messages within the periodicals, as both the traditional and the modern paradigms of feminine
sexuality are simultaneously prescribed. An explanation for these contradictions and
contentions may lie in the tensions between the structural arrangements and development of

346
"conservative" politics. Specifically, I argue that both the contentious messages and the messages that contradict social structural arrangements may be explained by a tension between competing political ideologies (reform politics and the "new right" or the "conservative swing") and resistance to social structural change.

Messages Reflect Tensions Between Competing Ideologies and Structural Organization

The Presence of Cautionary Tales and Critical Scripts. While the structural arrangements between the 1970's and 80's are similar and the political climate strikingly different, the messages emphasizing the importance of romance for women continue into the 1980's, with cautionary tales and critical scripts appearing along side one another. In addition to producing a contentious message of feminine sexuality, cautionary tales appear to contradict social structural arrangements, such as the stabilizing marriage rate.

While the appearance of these contentious messages were explained as a response to the transformation in women's roles in the 1970's, the confusing mix of themes in the 80's might best be explained by the contradictions in the political climate. During the 1980's, the political landscape was transformed, representing a reaction to the tolerance and liberation politics of the 1970's. Thus, perhaps it is this shift in political ideology that helps to explain the shifting meanings of feminine sexuality in the 1980's.

During this decade a bevy of legal challenges to both feminist and other minority goals of the 1970's emerged, as abortion rights, contraceptive rights, quotas and affirmative action laws all became threatened. The last time legal gains for women were reversed or temporarily overturned was in the 1930's. Thus, this new political climate appears to represent a return to a traditional rhetoric concerning the position of women in society and, hence, may help to
explain the continued presence of cautionary tales. Therefore, in addition to the contradictions in the political climate, the appearance of both critical scripts and cautionary tales might also reflect tensions between the structural arrangements and the “new right” political rhetoric; albeit that we might expect a plethora of critical scripts during a decade when the divorce rate continues to rise until around the middle of the decade.

However, since it follows on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Movement, this return to a traditional political ideology that affirmed women’s place in the home appears to have been unable to completely reverse the cultural messages of feminine sexuality, as critical scripts continue to appear in the 1980’s. That is, while the transformation in political ideology may have contributed to these contentious messages, it could not reverse the patterns established during the 1970’s and, thus, the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality persists. As William Chafe (1972) maintains, the changes in women’s economic role and marital status succeeded in altering people’s perceptions of women’s social roles and, therefore, perhaps might also explain the persistence of the modern paradigm in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. Similarly, like the presence of cautionary tales and critical scripts, messages emphasizing the conflict that women experience at work as a consequence of their “feminine nature” may be explained in the same way.

The “Sensual Woman” and Anxiety at the Office. The theme emphasizing the conflict produced for women as a consequence of subverting their “feminine nature” for a “worker” self continues into the 1980’s. In addition to this theme contradicting the structural arrangements of women’s lives during this period, the emphasis on the negative effects of work on marriage also appear to contradict a decade of high rates of employment for women.
However, just as with the other messages that contradict the social structural arrangements during this decade, the explanation for the appearance of these themes might lie in the competing political ideologies and the tensions between conservative politics and social structural change.

In attempting to explain work themes on demeanor and the presence of both cautionary tales and critical scripts, I have maintained that these themes appear to contradict structural arrangements because they are perhaps reflecting tensions between competing political ideologies and tensions between those ideologies and structural arrangements. In addition, I argue that the resurgence of the traditional meaning in the sexual interaction style scripts might also be explained by such tensions.

**Tensions Between Competing Ideologies and Structural Organization: The Virgin and the Asexual Woman Reemerge**

The emphasis on the sexual woman, the most often prescribed interaction style in the 1980’s, represents a continuation of the message from the 1970’s. Additionally, this theme is consistent with demeanor prescriptions that emphasize a “self” oriented paradigm. In these scripts, contraception continues to be presented as a means to worry free sexual exploration. However, these scripts reveal a growing tension in the 1980’s. Specifically, while criticisms of sexual exploration continue into the 1980’s, scripts on abortion increasingly incorporate mixed messages. Coinciding with these messages, there is a resurgence of the traditional paradigm in the sexual interaction style scripts. Thus, in addition to the sexual exploration prescription, there is a reemphasis on the virgin and the asexual interaction style themes in this decade. These changes indicate a significant shift in the tone of the sexual interaction style scripts.

349

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These contradictions in the sexual interaction style themes of this decade might be explained by the arrangement of events occurring during this decade. As I have highlighted throughout this chapter, political and structural arrangements rarely appear to complement one another; in fact, the 1930’s and 70’s appear to be the only example when they do. Furthermore, while all of the decades share the traditional paradigm in common, the messages of feminine sexuality have only once been tension free - the 1930’s. Despite the perennial presence of the traditional paradigm, the remainder of the decades have witnessed a contradiction between structural arrangements and political ideology: 1920’s, 1940’s, 1950’s, 1960’s, and now the 1980’s. Added to this, messages in the 1970’s and 80s are plagued by a tension that results from the presence of both the traditional and the modern paradigms of feminine sexuality. In addition to this tension, all but two decades reflect a tension between political and structural arrangements. However, with the exception of the 1980’s, all of these decades have either followed a significant social crisis or have experienced one:

* 1920’s: follows World War I
* 1930’s: the Great Depression
* 1940’s: World War II
* 1950’s: Cold War and Korean war
* 1960’s: Cold War continues, Civil Rights, Women’s Rights; Vietnam war

But perhaps a rapidly changing society can be interpreted as a different sort of social crisis. Since it contributed to rapid social change, the legalization of abortion, and political and social acceptance of a female labor force might be interpreted as a social crises of sorts. Therefore, perhaps the contradictory sexual interaction style messages reflect competing political ideologies during this decade and a rapidly changing society. I believe it is perhaps this
explanation that also helps us to understand the continued emphasis on the negative effects of work on women.

**Contentious Messages: “Other” and “Self” focused Messages of Feminine Sexuality**

While the themes themselves do not change between the 1970’s and 80’s, the cultural messages of feminine sexuality continue to straddle the *traditional-modern* ideal in the 1980’s. While readers are advised to work on appearance for their “own happiness” and to “be yourself,” they also continue to be presented with messages that are consistent with a *traditional* paradigm; that is, they are instructed to present an appearance and demeanor that will please a male partner. Thus, similarly to the messages of sexual interaction style that present both *traditional* and *modern* paradigmatic themes, these messages are also contentious. As with those messages that contradict social structural arrangements, perhaps the presence of contentious messages can be explained by the competing ideologies that exist during the 1980’s, and by the tensions that exists between these ideologies and social structural organization.

**Tensions Between Competing Political Ideologies and Social Change: Contentious Messages of Feminine Sexuality**

The themes of feminine sexuality during the 1980’s do not represent a significant departure from those of the 1970’s. However, there is one critical difference in the themes between these two decades. Whereas the sexual woman is prescribed during the 1970’s, the 80’s represents a combination of both the *traditional* and *modern* paradigms, as the virgin, the asexual woman, and the sexual woman are all prescribed in one decade. While no such contention appears in
the 1970's, both these decades do present many contentious messages as a result of presenting both traditional and modern paradigmatic themes.

In addition to the sexual demeanor scripts contradicting the social structural arrangements of the day, cautionary tales and critical scripts, and the emphasis on the conflict that is produced for women who work and the negative effects of work on marriage also appear to contradict such organization. Again, none of these themes would be expected in a period of high employment for women. Since these themes are unexpected in a decade of stabilizing marriage, fertility, and divorce rates, I have attempted to explain both these themes and those that combine the traditional and modern paradigms in light of the competing political ideologies that emerge during the 1980's. Specifically, I have argued that these messages might best be explained as a consequence of the tensions between competing political ideologies and the structural arrangements of the 1980's.

Similarly to the 1930's, messages in the 80's appear to represent somewhat of a political backlash to the 1970's. The cultural messages of the 1980's reflect a decade in flux, where tension abounds not only between the messages and the structural arrangements of women's lives, but also within the cultural messages themselves. One explanation that I have offered for the messages of feminine sexuality that emerge during this decade lies in the apparent contradiction that exists between the structural arrangements and political ideologies during this period. I have argued that this contradiction may have caused a tension that results from those very structural arrangements. That is, the political and legislative efforts to recast feminine sexuality during this period may perhaps be a response to the tensions resulting from those very transformations occurring in women's roles. While messages in the 1980's may
represent a political backlash to the 1970's, the 90's appears to represent something similar. However, whereas messages in the 1980's were a response to the reforms of the 70's, messages in the 90's appear to be a rejection of those messages from the “conservative” 80's.”

The 1990's:
The Fourth Shift in the Messages of Feminine Sexuality

Similarly to messages in the 1980's, messages in the 90's continue to include both the traditional and modern paradigms of feminine sexuality. Thus, the contentious messages of the two previous decades continue in the 1990's. In addition, the 1990's is structurally very similar to the 80's. However, while these two decades share these things in common, themes begin to shift again in the 1990's:

* sexual interaction style: sexual woman
* demeanor: in addition to being confident, self aware, and independent, the prescription is for also “being fun” and having a sense of humor. Cautionary tales and criticisms also continue
* effects of work on marriage - sexual behavior: For the first time the mention of sex at the office is “self” rather than “other” focused

As I will document, while the traditional paradigm continues into the 1990's, the themes and their meanings are more fully modern in this decade. For example, sexual interaction style themes emphasize the sexual woman in the 1990's. Additionally, prescriptions for demeanor shift slightly in the 1990's, as “being fun” and “having a sense of humor” are added to the “confident,” “self aware” and “independent” prescriptions of the 1970's and 80's. Finally, themes on sex at the office also become more consistent with the modern paradigm of feminine sexuality, as readers are advised against sexual activity at the office “because it can ruin your
career;” that is, for the first time since sexual activity was mentioned in the office in the 1950’s, the focus is on “self” rather than on the “other.”

In addition to these shifts in the themes of feminine sexuality, the themes also represent some departures from those of the 1970’s and 80’s:

* **demeanor:** prescriptions for “flirty” or “sexiness,” which appeared beginning in the 1970’s, disappear
* **sexual interaction style:** the sexual woman is prescribed, but criticisms of this interaction style disappear
* **grooming:** the seductive theme, a frequently appearing theme since the 1970’s, disappears
* **work demeanor:** conflict between the “feminine” self and the “worker” self disappears. No prescriptions for appropriate demeanor at the office

These shifts in the themes of feminine sexuality appear to be similar to those shifts that occurred in the 1960’s. Like the 1960’s, themes in the 90’s do not shift significantly, but there are departures from and additions to old themes that do indicate a shift in thematic structure; that is, like those from the 1960’s, theme shifts in the 90’s represent twists rather than transformations in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. Specifically, 1. while demeanor should still be “confident,” and “independent,” it should also be “fun;” 2. while the sexual woman continues to be prescribed, criticisms of that interaction style disappear; 3. while work theme scripts continue to emphasize the negative effects of work on marriage, for the first time these scripts are “self” focused; and, finally, 3. While the *sophisticated* look continues, the *seductive* look of the 70’s and 80’s disappears, and a new emphasis on the *natural* look emerges.

Given the structural similarity between the 1980’s and 90’s, we might not anticipate such shifts in the themes of feminine sexuality. Specifically, while we would expect to see themes
emphasizing the sexual woman and sex at the work, we might not expect *grooming* or demeanor themes to shift during a period of structural stability. Furthermore, continuing with expectations from the past, we might also not expect to see cautionary tales or criticisms in a period marked by stable marriage and divorce rates. Finally, we might also not expect to see scripts emphasizing the negative effects of work on marriage during a period of high and stable employment for women. Therefore, in order to explain these messages of feminine sexuality, other considerations must be brought to bear on their interpretation.

**A Political Cooling Off period: Implications for a Transformation in the Messages of Feminine Sexuality**

While they may share the continued presence of the *traditional* paradigm and similar structural arrangements, the 1980's and 90's are two politically dissimilar decades. I argue that it is this political shift that may help explain the transformation in the themes of feminine sexuality that occurs in the 1990's.

Unlike the 1920's and 70's, the 90's does not represent a decade informed by political reform. Additionally, the 1990's does not represent a decade marked by the social crises that characterize every decade that precedes it. Finally, conversely to the 1920's, 60's, and 80's, the 90's does not represent a decade in flux; that is, a decade caught between two competing political ideologies. In short, except structurally, the 1990's does not look like any previous decade included in this sample. Therefore, perhaps the 1990's represents a period of political and legislative efforts to construct feminine sexuality anew; but that story remains to be told.

Certainly the 1990's represents a political turn of events since the 80's. It is a leveling off period both structurally and politically; neither caught between competing ideologies, nor
reacting to a political watershed of change, the 1990's perhaps represents a "cooling off" period. It is this "cooling off" period that perhaps explains what amounts to an amalgamation of previous messages.

This political "cooling off" period might also help explain the continued presence of the *traditional* paradigm that continues to pervade the messages of feminine sexuality into the 1990's:

* cautionary tales and criticism appear both together and separately
* demeanor & grooming messages emphasize pleasing her partner and pleasing the self
* work both deters and contributes to marriage

It appears inconsistent to simultaneously advise readers against the romantic relationship, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of it for improving a woman's existence. Additionally, the two paradigms appear simultaneously, advising readers to focus on pleasing a man on the one hand, and the self on the other. Finally, themes emphasizing the ways in which work both contributes to and deters from marital happiness also appear simultaneously.

**Contentious Messages.** Thus, while messages in the 1990's often depart from those prescriptions of the 80's, contentious messages continue to appear. Also similarly to the 1980's, themes in the 90's are both consistent and inconsistent with structural arrangements. Specifically, the emphasis on the sexual woman, minus the critical scripts, and the "self" focus on sex at the office might be expected. But the shifts in grooming and demeanor prescriptions, the emphasis on the negative effects of work on marriage, and the continued presence of cautionary tales and critical scripts are unexpected. Overall, however, messages in the 1990's
represent a significant enough departure from those of the 80's to indicate a shift in the messages of feminine sexuality.

This transformation in the messages of feminine sexuality is similar to that shift that occurred in the 1960's. Whereas the shift that occurs in the 1940's represents a more significant shift, as new grooming, demeanor, and sexual interaction styles are prescribed, shifts in the 90's represent twists rather than significant changes in the themes of feminine sexuality.

**Summary and Conclusions**

In this chapter I have attempted to explain the bifurcation in the messages of feminine sexuality. I have offered interpretations for the shifts in both the themes and paradigms of feminine sexuality and for the constancy of the traditional paradigm. In order to explain the evolution of these messages, I have drawn on both structural arrangements and relevant political ideologies, legislative issues, social movements, and developments in contraceptive law and technology as they correspond to women's lives. In doing so, I have argued that, combined with social structural considerations, it is these events that help to explain both the shifting and the constant messages of feminine sexuality.

While themes are often recycled from decade to decade, there are some periods that represent significant shifts in thematic content. Some of these shifts represent more significant changes in the meanings of feminine sexuality than others. Specifically, shifts that occur in the 1940's, 60's, and 90's represent a significant departure from the themes of feminine sexuality that were prescribed in previous decades. However, these shifts do not represent a departure from the traditional paradigm of feminine sexuality. The transformation that marks the new
paradigm of feminine sexuality represents the most significant shift and this occurs in the 1970’s.

In explaining the shift from a traditional to a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality, I have relied on understandings of social processes and social change. Specifically, I have argued that the shift from a traditional to a modern paradigm might be explained by a shift in gender ideology that occurs as a consequence of transformations in the social, political, and cultural climate, and also by developments in reproductive technology. William Chafe (1972) maintains that the changes in gender ideology that occurred around the late 1960’s and early 70’s was preceded by a shift in perception that was made possible by women’s work force participation. The combination of several events, specifically women’s entrance into the work force, the emergence of the equality movements, the “pill,” and legislative gains for women, might also explain the shift from a traditional to a modern paradigm of feminine sexuality that occurs in the 1970’s. However, despite the emergence of the modern paradigm in the 1970’s, the traditional paradigm continues to appear across all eight decades. Thus, there is a tension in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality from the 1970’s on, with the themes straddling the traditional-modern ideal. I have argued that this tension might best be explained by rapid social change, competing political ideologies, and strains between these ideologies and social structural arrangements.

Finally, I have also offered explanations for those messages that contradict our expectations in light of social structural arrangements. Gerda Lerner (1979) has said that this phenomenon might occur as a result of strains between social structural arrangements and political ideologies. She argues that, sometimes the cultural messages of feminine sexuality are
reinforcing existing codes or political ideologies, while at other times they are resisting them; she refers to this phenomenon as a "tension" between tradition and change. Lerner maintains that these "tensions" appear when a society is in flux or transition and, thus, anomie is not only experienced, but also most probably articulated in material culture. Hence, "tensions" might reflect a strain between cultural expectations, political ideologies and the social arrangements of society and, thus, produce messages that contradict the social structural arrangements and also one another.

The decades that reveal tensions between social structural arrangements and political ideology are the 1920's, the 40's-60's, and the 80's through to the present. The 1930's and 70's, on the other hand, reveal a consistency between political and structural arrangements. However, since messages in the 1970's often contradict one another, structural and political consistency do not necessarily mean message agreement within a decade. Additionally, tensions between structure and political ideology do not necessarily indicate that the messages will be contentious. Despite structural and political tension in the 1920's, the 40's-60's, and the 80's through the 90's, messages in some of these decades are relatively consistent. Specifically, messages are consistent in the 1930's through the 50's. However, messages are contentious within all other decades.

In drawing on social, economic, political, and legislative arrangements to explain the bifurcation in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality, I have shown that these messages are not explained solely in terms of social structural arrangements; that is, the arrangements that organize women's lives do not fully explain the messages. Rather, the messages represent hegemonic ideals, and this has implications for who is included and excluded. Of course, the
"ideal" is out of reach for many readers, but since the prescriptions do change, different body types and faces move in and out of popularity. However, for some groups of women the "ideal" is perennially out of reach. Particularly, it is out of reach for women who do not match the audience profile of either *Ladies Home Journal* or *Mademoiselle*; that is, women of color, poor women, and lesbian identified women are negated in these scripts that prescribe a feminine sexuality that is essentially white, middle class, and heterosexually dependent. The prescriptions are perennially *White* in the sense that "creamy colored" skin and "silky smooth" hair are invariably the signs of one or the other paradigms of feminine sexuality, and *middle class* in that the costs associated with all the cosmetics, hair care products, exercise classes, "slimming" aids, and clothes required to achieve the appropriate sexual image are out of reach for a large group of women in America. Finally, since these periodicals prescribe an interaction style that is defined in terms of the relations between the sexes, women are defined in terms of their sexual natures in these periodicals. Since the cardinal rule of sexual orientation in both these periodicals is heterosexual, the woman who possesses something other than a heterosexual identity will find these periodicals not only inappropriate for helping her construct her sexual identity, but also rejecting of her as a female.
In this study I set out to uncover to what extent cultural messages of the feminine and, thus, feminine sexuality paralleled the significant transformations in women’s status and roles over the last eight decades. In wanting to understand the ways in which the events of the last eight decades had affected the cultural messages of feminine sexuality in particular, I asked what are the themes of feminine sexuality over these eight decades? I also asked, have the themes changed over time? And, If the themes have changed, have the meanings also changed, or are the meanings consistent over time? Finally, I also asked what explains these themes and overarching meanings?

In order to answer these questions, I looked at 31 issues of *Ladies Home Journal* and 24 issues of *Mademoiselle*. Since popular periodicals targeted at women follow a routine format throughout the year, with focus issues corresponding to particular months (e.g., the Valentine issue in February), the September issue, since it is not targeted at any holiday or event, was the issue included in this sample. This issue was selected from each periodical for every third year, beginning with 1920 and ending in 1996. Since the questions I ask in this study pertain specifically to issues of sexuality, only those scripts that prescribed sexuality were included in the final sample; this sample included 598 scripts (N=185 for *Ladies Home Journal*; N=413 for *Mademoiselle*).

In this study I have shown that the cultural messages of feminine sexuality reveal a
remarkable constancy over time. When placed against the backdrop of the twentieth century, and the changes that have occurred in women’s roles during this time, it is perhaps surprising to find such constancy in the messages of feminine sexuality. Despite changes in women’s work force participation rates, climbing divorce rates and declining fertility rates, and the legalization of abortion and the development of the contraceptive pill, the essential meaning of feminine sexuality reveals a remarkable constancy. While many scholars agree that the most significant changes in women’s social status and roles and, thus, their experience have occurred in this century (Chafe, 1972; Cott, 1979; Dubois, 1978; Flexner, 1974; Gordon, 1990; Woloch, 1994), some meanings of feminine sexuality permeate all eight decades. Specifically, I refer to this perennial meaning of feminine sexuality as an “other” focused, or traditional paradigm. However, while this “other” oriented paradigm appears in all eight decades, a shift in the meaning of feminine sexuality occurs around the 1970’s. This shift corresponds to a transformation in the meaning of feminine sexuality from an “other” to a “self” focused orientation, or from a traditional to a modern paradigm.

In addition to this constant message of feminine sexuality, there are also perennial metaphors of feminine sexuality. One of these emphasizes the search for the “true” self. Another perennial metaphor of feminine sexuality is the fragmentation of body from demeanor, whereby scripts on body and demeanor are separated; I have suggested that this fragmentation amounts to an alienation of body from self in these periodicals.

Finally, while the perennial metaphors and the two meanings of feminine sexuality permeate all eight decades, there are also shifts in the themes within the paradigms. In certain decades, themes are recycled, while at other times they are significantly transformed. These theme
transformations represent more minor shifts in the messages of feminine sexuality; such as the shift from the "mysterious virgin" of the 1920's to the "asexual woman" of the 40's. However, these shifts occur within the paradigms; that is, while the themes may change, the essential meaning of feminine sexuality remains unchanged. Thus, while the messages of feminine sexuality reveal a remarkable constancy, with both the traditional paradigm and the metaphors of feminine sexuality appearing in every decade, the messages are bifurcated; that is, while some meanings remain essentially constant (i.e., the traditional paradigm), there are also shifts in the meanings (i.e., the modern paradigm) and themes of feminine sexuality.

I have attempted to explain this perplexity by drawing on social, economic, political, and cultural events. In doing so, I have maintained that both the evolution of these messages and their constancy might be a response to what Gerda Lerner refers to as "tensions" between social, economic, political and cultural conditions. As Gerda Lerner (1979) has said, sometimes the cultural messages of feminine sexuality are reinforcing existing codes or political ideologies, while at other times they are resisting them; she refers to this phenomenon as a tension between tradition and change. Lerner maintains that these tensions appear when a society is in flux or transition and, thus, anomie is not only experienced, but also most probably articulated in mass culture.

The Myth of "Increased Choice"

We are all subject to normative systems that restrict what we can think and feel, but there is a recognition that these expectations change over time. Some scholars have noted an increase in the options for how to look and be for women. As a consequence, this increase in options for appearance and demeanor are seen to reflect favorably on women's lives, giving them a
more fluid existence than before as the choices increase. However, my findings reveal that this
"fluidity" is a myth. It is a myth to maintain that women and, in this case, readers, have choices
on what to think and feel and how to be and look when my findings reveal that the choices
represent recycled themes and a perennial emphasis on the "other" (i.e., the traditional
paradigm).

The Perennial Emphasis on the "Other." While I have documented transformations in the
paradigms of the feminine sexual ideal, I have also shown that there is a remarkable constancy
in the messages of feminine sexuality. While a paradigm shift occurs in the 1970's, with the
emergence of the modern paradigm, the traditional paradigm is a constant message in every
decade:

* romantic relationship justifies existence; told through cautionary
tales and criticisms combined; and cautionary tales that appear
alone
* pleasing a male partner with appearance
* pleasing a male partner with demeanor (domestically skilled,
receptive, yielding)
* sexual interaction style that emphasizes a virgin, virginal, and asexual
demeanor
* traditional feminine demeanor at work, such as friendliness, helpful-
ness, understanding
* "other" focused orientation on the effects of work on marriage

Additionally, since prescriptions for appearance and behavior appear separately from one
another in these periodicals, a further perennial message is uncovered; that is, the fragmentation
of appearance from self. In addition to this fragmentation, appearance is also perennially
carved up in these periodicals, whereby readers are told to "work on" certain body parts for
achieving the feminine sexual ideal. Thus, in addition to the relatively unchanging meaning of
feminine sexuality over these eight decades, there are also perennial metaphors of feminine sexuality. Thus, my findings expose the myth of "increased choice."

**Can One More Choice Truly be Called "Increased Choice?"** While it might be said that "increased choice" does appear in the form of the *modern* paradigm around the 1970's:

- *romantic relationship as improving/contributing to a woman's existence; told through cautionary tales and criticisms combined; and cautionary tales and criticisms that appear alone*
- *pleasing the self with appearance*
- *pleasing the self with demeanor (honest, confident, self aware, happy)*
- *sexual interaction style that emphasizes sexual experimentation and exploration*
- *traditional masculine demeanor, such as confidence, aggressiveness, assertiveness*
- *"self" focused orientation on the effects of work on marriage*

...those who have maintained that the choices have increased do not mean they have increased by one.

Furthermore, despite the "increased choice" that is made possible with the emergence of the *modern* paradigm, the choices continue to be limiting. Specifically, the choices are limiting because, while there are now two meanings to choose from, they continue to represent narrow understandings of the feminine sexual ideal as white, middle class, and heterosexual. Moreover, while the *modern* paradigm appears in each successive decade following the 1970's, the *traditional* paradigm also continues to appear. Therefore, in all decades, readers are presented with a feminine sexual ideal that is, in addition to white, middle class, and heterosexual, "other" focused. Given these findings, can the emergence of the *modern* paradigm of feminine sexuality truly be interpreted as "increased choice?"
Recycled Themes. Further confirming the myth of “increased choice,” in addition to the perennial presence of the traditional paradigm, the thematic content within both paradigms are often recycled. While, for the most part, thematic content mainly differs by paradigm, there are some themes that overlap and some that appear in almost every decade. For example, the looks that coincide with the traditional paradigm include virginal, and the girl next door, and prescriptions for behavior emphasize receptivity, domestic skills, and family mindedness, and a chaste, virginal, or asexual sexual interaction style. Conversely, the looks that coincide with the modern paradigm include natural, modern, and the trendsetter, with an emphasis on sexual experimentation and an independent, confident, and assertive demeanor. In addition to the recycling of these themes, some grooming themes appear in both paradigms; specifically, the sophisticated, mannish/tailored, classically feminine, seductress and romantic looks.¹

Both appearance and behavior themes are often recycled. Specifically, while ten appearance or grooming themes appear over these eight decades, and several prescriptions for behavior also appear, the themes often reappear in several decades. Furthermore, the same is true of prescriptions for behavior and sexual interaction style, as new twists are added to old prescriptions.

Simone DeBeauvoir said of female existence that “woman is forever becoming” (1952), but my findings will not allow me to offer such an elegant conclusion; as my findings reveal, the cultural messages of feminine sexuality are much more complicated than this assertion will allow. Specifically, since these messages reveal both perennial and emergent paradigms of

¹ Of those looks that appear the most frequently over these eight decades, the seductress, modern, and natural looks coincide with the modern paradigm, while the virginal look is more frequently mentioned in the traditional paradigm. The classically feminine, sophisticated, and mannish/tailored looks are equally likely to appear in either paradigm.
feminine sexuality, it would be misleading to conclude that the feminine is presented as “forever becoming,” or perennially reconstructed in popular cultural representations.

**Shifting Themes Within Perennial Meanings: Changes in how to Package the Feminine Sexual Ideal.** De Beauvoir’s point, however, is not lost here. As I have documented, themes do change. Specifically, prescriptions for how to look and be for women change significantly during three periods: the 1940’s, 1960’s, and 1990’s.

**From The “Mysterious Virgin” to the “Self-Actualizing Woman.”** The first two of these shifts occurs within the traditional paradigm decades, and the third after the emergence of the modern paradigm. The first minor shift occurs in the 1940’s, when prescriptions for appearance and behavior are transformed from those messages of the previous two decades. During this decade the shift in demeanor is characterized by a departure from the mysterious virgin of the 1920’s and the motherly and virginal woman of the 30’s to a representation of the feminine sexual ideal as asexual in the 1940’s and 50’s. Furthermore, prescriptions for appearance also shift between the 1920’s-30’s to the 40’s-50’s, as readers are presented with a new look. Whereas in the 1920’s and 30’s the look presented to readers emphasized a sophisticated and tailored image, by the 1940’s-50’s the reader is confronted with a classically feminine, virginal, and tailored image.

A second shift occurs in the 1960’s, but unlike shifts in the 1940’s, changes during this decade represent twists in the themes rather than a transformation as such. Messages concerning behavior in this decade characterize the feminine sexual ideal as family minded and, paradoxically, both asexual and sexual. Thus, since family mindedness and sexual indifference were first mentioned in the 1940’s, prescriptions in the 60’s do not represent a departure from previous themes. However, the emergence of new themes, such as sexual images, that are
combined with the old do indicate a shift in the overall messages of feminine sexuality. Additionally, readers are presented with new techniques for appearance that are also combined with previous prescriptions; specifically, readers are told to be *natural* and also *sophisticated*, a prescription from the 1920’s-30’s.

Finally, the third minor shift in the themes of feminine sexuality occurs in the 1990’s. This shift resembles that which occurred in the 1960’s; that is, rather than represent a significant shift in the themes of feminine sexuality, the messages in this decade reveal twists in the themes. Since the *modern* paradigm is prescribed beginning in the 1970’s, messages in the 90’s present readers with both an “other” and “self” focused paradigms. However, for the most part, the 90’s feminine sexual ideal is the *modern woman*, that is, she is *self confident*, *natural*, *sophisticated*, and *sexual*.

Thus, since the feminine is thematically constructed anew in several decades, in some sense women are presented as “forever becoming” in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. But shifts in themes occur within the framework of the two paradigms; that is, while the ways in which to achieve or package the ideal might shift somewhat from decade to decade, the meanings remain the same; that is, “other” or “self” focused. For example, while readers might be presented with a prescription that emphasizes a *virginal* sexual interaction style, a *sophisticated* look, and a *yielding* demeanor in one decade, and an *asexual* sexual interaction style, a *classically feminine* look, and a *receptive* and *supportive* demeanor in another, the meaning is still consistent with a *traditional* paradigm. That is, readers in both decades are instructed in an “other” focused sexual style, which includes an emphasis on the importance of the romantic relationship for justifying a woman’s existence, pleasing a romantic partner with
both appearance and behavior, sexual chastity, control, or denial, and a "traditional" feminine demeanor at work (i.e., friendly, understanding). Thus what has changed is the package (i.e., how to look and be), not the meaning of the feminine sexual ideal. Given that it is the package and not the meaning that has changed, can we say that theme shifts absent of shifts in paradigm truly represent a meaningful transformation in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality and, subsequently, an "increase in choice" in how to be and look?

Interpretations of the Bifurcation in the Messages of Feminine Sexuality

In attempting to explain the perennial presence of the traditional paradigm, as well as the emergence of the modern paradigm and the theme shifts that occur within these two meanings of feminine sexuality, I have brought several considerations to bear on their interpretation. While some messages appear to complement the social structural arrangements organizing women's lives (e.g., messages in the 1930's and the 1970's), messages in other decades do not appear to reflect these arrangements. For the most part, the messages within a decade both complement and depart from these social arrangements that organize women's lives. Thus, in attempting to understand these cultural messages, in addition to social structural arrangements, I have brought other considerations to bear on their interpretation. These other considerations include political, legislative, and cultural organization, as well as contraceptive technology. I have argued that the lack of significant change in the meaning of feminine sexuality is perhaps attributable to "tensions" as a response to rapid social change.

While consideration of the strains between political, social, economic, and cultural organization may help in interpreting the evolution of the messages of feminine sexuality, the persistence of the traditional paradigm over all eight decades requires further explanation.
This perennial paradigm appears to be reflecting underlying assumptions about femininity and, thus, feminine sexuality. Despite the fact that not all women may aspire to be, nor have the reproductive capacity to become mothers, hegemonic understandings of what it means to be feminine center on women's roles as wife and mother (Connel, 1995; Lorber, 1994; Weedon, 1987). Thus, the measure of a woman is in direct relation to her capacity to "mother." The hegemonic ideal is presented as a listener, concerned for others, a server of others; that is, she is "other" oriented and this is consistent with hegemonic construals of the feminine. Ultimately, this construction of the feminine, which is a direct consequence of the gender division of labor and the relegation of women into the mothering role, places women in subordinate and subservient positions in relation to men economically, socially, and also culturally.

This underlying assumption of the feminine as socially, economically, and culturally subordinate might be one interpretation for the persistence of the traditional paradigm. That is, the traditional paradigm is reflecting hegemonic assumptions about femininity and, thus, feminine sexuality. Given that underlying assumptions about gender are richly embedded in the social, economic, political, and cultural organization of society, the ebbs and flows in the strength of the traditional paradigm following the 1960's might reflect shifts in those assumptions; albeit that the shifts are minor.

Shifting Themes. I have also argued that it is tensions between structural and political and legislative arrangements that perhaps explain the evolution of the themes of feminine sexuality in the following decades: 1920's, 40's through the 1960's, and the 80's through to the 90's. On the other hand, I have posited that it is structural and political agreement that perhaps best explains the themes in the 1930's, when the messages of feminine sexuality complement the
social structural arrangements organizing women's lives. Finally, while themes in the 1970's have also been explained as perhaps partly the result of structural and political agreement, the presence of both the traditional and modern paradigms for prescribing feminine sexuality have been explained by rapid social change; that is, contentious messages might appear when social change occurs rapidly and, consequently, old and new political ideologies compete for prominence. Contentious messages within decades also represent a sort of tension between social structural and political events. Specifically, I have argued that the contradictory messages (i.e., the simultaneous appearance of both the traditional and modern paradigm) that appear within a given decade might also reflect strains between cultural expectations, political ideologies and the social arrangements of society.

Therefore, the cultural messages of feminine sexuality are not necessarily reflecting women's actual lived experience, that is, the social structural arrangements of women's lives. Additionally, the messages are not necessarily reflecting the experience of all women, that is, women of color and poor women are not included in these themes that prescribe feminine sexuality. Hence, while the themes shift within both the traditional and the modern paradigm, the themes ultimately represent hegemonic ideals of feminine sexuality. Since the ideals are hegemonic, this has implications for who can achieve the sexual ideal; that is, only white, middle class, heterosexual women are represented as the ideal, and this means that women of color, poor women, and lesbian and bisexual women are perennially on the periphery of this ideal.
The Feminine Sexual Ideal: 
More “Being” than “Becoming”

To sum up, despite unprecedented changes in women’s social status and roles over the last eight decades, the cultural messages that I have observed are limited to two paradigms of feminine sexuality, and to only minor shifts in thematic content. Considering the very significant transformations in women’s social status and roles over the last eight decades, the finding that one of these paradigms or meanings of feminine sexuality permeates all eight decades is nothing less than striking.

While certainly theme shifts in how to *look* and *be* occur over several decades, these occur within the two meanings of feminine sexuality. Therefore, since the essential meanings remain unchanged, these shifts hardly represent meaningful transformations in the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. The cultural messages of feminine sexuality are unwavering in their emphasis on the feminine sexual ideal as either “other” or “self” focused, white, middle class, and heterosexual. Yet, despite the changes wrought by many significant social, economic, political and cultural changes that have directly shaped the lives of women in this century and, perhaps as a consequence, given rise to the new meaning of feminine sexuality that emerged around the 1970’s, one meaning of feminine sexuality is presented as the perennial ideal - the “other” focused paradigm.

While women since the 1970’s have been presented with “new” choices, from please *him* with your appearance and demeanor, to “look and be who you want to be,” it can not be said that readers truly have an “increased choice” today. After all, there is no real choice in how to *look* and *be* when the very meaning of those prescriptions do not change. Thus, rather than constructed anew with each decade, the cultural messages that I have observed present the
feminine sexual ideal as more “being” than “becoming.” That is, the representation of the ideal is perennially “other” focused, white, middle class, and heterosexual.

**Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

There are limitations to a study that relies on interpreting only those messages that are identified as contradicting social structural arrangements. Identifying and interpreting the messages that contradict social structural conditions may miss the bigger picture. That is, such a study might overlook the connection between social, political, economic, and cultural conditions as sources of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. Perhaps, for example, the messages might be interpreted by identifying which social, political, economic, and cultural arrangements appear to reinforce or reflect those very messages. On the other hand, perhaps an approach that identifies patterns in the themes and paradigms and then contextualizes those patterns with social, political, economic, and cultural conditions might also avoid losing the larger picture of the evolution of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. Finally, another approach might involve identifying which social, political, economic, and cultural events are theoretically connected to the specific messages of feminine sexuality that I have uncovered.

Another drawback of this research that might be considered for further study is the institutional nature of the data. While this has been continually in my mind as I have studied these messages, this study does not address this institutional context. In an attempt to improve our understanding of this data source, I have sketched the historical development of women’s popular periodicals, the social profile of the editorship, and a profile of the audience and structural organization of both *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*, but I have stopped short of interpreting the messages in light of this institutional context.
Existing research on the producers of these messages is scarce (Gerbner, 1967; Butler, et al., 1979). In particular, few studies of mass communication or popular culture have analyzed the effects of the media industry upon the construction of cultural messages. However, Gerbner maintains that the analysis of the producers of these messages is exigent to understanding the themes and their meanings. While the images, representations, and ideas within the product reflect and reinforce social conditions, both historical and institutional, they also reflect the interests and values of the producers of the messages (Gerbner, 1969). In addition to reflecting the period in which they are produced, since they are also produced within an institution, the messages also represent an institutional image of social life that is unique. According to Gerbner, this relationship between the producer and the product becomes clearer when ownership of a communication medium changes and, as a consequence, the product changes also. Therefore, in addition to exploring alternative methods for interpretation and analysis of these messages, other attempts to improve our understanding of the evolution of the messages of feminine sexuality should focus on the producers and the institutional context of these messages.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


375

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and $^b$ Percentages based on total number of prescribing scripts for LHJ or Mlle, respectively.
$^c$ and $^d$ Percentages based on total number of scripts, both prescribing and non-prescribing for LHJ and Mlle, respectively.
### APPENDIX A

Percentage of Prescribing versus Non-Prescribing Scripts by Decade and Periodical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
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<th>non-Prescribing</th>
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<th>non-Prescribing</th>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>3.9^a</td>
<td>11.2^b</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.4^c</td>
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<td>1930's</td>
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</tbody>
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*a, b, c, d on facing page*

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APPENDIX B: CONTENT AND GENERAL CODING FORM

1. a. magazine: ______
   (L=LHJ, M=Madm)
   b. year of pub: ______
   c. Issue: ______
   d. title(s) (if this is a fashion text, can include all in one coding form):

2. # pages: ___

3. # fiction in this text: _____

4. Type of feature? special: _____
   regular: _____

5. IF regular feature, how billed:
   Fashion/Beauty: ______
   (If listed as either a “Fashion” or “Beauty,” then list “F” or “B”)
   Health: ______
   (if “Health” is listed under “Fashion/Beauty,” then list as “H” under “Fashion/Beauty”)
   Relationship: ______
   Advice column: ______
   Home decorating/architecture: ______
   Education/Jobs/Careers: ______
   (list as “E,” “J,” “C,” accordingly)
   Family: ______
   Other: ______________________

6. a. Writer gender: Male: ______
   Female: ______

7. Name of author: ___________________________

8. Author status (if fashion text, note which text refers to which status):
   a professional: ______
   reporter/journalist: ______
   experience/opinion of reporter/journalist: ______
   experience/opinion of one woman (not a regular writer; intent is that this person is a “regular” woman): ______
experience/opinion of one man (not a regular writer; intent is that this person is a "regular" man): ______
experience/opinion of a group of women (not regular writers; intent is that these women are "regular" women): ______
experience/opinion of a group of men (not regular writers; intent is that these men are "regular" men): ______
experience/opinion of a group of women and men (not regular writers; intent is that these people are "regular" people): ______
experience/opinion of one woman who is a celebrity: ______
experience/opinion of one man who is a celebrity: ______
experience/opinion of group of women celebrities: ______
experience/opinion of group of men celebrities: ______
experience/opinion of a group celebrities (both women and men): ______
experience/opinion of one man (not a regular writer; intent is that this other: __________________________________

9a. Tone of author:
humorous, not really intended to inform (with or without intent to inform - specify): ________________
advisor (question/answer column, and advice offered on fashion, etc. - specify): ________________
critical: ____
authoritative: ____

9b. Tone of text:
information: ____
entertainment (not on celebrity): ____
entertainment (on celebrity/celebrity focused): ____
advice: ____ details (i.e., question and answer, or fashion): ______

10. core context: sexuality text: ____
sexuality implied text: ____
non-sexuality text: ____

11. themes mentioned: work: ____
education: ____
family: ____
mariage: ____
relationships: ____
dating: ____
romance (not dating): ____
political activity: ____
medical: ____
law: ____
divorce: ____
friendships: ____
other: ________________________

390

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12. Target group:
   married: ____
   single: ____
   divorced: ____
   marital status not mentioned: ____
   not mentioned/unclear: ____
   other: ____

13. Sexuality issues (explain the sexuality messages in this text. e.g., 1. How is sexuality described in the text? what is described as “sexy,” or “sexual?” 2. explain theme and how sexuality is raised around themes in the text): __________________________________________________________
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391
SOCIAL IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY:

14. WORKER ROLE out of home mentioned? No: ____ (go to question 15)
   Yes: ____
14a. What is said/what are issues about work in this text?

   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................

14b. Are issues of sexuality raised around this theme? If so, how?

   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................

14c. 1. Comments about the effects of work on women? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ____

2. Comments about the purpose of work for women? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ____

14d. Cautionary tales regarding the worker role? ESPECIALLY RELATING TO SEXUALITY.
   No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: .................................................................................................................................

15. WIFE ROLE (or other intimate relationships - i.e., living-together - mentioned? 
   No: ____ (go to question 16)
   Yes: ____ is this wife role or other intimate relationship? ___________________

15a. What is said/what are issues about wife role in this text?

   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................

15b. Are issues of sexuality raised around this theme? If so, how?

   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................................

392
15c. What are some of the expectations/prescriptions for behavior of the wife role that are mentioned in this feature? (this question gets at definitions of the “good” wife)

1. Disposition of wife mentioned? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

2. Appearance mentioned? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

3. Behavior of the wife mentioned? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

4. Aspirations mentioned? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

15d. Divorced mentioned? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

15e. Cautionary tales regarding the wife role? ESPECIALLY RELATING TO SEXUALITY (i.e., what happens to the wife who is not “good,” but “bad”?)
   No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

16. MOTHER ROLE mentioned? No: ____
   (go to question 17)
   Yes: ____

16a. What is said/what are issues about mother role in this text?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

16b. Are issues of sexuality raised around this theme? If so, how?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

16c. 1. Disposition of mother mentioned? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

2. Appearance? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

3. Behavior of the “good” mother mentioned? No: ____
   Yes: ____ details: ______________

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4. Aspiration mentioned? No: ____
   Yes: ___ details: _____________________

16d. 1. Cautionary tales regarding the wife role? ESPECIALLY RELATING TO
SEXUALITY (i.e., what happens to the wife who is not “good,” but “bad”?
   No: ____
   Yes: ___ details: _____________________

17. 1. “SINGLE” (note whether this is “no marital status mentioned,” “happily single,”
or relationship/dating/romance)
   No: ____
   Yes: ___
   2. If single role is mentioned, is this romantic context or other? details: ______

17a. What is said/what are issues about “single” in this text?

17b. Are issues of sexuality raised around this theme? If so, how? _________________

FIELDNOTES:
### GENERAL CODING FORM

1. **Magazine:**
   
   
   (L=LHJ, M=Madm)

   **Year of pub:**

2. **A1. Department:**
   **Title:**
   **Details:**

3. **B2. Department:**
   **Title:**
   **Details:**

4. **C3. Department:**
   **Title:**
   **Details:**

5. **D4. Department:**
   **Title:**
   **Details:**

6. **E5. Department:**
   **Title:**
   **Details:**

7. **F6. Department:**
   **Title:**
   **Details:**

8. **G7. Department:**
   **Title:**
   **Details:**

9. **H8. Department:**
   **Title:**
   **Details:**

10. **I9. Department:**
    **Title:**
    **Details:**

11. **J10. Department:**
    **Title:**
    **Details:**

12. **K11. Department:**
    **Title:**
    **Details:**

13. **L12. Department:**
    **Title:**
    **Details:**
M13. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

N14. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

O15. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

P16. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

Q17. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

R18. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

S19. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

T20. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

U21. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

V22. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

W23. Department: __________________________
Title: __________________________  Details: ______________________________________

3. Information on the “cover:”
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

4. Is This a “Special” issue (i.e., devoted to “work,” “motherhood,” “college,” etc)?
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

Introduction

A documentation of the development of the popular periodical industry and, specifically, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*, and the audience profile and structural and other organizational differences between these two periodicals is necessary for establishing a more complete understanding of the periodicals and, thus, the cultural messages of feminine sexuality. In addition, what is also necessary for a deeper understanding of these periodicals and the themes of feminine sexuality that they present is a documentation of the manifest content of the periodicals. In this chapter I present a quantitative content analysis of the themes that are discussed in chapter 7. In this chapter, I document the shifts in the vehicles that carry the messages of feminine sexuality over this seventy-six year period.

The *Grooming* and *Interaction Style* Vehicles and the
Themes of Feminine Sexuality: General Trends
Over Eight Decades

As stated in chapter 3, the themes of feminine sexuality are communicated through two vehicles, or message carriers, either a *grooming* or an *interaction style* vehicle. As the following cites will illustrate, while the grooming vehicle is appearance or look based, the interaction style vehicle is focused on demeanor or behavior:

"...the casual look is out...now you should be tailored, not functional...cut to make you feel feminine and appealing. The look should be soft, and accentuate the figure." (Mlle, 1946)
"every woman should have a silken voice...a voice that could win a war." (LHJ, 1936)

Table 1 documents the number of scripts by grooming and interaction style vehicle over this seventy-six year period, revealing that grooming is the most popular vehicle prescribing feminine sexuality in these periodicals (N=403 out of a total of 598 scripts on feminine sexuality, or 67%), with sixty-three percent of the messages devoted to appearance. Just over a third of the messages of feminine sexuality are communicated via the interaction style vehicle (N=162, or 27%), and even fewer scripts simultaneously combine both the grooming and interaction style vehicles (N=33, or 6%):

"I wouldn’t want to be married to a ‘glam’ girl...she would be to vain to want children." (LHJ, 1956)

"I know that young people court differently today...that there is a different vocabulary of love, but my advice is always keep a white lace nightie available...” (Mlle, 1946)

Shifts in the popularity of the respective vehicles for communicating messages of feminine sexuality are also documented over the decades in Table 1. Table 1 reveals that, while the trend is toward an increase in both vehicles, a dramatic increase occurs in the 1940’s and the 80’s in the grooming vehicle, and in the 40’s, 70’s, and 80’s in the interaction style vehicle. Finally, the Cold War era and the 80’s represent a turn of events for those scripts that combine grooming and interaction style. While grooming/interaction style combined scripts remain steady over time, there is a marked increase in the number of these vehicles that occurs the 1950’s and the 80’s.

Both the grooming and the interaction style vehicles revolve around one of two themes that emerge in the periodicals - either a romantic relationship or a work theme (N=287, or 48% of the total number of scripts; romantic relationship, N=168, or 59% of the thematized scripts;
Table 1 Frequency of Grooming and Interaction Style Vehicle Scripts Over Eight Decades

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<td>%</td>
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<td>cum</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td>Interaction Style</td>
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Table 1 Frequency of Grooming and Interaction Style Vehicle Scripts Over Eight Decades (continued)

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a "Unsituationalized" refers to scripts that combined interaction style and grooming without reference to a situation
b "Situationalized" refers to scripts that combine interaction style and grooming within either the romantic relationship or the work situation
work, N=80, or 28% of the thematized scripts; romantic relationship and work combined, N=39, or 13% of the thematized scripts). Thus, sometimes, the vehicles are situationalized, whereby grooming and interaction style are prescribed in the context of either the romantic relationship or work. When these themes emerge in the grooming vehicle, I refer to these scripts as situational grooming vehicles (N=97) and as situation performance vehicles (N=129) when they emerge in the interaction style vehicle. The situational grooming vehicles combine a discussion of appearance or grooming with either the romantic relationship or the work situation:

"Pick fashions to make you look chic and to fit what you will be doing on your honeymoon." (Mlle, 1940)

"How to up-date your work image to look confident, successful and polished...soften your features with a shorter cut and the right makeup." (LHJ, 1980)

Whereas the situation performance vehicle emphasizes demeanor either at work or in the romantic relationship:

"...In the past being feminine meant being sweet and bland, but I think today women can be aggressive at work and still be feminine." (LHJ, 1976)

"...husband and boss want the same thing...boss must know that you are with him, that you are sincere...must show that he can trust you to stand by him and shield his mistakes and uphold his standards....your qualities must compliment his, if he does everything at the last minute, then you must be organized....in the office, as in marriage, men don’t change, so you must be flexible.” (Mlle, 1939)

Table 1 documents the emergence of these themes in the periodicals, revealing that, while grooming vehicle messages are more often presented unsituationalized or alone (N=306, or 76%), the interaction style scripts rarely appear alone. Rather, interaction style scripts more often appear situationalized (N=129, or 77%).
In addition to the unequal representation of the vehicles in these periodicals, with the grooming theme being the most popular vehicle for communicating ideas about feminine sexuality, the work and romantic relationship themes are also represented unequally. Tables 2 and 3, which document the romantic relationship and work themes as they appear in the vehicles over these eight decades, reveal that the most frequently mentioned theme for prescribing feminine sexuality is the romantic relationship (N=168). However, while the grooming vehicle, the most popular message carrier of feminine sexuality, is more popular with the work theme, it is the interaction style vehicle that more often communicates messages about the romantic relationship theme.

The Themes: The Romantic Relationship and Work

The Romantic Relationship Theme across the Vehicles and the Decades

Table 2 documents the romantic relationship scripts as they appear in the grooming and interaction style vehicles over these eight decades, revealing that these scripts represent the most significant portion of the thematized scripts (N=168, or 58% of the total number of thematized scripts), and that they appear in both vehicles for every decade with the exception of the 1920’s, when only demeanor is prescribed. The most frequently appearing vehicle for communicating this theme is the situation performance message carrier (N=129, or 45%) and, thus, the emphasis is on demeanor in a romantic relationship as opposed to appearance.

Table 2 reveals that the trend is toward a very slight, but steady, increase in the numbers over time. However, while the general grooming and interaction style vehicles peak twice, once during the Cold War and then again after the Civil Rights and Women’s Movements of the 1960’s, the romantic relationship theme peaks very slightly once in the 1940’s, and then
* Cumulative percentages are based on the total number of scripts focused on the romantic relationship (N=168) and does not include scripts that combine both romantic relationship and work themes.

b Refers to scripts that include both the work and romantic relationship theme in either the grooming or the interaction style vehicle.

c Refers to scripts that combine interaction style and grooming within one script.
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*Cumulative percentages are based on the total number of scripts focused on the Work relationship (N=86).

b Some scripts combine both the romantic relationship and work theme in either the grooming or the interaction style vehicle.

c Refers to scripts that combine interaction style and grooming within a script.
peaks sharply in the 1970's. This pace established in the 1970's is maintained through to the 90's.

Romantic relationship scripts appear more frequently in the situation performance than in the situational grooming vehicle. As the following example illustrates, these scripts focus on demeanor in a romantic relationship:

"...because this housewife is high in sex appeal, she thought she was feminine, but she is too aggressive and this is not feminine. Feminine behavior is housekeeping." (LHJ, 1956)

Additionally, these scripts also sometimes explicitly prescribe a sexual demeanor:

"all this talk about sex has gotten women very nervous before their wedding night...as long as you believe in the man you are marrying, any mistakes that you make are not irreparable. Women have been coping with sex for years and have lived happily after the wedding night...just be natural...don't read books or listen to others because then you won't respond naturally." (Mlle, 1939)

These sexual demeanor scripts prescribe expectations for sexual health, sexual activity and performance (N=58, or 34% of the total number of romantic relationship scripts). Sexual activity scripts emphasize prescriptions for sexual demeanor in a given situation:

sexual activity:
"...in the car on the way to the church (on my wedding day), my father told me that half way wasn't enough in marriage, that I should go three-quarters of the way." (LHJ, 1936)

Whereas sexual performance scripts prescribe specific sexual acts:

sexual performance:
"While this was is attractive and genteel, she does not experiment enough sexually...this turned her husband off." (LHJ, 1979)

Sexual health and education refers to scripts that discuss contraceptive technology and abortion, as well as sexually transmitted diseases:

sexual health:
"The pill is bad for your health, but most women prefer it...there
are pros and cons to each contraceptive method...” (Mlle, 1979)

Each of these scripts, sexual health and education, and sexual activity and performance allude to sexual demeanor, or the sexual behavior that is expected of the reader. However, as documented in Table 4, while prescriptions for sexual demeanor appear in every decade, the presence of sexual activity and performance versus sexual health varies from decade to decade, with sexual activity being prescribed more than either sexual performance or sexual health and education in any decade. However, sexual health and education and sexual performance scripts increase in number over the decades, with both peaking in the 1980’s. Overall, the sex focused scripts increase in number over these eight decades, peaking in the 1940’s and then again in the 1970’s through the 1990’s.

Romantic relationship scripts appear infrequently in scripts that focus exclusively on grooming or on a combination of grooming and interaction style unless the script also contains the work theme (N=39, or 13%). In these scripts, which do not emerge in the periodicals until the 1940’s, work and the romantic relationship are discussed simultaneously, as in the following example:

“work in Boston...it is a good place to meet eligible men.” (Mlle, 1959)
“college graduates need to decide if they want a career or motherhood... they must deal with the conflict between society’s expectations and their own desires.” (Mlle, 1966)
“It used to be that we got our self esteem from our husbands and children, but now we are in the working world, we must get our self esteem from that...” (LHJ, 196?)

However, this theme, which peaks in the 1950’s and then again in the 80’s, is a very distant second as to the popularity of communicating feminine sexuality through the romantic relationship theme via the situation performance vehicle. Thus, romantic relationship scripts
"W" and "R" refer to the numbers at work and in the romantic relationship.

The total number of scripts focused on sexual demeanor is 63. However, since sexual performance and sexual activity scripts are sometimes combined, the total exceeds 63. Specifically, only two of the sexual performance scripts in the 1980's and all three in the 1990's appear alone within a script. Thus, the sexual performance scripts in the 1930's (N=1), 50's (N=1), and 70's (N=2), and 2 from the 1980's (N=2) do not represent additional scripts, but simply scripts that combine sexual activity and sexual performance prescriptions.

"tot # scripts" refers to the total number of either romantic relationship or work scripts (see Tables 6.2 and 6.3). For example, there are a total of 159 romantic relationship scripts and 58 are on sexual demeanor. Therefore, thirty-six percent of the total number of romantic relationship theme scripts are focused on sexual demeanor.
Table 4  Number of Scripts Prescribing Sexual Health/Education, Sexual Activity, and Sexual Performance In Romantic Relationship and Work Theme Scripts

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<td>tot #</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOT       | R      | W      | R      | W      | R      | W      | R      | W      | R      | W      | R      | W      | R      | W      | R      | W      | R      | W      | R      | W      |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|           | 2      | 0      | 3      | 0      | 2      | 0      | 6      | 1      | 3      | 0      | 12     | 0      | 25     | 2      | 11     | 2      | 64     | 5      |
appear more often in scripts focused on demeanor or on scripts that combine demeanor and grooming with work and the romantic relationship.

The Work Theme across the Vehicles and the Decades

As Table 3 documents, work scripts represent a significantly lower percentage of the thematized scripts compared to the romantic relationship theme (80, or 28% compared to 168, or 58%). Additionally, the work theme is frequently connected to the romantic relationship theme (N=39). However, while a third of the work theme scripts are connected to the romantic relationship theme, it is the situational grooming vehicle that is the main message carrier of this theme (N=65), with the vast majority of these scripts appearing in the situational vehicle (81%).

Thus, while it is the situation performance vehicle which communicates the romantic relationship theme in these periodicals, it is the situational grooming vehicle which is responsible for carrying messages about feminine sexuality at work. Also conversely to the romantic relationship theme, the work theme appears in both the grooming and the interaction style theme, in one variety or another, over each decade included in this sample.

Table 3 documents a trend in the work themes that is similar to that found in Table 2 for the romantic relationship theme. The trend in the situational grooming vehicle, which carries the work theme, is toward an increase over time. However, similarly to the trend documented in Table 2, Table 4 documents periods of marked increase; one beginning in the 1940’s and then another in the 1970’s. Thus, while the trend toward an increase in the romantic relationship, which was communicated through the situation performance vehicle, revealed a specific period
of increase (1980’s), it is the 1950’s and 70’s that appear to be the critical decades for the increase in the work theme.

In addition to prescribing a general demeanor at work, similarly to the romantic relationship theme, this theme also includes prescriptions for sexual demeanor. However, this theme appears very infrequently in the work theme scripts that are presented through situation performance (N=5, or 6% of the total number of work scripts), and all focus on prescriptions for sexual activity:

“...this woman had an affair with a colleague at work. Her husband, who didn’t want her working in the first place, found out and now he wants a divorce....they must work on this together...he thinks her interests should revolve around him, but all people need self expression in a marriage, so she is entitled to her work.” (LHJ, 1959)

“...you won’t get anywhere in your boss makes a pass at you...this happened to my friend and she didn’t know what to do...she wanted to move up at the company and she didn’t want to known as the woman with the sexual harassment case...if this is happening to you, you should first talk to a friend, then talk to a lawyer...but perhaps you should talk to your boss first, since it may just be a misunderstanding...or you could write him a letter.” (Mile, 1983)

The Grooming and Interaction Style Vehicles:
Backstage Techniques and Emotion Management for Controlling the Body, Face, Hair, and Demeanor

Grooming

Regardless of their incorporation of the romantic relationship or the work theme, both the grooming and interaction style vehicle scripts are communicated through impression management techniques. The impression management prescribed for achieving the appropriate appearance is a backstage technique, whereby readers are advised on how to accomplish a
certain frontstage look or appearance. The backstage techniques in the grooming vehicle involves manipulation and control of appearance, including body, dress, an aspect of body, face, and hair:

“nothing looks quite so young as a short skirt above nice slim ankles” (LHJ, 1929)

“...new makeup and hairstyles can reveal a new you... long, untamed curls give you a sexy look...or you can achieve a dramatic, sophisticated look with a short cut.” (LHJ, 1989)

Body, face, and hair comprise the categories of the grooming vehicle and some of these aspects of appearance are more popular than others.

The most popular category of the grooming theme is the body, followed by face, with hair being the least popular category. The body category includes scripts that address the following:

* weight: dieting (either reducing or increasing), which includes “eating healthy,” and calorie counting
* references to body shape (i.e., “figure”), and dress (i.e., how to clothe the body)
* exercising, which includes impact exercise, stretching and posturing (“proper” stance);
* and objects used for “covering,” such as corsets and girdles
* clothing the body

documents that, while the body category is the most popular at any given time, body scripts peak during the 1980’s and 90’s. Additionally, this peak in the body scripts during the 1980’s and 90’s helps account for the sharp increase in grooming scripts during this period that was documented in Table 1. Thus, while the grooming vehicle remains relatively stable, with peaks occurring in the 1940’s and 80’s, the categories of this vehicle are more ephemeral, with ebbs and flows to their popularity over these eight decades.
Body scripts outnumber all other grooming scripts (N=421, or 70% of the total number of grooming vehicle scripts). However, while body scripts outnumber all other categories in the grooming vehicle during every decade, dress scripts account for a significant portion of these scripts (N=109, or 48%), and this category outnumbers the body scripts until the 1980’s. During the 1980’s, body scripts outnumber all other scripts in the grooming vehicle, even with the exclusion of dress scripts from body. While body scripts peak in the 1980’s, dress scripts begin to increase in popularity beginning in the 1940’s, with this remaining steady until the 1970’s, when dress scripts decline in the grooming vehicle.

While the body scripts peak in the 1980’s, they decline again by the 1990’s, approximating pre-war numbers. Similarly, the hair category of the grooming vehicle, the least mentioned category of the grooming vehicle, which includes scripts that focus on all body hair, including removal, steadily increase in number over this seventy-six year period, also peaking in the 1980’s. Conversely to these ebbs and flows in the body, dress, and hair categories, the face category of the grooming vehicle, the third most popular category, remains relatively stable over these eight decades.

While the body and dress category of the grooming vehicle more often appear separated or alone within a script (N=117 or 61%, and N=109 or 47%, respectively), they also sometimes appear combined with other categories of this vehicle (N=47 or 25%, and N=40 or 17%, respectively):

“...neatness is the new look, and this goes with girdles, and carefully combed hair and powdered noses...the look is businesslike.” (LHI, 1923)
On the other hand, the face and hair scripts appear about as often alone as they do in combinations with other grooming categories.

These categories of grooming also appear in the interaction style vehicle scripts. Similarly to the grooming vehicle scripts, dress scripts represent the most popular grooming category that appears in these scripts. However, unlike the grooming vehicle scripts, body scripts are mentioned less often than face scripts.

**Grooming and Interaction Style Combined**

When grooming and interaction style are combined, dress is the most frequently mentioned grooming category that appears in the situational grooming vehicles (N=24, or 35%). However, while body is the second most popular category in the grooming vehicle for prescribing feminine sexuality, in the situational grooming vehicle scripts it is face (N=20, or 29%), followed by body (N=17, or 24%). Just as with the grooming vehicle scripts, hair is the least mentioned category in the situational grooming vehicle scripts that combines grooming categories (N=8, or 12%).

In these scripts, the grooming categories that are manipulated backstage to achieve a frontstage look are combined with demeanor prescriptions and, thus, emotion management techniques:

"...she is a housewife and mother who looks like a model with her small waist, pretty blonde hair and a captivating smile...these are all assets. But she also sews, and this impresses her husband who sees big savings in the budget." (LHJ, 1953)

"...the sophisticated look is comfortable and casual...knee length skirts and jackets...long skirts are too dowdy...it is impossible to look good and be confident in clothes that aren’t comfortable." (LHJ, 1990)
“...red lipstick, nails, and cheeks make you feel elegant...wear in the a.m...it used to be that it was considered too racy, but now any type of woman can wear it...it might not be for the beauty lightweight...red signals passion, and aggressiveness, and may make the shy types feel like a dragon lady.” (Mlle, 1990)

However, like the general grooming vehicle, the grooming categories of the situational grooming vehicle more often appear alone in these periodicals.

**Interaction Style and Situation Performance**

While interaction style vehicle scripts more often appear alone, they rarely appear unless they are situationalized with either the romantic relationship or the work theme; that is, interaction style vehicle scripts appear more often as situation performance vehicle scripts (N=123) than alone (N=5). However, as with the situation performance vehicle scripts, when the interaction style vehicle appears, emphasis is on emotion management:

“...after a year of dating and being recognized as a couple, cry and tell him ‘what about us?’ Don’t blame him, but let him know that you worry and wonder. Don’t give him an ultimatum because that will scare him off. Rather, withdraw physically, not nastily, but just a little indifference. If still nothing, say goodbye to him, sadly, not angrily. You will split up and he will realize that he misses you and that he does not want to go through this charade again with someone else.” (Mlle, 1953)

**Conclusions**

In this chapter I have documented that the grooming vehicle, which appears more frequently than the interaction style vehicle in communicating messages about feminine sexuality, more often appears unsituationalized, whereas the interaction style vehicle is more
often situationalized around the romantic relationship theme. However, while it may be useful to know how grooming and interaction style vehicles are dispersed over these eight decades, documentation of the manifest content does not tell us very much about the themes of feminine sexuality.

Ultimately, a quantitative analysis is not able to provide information of the meanings of the messages of feminine sexuality over these eight decades and, thus, while it is a necessary step in contributing further to an understanding of the organization of the themes over time, the numbers alone are insignificant because they do not allow for an explanation of the evolution of these messages over these eight decades in *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*. For example, while it may be useful to know that scripts prescribing sexual activity are mentioned more during one period than in another, it is the messages conveyed within such scripts that will be more useful for explaining the evolution of feminine sexualities. Therefore, In order to understand the messages of feminine sexuality and to interpret their evolution, those contents must be thematized.
APPENDIX D

A breakdown of female readership information for 1995 for each of the Big Three (Ladies Home Journal, McCall's, and Good Housekeeping), so named because of their circulation rates, is located in Tables I-V. Magazine readership for 1995 reveals that the majority of McCall's readers are between 18 and 49 years of age, whereas the majority of the Ladies Home Journal and Good Housekeeping readers are between 25 and 54 years of age.

For all of the magazines, over 80 percent of the readers are high school educated, and close to half have attended college. According to the guidelines in the US Census data on income, the readers would be classified as working- to middle-class for each of the periodicals. Over a quarter of the readers of Ladies Home Journal, McCall's, and Good Housekeeping are employed as professionals or managers. Each of the magazines report that just over a quarter of their readers are working mothers. The majority of the magazines' readers are in-home mothers. The Big Three, then, are directed at specific groups of women. And, according to several authors (Butler, 1979; Peterson, 1956; Wood, 1971; Woodward, 1960), the fact that the Big Three attract a specific audience is no coincidence, since they are marketed so as to appeal to a specific audience and, so, attract certain types of advertising.

1 All information in Tables I-V was supplied by McCall's research group report for Fall.
2 McCall's research group did not supply any information on race.
TABLE I

1995 DEMOGRAPHICS FOR AGE OF FEMALE READERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>TOTALS$^a$</th>
<th>McC</th>
<th>LHI</th>
<th>GH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>(12,997)</td>
<td>4,006</td>
<td>3,629</td>
<td>5,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33,684</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>(9,518)</td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td>2,793</td>
<td>3,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>21,276</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>(18,041)</td>
<td>4,917</td>
<td>5,375</td>
<td>7,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>29,218</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-49</td>
<td>(31,038)</td>
<td>8,923</td>
<td>9,004</td>
<td>13,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>62,902</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-54</td>
<td>(31,591)</td>
<td>8,805</td>
<td>9,599</td>
<td>13,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>57,168</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 +</td>
<td>(16,764)</td>
<td>4,701</td>
<td>5,515</td>
<td>6,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>29,792</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ The total number of readers within each category often overlaps with another categories and, therefore, the information is not fully adequate for purposes of comparison at this point. What is required in order to render these percentages more comprehensible is a total readership figure for each of the periodicals. However, this has not been yet been made available by the publisher. Numbers in parentheses represent the totals in each cell. Numbers not in parentheses represent the total number of readers for information that was provided on all of the periodicals; note that information was supplied on several periodicals, not just the periodicals listed in Tables I-V.

$^b$ Notice that many of these age categories are not mutually exclusive. This is an unavoidable problem, since this information as supplied by the Conde Nast Publishing company. The information, then, necessarily reflects the interests of the publishing company.
### TABLE II

1995 DEMOGRAPHIC FOR EDUCATION OF FEMALE READERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION(^a)</th>
<th>McCall's</th>
<th>LHJ</th>
<th>GH</th>
<th>TOTALS(^b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Grad</td>
<td>12,446</td>
<td>13,939</td>
<td>18,845</td>
<td>80,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Comp</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Att. Coll +</td>
<td>6,796</td>
<td>7,823</td>
<td>10,428</td>
<td>25,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Comp</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) & \(^b\) See footnotes in Table I
### TABLE III

1995 DEMOGRAPHICS FOR HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF FEMALE READERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</th>
<th>TOTAL $</th>
<th>McC</th>
<th>LHJ</th>
<th>GH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 +</td>
<td>(38,878)</td>
<td>10,547</td>
<td>12,129</td>
<td>16,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Comp</td>
<td>70,643</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 +</td>
<td>(31,127)</td>
<td>8,213</td>
<td>9,749</td>
<td>13,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Comp</td>
<td>55,328</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 +</td>
<td>(23,562)</td>
<td>6,044</td>
<td>7,524</td>
<td>9,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Comp</td>
<td>42,079</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* & b See footnotes in Table I
TABLE IV

1995 DEMOGRAPHICS FOR PERCENTAGE OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT AMONG FEMALE READERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prof./Mgr Employed Women</th>
<th>TOTALS&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>McC</th>
<th>LHJ</th>
<th>GH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; Management</td>
<td>(8,288)</td>
<td>2,141</td>
<td>2,753</td>
<td>3,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Comp</td>
<td>16,666</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> & <sup>b</sup> See footnotes in Table I
# TABLE V

1995 DEMOGRAPHICS FOR PERCENTAGES OF WORKING OUT OF HOME VERSUS IN-HOME MOTHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTALS&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>McC</th>
<th>LHI</th>
<th>GH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUT OF HOME VERSUS IN-HOME WORKERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working out of Home Mothers</td>
<td>(13,681)</td>
<td>3,872</td>
<td>4,138</td>
<td>5,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Comp</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in-home Mothers</td>
<td>(28,872)</td>
<td>7,848</td>
<td>8,794</td>
<td>12,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Comp</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> & <sup>b</sup> See footnotes in Table I
APPENDIX E

While Mlle has consistently included less fiction than LHJ, it has never featured fiction as a prominent part of the periodical; in fact, fiction was completely dropped from Mlle in the mid 1990's. Certainly the 1940's and 50's contained more fiction than any other decades, but in comparison to LHJ, the quantity of fiction has always remained very low. Unlike Mlle, LHJ has always included fiction and poetry as a special feature of the periodical. However, similarly to Mlle, LHJ has steadily reduced the amount of fiction included in the periodical over the years. An especially sharp decline in the quantity of fiction occurred in the 1960's and continued through to the mid 1990's when fiction was dropped from the periodical altogether.
Life Course Messages on Prescriptions for Appearance and Self

The themes of feminine sexuality that appear in *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle* are perennially life course dependent; that is, the themes are relative to the audience profile of the periodicals across all decades. The life course dependency of the cultural messages of feminine sexuality span both the *grooming* and the *interaction style* vehicles, and the focuses within them (i.e., either work or romantic relationship focused).

*Grooming Messages in Ladies Home Journal and Mademoiselle*

The grooming messages within each of the periodicals differ only slightly from the overall themes that are documented in chapter 6 through 8. However, the themes do differ between the periodicals.

The 1940’s and 50’s. While the *grooming* prescriptions change over time, shifts in *grooming* are life course dependent. The *classically feminine* look of the 1940’s and 50’s is popular in both periodicals, but the prescriptions diverge after this, with Mlle prescribing a *virginal*, *sophisticated*, and *well-groomed* look, and LHJ prescribing a *girl next door*, *seductive*, and *romantic* look. However, by the 1950’s Mlle drops the *virginal* and the *sophisticated* look for the *seductive* look. Conversely, LHJ drops the *seductive* look and add the *well-groomed* look.
The 1960's and 70's. As documented in chapter 6 and 7, the *grooming* messages shift beginning in the 1960's. However, a comparison of LHJ and Mlle reveals that these shifts differ by periodical. While the *natural* and *sophisticated* looks are popular in both periodicals, the differences between the periodicals hinges on two opposing themes - the *virginal* and the *seductress* themes, with the former being popular in Mlle and the latter in LHJ. Furthermore, the *virginal* theme, which disappeared from popularity in Mlle during the 1950's, is back, and the *seductress* theme, which disappeared from LHJ during the 50's, also reappears. In fact, the *virginal* theme, which is never a popular theme in LHJ, disappears from Mlle altogether after the 1960's. The *seductress* theme, on the other hand, appears as a popular theme in every decade after the 1940's, but popular mainly in LHJ prior to the *modern* theme period beginning in the 1970's. This theme, however, becomes about equally popular in LHJ and Mlle during the *modern* theme period.

The 1980's and 90's. Both LHJ and Mlle prescribe the *seductive* theme by the 1980's. In fact, this and the *well-groomed* theme is the only *grooming* message that the periodicals have in common during this decade. While readers in both periodicals are instructed to be *virginal* and *well-groomed*, readers of LHJ are also instructed to be *modern*, or *sophisticated*, whereas in Mlle, the message is first to be *natural*, or *classically feminine*.

By the 1990's, the *classically feminine* look disappears from Mlle and the *sophisticated* look emerges. However, in LHJ the change is more dramatic. The *seductive*, *well-groomed*, and *modern* looks are dropped from LHJ in the 1990's only to be replaced by themes popular in Mlle during the 1980's; specifically, the *natural*, and *classically feminine* looks appear in LHJ during the 1990's, and a look not popular since the 1950's - the *girl next door*.
Interaction Style Messages in *Ladies Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle*

In addition to differences in the *grooming* messages of feminine sexuality, LHJ and Mlle also prescribe different *situational-grooming* and *interaction styles* that reveals a life course dependency to the messages. The differences between LHJ and Mlle are revealed in the *situational grooming* scripts and the *interaction style* scripts. While there is agreement in some decades in the relationship based scripts, specifically the *situational grooming* scripts agree in the 1940’s and the 90’s, and the *interaction style* scripts agree in the 1950’s and 80’s, messages in the work focused scripts are discordant in every decade.

Situational Grooming and Interaction Style in the Romantic Relationship: The 1940’s

Message about feminine sexuality in LHJ and Mlle are in agreement in the situational *grooming* scripts focused on the romantic relationship during the 1940’s. However, there is disagreement in their messages on *interaction style* in the romantic relationship and at work, and on prescriptions for *situational grooming* at work. No criticisms of the romantic relationship appear in Mlle during the 1940’s, although cautionary tales warning the mainly single audience of the consequences of remaining single are present. Furthermore, interaction style messages emphasizes the importance of domestic skills and a yielding manner, whereas LHJ prescribes these in addition to emphasizing receptivity, supportiveness, and having interests outside of the home.

Work scripts in LHJ focus exclusively on *work-grooming*, and do not address *interaction style* at all. In the work grooming scripts, emphasis is placed on being well-presented, but makeup is not mentioned in LHJ, and neither is the office/after office look. Overall, as outlined
in Appendix C, there is a dearth of messages about work in LHJ throughout the traditional theme period.

Agreements, Tensions and Contradictions Between Prescriptions and Structural Arrangements. While a traditional demeanor is prescribed in both LHJ and Mlle, the lack of critical scripts on marriage and romantic relationship in Mlle, and the emphasis on a domestic, yielding demeanor, as opposed to a supportive, receptive one, indicates not only a shift in prescriptions, but also different expectations for a younger audience. In an era when the marriage rate was increasing and age at first marriage was declining, it perhaps makes sense that marriage and romantic relationships would become glorified, whereas in LHJ, the periodical with readers who were already married, criticisms of the marital state are acceptable, especially in a climate where divorce is increasing. Perhaps because they are still looking for a husband, it also makes sense that Mlle’s messages might emphasize domestic skills and a yielding demeanor, rather than the supportive, receptive, interests-outside-the-home prescriptions that appear in LHJ. Thus, there is no need to be supportive, receptive, and interesting - these are expectations for someone who spends a lot of time with her partner, not someone who spends a few hours a week with him. Therefore, given the social structural and political climate during this period, the themes on interaction style in the romantic relationship make sense. However, the themes on work-grooming and interaction style at work contradict the social structural arrangements of the 1940’s and, thus, reveal tensions between expectations and social reality.

Given the audience profile of LHJ, it is more likely that the readers of this periodical were working than the reader of Mlle. Therefore, the lack of prescriptions for interaction style at
work, and the office/after office look in LHJ does not make sense. However, as discussed in chapter 10, the political climate favored women working during much of this period and the 1950’s out of necessity only. Unlike the “career” approach taken in the work scripts of Mlle, work was less a means to self fulfillment for the majority of women who were working during this period and more a means for serving the country and family. Additionally, the readers of LHJ, who represented the white, middle class labor force during this period were married and, thus, an after office look might not be necessary for a woman whose plans after work involved cooking for her family. Cast in this light, the lack of emphasis on appearance and “appropriate” interaction style makes sense during the 1940’s.

The 1950’s

By the 1950’s there is agreement between LHJ and Mlle on interaction style messages in the romantic relationship, although prescriptions for sexual interaction style do diverge. While an asexual interaction style is prescribed in both, only the messages in LHJ equate sex and love. Similarly to the 1940’s, however, the differences between the periodicals in their messages on situational grooming and interaction style messages at work continue. As in the 1940’s, the emphasis on body, face, and hair and a “look” at the office that appears in the 1950’s is exclusively found in the messages of Mlle and not in LHJ. However, while the sexual behavior at the office is mentioned in LHJ, but this theme does not appear in Mlle. Finally, the conflict between the public self and the private self that emerges in the 1950’s does not appear in LHJ. Overall, LHJ continues to offer very few scripts on work.

While there is agreement between the periodicals on situational grooming in the romantic relationship in the 1940’s, by the 1950’s, differences between LHJ and Mlle begin to emerge.
While an increasing emphasis on the reducing diet and exercise and, thus, “losing it” become important for maintaining the romantic relationship in the 1950’s, Mlle does not include any messages on these themes.

Agreements, Tensions and Contradictions Between Prescriptions and Structural Arrangements. Work continues to be a source of contention in the 1950’s for the same reasons provided in the 40’s. Work in the 50’s continues to be interpreted as a necessity for married women and, therefore, there is no emphasis on “a look.” Similarly, given the emphasis on her “need” to work, the absence of scripts in LHJ that highlight the conflict between the private-feminine and the public-worker self in Mlle make sense. The implication of the private-feminine versus public-worker conflict in Mlle is that women must surrender their “femininity” if they work. However, married women workers perceived their roles as worker in quite a different way. Since it enabled them to improve their families quality of life, married women who also worked were not perceived as surrendering their femininity by working, but rather as preserving it.

Rather, the emphasis is on cautionary tales, which warn the reader of LHJ of the dangers of the office romance. However, the reader of Mlle is not cautioned in the same way, perhaps this absence was ensured by the lack of availability of birth control for unmarried women during this period and, thus, sexual relationships with an office mate, or anyone, was almost certainly too risky, and so the cautions are not necessary. Similarly, the equating of sex and love might not have been perceived as necessary for enforcing asexuality in Mlle. Since there were also risks with sex, at least there were safety nets should a “mistake” occur, such as marriage. However, sex minus love meant community ostracism for a single woman during this period.
On the other hand, for a married woman, contraception was widely available and, hence, if a woman chose to have an extra-marital liaison, she could do so virtually risk free. Therefore, both the equating of sex and love and the cautionary tales of sexual interactions at work, were perhaps perceived as necessary.

**The 1960’s**

While there is some convergence between the messages in LHJ and Mlle in the 1940’s, 50’s, 80’s, and 90’s, the 1960’s and 70’s represent two decades of discordant messages on feminine sexuality. In the romantic relationship focused scripts, Mlle’s messages do not prescribe a look, per se, and they do not maintain the importance of being “attractive” or “family minded.” LHJ and Mlle also prescribe slightly different sexual interaction styles, as readers of Mlle are presented with a sexual/asexual interaction style, while LHJ readers continue to be presented with the 1940’s-50’s asexual theme. And, conversely to the 1940’s when sex and love were equated in LHJ only, by the 1960’s, sex and love are equated only in Mlle.

Differences between LHJ and Mlle continue into the work focused scripts that rejects the main themes in the work messages, as the conflict between the feminine-private self and the worker-public self, along with the office/after office theme, continues to be absent from the periodical. Additionally, the femme fatale theme is also missing from work-grooming scripts in LHJ. In all decades of the traditional theme period, LHJ continually bypasses work messages in favor of the romantic relationship script.

**Consistent Message in LHJ and Anomie in Mlle.** The 1960’s in LHJ and Mlle represents the beginnings of a shift in the messages on feminine sexuality in both the grooming and
interaction style scripts. The absence of any emphasis on a distinction between the private-feminine and the public-worker self continues in LHJ, although for the first time “work look” messages appear in LHJ. However, although it is a popular look in general in LHJ during this period, the “sexy” look is not prescribed for the office, as it is in Mlle. Coinciding with these changes in messages, structural shifts are also occurring in the female labor force during this period, as a growing number of single women join the work force. However, the biggest segment of the female labor force continues to be married women with children. Additionally, for the first time, an increasing percentage of these women begin to document that their reasons for working are largely for personal reasons, such as for a “sense of accomplishment,” or “achievement,” with fewer women citing “necessity” as a reason for working. Previously, this emphasis on “self” in the work scripts was found only in Mlle and, alongside these prescriptions were the conflicting private-feminine and public-worker messages. However, by the 1960’s, women have become an accepted part of the labor force. Along with political shifts and structural shifts, women’s participation in the labor force during the 1940’s and 50’s paved the way for a shift in perceptions of femininity, which culminated in the women’s rights movement during this decade. However, the public-private conflict continues, but perhaps this can be explained by the overall mixed messages during this decade, whereby an anomic reaction may explain the emergence of this theme in LHJ. For example, it is possible that, because expectations for women’s general behavior and grooming were in flux during this period, then the messages of feminine sexuality were also in flux.

The availability of the birth control pill coincides with the sexual interaction style, and a continuation of the asexual interaction style, the femme fatale at the office, and a deemphasis
on appearance in Mlle. However, the equating of sex and love, absent in the 1950's in Mlle, emerges during this decade. Thus, while the messages are somewhat consistent in LHJ, they become contradictory in Mlle. While there are certainly changes in the messages of feminine sexuality in LHJ, the changes and the contradictions they produce are more pronounced in Mlle. Therefore, the shifts that produced this change in messages, both medical, political, structural, and legislative, appear to have affected perceptions and, thus, prescriptions for younger women only. Additionally, rather than produce a coherent message of expectations for the younger woman's sexuality, these shifts appear to have produced tensions or an anomic response, whereby the messages appear contradictory.

The 1970's

The differences between LHJ and Mlle on messages focused on the romantic relationship continue into the 1970's, with Mlle emphasizing the modern theme and LHJ the traditional. The messages in the work scripts in LHJ continue to conflict with those in Mlle, but for the first time the conflict between the private-feminine and the public-worker tension appears in LHJ. However, while the emphasis in Mlle is on a "sexual" feminine self, or a modern theme, the emphasis in LHJ is on a traditional feminine theme. Finally, a deemphasis on the "look" and the office/after office theme also continues into the 1970's in LHJ.

Consistent, Tension Free Messages. The 1970's is a watershed of change in Mlle, while LHJ continues with the traditional emphasis established in the 1920's. Regardless of the structural, political, and legislative shifts that occurred, the messages of feminine sexuality in LHJ during this period do not reflect these changes. This lack of response in LHJ may be interpreted in one of two ways: either LHJ perceives that all the changes did not affect the
readers of LHJ and, thus, a thematic shift was unnecessary, or there really was no shift in expectations for the reader of LHJ. Either way, the contradictory messages of feminine sexuality during the 1960’s stabilize by the 1970’s in Mlle. This shift towards a modern theme may reflect a general acceptance of the structural, political, and legislative changes that began to occur in the mid-1960’s and the change in expectations for feminine sexuality that followed them.

The 1980’s

After the discordant messages of the 1960’s and 70’s, the messages of feminine sexuality in LHJ and Mlle once again share some agreement. The agreement between LHJ and Mlle on the messages of feminine sexuality encompass both the situational grooming and the interaction style messages in the romantic relationship. Thus, there is more agreement between the periodicals during this period than in any prior decade. However, different messages on sexual interaction style do emerge again in the 1980’s. While the sexual interaction style is prescribed in both LHJ and Mlle, the virgin style is not a suggested style in LHJ, and the asexual style does not appear in Mlle. Both periodicals, however, do equate sex and love.

Unlike the message agreement in the romantic relationship scripts, the conflicting messages in LHJ and Mlle continue unabated in the work focused scripts, as the conflict between the private-feminine self and the deemphasis on femininity at the workplace disappear in the LHJ scripts. Additionally, the office/after office theme continues to be absent during the 1980’s, as does the sexual behavior theme that emerges again during this decade.

LHJ and Mlle Begin to Merge in the Romantic Relationship. The focus on asexuality in LHJ seems consistent with the traditional theme that is emphasized in the work scripts.
However, there is also an emphasis on the sexual woman sexual interaction style in LHI, but this is not inconsistent with the modern-traditional theme that appears in both the romantic relationship focused grooming and interaction style scripts, since the prescriptions are for both - traditional and modern. Additionally, the traditional emphasis on the virgin and the asexual woman appear to be consistent with the marital status of the respective audiences if these two interaction styles are understood in all their implications. The virgin and the asexual woman capture the same meaning; that is, they both deny women a sexual identity, but whereas the former denies it to a single woman, maintaining that chastity is best for her, the latter denies it to a married woman, maintaining that women do not enjoy sex anyway.

Messages that prescribe a sexual-asexual woman and a sexual-virgin are inconsistent and, thus, indicate that the anomic conditions of the 1960's are back, as readers in both LHI and Mlle are presented with mixed messages on how to look and be. Since structural arrangements are similar to those of the 1970's, these shift to pre-1970's themes on the virgin in Mlle and the asexual woman in LHI perhaps reflect the conservative political swing. And, consistent with this turn in political ideology, for the first time, the equating of sex and love appears in both LHI and Mlle. Thus, in the 1980's, messages about feminine sexuality in LHI and Mlle appear to be converging for the first time in the romantic relationship scripts. However, the differences between the periodicals persists in the work focused scripts, as the traditional theme continues to be emphasized in LHI. This theme seems consistent with a political climate that denigrated working mothers and, therefore, the scripts shift from an emphasis on work as a means to "self fulfillment" to work as "necessary."
The 1990’s

While LHJ’s and Mlle’s situational grooming scripts focused on the romantic relationship continue to be in agreement into the 1990’s, although the interaction style prescriptions begin to diverge again during this decade as no criticisms appear in Mlle during this decade. However, disagreements continue to appear in the messages on situational grooming and interaction style at work. Mlle’s messages on grooming style at work is not look focused and, unlike LHJ’s messages, the interaction style messages do not prescribe the ways in which work deters from or contributes to marriage or the romantic relationship.

LHJ and Mlle continue to merge messages in the 1990’s, although there are still some differences. While the emphasis on a look disappears from both, the emphasis on the effects of work on marriage continues in LHJ only. Additionally, while criticisms of marriage and the romantic relationship appear in Mlle, these scripts are absent in LHJ and, thus, by implication, LHJ continues to reinforce the importance of marriage for its readers.

Life Course Dependency: Implications for the Interpretation of the General Themes of Feminine Sexuality?

The differences between the messages in LHJ and Mlle highlight disparate expectations of feminine sexuality that are life course dependent. While social structural arrangements change over the life course and over these decades, these arrangements begin to converge in later decade, yet the prescriptions in the two periodicals do not wholly comply with this convergence. Political, medical, and legislative conditions also seem to be connected to shifts in these messages, since shifts in these areas correspond to shifts in themes. However, the prescription in LHJ is toward a traditional theme of benign sexuality, whereas in Mlle it is
toward a modern theme, and an identification of the "modern woman" as solely sexual in nature. While the reader in LHJ is presented with this modern theme in later decades, she is simultaneously confronted with the traditional theme.

While there is a convergence in the messages on grooming and interaction style in the romantic relationship in the 1940's, 50's, 80's, and the 90's, the messages seem to merge more and more beginning in the 1980's. Thus, while there is never any semblance between the work scripts in LHJ and Mlle, messages on the romantic relationship do share some similarities in most of the decades included in this sample. Therefore, what is most interesting about the 1960's and 70's is that there is almost complete discordance of the messages on feminine sexuality.

The 1960's represents a period when the messages between LHJ and Mlle not only contradict one another, but also a period of contentious messages within each periodical. Conversely, while the messages between LHJ and Mlle continue to contradict one another in the 1970's, there is a level of agreement between the messages within each periodical that is rare in most other decades.

The 1960's and 70's also represent shifting and contradictory themes in the general thematic analysis. Therefore, in addition to the interpretations of these messages presented in chapter 9, differences in audience profile may also help to account for the mixed messages documented in chapters 6 through 8.