

**GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE SEXUALITY IN
MEN'S PORNOGRAPHIC AND NON-PORNOGRAPHIC MAGAZINES**

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Abstract

This thesis applies the radical feminist perspective set out by MacKinnon (1993) and Dworkin (1995), to analyze the construction of female sexuality within popular Canadian men's pornographic magazines and non-pornographic magazines. A mixed methods approach was used to analyze the images and text within the feature articles of the selected magazines. Results revealed that women continue to be constructed as sexual objects within both categories of magazines, but the earlier link identified by MacKinnon and Dworkin between violence and sexuality was no longer apparent. Instead, women were a sexual puzzle that the magazines attempted to unpack. Rather than a strict dichotomy between pornographic and non-pornographic magazines, a continuum of grey emerged whereby the level of explicitness between the two magazines increased as the continuum progressed from left to right, thereby demonstrating the pornographication of mainstream media, as per McNair (2002).

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Introduction

Researchers have long been engaged with the effects of media on viewers. In particular, the depiction of violence and sexual themes has piqued the interest of various disciplines, including sociology and criminology. Because “the modern world appears to seek guidance from the mass media” (Creed, 2003: 50), feminist scholars have concerned themselves with media constructions of gender (Bouteillier, 2000: 442) and with what McNair (2002) calls the “sexualization of culture” (p.7). In part, this sexualization reflects the breakdown in censorship that began in the 1960s and the 1970s; since that time, the distinct black and white dichotomy between mainstream and restricted or obscene representations of sexuality has blurred to gray (Attwood, 2006: 81).

However, many worry that the resultant growth of highly sexualized representations of women in the media has had unbalanced effects, with women being depicted, in images or text, more often as sexualized objects available for the pleasure of their male partners (Arthurs, 2004: 53). In this sense, there is evidence that increased sexual freedom has been constrained or shaped by patriarchal social structures which privilege men; since men are the most powerful members of society, they therefore determine many of its norms and values (McNair 1996; 2002), and the values are in turn reflected in media images which subordinate and sexually objectify women. McNair (2002) contends “the depiction of women in patriarchal culture [has] reflected their subordinate sexual, political and socioeconomic state” (pg. 113). A number of researchers also report that women are portrayed in media in such a manner as to represent the heterosexual male fantasy (Machin and Thornborrow, 2003; Sheehy and Hong, 2008; Sun, Bridges, Wosnitzer, Scharrer, and Liberman, 2008).

The current debate over female members of cast of the television show *Glee* posing in sexualized photos in *GQ* magazine is a particularly focusing event. As *GQ* retorts, “How the hell did a show about high school theater geeks come to be the biggest TV show in America? Well, T&A helps. (That's talent and ambition, you pervs.)” (*GQ* online, 2010). The fourteen page spread features images of three scantily-clad cast members in highly sexualized positions. Concerns have been raised within the media that, by posing in such manner, these actors are going against the family friendly nature of the show (Bierly, 2010). Concerns have also been raised about the pedophilia inherent in the spread, which sexualizes actors who portray teenagers (McNamara, 2010). However, one particular author, McNamara (2010), identifies a greater concern, namely the sexism inherent in an article which depicts a fully clothed male grasping the “*dérrières*” of two scantily clad young girls. McNamara asks, “Does a woman still have to strip down to panties and thigh-highs and straddle a bench” to prove that “she isn't a theater geek but a sexually attractive young woman who shouldn't be shoe-boxed into Rachel roles?”

Interestingly, current North American research on the construction of female sexuality in the media, particularly media marketed towards men, tends to focus on pornographic material, rather than mainstream non-pornographic media such as television programs or entertainment magazines (See, for e.g., Carr and VanDeusen, 2004; Burt, 1980; Bouteillier, 2000; MacKinnon, 1995; and Dworkin, 1991). In examining print media, three researchers expand their focus to examine how female sexuality is portrayed in non-pornographic magazines. Mooney's (2008) research is based on articles in *Lad* magazines produced in the United Kingdom, while Sheehy and Hong (2008) focus on one recurring article within the magazine *Esquire* rather than focusing on the images or the entire feature

article. Accordingly, there is a gap in the current research on the portrayal of women in the media. Researchers have not examined the construction of female sexuality within the entire magazine, and have rather focused on the articles or the images, rather than a wholistic reading of the entire content of the magazines. Furthermore, current research tends to separate pornographic and non-pornographic material by asserting a black and white dichotomy between the two. While some researchers comment on the existence of pornographic themes within non-pornographic media (Mooney 2008; Taylor, 2006), researchers have yet to conduct a comparative analysis between the two types of magazines.

My research fills that gap, by analyzing a number of popular men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines in order to compare the ways in which pornographic and non-pornographic men's entertainment magazines construct women's sexuality. My thesis focuses on the content of the magazines, with particular attention to the images and articles contained therein. By focusing on both pictures and text, this allows an overall interpretation of female sexuality to emerge from the magazines.

My research questions are as follows:

- How is women's sexuality constructed in men's magazines?
- Is the construction of women's sexuality in pornographic and non-pornographic magazines similar/different?

A social constructionist and feminist framework will be used to answer these questions, and to examine whether there is a black and white distinction between pornographic and non-pornographic material, or whether there are similarities between the two types of magazines that blur the boundaries to a shade of grey.

Chapter One discusses the relevant literature on the social construction of gender. I make the argument that gender and sexuality are socially constructed phenomena and that

the media is one of the primary outlets in which the meaning of the two is constructed. I also discuss the literature which focuses on how women are depicted in the media, especially print media. In the first part of the literature review, I focus on how women are portrayed in non-pornographic mainstream material, with special attention paid to women are portrayed in men's non-pornographic magazines. In the second part of the literature review, I discuss the literature related to how women are portrayed in pornographic material, again paying special attention to men's magazines. In this section, I also compare two lines of thought with respect to the pornography debate: the pro-pornography arguments advanced by the third wave feminists, and the anti-pornography position espoused by second wave feminists. Both views provide a different view of pornography and offer a different perspective on the question of female empowerment.

Chapter Two outlines the theoretical lens used to analyze the images. The research questions are clearly outlined within this chapter, followed by an overview of the mixed methodology used to analyze the images and text within the feature articles in the magazines in the sample. I use a quantitative inventory analysis to examine the images in my sample. Akin to content analysis, this approach allows a researcher to quantify the number of times that a particular component or theme appears in each magazine. By using a quantitative approach, numeric comparisons can be made between the two types of magazines. I then use a qualitative thematic analysis to examine the themes within each magazine. This allows comparisons to be made between the construction of female sexuality within the images and the text, respectively. Finally, I outline the process of sample selection, identifying which magazines were selected for analysis and providing justifications for my choices.

Chapter Three displays the results of the data analysis of the images in the magazines. An interpretation of the results from the data analysis is also provided. Chapter Four consists of a discussion of the themes which emerged in the textual analysis; it also presents the analysis of the images and the text within each article as a whole. Chapter Four discusses the themes in both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines relating to female sexuality, and includes a comparative analysis of the themes within and between both types of magazines.

In the concluding chapter, I outline the major findings of my thesis and demonstrate how my research has contributed both to the current literature by filling a gap in the current research and to the field of criminology. I also discuss future research that flows from my findings, including research that focuses on the readers' interpretation of the sampled material, and the possible effect that the consumption of this material may have on male readers and girls and young women who are maturing within a highly sexualized media environment that normalizes and celebrates a phallogentric understanding of female sexuality.

Chapter One: Literature Review

My project is situated in a radical feminist perspective, taken from Dworkin and MacKinnon, with an emphasis on social construction theory, and this chapter will provide an overview of the ways in which feminist scholars have used this theoretical position to explore the meanings embedded within media portrayals of women and women's sexuality. Specifically, I will be examining portrayals of women's sexuality in magazines, a form of popular culture defined as a "collection of articles or stories published at regular intervals". Most magazines include pictures and function to provide entertainment; they are also more visually appealing than books and newspapers (Danesi, 2002: p. 74). The literature discussed in this chapter points to a general trend whereby women are constructed as sexual objects in media texts. Particular focus is paid to studies dealing with magazines and other entertainment media which is marketed towards men. The chapter is divided into the following sections: theoretical perspectives on the social construction of gender; media and its implication in social construction; the influence of a patriarchal culture on media constructions of gender; the construction of female sexuality in mainstream, non-pornographic media; and lastly, the construction of female sexuality in pornographic media.

1.1 Social Construction of Gender

Best (2008) defines social construction as "the way people assign meaning to the world" (p. 11). He further clarifies it as a social process, whereby people constantly produce new understandings about reality and social problems (p. 11). He asserts that "all knowledge is socially constructed through our language" (p. 16) and identifies language as a categorical concept, which helps an individual categorize the world in new ways. Burr (1995) asserts that social construction theory can be used to explain how an individual

creates his or her own identity; a “person is socially constructed...this construction process is rooted in language” (p. 32), which Burr defines as text and talk. Therefore, identity is not something that is internal to a person; rather it is the result of social processes rooted in languages and signs (p. 109). Signs are representational objects that are embedded with subjective meanings (Berger and Luckman, 1966: 35-39). Language, which Best (2008) defines as vocal signs, allows people to intersubjectively categorize the world by assigning meaning to things, enabling people to understand the world around them (p.11).

Accordingly, Best sees social construction as an interactive process, whereby individuals and social institutions such as the media present their constructions to an audience and then adjust their constructions according to the audience’s reaction (p. 327).

Feminist scholars have applied social construction theory to gender and sex to examine the ways in which the meaning of gender and sexuality is established and reinforced through text and talk. Burr suggests that sexual desires are “socially created and socially shared” (p. 42). As such, we construct our sexual identity from the (limited) discourses available around us (p. 106). These desires, once shared, may be internalized by individuals as pleasurable, and used to construct his or her sexual identity. While there are multiple and competing discourses, Burr uses the example of two competing discourses that help an individual to construct his or her own sexual identity: society’s notions of what is natural or moral and, conversely, what is perverted. The latter includes everything that is not constructed as “natural” (p. 107). Accordingly, the meaning of sexuality is constructed based on discourses that define how people *should* behave, “in ways that are natural and normal” (Burr, 2003, p. 42), such as participating in heterosexual (procreative) sex.

However, sex is not always about procreation, and what people find sexually attractive is not always attributable to biological or evolutionary arguments. Carstarphen (1999) notes that while we think of sex as a biological construct, gender is a social construction that establishes roles for men, women, and children (p. xiv). de Lauretis (1984), comments on how femininity and gender roles are constructed through the use of language (p. 14), thereby demonstrating that gender roles and constructions of femininity are the results of an interactive and reflexive social process.

A number of feminist scholars note that the media plays an important role in providing cultural currency from which individuals may draw in the process of constructing a sense of self. Story (2006) notes that it is from popular culture:

...that most people in our society get their entertainment and their information. It is here that women (and men) are offered the culture's dominant definitions of themselves. It would therefore seem crucial to explore the possibilities and pitfalls of intervention in popular forms in order to find ways of making feminist meanings a part of our pleasures. (p. 106: c.f. Gamman and Marshment, 1988:1)

Both Best (2008) and Story (2006) argue that entertainment media help individuals construct social reality. Best includes fictional genres, such as novels, in his definition of popular culture fictional genres; he believes novels can and do address topics in the news and are therefore capable of commenting on, and constructing, social problems.

Social construction also offers a theoretical framework that enables critical feminist analysis of media representations of women and women's sexuality. Zavoina (1999) believes that the constant repetition of certain discourses within the media, such as the portrayal of men and women in a variety of sexual and social roles, allows these portrayals to become accepted and internalized by members of the public as "real" (p. xvi). Meehan (2002) argues that media texts that embody the dominant ideology (i.e. a male dominated

ideology) are absorbed by the audience as natural and commonsensical (p. 211). Each feminist scholar that utilizes social construction offers a different perspective or interpretation of that construction based on their own background and what type of media outlet they are exploring.

In the following example, Farganis (1985) shows how media representations within Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* can help comment on and challenge mainstream discourses, thereby becoming part of the process of meaning-making. This represents a first in a list of examples of how feminists use the social construction perspective to critique heterosexist conceptions of gender and gender roles.

In this post-apocalyptic tale, women are placed into different social categories: Wives, who are married to the "commander" but, because of nuclear fallout, are unable to bear children; Marthas who are household employees; Handmaids who breed children; and Aunts who assist the Handmaids. In this fictional construction, women become objects subjected to the whims of the commanders. They are sexual property, with no option to say "no"; they are powerless, and their will is the will of the commander. As sexual property, a Handmaid is responsible for providing a child to the commander and his wife. If a Handmaid is unable to produce a child, or produces unfit children, she is banished "to clean up radioactive nuclear wastes" (p. 312). Farganis argues that the Handmaids have been socially constructed within the novel as "two-legged womb[s]" or "sexual vessels without power" (p. 313). It is the men, consisting of the commanders and the elite class above them, who possess the power over the Handmaids and other women. As Farganis notes, "the individual can no longer choose how to live or give self-direction to his or her life" (p. 313).

Power over female sexuality is not only relegated to the commanders, but to the state as well. Farganis suggest that Atwood is focused on “how power constitutes emotions and desires and sexual arrangements” (p. 314). In a power play, Gilead (the state) regulated and controlled sexual practices in response to the decline in fertility; “women are controlled so they can breed” (p. 314). Sex, in Gilead, was relegated from the private sphere to the public sphere, thereby allowing the women to become “a public object, a commodity” (p. 317). Farganis (1985) argues that *The Handmaid’s Tale* represents “the heart of social constructionist theory” and, in particular, the social construction of gender (p. 315). The novel describes how gender and sexuality are socially constructed by those in power, but the nature of the interaction that is implicated in the process of construction means that women are not powerless to challenge limiting stereotypes. As Farganis notes, “individuals are not locked into a social prison from which there is no escape, even though the social self is, to a large degree, shaped, molded, and controlled by social forces that exist prior to and outside the person” (p. 311). It is through the construction of the “social self” that the Handmaid Offred is able to resist, in part, Gilead’s controlled over sexual practices. Offred thereby becomes part of the process of meaning making, because intersubjective communication is at the heart of the construction of meaning. Discourses are never set in stone because meaning is negotiated and renegotiated by real social actors on a continual basis.

1.2 Objectification and Patriarchy

McNair (2002) notes that media constructions of female sexuality have played a pivotal role in normalizing sex and transforming the repressive norms of the 18th century into the more progressive norms of today. He calls this the “sexualization of culture” (p. 7). According to McNair, sex has transformed from the heteronormative standards of the past

and is now made up of diverse types of sexualities, perversities, and identities (p. 4). Sex has also been conceptualized as a source of pleasure, a treat or luxury, and a commodity that everyone should have a right to consume (Attwood, 2006: 87). Like McNair (2002), Attwood argues that the normalization of sex was fuelled by the “breakdown between mainstream and restricted obscene categories of sexual representation and increasing entrenchment of sexualities within media forms” (p. 81). Because media representations of sex are ever more visible and explicit (p. 82), female sexuality, which traditionally has been censored or repressed by society, has become part of the public domain. What has been defined as “pornographic” has become, in fact, a form of representation that is no longer restricted to the private realm. Rather, “pornography” has invaded the public realm and can be found in entertainment magazines, television shows, advertisements, art and movies. Representations of female sexuality, which were initially restricted to the private realm, has invaded the public realm through the outlets identified above, resulting in what McNair (2002) terms the pornographication of mainstream culture.

This however has its downside. Several researchers (Mulvey 1988; McNair 2002; Arthurs, 2004; Attwood, 2006; Attwood, 2005) argue that media portrayals construct women as sexual objects, which reflects their “subordinate sexual, political and socioeconomic state” (McNair, 2002: p. 113). McNair (2002) posits that such constructions are due to patriarchy. In a patriarchal culture, it is not only the men who are setting the norms and values of society; women are instrumental in accepting and co-creating norms that constitute patriarchal society. For example, women internalize norms that construct female members of society as inferior to men. Hardy (1998; 2001) suggests that in a patriarchal culture, the gender separation of dominance and submission is akin to the

separation of subject and object whereby women and femininity come to represent the object that is acted upon by the male subject (p. 438).

Mulvey (1988) suggests that in a patriarchal culture women represent the “male other”, whose purpose is to provide an outlet through which men can live out their fantasies and obsessions (p. 58). As such, the cinema offers men an opportunity for scopophilia, the process of treating other people as objects and subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze (p. 59). Since we live in a patriarchal culture where men are the viewers and women are being watched, pleasure has been split, and men are seen as active consumers of pleasure and women are seen as passive objects of pleasurable consumption (p. 62). This allows the viewer to pretend that he is gazing on a private world (p. 60). The media – including magazines – largely reflect this patriarchal division between public and private, subject and object, and media images and texts that promote this conception of gender remain largely unchallenged (p. 59).

Smart (1989) sees McNair’s (2002) patriarchal culture as “phallogentric” in that it is “structured to meet the needs of the masculine imperative” (p. 27). In a phallogentric culture, the focus is on the male and masculine sexuality, and the female and female sexuality are only understood in terms of the “pleasure of the Phallus, and by extension the pleasures of penetration and intercourse – for men” rather than in terms of a woman’s own sexual pleasure (p. 28). As such, female sexuality is ignored, or constructed in terms of what men desire, rather than what women actually want. This definition of female sexuality has negative consequences for women. For example, rape myths are based on the fact that rape involves penetration; therefore it must be enjoyable for the (unwilling) female partner.

Living within a phallogentric culture brings additional negative consequences for women, especially in terms of female sexuality. Smart (1989) draws on a survey of men's "sex lives" completed by the magazine *Woman*, and published in a book by Sanders (1987; c.f. Smart, 1989: 28). The survey explored how men view their sexual relationships and how they define female sexuality. Sanders uses quotations from the survey to demonstrate that women "are too reserved and guilty to enjoy sex and satisfy their husbands" (c.f. Smart p. 28). Survey participants responded by agreeing with this statement, and suggested that their wives were being "selfish and unloving" by denying their husbands the "right kind of sex". They further stated that since their wives had previously engaged in and enjoyed "the right kind of sex", they just needed to be convinced or coerced into engaging in the "right kind of sex" again. Smart concludes that these perceptions are consistent with the idea that male sexual desire is constructed as insatiable whereas female sexual desire is constructed as passive; women are just "passive objects of desire" (Smart, 1989: 30), and that at the base of it is the social construction that defines sexuality as the pleasure of the Phallus (p. 28).

Sanders, in his survey of men, further constructs women as a sexual puzzle, that women possess something, namely their sexuality, that they are conditioned by society to not share with men (c.f. Smart 1989: 29). Baumeister and Twenge (2002) suggest that women may engage in self-suppression of their own sexuality, thereby making sex more valuable and turning it into a scare, and therefore more desirable, resource. However, men often cite cases where women have previously enjoyed sex and use those examples to demonstrate that "women can enjoy sex in spite of themselves" (Smart, 1989: p. 30). As a sexual puzzle, women desire sex yet withhold it from men; the puzzle then becomes a question of identifying ways to gain power over women's sexuality, "in spite of women

themselves” (p. 29). Smart uses the example of rape to illustrate the sexual puzzle. Although, according to Sanders (1987), women enjoy sex, they often succumb to the “parental prohibitions” within their head and deny themselves the pleasure of sex (p. 73-74, c.f. Smart, 1989: 31). Armed with the knowledge that women do enjoy sex, men will incorrectly interpret a woman saying NO to sex with a man, as being “whimsical or capricious”; what she really means is yes.

Smart (1989) notes that this construction of women’s sexuality and rape is consistent with the construction found within quotes from rapists:

Rape is man’s right. If a women [sic] doesn’t want to give it, the man should take it. Women have no right to say no. Women are made to have sex. It’s all they are good for. Some women would rather take a beating but they always give in; it’s what they are for.

I think I was really pissed off at her because it didn’t go as planned. I could have been with someone else. She led me on but wouldn’t deliver...I have a male ego that must be fed.

Rape gave me the power to do what I wanted to do without feeling I had to please a partner or respond to a partner. I felt in control, dominant. Rape was the ability to have sex without caring about the woman’s response. I was totally dominant (Scully and Marolla 1985; 261, 258, 259, Cited in Smart, 1989: 31).

Smart (1989) argues that the media is an important player in creating and maintaining phallogentric culture as well as a source of information about female sexuality. She asserts that women are portrayed in negative ways in pornographic magazines as well as in “down-market tabloid newspapers” (p. 40). In describing female fantasies, both of these sources describe women as “lascivious” who willingly reveal “that their sole enjoyment is sexual intercourse with total strangers, often in the most unlikely circumstances” (p. 40). My research will extend this work by comparing the construction of female sexuality within men’s pornographic

and non-pornographic magazines. Both types of material are identified by Smart as constructing women in negative manner; however, my research will identify similarities and differences between mainstream and pornographic media representations to determine if phallogentric culture pervades both types of men's magazines or is relegated to pornography.

1.3 Depictions of Women in Mainstream Media

My works draws on earlier research that has focused on “ the role of the dominant media images of women in circulating and maintaining established beliefs about the nature of the feminine and the masculine and the proper roles to be played by women and men”(Gledhill, 1997: 346). Accordingly, feminist media researchers were concerned with how the media was *constructing* female sexuality and femininity. This is demonstrated in the following examples focusing on various media texts including those in television, novels newspapers and magazines.

Andersen (2002), in discussing advertisements (ads), cautions researchers to avoid examining ads merely as representations of sexuality, as these images are not meant to provide sexual gratification to the viewer; rather, these images are meant to motivate people to buy the product seen in the ad (p. 223). However, ads still have a tendency to mimic pornography in their depictions of women as sexy and desirable, because advertisers construct women as sexual objects in order to attract the male gaze (p. 224). Additionally, women are frequently depicted as wearing very little clothing and reduced to their body parts, both of which are associated with male sexual desire (p. 225 and p. 232). Ads also depict women in subordinated positions, confirming to male viewers that they have power over the women in the images (p. 224-225); this also works to maintain patriarchal values.

The images also “provoke sexual associations without having to state anything explicitly” (p. 226). In one example, a woman is crouching behind a bush, on her hands and knees, wearing only a bra, panties and expensive high-heeled shoes (p. 235-236). This image exemplifies the ways in which women are socially constructed as sexual objects within advertisements, and the presence of such images suggests that pornographic representations have become normalized to the degree to the point where they are commonly featured in mainstream media.

Kuruc (2008) examined the construction of female sexuality on television by conducting a semiotic analysis of fashion in the popular television show *Sex and the City*. This show exemplifies how the depiction of female sexuality has become normalized in mainstream media. While *Sex and the City* has been hailed by critics as a progressive show for women since it depicts sex from the female perspective (p. 201), Kuruc offers a different perspective and suggests that *Sex and the City* “encourage[s] gender stereotypes about female frivolity and superficiality” (p. 203). She makes the argument that *Sex and the City*, through the use of fashion, functions to reinforce the gender-based stereotypes that are characteristic of a patriarchal society (p. 193).

The use of stereotypes is most evident in the construction of the character Samantha. As the oldest character on the show, Samantha “is ironically projected as the most sexual and promiscuous of all the women” (Kuruc, 2008: 211). While this may represent an attempt by producers to challenge the notion that older women are non-sexual, the unintended consequence is a negative construction of Samantha’s sexuality. Samantha is often depicted as an aggressive cougar; this is often represented in her clothing choices (p. 211). Samantha is often seen wearing plunging necklines and sheer garments during the

day, and lingerie outside of the bedroom. In the episode “The Drought,” “she is seen wearing a purple dress with tasseled breast decorations. This outfit is suggestive of a stripper outfit and is accentuated by Samantha’s sexually aggressive attitude” (p. 211). Kuruc’s paper demonstrates that patriarchal norms can subsume potentially subversive competing discourses about female sexuality.

Hardy (2001) examines the content of Black Lace novels, which are romantic pornographic works of fiction typically written by women for women. In an attempt to challenge traditional notions of power seen in pornographic media, Black Lace fiction attempts to construct the sexual woman as the one who is able to wield sexual power over her lover (p. 441). However, despite this difference, women are still constructed within these novels as sexual objects. To exemplify, even when the woman is able to exude some form of power, she is still depicted as being submissive – as having to “yield to the natural ‘truth’ residing in her body” and to “surrender to the male and their body” (p. 442: 443). Hardy found that in these erotic novels the women depicted primarily fell into four categories:

- Explicitly submissive
- Possibly or lightly submissive
- Possessing no power; and
- Mainly or wholly dominant (p. 447)

Between these four categories, three-quarters of the time women are constructed as powerless or submissive to the male subject; supporting Hardy’s argument that despite the empowerment that is granted to women who are able to write their own erotica, Black Lace novels in themselves are not conducive to the empowerment of all women. Rather, the stereotypes about female sexuality that are created and reinforced in male-oriented pornography are further reinforced in Black Lace novels.

Benedict (1992) further analyzes the argument that female sexuality is subject to stereotypes within the media, and that stereotypes are used within the media to construct and define female sexuality. In her analysis of newspaper articles which depict women who have been sexually assaulted, Benedict, in addition to identifying ten rape myths or stereotypes about women who are sexually assaulted, found that the newspapers in her sample construct sexually assaulted women into two distinct categories: the virgin; or the vamp (p. 18). This dichotomy speaks to the construction of female sexuality within the media. The virgin was portrayed as “pure or innocent, a true victim attacked by monsters” whereas the vamp was “a wanton female who provoked the assailant with her sexuality” (p. 18). To elaborate on these stereotypes, the virgins are typically the women who stay at home, whereas the vamps are the alluring sirens or whores of the ads or other media depictions (p. 22). According to Gallagher (1981) “throughout the imagery of ‘virgin’ runs a consistent stress on subordination, sacrifice and purity. The ‘whore’ imagery is connected with cruelty, inhumanity, insensitivity and unscrupulousness” (c.f. Benedict, 1992: 22). With respect to the virgin stereotype, the media constructs virginal women as being passive, dependent, indecisive and rewarded for their “good” behavior; whereas if they behave in the manner akin to the vamp, they are punished (i.e. raped) (p. 22). To be more exact, the virgins are constructed as “dependent, foolish, indecisive, deceitful, incompetent, and so on. More troublesome, however, may be the fact that often these flaws are presented as being desirable or even funny...better to be wide-eyed and pretty than a forceful blue-stocking” (Gallagher, 1981; c.f. Benedict 1992: 22).

Benedict identified eight factors that construct a sexual assault victim as a vamp:

- If she knows the assailant
- If no weapon is used

- If she is of the same race of the assailant
- If she is of the same class of the assailant
- If she is of the same ethnic group of the assailant
- If she is young
- If she is pretty
- If she in any way deviated from the traditional female role of being at home with family and children (p. 19).

Conversely, if a sexual assault victim does NOT fit into any of these factors, she will be constructed as the “pure” virgin.

As noted above, social construction theory posits that both women and men are instrumental in maintaining patriarchy. This is exemplified in the following study which focuses on material marketed towards women. Machin and Thornborrow (2003) conducted a discourse analysis of 44 international issues of *Cosmopolitan*, published in the month of November 2001. The authors wanted to look at two things: how women were depicted at work; and how women’s sexuality was constructed (p. 454). In terms of how women’s sexuality was constructed, Machin and Thornborrow identified the following discourses: women were portrayed as sexual objects; and women’s sexuality was depicted in terms of sexual acts, with the sexual acts being presented as “mildly transgressive”, with traditional sexual roles still evident (p. 455). However, despite the obvious objectification of women within these discourses, they are explicitly presented in *Cosmopolitan* as a form of empowerment for women (p. 455).

Machin and Thornborrow (2003) found that the women in *Cosmopolitan* were dressed up to play on traditional notions of female sexuality and the heterosexual male fantasy. These women wore shorts skirts, revealing tops, high heels, and shiny red, sensuous lipstick (p. 460). In addition to the images, the authors also examined *Cosmopolitan*’s construction of the “fun, fearless female” within the text of the articles (p. 461).

Cosmopolitan's primary discourse is about empowering women as strong sexual beings; women were encouraged to feel confident in the bedroom, to be able to give men amazing orgasms while simultaneously getting what they want (p. 461). The authors illustrate these discourses by quoting first-hand accounts such as "I like to take charge in bed. That feeling of absolute power makes me feel confident in my sexuality" (p. 462). However, the reader is constructed by *Cosmopolitan* as "naïve" and therefore in need of education; she is told in articles to "act naturally and sexually" and is encouraged to use her body to express herself sexually (p. 462). Additionally, *Cosmopolitan* also featured "naughty" articles, which encouraged women to engage in transgressive behaviors, including having sex with strangers, being dominant in the bedroom, and giving and receiving oral sex (p. 462). These "naughty" articles encourage women to become empowered and take control of their sexuality; however, this control was linked to pleasing men sexually (p. 464). Accordingly, in *Cosmopolitan*, women are given the opportunity to internalize and accept the norms of a patriarchal culture. To exemplify, women were constructed as powerful beings in *Cosmopolitan* when they were able to give pleasure to their male partner (p. 464). Smart (1989) argues that this is not evidence of gender equality as female sexuality and empowerment becomes reduced to the pleasure of the phallus. This line of thinking resonates with depictions of women in other types of media, whereby women are depicted as sexual objects.

Caputi (2010) followed McNair's (1996; 2002) line of thought and examined how pornography has become mainstream in advertisements. She argues that "ritual degradations" that are present within pornography often covertly show up in advertisements as well. In her analysis Caputi (2010) uses MacKinnon and Dworkin's definition of

pornography as “the sexually explicit subordination of women” (p. 44; c.f. Dworkin, 1989: 253-275) to determine whether advertisements reproduce this subordination.

Caputi (2010) found several themes inherent in advertisements. The overarching theme was one of “eroticized domination and objectification” of women, with women being depicted as inferior or subordinate to men (p. 46). Advertisements successfully construct women as inferior beings by having them wear less clothing than the men in the images or by having men tower over them. In objectifying women, they are treated “as if they had no innate self, sovereignty, purpose, agency or soul” and are used for purposes that are not consistent with their own desires, such as the sexual gratification of viewers. This is seen in images where women are pictured fused with a car, or as a sex doll, or as a body part (p. 47-48). Caputi notes that “as objects women are denied autonomy and presented as perpetually accessible, something to toy with, something to possess, something to be consumed” (p. 47-48). The images Caputi uses in her analysis include an image of singer Christina Aguilera with her mouth sewed shut and an image from the television show *Nip/Tuck*, depicting a woman lying on a slab with a scalpel in her abdomen (p. 49-51). Overall, Caputi focused on advertisements and how some advertisements feature pornographic themes. Her analysis suggests that pornography has been normalized, which is why mainstream media such as advertisements is now featuring pornographic themes.

Sheehy and Hong (2008) examine how the ideal woman is constructed in the men’s non-pornographic magazine *Esquire*. David Granger, *Esquire*’s editor in chief describes *Esquire* as “special because it’s a magazine for men. Not a fashion magazine for men, not a health magazine for men, not a money magazine for men. It is not any of these things, it is all of them. It is, and has been for sixty-eight years, a magazine about the interests, the

curiosity, the passions, of men” (p. 1). In comparison to pornographic magazines, *Esquire* can be classified as an entertainment magazine for men. Sheehy and Hong identify *Esquire* as “a leading magazine in the men’s genre” and analyze how *Esquire* has framed the “image of the ideal woman in American society” (p. 1). Their textual and content analysis focused on a regular feature article in *Esquire* entitled “Women We Love” or “A Woman We Love”.

In the first edition containing “Women We Love”, the column was introduced with a bold statement: “You don’t live through —*you don’t*— twenty years as witness to the greatest social revolution in history without storing up some fairly heart-felt convictions about women. And they *need* to be expressed” (Sheehy and Hong, 2008: 10). In this column, different feminine ideals are present in different timeframes; Sheehy and Hong focus primarily on the differences between the construction of the ideal female before and after the “backlash” of the women’s movement.

Sheehy and Hong (2008) identify three major changes in *Esquire*’s depiction of the ideal woman, in the columns published from 1987 to 2006. They note that there was a shift in how women were portrayed as employed individuals. In 1987, 80 percent of women depicted were employed in the entertainment, arts or sports industry; this jumped to 98 percent in 2006 (p. 11). More importantly, even when women involved in some form of business were depicted (in 2006), they were also shown alongside of women involved in the entertainment industry – they were never given the spotlight in the column. The second change that Sheehy and Hong (2008) note is the shift away from depicting the revolutionary feminist who possesses “wits, power and guts” to depicting the traditional woman who possesses “glamour, mystery and depth” (p.12). As the years passed, *Esquire* went from depicting approximately half of the women as revolutionaries and half of the women as the

traditional ideal in 1987, to depicting over 90 percent of the women as the traditional ideal in 2006. The third change that Sheehy and Hong (2008) identify is the decline in the depiction of older, intellectual women in “Women We Love” (p. 13). *Esquire* now features primarily younger women who work in the entertainment, arts or sports industry. Ergo, while women were originally depicted as the epitome of the feminist revolutionary, over time they reverted to being depicted as the traditional idealistic younger women who works in the entertainment, arts or sports industry (p. 17). Sheehy and Hong conclude that these depictions represent an attempt by *Esquire* to construct the ideal women in the eyes of the male heterosexual fantasy; and their fantasy reflects traditional ideals of power relationships and femininity.

Mooney (2008) examined similar constructions across a genre of men’s magazines published in the United Kingdom, referred to as “Lad magazines”.¹ After analyzing several examples (including *FHM*, *Loaded*, *Nuts* and *Zoo*) she contends that these types of magazines closely resemble pornography in their depiction of women: “the way in which women are represented, both textually and visually borrows from the pornographic genre”. Although the magazines also feature stories about sports, drinking and technology (p. 252), women are depicted in various stages of undress, including, in some instances, being depicted completely naked. Mooney calls these magazines “soft-soft porn” because they bridge the gap between pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. However, it is not just the amount of clothing that supports this categorization; rather Mooney contends that it is the “sexualized gaze of the viewer” that contributes to this definition (p. 250).

Mooney sets these types of magazines apart from pornographic magazines such as *Playboy* due to their widespread availability in newsagents and supermarkets. As one reader

¹ These magazines are comparable to their American counterpart, *Maxim*.

claims, “You obviously wouldn’t classify it as pornography or they wouldn’t be selling it at Safeways [supermarket]” (p. 250; c.f. Jackson, Stevenson & Brooks 2001, p. 122). Both this easy access and the use of similar constructions of femininity and sexuality within both types of magazines normalizes pornography and brings it into the mainstream.

In addressing the similarities between Lad and pornographic magazines, Mooney (2008) notes that women are posed in a similar manner in both types of magazines. While Lad magazines do not directly depict female genitalia, breasts are commonly featured within the magazines. Mooney notes that in *Loaded*, one particular article features a striptease, where women are clothed on one page and naked on the text; mimicking pornographic magazines where women are depicted in the articles in “increasing states of undress” (p. 250). In *Zoo*, women are routinely depicted naked, with an emphasis on their sexual body parts (breasts and buttocks). Their expression copies those of women in pornographic magazines, with a small smile and a luring gaze directed at the reader (p. 251). Lad magazines, however, attempt to normalize pornography in their depiction of “real” women who are not porn stars or adult entertainment stars as highly sexualized. Mooney draws on Attwood (2005), who argues that there is a “*hierarchy of female body representation* from the high ranking *fashion body*, the *porn body* and, at the bottom, *ordinary women*” (p. 90; c.f. Mooney, 2008: emphasis in original). With the use of real women, Lad magazines convey to readers that the women in their magazines are “more accessible” to the reader (p. 251). All three types of women are depicted in men’s entertainment magazines, yet the ordinary women are often to subject to a greater level of scrutiny as readers are encouraged to discover more about these women (p. 255). According to Mooney, these “real” women “are valued entirely for their constituent body parts and their sexual attractiveness” (p. 252).

Taylor, who conducted a quantitative analysis of Lad magazines with respect to women and sex, points out that in these magazines:

The message of such articles is that women want to engage in unusual sexual behaviors as much as men do, that women are driven by sexual variety just as men are. This is exemplified by articles in which women are quoted as they enthuse over bondage, sex in public, group sex, and the use and imitation of pornography during sex. The implicit message is that women's and men's sexual desires are essentially similar (2005a: 162).

Rather than being represented as women with sexual desires that exist separately from men, women's sexuality is only considered as it relates to men's sexuality; they are constructed as sexual objects whose main concern is being an object of desire for the male gaze.

1.4 *Depiction of Women in Pornography*

Current and past research in media representations of gender has included research into more explicit depictions of female sexuality, specifically those found in pornographic material. Feminist scholarship has divided over the appropriate policy response to the mainstreaming of pornography. On the one hand, many third wave feminists (and liberal politicians) have argued that putting limits on pornography restrict personal freedoms and the ability of women to express their sexuality; on the other hand, second wave feminists (and conservative politicians) argue for government control over pornography, claiming that it advocates violence against women, children and minorities (Strossen, 1995: p. 12).

MacKinnon (1993) and Dworkin (1995) represent the most extreme anti-pornography position within feminist literature, asserting that the consumption of pornography is in and of itself harmful to women. They define pornography as “graphic sexually explicit materials that subordinate women through pictures or words” (22). Within their definition, pornography includes videos, images or articles about women, extending therefore to material that is not self-identified as pornography but which is marketed as

entertainment (such as *Maxim* magazine). MacKinnon argues that *Playboy*, for example, objectifies and dehumanizes women, constructing them as mere things available at a whim for the pleasure of men (p. 22-23), depicting them in postures of “sexual submission display and access” (MacKinnon, 1991: 797). In this way, adult women are infantilized and constructed as sexualized children, “fusing the vulnerability of a child with the slutty eagerness to be fucked said to be natural to the female of every age” (p. 797). In pornography where women are depicted engaging in sexual activity with men, MacKinnon suggests that the women are doing what men fantasize about women doing when men are not around. Pornography is therefore a tool used by men to construct women as objects of sexual submission, which is used to force women into sexual activity (p. 798). From this perspective, pornography is a form of rape.

White provides a more succinct definition of pornography, which includes subordinating material that depicts:

women as dehumanized sexual objects who enjoy humiliation or pain, experience sexual pleasure in rape, incest or sexual assault, tied up or cut up or mutilated or bruised or physically hurt, penetrated by objects or animals, presented in postures or positions of sexual submission, arms and body parts are exhibited such that women are reduced to those parts, or presented in scenarios of degradations, humiliation, injury, torture, shown as filthy or inferior, bleeding, bruised or hurt in a content that makes these conditions sexual (White, 2006: 90).

It is through pornography that men, through masturbation, learn to associate the abuse, torture, humiliation, degradation, and rape of women with pleasure (MacKinnon 1992: 17). Moreover, the depiction of such materials furthers the perception that women want to be raped, and in fact, are impervious to rape-injury; they are “worthless, trivial, non-human, object-like and unequal to men” (MacKinnon, 1991: 799). Furthermore, MacKinnon (1991) asserts that laboratory experiments have identified that pornography, by portraying sexual

aggression as pleasurable for the victims, increases the acceptance of the use of coercion in sexual relations (p. 799). MacKinnon (2005) argues that women who are made to perform for pornography appear as if they are enjoying themselves “and this includes glossy legitimate men’s entertainment magazines – taken through every available orifice or posed, presented, displayed as though that were her fondest wish in life” (p. 300-301). In pornographic media, women are thereby constructed as masochists, or individuals who obtain pleasure from painful activity. MacKinnon further asserts that pornography functions to maintain male supremacy over women; “pornography, in the feminist view, is a form of forced sex...an institution of gender inequality...[P]ornography, with the rape and prostitution in which it participates, institutionalizes the sexuality of male supremacy” (MacKinnon, 1984: 325). MacKinnon (1993) further contends that pornography functions as a social message, whereby the material is telling consumers to “get” all women (p. 21).

Dworkin (1995) furthers the argument that the major theme of pornography is male power (p. 48). More specifically, with respect to the women who appear in pornography, are degraded within the pornographic material to “celebrate male power” over women (p. 49); “male power is the *raison d’être* of pornography; the degradation of the female is the means of achieving this power” (p. 49). Dworkin uses an image taken from the pornographic magazine, *Hustler*, to exemplify the above argument.

Dworkin describes the image, captioned “BEAVER HUNTERS”, as follows:

Two white men, dressed as hunters, sit in a black Jeep. The Jeep occupies almost the whole frame of the picture. The two men carry rifles. The rifles extend above the frame of the photograph into the white space surrounding it. The men and the Jeep face into the camera. Tied onto the hood of the black Jeep is a white woman. She is tied with thick rope. She is spread eagle. Her pubic hair and crotch are the dead center of the car hood and the photograph. Her head is turned to one side, tied down by rope that is pulled taut across her neck, extended to and wrapped several times around her wrists, tied around

the rearview mirror of the Jeep, brought back around her arms, crisscrossed under her breasts and over her thighs, drawn down and wrapped around the bumper of the Jeep, tied around her ankles. Between her feet on the car bumper, in orange with black print, is a sticker that reads: I brake for Billy Carter. The text under the photograph reads: Western sportsmen report beaver hunting was particularly good throughout the Rocky Mountain region during the past season. These two hunters easily bagged their limit in the high country. They told Hustler that they stuffed and mounted their trophy as soon as they got her home (p. 49).

Dworkin meticulously dissects the image to examine how the men and woman in the image are constructed. She sees the men in the image as “self-possessed” with power. They are clothed, armed, partially hidden from view by sitting inside the vehicle (p. 49). The woman, in comparison is possessed by the men. Dworkin parallels her to a “captured animal” that has been stripped “naked, bound, exposed on the hood of the car outdoors” (p. 50). With these clear differences between the men and the lone woman, Dworkin furthers her argument and claims that the image exemplifies male physical power over women. The men have targeted, hunted captured, bound and put on a display in a trophy-like manner a woman.

Dworkin (1995) argues that the woman is dehumanized in the image; she is turned into animal by being named beaver (p.51). The hunter further dehumanizes her by posting the bumper sticker on the car “I brake for Billy Carter”, which Dworkin reads as ridiculing men who brake for animals, or in this example, women (p. 51). Dworkin also identifies the theme of owning in the image. The men are depicted as wealthy sportsmen, equipped with a shiny car and weapons. They have proudly bound a woman with the intention to stuff and mount her like an animal trophy on display; she has been commoditized and become a representation of male wealth (p. 51). The last theme Dworkin identifies is that of sex as power (p. 52). It is the men in the image who possess the power of sex. While the woman

is described as a wild animal, suggesting that “the sexuality of the untamed female is dangerous to men”, the men in the image have successfully defeated and tamed this wild animal (p. 52). Sexual power is also evident by the emphasis upon their guns, while their penises remain hidden. Dworkin also identifies the car as a measure of virility, “especially when a woman is tied to it naked instead of draped over it wearing an evening gown” (p. 52). Lastly, Dworkin sees the power of sex in this image as the power of conquest, where the men have successfully hunted the beaver and mounted her.

In furthering the argument on the objectification of women, Dworkin (1993) comments on how the humiliation of being ejaculated upon constructs women as nonhuman things. Women are created into objects that say “hurt me”; they enjoy the pain that men subject them to. Dworkin argues that women are not just objectified; rather they are constructed as fetishized objects, likening women to a pair of high-heeled shoes; they become the sexual fetish, the object to be ejaculated upon by the consumer or the man in the image or video. By ejaculating upon women, rather than in them, Dworkin argues that men are marking their territory; that men, in fact, claim ownership over women by ejaculating upon them. Lastly, men confirm that women are “dirty” by contaminating them with their sperm. Dworkin argues that this objectification of women represents how men want to experience sexual activity.

Stoltenberg (1993) furthers MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin’s (1981;1993;1995) argument by examining whether pornography embodies sexual freedom, or promotes hatred and degradation of specific groups of people, such as women and other minorities. Contrary to the arguments that pornography allows women to freely express their

sexuality, Stoltenberg argues that examples taken directly from pornography provide a different story:

“Baby, you’re gonna get fucked tonight like you ain’t never been fucked before,” he hissed evilly down at her as she struggled fruitlessly against her bonds. The man wanted only to abuse and ravish her till she was totally broken and subservient to him. He knelt between her wide-spread legs and gloated over the cringing little pussy he was about to ram his cock into (p. 65; c.f. Baker, 1978: p. 132).

“Bitch,” he snapped, pulling away from her, yanking his dick out of her mouth. “You’re trying to make me come before I’m ready. You know I like to fuck your ass before I come! You inconsiderate bitch!” he spat, knowing how she ate up that kind of talk (p. 66; c.f. Mixer, 1997: p. 103).

Reaching into his pocket for the knife again, Ike stepped just inches away from Burl’s outstretched body. He slips the knife under Burl’s cock and balls, letting the sharp edge of the blade lightly scrape the underside of Burl’s nutsac. As if to reassert his power over Burl, Ike grabbed one of the bound man’s tautly stretched pecs, clamping down hard out Burl’s tit and muscle, latching on as tight as he could. He pushed on the knife, pressing the blade into Burl’s skin as hard as possible without cutting him. “Now you just let us inside that tight black asshole of yours, boy, or else we’re gonna cut this off and feed it to the cattle!” (p. 66; c.f. Robeson, 1981: p. 27).

Stoltenberg clarifies the discrepancy between sexual freedom and its expression in pornography. According to him “sexual freedom has never really been about *sexual justice between men and women*” (p. 67: emphasis in original). Rather, it is about maintaining patriarchal relations and men’s superiority over women by sexualizing and subordinating them (p. 68). As such, pornography functions to turn male domination and subordination of women into something sexual (p. 69). With sexual inequality and sexual freedom, there has been an increase in tolerance of sexual activities which degrade and harm women and confirm the equality between men and women: “treating women’s bodies or body parts as merely sexual objects or things; treating women as utterly submissive masochists who enjoy pain and humiliation and who, if they are raped, enjoy it; treating women’s bodies to

sexualized beating mutilation, bondage, dismemberment...” (p. 70). In terms of social construction, women are constructed by pornography as subordinated objects subject to men’s will and domination. In pornography, women are reduced to their sexual body parts desired by men; penises become weapons to fuck women; and women become objects for men to possess (p. 75).

McCarthy (1980) seeks to educate men and women who are not typical consumers of pornography about what really is said in pornography. In an effort to inform specifically women, critical feminists seek to show women that the anti-pornography movement is not about sexuality; rather the objections to it are based on the violence and degradation inherent to it (pg. 15). McCarthy cites the following examples:

“There’s still something to be said for bashing a woman over the head, dragging her off behind a rock, and having her” (p. 15: c.f. *Penthouse*, February 1980).

He writes of Kathy and how he was “ramming his huge eleven-inch tool down her throat.” Kathy “was nearly unconscious from coming” (p. 15: c.f. *Penthouse*, February 1980).

McCarthy also draws on *Hustler* magazine’s infamous degradation of women. One particular cover image in *Hustler* has caused much debate. In this image a nude woman is being pushed head first into a meat grinder, coming out at the bottom as ground meat. Within this particular issue of *Hustler* is another image of a “nude woman lying on a plate looking like a piece of chicken covered with ketchup, and another who is laid out on a hamburger bun, also covered with ketchup” (p. 16). In yet another issue of *Hustler*, there is a drawing:

of a man’s scrotum pushed up against the ear of a retarded girl, his penis presumably filling up her empty head and semen squirting out the other ear. The text reads, ‘Good Sex with Retarded Girls – you can do anything you want cause who would believe a scrunched face retarded girl?’ (p. 16).

Interestingly, McCarthy notes that she was bleeped out on a radio show for talking about the above example; however, Larry Flynt is not subject to such censorship (p. 16). In making this argument against pornography, McCarthy is careful to caution readers that the harm which pornography may cause does not imply that feminists are seeking complete censorship of all sexual material including erotica (p. 15). Rather, feminists are seeking to have material that clearly degrades, humiliates or hurts women, subjected to the same censorship which McCarthy received while discussing these same images on a radio show.

MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin (1981;1993;1995) started this debate about pornography with a clear idea about pornography representing a “documentary of abuse” of women (c.f. Rubin, 1993: 31). Since the beginning of Dworkin and MacKinnon’s anti-pornography movement, feminist scholars have reworked that debate and examined the role of women’s agency in pornography and the notion that pornography may in fact, empower women.

Assiter and Carol (1993) discuss the argument against censorship and are considered to be pro-pornography in comparison to the anti-pornography feminists such as MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin (1981;1993;1995). They point out that they have no desire to return to the good old days where “good girls don’t” (p. 4); but suggest that “some women who call themselves feminists seem determined to do just that” (p. 4-5). Prior to the debate surfacing around pornography, Assiter and Carol note that “men were free to make up their own versions of our experience and feed them to the world. If they were wrong, we were not permitted to say so.” (p. 4). In this reference, Assiter and Carol are referring to representations of female sexuality within pornographic material, which were created by men for men. In these earlier representations of pornography, women had no say as to

whether what was represented within the material was consistent with real women's experiences with sex. However, with the rise of feminism and anti-censorship movement, sexuality invaded the public realm and women were therefore able to publish their own knowledge on sexual issues and inform the public of women's own experiences and descriptions of sexual activities (p. 4).

Rubin (1993) emphasizes the importance of informing feminists about pornography, namely that the arguments against, and for the censorship of, pornography are "flimsy" and which she further suggests that there is little support for (p. 18). In particular, Rubin calls attention to the fact that anti-porn feminists have routinely called for new material which emphasizes a female perspectives (i.e. television shows and magazines). However, when the feminist debate came around to pornography, rather than suggesting the production of pornographic material that is pro-women and representative of women's own sexual desires and fantasies (versus the heterosexual male perspective), feminists such as MacKinnon (1991; 1993; 1995) and Dworkin (1981; 1993; 1995) deemed all pornography to be harmful to women and called for the at the very least censorship of it all, or worst the abolition of all pornographic material (p.19). Rubin also draws attention to the fact that in anti-pornography feminist's definition of pornography, all pornography is defined as material which objectifies, subordinates or depicts sexualized violence against women. These feminists failed to take into account that pornographic material can include that which does not objectify or subordinate women. Furthermore, while anti-pornography feminists make the argument that pornography is violence and promotes violence against women, Rubin contends that "very little pornography actually depicts violent acts", which is contrary to MacKinnon's argument that all pornography is violent. Rubin further argues that the most

common element in pornography is not violence but “ordinary heterosexuality intercourse” (p. 21), followed by oral sex. Rubin points out that violence may be more prevalent in mainstream media, such as on television shows or movies. “I hate to labour the point, but there are more women battered and murdered on prime-time television and Hollywood films than in pornographic materials” (pg. 31-32).

These pro-pornography arguments tie into McNair’s (2002) analysis of the sexualization of culture and pornographication of mainstream cultural spaces. Representations of “pornography” are no longer restricted to those images which MacKinnon (1993) and Dworkin (1995) examined. Rather, “pornography” has invaded the public realm, and what has been deemed to be “pornographic” representations of sexuality, are becoming increasingly dominant within mainstream depictions. Embedded in these images are themes such as the sexual availability of women, the commodification of women and the objectification not only of a woman, by of her body parts as well.

Arguments against censorship of pornographic material have also been made in terms of the women’s agency in participating in the production of such material. Koskela (2004) examines the role of empowerment in material that she defines as “exhibitionist”; she suggests that exhibitionism can “bring back the subject” (206). Koskela specifically looked at the role of empowerment in terms of individuals who broadcast their lives to the world via webcams. Koskela suggests that home webcams allow individuals to “reclaim the copyright of their own lives” by producing their own material (p.206). According to Koskela, what was traditionally seen as representing the private realm, such as our home life or our sexuality, has become public; and that people derive some form of pleasure by being seen, and not necessarily in a sexual manner (p. 201). Exhibitionism has transformed from

“illegitimate to legitimate pleasures” and it has also “invaded the public realm” (Weibel, 2002: 208).

Koskela (2004) describes the process through which individuals, who puts themselves on display, are in fact empowered through exhibitionism. She suggests that through exhibitionism, individuals reject the regime of order and shame (p. 206). The regime of order consists of “the way in which society regulates individuals” (p.206). It is not only deviant behavior that is subjected to order, but everyday acts as well; it is a way of keeping people “meek and obedient” (p. 207). In terms of sexuality, the regime of order dictates that sexuality should be relegated to the private realm of one’s life. The regime of shame is “the idea of having or doing something that cannot be shown” (p. 207). In terms of sexuality, this is the idea that sexual activity is not something that is supposed to be broadcasted to the world; sexual activity is meant to be a private act. Koskela believes that individuals become free when they “show everything”, because they have nothing left to hide (p. 208). Individuals who display their private lives on webcams, Koskela argues “rebel against the modesty and shame embedded in the conception of the private” (p. 210).

Koskela (2004) also comments on the idea of power in terms of webcams. She notes that “the traditional idea of power places those who can see in the position of being in power – more powerful than those who are seen” (p. 209). Those who deliberately allow themselves to be under the gaze of the camera plays with this conceptualization of power; after all, traditionally speaking those who are seen do not know they are being watched. This ties in with the Lacanian Gaze theory, which theorizes that the spectator has power over the “gazed-at” (MacKinnon, 2002: 81). Mulvey, in her book *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, suggests that “the male on the screen and by identification with him, the

male spectator enjoy sexual power over the female on screen by means of the gaze” (Cited in MacKinnon, 2002: 74). However, for women who participate in the production of pornographic material do use with the foreknowledge that they are going to be under the gaze of the camera; there is no unknown watcher, he is known and welcome to watch. Koskela suggests that this means that “there is a possibility to gain power without gaining control” (p. 210); the women thereby become empowered as the subject, rather than the object.

Pitcher (2006) and Gill (2007) comment on how the women who participate in the controversial semi-pornographic video *Girls Gone Wild (GGW)* are empowered. Pitcher argues that the women in *GGW* who have “the opportunity to flash one’s breast on camera” allows them to engage in “a moment of interactivity, self-expression, and self-disclosure, all in one” (p. 206). Furthermore, Pitcher points out that it is not the camera crew who seek out the women to participate. Rather, it is the women themselves who seek out the gaze of the camera; “who appear to “go wild” under their own desire, for their own ends, and by their own consent, thereby successfully producing an effect of agency” (p. 206). *Girls Gone Wild* not only depicts these women as active willing participants, but that women “willingly agree to participate in the spectacle, but often specifically seek it out for a variety of reasons; for the titillating pleasure of male attention, self-expression, or even the perceived potential for media exposure” (p. 207). Pitcher discusses the idea that the women who participate in *Girls Gone Wild* are free, active agents; women who have participated have described their experiences as “freeing,” “pleasurable” and “empowering” (p. 201). She notes that “the illicitness of exposing one’s body on camera is one element that helps constitute the *Girls Gone Wild* experience as pleasurable and hence as potentially powerful” (p. 207). The same

argument can be applied to women who actively choose to participate in other forms of pornographic material.

Gill (2007) argues that in the age of post feminism, women are, in fact, no longer objectified, as Weibel (2002) suggested, within media. Rather they are “portrayed as active, desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so” (Gill, 2007: 151). It is through television shows such as *GGW* that women are encouraged to be active individuals and to construct themselves as “the heterosexual male fantasy found in pornography” (p. 152). Despite their attempts to be empowered by exhibiting themselves on shows such as *GGW*, Gill contends that while “young woman are hailed through a discourse of ‘can do girl power’” their bodies “are powerfully re-inscribed as sexual objects” (p. 163).

Despite this appearance of power in the women who choose to participate in *GGW* or any other form of pornographic material, their agency is limited to the choice to participate. These women who actively choose to put their bodies on display have no say as to what material will make it onto the movies, magazines or television show. For *GGW*, while the women who participate do have control over what they show on screen, if they later regret their decision, they are unable to prevent the producers from using their material; they have no control over the outcome of the image. The same is true for women who participate in other forms of pornography.

The argument has also been made that women who choose to perform in front of the camera, whether on *GGW* or posing in a pornographic magazine, are engaging in acts of resistance. Resistance is defined in terms of its relationship to power - “where there is power there is resistance, resistance is never outside a relation of power” (Foucault, 1978: 95). As

mentioned previously, power relations are evident in media, where the viewer is traditionally seen as the active the subject watching the viewed, who is the passive object (Koskela, 2004: pg. 209). In terms of participating within sexualized media, Koskela suggests that even a small trivial act, such as removing one's clothes and embracing the lens of the camera, can be defined as resistance. Furthermore, it is not necessary for the individual to be consciously aware of engaging in resistance. According to Koskela, exhibitionism can resist "that power which attempts to set up situations, groupings or actions which resist the impositions of dominating power"; more importantly she contends that resistance can consist of "very small, and some might say trivial moments (p. 208).

Resistance is discussed by Jimroglou (2001) in her analysis of the JenniCAM. The JenniCAM was a personal webcam broadcasted by Jenni. She chose to have her entire life broadcasted from her bedroom for several years. Every single act that she engaged in was broadcasted over the Internet; whether she was working at the computer, sleeping, changing her clothes or even engaging in sexual activity. Jimroglou argues that while it appears that JenniCAM "would seem to seem the perfect heterosexual male fantasy, a voyeuristic window into a woman's bedroom", the JenniCAM actually challenges the traditional conceptions of gender (p. 287). Jimroglou therefore suggests that the JenniCam represents a means of creating a subject capable of resisting the traditional readings of female embodiment (p. 287).

The argument, therefore, could be made, that women who are choosing to participate to engage in sexual activity in front of a camera are in fact engaging in an act of resistance. Resistance occurs, when women willingly subject themselves to the gaze of the viewer; rather than being the passive object, she becomes the active subject. The watchers have no

power if those who are being watched, like the women in pornographic material, are aware of, and embrace, the fact that they are being watched.

McElroy (1995), a self-defined liberal feminist, presents an argument against the censorship of pornography. She offers three arguments against censorship:

- Freedom of speech is a necessary condition for human freedom;
- The suppression of pornography will hurt women;
- And, pornography offers certain benefits to women (Chapter Five, ¶ 5).

In supporting these arguments, McElroy focuses on one major concept, that being choice; she asserts that women should “be free to choose” (Chapter 6, ¶. 1), and this includes allowing a woman to make her own choices about sex. However, McElroy does make the contention that women should be aware that their choices can have an impact upon other women. McElroy represents one side of the argument on pornography insisting that “on a political and legal level...No form of pornography between consenting adults is objectionable. Pornography is words and images, over which the law should have no jurisdiction” (Chapter Six, Conclusion). For the individual woman, she recognizes that it comes down to a personal choice, where each woman should have the freedom to decide for herself what she finds acceptable or not (Chapter Six, Conclusion).

Levy (2005) questions whether Brazilian waxes and pornographic depictions of women in magazines such as *Playboy* or in television shows such as *Girls Gone Wild* have empowered women. She argues they have not, and that women have instead become female chauvinist pigs (p. 3). She points out that one of the first goals of the feminist movement was to advance women’s sexual pleasure and satisfaction, and with the rise of “raunch culture”, female sexuality was embraced (p. 4). Levy defines “raunch culture” as the cultural perspective that evolved as sexuality moved from the private to the public realm,

which asserts that easily accessible pornography helps individuals embrace their previously secret sexual side. In fact, Levy attributes the explosion of raunch culture in part to the association of empowered women with sexuality, based on the assumption that the most visible form of sexuality within society is red light entertainment.

However, Levy questions the position that women have come so far from the start of the feminist revolution that concerns over objectification or misogyny are no longer warranted, and that as a result of feminism, women have become liberated in the sense that they are able to participate in sexual exploits, such as posing in *Playboy*, for their own benefit and not for the benefit of male viewers (p. 4). Despite the superficial appearance of empowerment raunch culture entails, she argues that “resurrecting every stereotype of female sexuality that feminism endeavored to banish” (p. 4) is not in fact good for women. She uses examples such as women female athletes posing in magazines such as *Playboy* and women infantilizing themselves by having Brazilian waxes to support the notion that women have embraced the slutty stereotypes of female sexuality. This suggests that women are not empowered, but have instead turned into the heterosexual male fantasy. In other words, mainstream pornographication has led women to accept and internalize the patriarchal construction of women of as sexual objects that need to conform to male stereotypes in order to “be sexy”.

Hardy (2001) seeks to address the question of empowerment by looking at who is behind the scenes in the creation of pornography, and whether the content of pornographic material changes depending on whether a man or a woman is the director or writer. Hardy (2001) notes how men and women are typically depicted in pornography:

As regards [to] physical gestures, those of the women usually consisted of assuming prone positions, more often than not on all fours, while the men

made their gestures with the phallus, to ‘spear’, ‘pump’ and ‘thrust’, or with their hands, to ‘grip’, ‘tear’ or ‘slap’. When speaking the men issued orders or abuse, while the women begged, pleaded and moaned. In short, with very few exceptions, the scenarios clearly represented, through the connotations of their gestural exchanges, a gender power relation of male domination and female submission (p. 437).

Sun, Bridges, Wosnitzer, Scharrer and Liberman (2008) examined whether this description of pornography holds true for pornographic movies that have been directed by women.

While pornography was traditionally a male realm, recently women have become involved in the behind the scenes production of pornographic material, as opposed to being limited to the sexual objects in front of the camera (p. 312). Sun et al. examined all films directed by women and randomly selected the same number of male directed films, amassing a sample of 250 popular pornographic videos. There were 61 pornographic scenes in the female directed videos and 193 pornographic scenes in the male directed videos, which they scaled down to a random selection of 61 pornographic scenes (p. 316). The authors primarily focused on the depiction of aggressive behavior, as well as the presence or absence of pleasure, dominant or submissive behavior, victim/abuser, power (who initiates the sexual activity), dehumanization (name calling, or the use of force) and race; these factors represent those which are the most relevant to this paper. The authors applied Mustonen and Pulkkinen’s (1993) definition of violence and aggression which includes “any action causing or attempting to cause physical or psychological harm to oneself, to another person, animal or inanimate object, intentionally or accidentally, whereby harm is understood as resulting from verbal or nonverbal assault” (p. 316). The authors also took note of the presence or absence of positive behaviours, including “representations of display of concern for the other, use of first names or endearments, caressing, embracing, and kissing” (p. 316). The authors’ hypothesis was that in female directed videos the women would be constructed as

caring, loving individuals, rather than the commonly seen construction of women as sexual objects in male directed pornography.

Sun et al.'s (2008) results indicated that female directors were more likely than male directors to direct positive scenes; positive scenes were almost twice as likely to be present in scenes featuring women, versus scenes with men and women (p. 318). Male directed scenes had a total of 666 aggressive acts, whereas female directed scenes had a total of 820 aggressive acts; however the differences between the two were not statistically significant (p. 319). More significantly, male directors were twice as likely as female directors to show men as the perpetrators of aggression, whereas 60 percent of aggressive acts in female directed films had female perpetrators. The last, and most significant, finding was that in both male and female directed films nearly all victims were female with men more often representing the aggressor; furthermore, the victim response to aggression, in both male and female directed videos, was either neutral or pleasurable (p. 320).

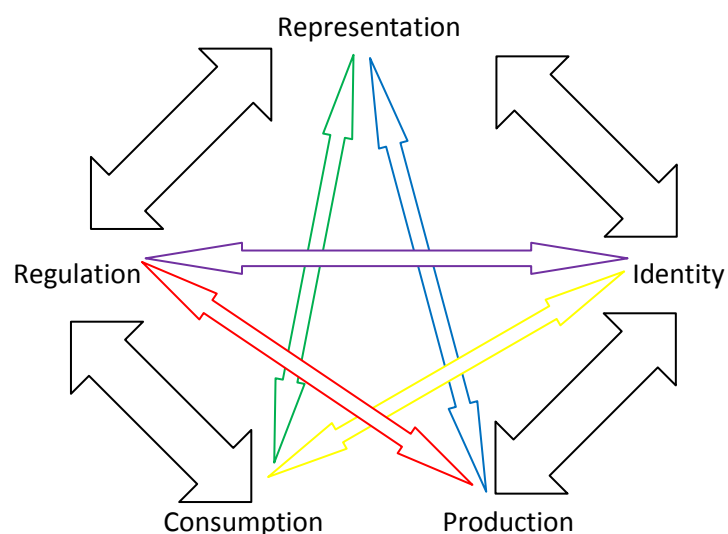
The idea of a woman behind the camera as the creator of pornography challenges the traditional view of power relationships embedded in pornographic media. The female, once the sexual object on display for the male-directed camera, now appears in a position of control, determining what aspects to focus on for sexual pleasure. However, this notion of the female director does not necessarily represent a step forward in the road to female empowerment, as the gender of the director does not guarantee a more female friendly type of pornography. Rather, the primary consumers for heterosexual pornography have been men; ergo, directors need to be able to create a product that male consumers will purchase and not necessarily a product that is female-approved. As Sun et. al.'s (2008) research discovered female directed pornography has more instances of aggressive behaviors than

male directed videos and was just as likely to portray women who either was neutral to or enjoyed the abuse, rather than depicting the abuse as painful or humiliating. Even though the female was constructed in some instances as the aggressor, the man was more often the aggressor of violence and aggressive behaviours. Therefore, in both male and female directed pornography, there is a tendency to construct the sexual female as the primary victim of violence and aggressive behaviours who enjoys, or is passive about the pain to which she is subjected.

1.5 The Analysis of Female Sexuality in the Media

Hall (1997a) notes that it is useful to study language and representations in the media because language represents a medium through which “thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture” (p.1). Berger (2005) echoes this argument by adding that the interpretation of mass-mediated texts provides individuals with the means to learn about our culture, and therefore, about ourselves (p. 113). Hall suggests a mechanism through which individuals consume media, and help construct their own identity in the process; he refers to this as the “circuit of culture” (p. 1).

Figure1 The Circuit of Culture



However, in interpreting representations, Hall (1997b) cautions researchers to be aware that the images and text within media are only “signs”, and while they may appear similar to that which they are representing, they are only carriers of meaning and still need to be interpreted by the reader (p. 19). Hall suggests that use of a “constructionist” approach to the interpretation of media, meaning that “things don’t *mean*: we *construct* meaning using representations systems – concepts and signs” (emphasis in original) (p.25).

Ergo, in terms of studying representations of female sexuality, Gamman and Marshment (1988) note that it is from popular culture

“that most people in our society get their entertainment and their information. It is here that women (and men) are offered the culture’s dominant definitions of themselves. It would therefore seem crucial to explore the possibilities and pitfalls of intervention in popular forms in order to find ways of making feminist meanings a part of our pleasures” (p.1; c.f. Story, 2006: 106).

It is therefore useful to study such representations to analyze how female sexuality is constructed within the mass media.

Lebrun (2010) used semiotic methodology to analyze “ladies night” bar flyers distributed in Montreal; she argued that these flyers were a “technology of heteronormativity” used to produce “normative identities” such as heterosexuality (p. 223). The use of semiotic methodology allowed Lebrun to pay attention to the cultural context as well as to examine the texts as whole. Lebrun paid close attention to clothing, postures, positioning, poses and camera angles; she was concerned with how these factors contributed to the “sexual objectification and commodification of women” (p. 225). In her analysis, Lebrun is concerned with hegemony, which Brown (1989: 162; citing Gramsci, 1971) defines as “the exercise of social and cultural leadership by the dominant classes”. According to Brown, those in power maintain hegemony through cultural and social

influences, such as magazines or flyers (p. 225). Heterosexuality is a normative identity constructed by those in power.

Lebrun (2010) identified several themes which emerged in her analysis. The “always already sexually available women” was open to any sexual encounter; this woman was often pictured naked, smiling seductively and with her nipples/breasts visible (p. 225). Lebrun found that this theme was prevalent throughout the flyers and conveyed to readers/consumers that the barely dressed woman was waiting for a man to join her. The “powerful seductress” was portrayed as a confident women who chooses to be sexually promiscuous; these women were often depicted “as mere body parts”, such as an eye, red full mouth or cleavage (p. 226). Another theme to emerge was the “infantilizing and sexualizing [of] young women” (p. 226). In this instance, adult women were portrayed as young women dressed in skimpy outfits with their hair loose and messy, often depicted on their knees with their legs spread apart and their breasts covered. These depictions convey both sexual availability, with the open legs, and modesty by covering their breasts. Lebrun also draws attention to the theme of “porn chic”, which is the process of pornography becoming more mainstream; this is evident in the imaginary pornographic scenarios presented in the flyers (p. 227).

Lebrun (2010) concludes her argument by noting that the women in these flyers have no real power, and the flyers effectively “reaffirm male dominance...through the ongoing sexual objectifications of women’s bodies” (229). She argues that the flyers welcome women to the male dominant bar environment in order to maintain heteronormativity. However, there are conditions upon them entertaining: they must conform to the heteronormative standard and be passive and sexually available to men (p. 229).

Much of this is consistent with Goffman's earlier work (1976) which analyzed how men and women were pictured in advertisements in the book *Gender Advertisements*. In the introduction to the text, Gornick described Goffman's analysis as focusing on the individuals in the photographs; he looked at gestures, expressions and postures and believed that these images did not depict how men and women actually behave, but "how we think men and women behave" (p. vii). Advertisements, according to Goffman, were representations of what society thought how men and women should act. My project will use men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines to explore the types of scripts consumed by men when reading them. Gornick, in discussing Goffman, further suggests that men and women "take cues about 'gender' behavior from the image of that behavior" (p. viii). However, the question my thesis seeks to answer is not focused on the effects the magazines have upon men; rather, I am interested in what men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines say about how women 'should' behave.

Goffman (1976) recognizes that gender is a result of social construction; he defines gender as the "culturally established correlates of sex" and gender displays of femininity and masculinity, such as those found in advertisements, as "conventionalized portrayals of their correlates" (p. 1). Displays of femininity and masculinity can be conveyed in any social context and often reflect the current social structure (p. 8). What Goffman argues, then, is that the gender displays seen in advertisements reflect how gender is structured within society. Furthermore, these "expressions of gender" or gender displays "are illustrations of ritual like bits of behavior which portray an ideal conception of the two sexes and their structural relationship to each other" (p. 84).

In analyzing the set of advertisements, Goffman (1976) focuses on the women in the images, and how the women compare to the men depicted in the images. In conducting his analysis Goffman takes what Farran (1990) refers to as an “inventory approach” by concentrating on positioning, postures and body parts; Goffman examines the composition of the image as a whole and therefore can focus on the individual nuances. Goffman² found that there was a difference in the relative size of men and women; women tended to be depicted as smaller, or in positions which would situate them below the men in the images. Goffman argued that this was a means to “express power in height” with the man towering over the woman (p. 28). This expression of power was also evident in images where beds were pictured; those lower down on the bed were seen to be inferior to those above (p. 41). This position also has implications in terms of sexual availability; when women, or men, are lying down on a sofa or a bed Goffman found this to be a “conventionalized expression of sexual availability” (p. 41). Power relations also came into play in the postures women would take. The “canting posture”, a sign of submissiveness whereby women lower their head to be lower than the viewer or the men in the image, was found by Goffman to be indicative of women’s inferior position to men (p. 46).

Goffman (1976) identified the woman’s hands as a body part of interest in his analysis. In one theme, the feminine touch, the woman would use her hands to trace the object or gently caress its surface (p. 29). Additionally, self-touching was understood by Goffman as conveying to readers that the woman’s body is a “delicate, precious thing” (p. 31). Goffman also found that the women in the images were often smiling, exhibiting characteristics of approval – meaning that the “other’s act has been understood and found acceptable or approved and appreciated” (p. 48). However, it is important to note here that

² While multiple themes emerged in his analysis, I only discuss the themes of a sexual nature.

Goffman's work has been criticized as too deterministic. Yet, his work is still relevant because Dworkin and MacKinnon utilize Goffman's research to analyze representations of women in pornography.

Farran (1990) uses Goffman's (1976) inventory approach to analyze a photograph of Marilyn Monroe. In terms of social construction, while Goffman suggests that advertisements are indicative of how society thinks men and women should behave, Farran sees images, including the image of Marilyn, as representing "current social signifiers as to what is sexual" (1990: 266). Farran, paraphrasing Kuhn (1985), suggests that it is though "photographs that women's sexuality, femininity and indeed 'self' are constructed" (p. 268). Berger (1972) comments on how the Marilyn photograph was made to appeal to men; "this picture is made to appeal to sexuality. It has nothing to do with her sexuality" (55); by constructing an image appealing to male sexuality women are turned into "the surveyed female", an object to be surveyed by men (p. 47). Greer (1972) suggests that men actually prefer to see women as sexual objects, because it disempowers women and grants men the power over them.

In the image Farran is analyzing, Marilyn is "self-touching", which Goffman had argued means that Marilyn is "delicate and precious" (1976:31). Farran, conversely, interprets this posture as being sexually suggestive; "that she (Marilyn) may uncover her breasts for just the right person" (1990: 266). Marilyn is also depicted in what Goffman termed a "canting posture" with her body slightly lowered. However, Marilyn's posture becomes more sexual as she hugs herself; Farran suggest that this could mean that she is hiding her body, or that she is being playful and coy (p. 266). Marilyn draws attention to her breasts with her low cut dress and exposes part of her legs while "teasingly hiding the 'rude'

bits” (p. 266). Marilyn is also smiling in the image; according to Farran women are depicted smiling more than men because it is women’s responsibility to appease men. Farran also identifies another feature that Goffman did not identify: the “come hither” eyes which Marilyn possessed. Farran draws attention to another theme, that Marilyn and other women in images are often depicted in a child-like manner with their body hair removed and tousled hair styles (p. 269). She suggests that this is because men enjoy seeing women as powerless.

1.6 My Research

To summarize the trends in the current research, the literature reveals a focus on mainstream non-pornographic and pornography media as separate entities with different constructions of female sexuality. While I acknowledge that there is a debate on the agency and resistance of the women who pose in front of the lens for the purpose of production of pornographic and/or sexually explicit material, this project does not engage with the meaning of pornography to women. Rather I am interested in seeing if there is a shift in what MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin (1981;1993;1995) wrote and if there is a shift in men’s media. I am not concerned with what women think about pornography, rather I am going back to MacKinnon and Dworkin’s arguments regarding pornography to see if the representations targeting men have changed.

While some researchers acknowledge that similarities exist between non-pornographic and pornographic men’s media none have yet to undertake a comparative study between the two types. I conduct an analysis similar to that undertaken by Mooney (2008) to see if the same results will be found in the Canadian context. However, where Mooney focuses specifically on non-pornographic material, I expand on her study to include a comparison between pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. I also expand on her

study to include an analysis of both the images and articles within pornographic and non-pornographic, allowing an overall construction of female sexuality to emerge. By comparing the two types of magazines, I allow a continuum to emerge in which the construction of female sexuality can be assessed across the spectrum, from soft entertainment to hard pornographic magazines. My research also comments on the role of violence in pornography, thereby providing an opportunity to revisit arguments made by both MacKinnon (1984; 1991; 1993; and 2005) and Dworkin (1989; and 1995) regarding the level of violence in sexually explicit material.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 *Research Questions*

My thesis is based on the following concern identified by Farganis: that “within sociology and within women’s studies, there has been interest, or late, in the social construction of gender, that is, in the ways in which the individual comes to learn of his or her sex and the ways in which society comes to regard that sexuality” (1985:309). My thesis focuses on men’s magazines as a medium through which men can learn about female sexuality. My thesis seeks to answer the following questions: How is women’s sexuality constructed in men’s magazines? Is the construction of women’s sexuality in pornographic and non-pornographic magazines similar/different? I examine these constructions through a radical feminist perspective as developed by MacKinnon and Dworkin.

I chose to use a qualitative method as I sought answers to my questions in the real world, and in order to do so, I follow what Rassman and Rallis identified as the process which a qualitative researcher goes through: “they gather what they see, hear and read from people and places and from events and activities” (1998: 5). They furthered identified the purpose of qualitative research, which is to learn about different social phenomena and attempt to develop new knowledge about said phenomena or a new way of interpreting the phenomena (p. 5).

2.2 *A Feminist Lens*

In analyzing the magazines within my sample, I take MacKinnon (1991; 1993; 1995) and Dworkin’s (1981; 1993; 1995) theoretical approach and apply that lens and see if it is still relevant within current media marketed towards men. Given that the literature, as discussed within Chapter One, has shifted away from theory that all pornography depicts

violence against, degrades, subordinates, and objectifies women, I apply MacKinnon and Dworkin's perspective to see if it is still a useful theoretical framework in analyzing media, specifically that which is marketed towards men.

I utilize, as a methodological framework, a feminist social constructionist lens, recognizing that both sexuality and gender are socially constructed. Hekman (1999:126) argues that "women are made, not born, and thus that gender and even sex are social, not natural constructions". This thought is echoed by Stanley and Wise, who see 'woman' as "a socially and politically constructed category, the ontological basis of which lies in a set of experiences rooted in the material world" (1990: 21) and by Foss and Foss (1989) who note that an identifying factor of the feminist perspective is that it recognizes that gender is a social construction (1989: 67).

Feminist social constructionist theory recognizes that "cultural products" (Reinharz, 1992) such as visual texts (i.e. men's magazines) resonate with the current themes of the society (Weitz, 1977: 194). As such, by analyzing men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines, I explore how pornography constructs female sexuality in terms of the heterosexual male fantasy.

To note, it is not a feminist method that I use, rather I use a feminist perspective to guide my analysis. DeVault (1991) recognizes that "feminism" is not a method; rather it is "a set of beliefs, that problematize gender inequality" and acknowledges that men often use their power to construct women as inferior beings (p. 27). The feminist perspective differs from other perspectives in that it recognizes the importance of gender in culture (Foss and Foss, 1989: 67). Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988) elaborate on these differences and identify five elements that separate the feminist perspective from other perspectives:

- Gender is understood as a “complex social, historical, and culture product” that “is related to, but not simply derived from biological sex differences.
- Gender orders social life and social institution in fundamental ways.
- Gender is the basis for the construction of masculinity and femininity, which are organized in such a way as to give men domination over women
- The views of men that rationalize the subordinate positions of women are embedded in “system of knowledge”
- Focuses on the task of feminist analysis is to make women “the center of intellectual inquiry” (504, cf. Humphries, 2009: 1-2).

DeVault (1991) suggests that the use of a feminist perspective is to make women’s voices heard; my focus is on why women are constructed as subordinate beings and why women’s voices are silenced. Furthermore, Foss and Foss (1989) identify a goal of feminist perspective is to challenge the existing framework or “common assumptions of culture” (67) or “how to change the conception of gender that is constructed and maintained through communication” (p. 72). I intend to achieve both these goals by analyzing how femininity is constructed in men’s magazines. By adopting a feminist perspective, I am able to get “‘to the root’ of the basic constructs of masculinity and femininity” (p. 68).

As discussed in my literature review, the three examples of Farran (1990), Goffman, (1976) and LeBrun (2010) who conducted research on the representation of women in various types of media have important implications for my study. Goffman (1976) and Farran’s (1990) use of an “inventory approach” to analyze images represents an effective methodology that I employ in my analysis of images within men’s pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. In regards to the text of the articles, I conduct a qualitative thematic analysis of the text which accompanies the images in the magazines. I utilize MacKinnon (1991; 1993; 1995) and Dworkin’s (1981; 1993; 1995) theoretical approach to guide my analysis, from their perspective. Specifically focusing on whether the violence, objectification and degradation, which MacKinnon and Dworkin found to be so inherent

within pornography, are in fact present within the text. By including text in my analysis, I gain more data in order to determine whether the identified themes are present within my sample. With respect to the themes of gender and sexuality found by each author, I use these themes to guide my analysis of the magazines in my sample in hopes of uncovering whether these themes are reproduced in either or both men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines.

2.3 *My Research: Analysis of the Images*

In using the inventory approach, as developed by Goffman (1976) and clarified by Farran (1990), I conduct an inventory of the following components within each "sexualized image"³:

- Touching others/touching oneself with their hands
- Smiling
- Clothing
- Postures – "canting" posture
- Positioning
- Gestures
- Expressions
- Body parts
- Eyes – 'come hither'
- Child like manner – infantilizing and sexualizing young women – tousled hair, body hair removed

These ten components represent the items used by Goffman (1976), Farran (1990) and Lebrun (2010) in their respective analyses. My first step is to identify whether these themes are present within the images analyzed. The second step consists of identifying additional themes/components and determining whether they are present in both types of men's magazines. These additional components may include the following:

- Violence

³ A sexualized image is defined as any image whose focus is on the sexuality of a woman; any image which emphasis the sexual features of a woman.

- Sex toys
- Girl/girl sexual behavior
- Group sex/threesomes

I use the inventory approach to analyze the images in my sample, thereby conducting a qualitative content analysis by counting the frequency of images that, as defined in the following section, are considered to contain any of the above variables. This type of coding is referred to as manifest coding, or the process of “coding the visible, surface content in a text” (Neuman, 2006: 325). Weber (1990) defines this practice as coding the theme of the text or image (p. 22). Each image that portrays at least one woman will be counted towards the total number of images of women, after which the total percentage of those images that are defined as “sexualized images” of women will be determined. Weber validates the use of a counting content analysis “because it may reveal aspects of the text that would not be apparent otherwise” (p. 56). By combining this type of quantitative analysis with a thematic qualitative analysis, I can account for the drawback of content analysis identified by Weber, namely the lack of accounting for “the richness of language” within the analyzed text (p. 76).

In conducting such an analysis, it is important to operationalize the variables. This is consistent with grounded theory approach, and the need for clear and consistent categories to ensure that the research can be verified (Glaser and Strauss, 2009: 3). The categories, as identified below, must “fit” within the data; they must be “readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study (pg. 3).

With respect to my variables, as identified above, the chart below lists which indicators I will be looking for in the analyzed images, to determine whether the image is erotic or contains at least one incidence of sexual violence against women or has both

indicators present. It is important to note that the list of indicators is not exhaustive and as I work my way through my data, the list will likely become longer. It is also important to note that through the measurement process, I need to be extremely careful and specific, in order to ensure that replication is possible and therefore the reliability of the study is ensured (Neuman, 2006: 324).

Table 1 – Operationalization of Variables

Variables	Indicators	Explanation
Touching	Specifically focusing on a woman touching her own body, or her hair with her hands.	Self-touching was understood by Goffman (1976) as conveying to readers that the woman’s body is a “delicate, precious thing” (p. 31).
Clothing	Referring to the amount of clothing that a woman is wearing. Examining whether she is naked, wearing only a top, only a bottom, is in lingerie, or is fully dressed.	The amount of clothing is important because, the amount of clothing that a woman is wearing is related to the perception of sexual availability – the less clothing she is wearing the more available she appears. According to Lebrun (2010) The “always already sexually available women” was open to any sexual encounter; this woman was often pictured naked, smiling seductively and with her nipples/breasts visible (p. 225).
Postures	The canting posture, where a woman is bowing her head to a man. Where a woman is covering up her naked body with her hands. When a woman throws her head back in ecstasy.	Power relations come into play in the postures women would take. The “canting posture”, is a sign of submissiveness whereby women lower their head to be lower than the viewer or the men in the image, was found by Goffman (1976) to be indicative of women’s inferior position to men (p. 46).
Positioning	Submissive (on her knees) Legs spread open,	In any position whereby a woman is situated lower down than a man,

	<p>Leaning forward Laying down Bent over doggy style</p>	<p>Goffman (1976) argued that this was a means to “express power in height” (p. 28). This expression of power was also evident in images where beds were pictured; those lower down on the bed were seen to be inferior to those above (p. 41). This position also has implications in terms of sexual availability; when women, or men, are lying down on a sofa or a bed Goffman found this to be a “conventionalized expression of sexual availability” (p. 41).</p>
Expressions	<p>Smiling “o” mouth Parted mouth with a coy half smile</p>	<p>Goffman (1978) found that the women in the images were often smiling, exhibiting characteristics of approval – meaning that the “other’s act has been understood and found acceptable or approved and appreciated” (p. 48). The “o” mouth and the parted mouth with a coy half smile have implications for conveying sexual invitations and/or pleasure.</p>
Body Parts	<p>Images where the following body parts are emphasized in close up images, or strategically photographed images where the following body parts are the centre of attention: breasts; buttocks; vagina; mouth; and come hither eyes or eyes closed in ecstasy</p>	<p>Where “body parts are exhibited such that women are reduced to those parts” (MacKinnon, cited in White, 2006: 90).</p>
Child-Like Manner	<p>Tousled Hair Pubic Hair removed</p>	<p>Lebrun (2010) noted in her analysis that women were often depicted in a child-like manner where young women were sexualized and infantilized (p. 226). In this instance, adult women are portrayed as young women dressed in skimpy outfits with their hair loose and messy, often depicted on their knees with their legs spread apart and their breasts covered. These depictions convey both sexual availability, with the open legs, and modesty</p>

Violence	Whips Painful Intercourse ⁴ (uncomfortable positions, spanking, hitting, clawing, whipping)	by covering their breasts. The infantilization is complete when the women are depicted with no pubic hair, thereby creating the image of a sexualized pre-pubescent woman. “Images of women as dehumanized sexual objects who enjoy humiliation or pain, experience sexual pleasure in rape, incest or sexual assault, tied up or cut up or mutilated or bruised or physically hurt, penetrated by objects or animals, presented in postures or positions of sexual submission, arms and body parts are exhibited such that women are reduced to those parts, or presented in scenarios of degradations, humiliation, injury, torture, shown as filthy or inferior, bleeding, bruised or hurt in a content that makes these conditions sexual” (MacKinnon, cited in White, 2006: 90)
Sex Toys	Not including whips Any object which is designed to be used for sexual pleasure.	Any object which is designed to be used for sexual pleasure.
Sexual Behaviour	Vaginal intercourse (man or dildo) Anal intercourse (man or dildo) Woman performing oral sex on man Women with semen on her face or body Man performing oral sex on woman Double penetration (two men or one man +dildo) Girl/Girl Sexual Behavior – two women, twom woman and a man Group sex/ threesomes.	The depiction of sexual behavior within the magazines has implications for sexuality availability (what women are available for), and power relations dependent upon which of the indicators are the most prevalent.

⁴ The term “painful intercourse” represents a MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin (1981;1993;1995) interpretation of the language that describes the sexual activity. However, as per the literature on agency (Assiter and Carol, 1993; Gill, 2007; Pitcher, 2006) there are women who chose to participate in such activity and do derive pleasure from it.

2.4 Analysis of the Text

Rossmann and Rallis (1998) identify three qualitative research strategies: descriptive cultural studies; evaluation or policy studies; and action research (p. 17). Evaluation or policy studies, or comparative studies, entail comparing and contrasting examples in order to “inform decision making” (p. 17). Action research, or small-scale experiments, “takes actions to improve practices or programs to forecast what works and what does not” (p. 17). Descriptive cultural studies are defined as those which “describe social phenomenon and contribute to understanding about them” (p. 17). For my study, I pursue a descriptive cultural study, which will focus on describing the social phenomena of men’s entertainment and pornographic magazines. By doing a descriptive cultural study, I contribute to the social understanding of how women are portrayed within these two types of magazines. By focusing on magazines, or cultural artifacts, and not on actual people the process of gathering data will be unobtrusive and the data gathered from the magazines will be rich in content.

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) “data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned. Working with the data, you create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories and link your story to other stories” (p. 127). In conducting qualitative data analyses, Rossmann and Rallis (1998: 176) identify six phases:

- Organizing the data
- Familiarizing yourself with the data
- Generating categories, themes and patterns
- Coding the data
- Searching for alternative explanations of the data
- Writing the report

In the first stage of organizing and becoming familiar with the data I immerse myself within the data (p. 176). By completely immersing myself with the data, I allow the themes to emerge naturally. For my thesis, the step of organizing my data consists of organizing the data first into two categories, the data from pornographic magazines and the data from non-pornographic magazines. Then the data is organized into theme by classifying each piece of data into the one or more thematic categories into which it fits. For the second step of familiarizing myself with the data, I read, reread and read again each magazine in order to reach data saturation and ensure that no important piece of information is missed.

Generating categories, themes and patterns occurs as I familiarize myself with the data. As I read (and reread and read again) each magazine, I identify patterns in the data including “recurring ideas, themes, perspectives, and descriptions that depict the social world you are studying” (Rossman and Rallis, 1998: 179). This is informed by data collected by other researchers, as identified in the literature review. McCuaig (2007), in her thesis, refers to this as a “reflexive process of analysis” whereby the researcher refers to “secondary data such as the existing related research and literature to denote the commonalities and disparities of their findings” (p. 56). In the process of coding the data, Rossman and Rallis (1998) emphasize what words, phrases, images or cues exemplifies that particular theme. To achieve this, I use clear definitions of each thematic category and identifying what indicators could be present to classify the data into that particular theme. In classifying the data, I classify the data into a few broad themes, and then recode the data into more specific themes by refining the old ones or creating new themes. In analyzing the data, Rossman and Rallis suggests that your analysis will be strengthened if you search for alternative meanings of the data (p. 181). I engage in this process by addressing competing

explanations for why women are depicted the way they are in each type of magazine. The last stage of writing the report is important in that it involves the process whereby I, the researcher, through my choice of wording engages in the interpretative act and thereby turns the raw data into meaningful research (p. 182).

2.5 *Subjectivity*

McCuaig (2007) notes the importance of being “cognizant of the issue of subjectivity and let[ting] the themes emerge naturally from the data without imposing meaning”, while simultaneously noting that she is “motivated to uncover themes which reflected the various subject matters incorporated in my interview guide” (p. 56). This is what Rossman and Rallis (1998) refer to as being reflexive, and being mindful of the lens or worldview through which the individual researcher interprets the data (p. 26).

2.6 *Sample Selection*

I selected my sample by examining the Coast to Coast 2008 Canadian Newstand Boxscore list of the top 100 magazines, by circulation. C2C is a National Distributor of magazines in Canada and has been operating in Canada for thirty years. The Boxscore list is compiled by C2C and is based on the number of magazines that Canada distributes in Canada.

Table 2 - Top Non-Pornographic Magazines by Circulation

Rank	Magazine	Category	Frequency	Units Sold in 2008
14	<i>Maxim</i>	Men's Lifestyle	Monthly	889,067
18	<i>Vanity Fair</i>	Men's Lifestyle	Monthly	679,540
22	<i>Men's Health</i>	Lifestyle	Monthly	565,260
50	<i>GQ - Gentlemen's Quarterly</i>	Men's Lifestyle	Monthly	309,550

To select my sample, I identified those magazines on the list that fit within my research parameters. For the purposes of this study, I defined men's entertainment, non-pornographic magazines as magazines that are marketed towards men but exclude single interest activities such as fishing or finance. Rather, these types of magazines focus on the personal lifestyle of the young adult male. These magazines primarily concern themselves with interests that young adult males share, such as music, movies, gaming, sports, entertainment, style and heterosexual dating/sex. I began by examining the websites for each of the magazines on the list and identified those pages which set out information about the magazine's content and/or target audience. The top three magazines by circulation that fit my definition are *Maxim*, *Men's Health* and *GQ*. The caption of *Maxim*'s website indicates that their magazine focuses on "Hot Girls, Sexy Photos (& Videos), Celebrities, Gaming, Top 100 and Entertainment" (*Maxim*, 2009). *Men's Health* website indicates that their magazine includes information on fitness, health, women, style, and technology (*Men's Health*, 2009). *GQ Gentlemen's Quarterly* focuses on fashion, style, and culture for men, with articles on food, movies, fitness, sex, music, travel, sports, technology, and books (*GQ*, 2009). More importantly, these three selected magazines fit within my definition of men's entertainment, non-pornographic magazine.

The second criterion for men's non-pornographic entertainment magazine is that the magazines were published on a monthly basis. All of the above magazines are published on a monthly frequency.

For pornographic magazines, the chart below represents the pornographic magazines that were listed in the first 100 ranked magazines in the Boxscore chart by Coast to Coast.

Table 3 - Top Pornographic Magazines by Circulation

19	<i>Hustler</i> Canada	Sophisticates	Bi- Weekly	292,575
33	<i>Club</i>	Sophisticates	Monthly	168,188
37	<i>Playboy</i>	Sophisticates	Monthly	255,973
	Naughty Neighbours (DVD)	Sophisticates	Bi-weekly	123,222
49	40 Something	Sophisticates	Bi-weekly	95,151
62	<i>Club</i> International	Sophisticates	Monthly	94,616
64	Score (DVD)	Sophisticates	Monthly	81,039
81	Penthouse Letters	Sophisticates	Monthly	139,511
82	Best of <i>Club</i>	Sophisticates	Monthly	87,163
84	<i>Club</i> Confidential	Sophisticates	Bi-weekly	82,631
85	Swank (DVD)	Sophisticates	Monthly	79,696
92	Penthouse	Sophisticates	Monthly	112,650
99				

However, pornographic magazines are not limited to only articles about sex, they also feature articles about sports, technology and entertainment; however, these represent a small percentage of the articles. In selecting my sample of pornographic magazines, I define pornographic magazines as those which target men and the primary focus of which is on images of naked woman involved in sexually explicit behavior. Rather than limiting my definition of pornography to White's (2006) definition, which only includes pornographic material that is "graphic" and "subordinates" (p. 90) women, my definition of pornography will be taken from MacKinnon (1993), which defines pornography as "sexually explicit materials" (p.22). This can include material which is graphic and/or subordinates women, but is not limited solely to those variables. It is also important to note that I am not exploring pornography; I am exploring representations of women's sexuality in magazines targeted at men, which are categorized as pornographic versus non-pornographic by the magazine industry.

This definition can be exemplified by a comparison of the cover of *Men's Health* and *Hustler Canada*. The cover of *Hustler Canada*, “Cheating for Fun...and Profit”, “A Day in the Life of Porn Star Kayden Kross” and “Phil Henderson’s Bodacious Booty Babes” (*Hustler Canada*, December, 2009) versus the cover of *Men's Health*, which features articles such as “What Sexy Women Love”, “Your Greatest Health Threat” and “Eat Better, Think Smarter” (*Men's Health*, December 2009). Ergo, pornographic magazines tend to focus on one aspect of men’s lifestyle, that being sex with women.

The top three magazines that fit my definition were *Hustler Canada*, *Playboy* and *Club*. On *Playboy*’s website, their description about their website and magazine is that it features “Sex, Sexy nude women, Playmates, Cyber Girls, celebrities, interviews, fashion and entertainment” (*Playboy*, 2009). *Hustler Canada*, conversely, describes their magazine as containing “explicit erotic nudity” with “high-quality, hot photo spreads [which] feature the world's sexiest women, along with political and current-events, satire and social commentary”. The features articles in *Hustler Canada* range from “Ace Frehley: Kiss this! Legendary guitarist tells all” to “Cougars Unleashed”; exemplifying that the magazine does contain non-sexual articles (*Hustler Canada*, Holiday Issue 2009). As for *Club*, they describe their magazine as “legendary” and “home to the hottest sex megastars in the world for over 30 years, and it’s still setting new standards for exclusive, quality content. It’s where you’ll always find the world’s sexiest babes at their naked best – today’s legends and tomorrow’s porn stars. It focuses on high quality photography, and its status gets it behind the scenes exclusives, big name interviews and monthly on-set reports with the prestige studios” (*Club*, 2009).

A further criterion for my selection is that the magazines were all published on a monthly basis. While Coast to Coast contends that *Hustler Canada* is published bi-weekly, information from the *Hustler Canada* website indicates there are only 13 issues per year, which indicates there are 12 monthly issues and a special Holiday Issue.

For all the magazines, save for one exception, I selected the December 2009 issue. The one exception was *GQ*. For *GQ*, I chose to select the January issue, rather than the December issue, as the December issue was not a regular issue, rather it was the self declared “men of the year” issue and focused primarily on this year’s most popular men in sports, film, music and politics. As the December issue was not representative of the regular *GQ* issues, I selected the January issue, as it came out during the same time period as most December issues do (within a 30 day time frame).

In selecting articles to examine within these magazines, I focus specifically on the articles featured on the covers of magazines. By doing so, I make my sample more manageable, in terms of the amount of data collected, and I examine those articles which the magazines use to entice men to purchase the magazine. In selecting the feature articles, I chose only those articles which discuss, depict or construct women’s sexuality.

With respect to the images in the magazine, in order to be able to conduct an inventory analysis of each image, I select only those images that are at least two inches wide by two inches long. This width and height allows me to clearly see all the details within in the image, which allows me to conduct the inventory analysis.

On the back covers of *Men’s Health* and *Maxim* there are bonus sections. This bonus section in both magazines represents a ‘tech guide’, which focuses on the years’ most popular technology. As such, I include the images on the back cover, as they both depict

sexualized women. However, I do not include the feature articles from the back covers of these magazines, as their primary purpose is the depiction of technology and promoting those products in time for Christmas shopping.

Chapter 3: Image Analysis

The total number of images depicting women in a sexual context within a magazine can be used as an initial measure to assess where certain magazines fall on the continuum from least explicit to most explicit men's magazines. By examining the total count of images which depict or construct women's sexuality ("sexualized images" – as defined in the methodology section), distinctions and parallels between pornographic and non-pornographic gender constructions can be identified and discussed. Table 3 outlines the total number of images of sexualized women in the feature articles in each specific magazine, as well as a total count of images of sexualized women in the two categories, i.e. pornographic magazines and non-pornographic magazines. This total count includes image(s) on the front and back covers. The associated percentage is representative of the number of images in each magazine respectively, relative to the total number of images for that category.

Unsurprisingly, the pornographic magazines have more sexualized images than the non-pornographic magazines. In the feature articles in the pornographic magazines, there were 204 sexualized images, whereas there were 17 sexualized images in the feature articles in the non-pornographic magazines. However, the differences between the two genres is a subtle one and the six magazines exist on a spectrum, going from least sexualized – *Men's Health* with only three sexualized images in the feature articles (17.6% of the total non-pornographic category) – to the most sexualized – *Club* with 145 sexualized images in the feature articles (71.1% of the images found in the pornographic magazine category). On further examination of each of the magazines, the total number of sexualized images increases from the least explicit to the most explicit magazines across both categories.

Men's Health and *GQ*, representing the least explicit of the magazines, feature three and four images respectively. *Maxim*, which is more explicit than the other magazines, features 10 images and falls closer to the number of images in *Playboy* (17).

Accordingly, the line between the two genres (pornographic and non-pornographic) is not a firm one. *Playboy*, which falls in the pornographic category, had relatively few sexualized images (only 17 or 8.3% of the total images in the category) relative to the other pornographic magazines, and *Maxim* contained significantly more sexualized images than the other two magazines in the non-pornographic category (10 or 58.8%).

Hustler Canada is more explicit than *Playboy* on the basis of the sheer number of images; it features 2.5 times the number of images than *Playboy*, with 42 sexualized images (vs. 17). *Club*, featured more images than *Hustler*; with 145 images *Club* has nearly three times the number of images found in *Hustler*.

Maxim and *Playboy*, situated in the middle of the continuum, represent what Mooney (2008) describes as “soft-soft” pornography (p.250); both feature characteristics of pornography, but do not meet the requirements for hard-core pornography. Interestingly, although *Playboy* does not meet the requirements for “hard” or “real” pornography, it is still considered to be pornographic, because its primary purpose is to display images of naked woman involved in sexually explicit behavior; *Maxim*'s focus is on providing entertainment for men, which can include sexualized images of women, but does not contain any images of naked women engaging in sexual behavior. This is a topic to be discussed further in the section on the continuum.

Table 4. *Summary of images of women in the feature articles by magazine*

Magazine	Non-pornographic			Pornographic				
	Men's Health	GQ	Maxim	Category Total	Playboy	Hustler Canada	Club	Category Total
Number of Women	3	4	10	17	17	42	145	204
% of Total Depictions/ Category	17.6%	23.5%	58.8%	100.0%	8.3%	20.6%	71.1%	100.0%

The existence of a continuum of sexualization, as opposed to a firm division between pornographic and non-pornographic magazines, becomes evident when an inventory approach is utilized to assess the content of the images. Table 5 includes a detailed inventory of image content indicators. The following indicators were taken from previous research: physical touch, expression, clothing, posture, positioning, body part emphasis and child-like connotations (Goffman, 1976; Lebrun, 2010 and Farran, 1990). Additional indicators, including sexual behaviors, violence, and presence of sex toys, were added after analysis began, because they were recurring themes across a number of magazines in the sample.

The most common components identified in non-pornographic magazines, found in at least 30 percent of the images were: tousled hair; “come hither” eyes; caressing her own body; mouth parted in a coy, half smile; positioned lying down and wearing lingerie. Tousled, messy hair was the most common component, being found in 16 of the 17 images. “Come hither” eyes were the second most common component, found in 14 of the 17 images. There were eight instances where women were depicted caressing their body, as if it were a “delicate precious thing” (Goffman, 1976: 31). There were six instances where women were depicted with their mouth slightly parted in a coy half-smile and six separate instances where women were depicted in a lying down position. In six images, women were depicted wearing lingerie; this included specific items such as teddies or two-piece sets, and excluded instances where women were wearing only a top or only a bottom piece of lingerie.

There are fifteen components present in pornographic magazines that are not found in non-pornographic magazines. This suggests that even though there are elements which

support the theory that there is continuum from non-pornographic to pornographic magazines, there are indicators that support a distinct dichotomy between pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. In this respect, it is these fifteen components which separate pornographic magazines from non-pornographic magazines. Nine of the components involve the depiction of explicit sexual behavior: vaginal intercourse; anal intercourse; oral sex (women giving and receiving); double penetration; group sex/threesomes; girl/girl sexual behavior (including depictions of two women or two women and a man); and lastly, painful intercourse. Four components involve physical characteristics of women engaging in sexual intercourse: eyes closed in ecstasy; the mouth shaped into an 'o' (as if the woman was having an orgasm); depicted bent over on their hands and knees (a.k.a. doggy-style); and wearing only a shirt and no bottoms. The remaining two components are depictions which emphasize the vagina and/or the lack of pubic hair. There is clear link between these two characteristics; images where the woman has removed her pubic hair increases the visibility of their vagina and draws further attention to that particular body part. This attention is in addition to the emphasis placed on that particular body part by the provocative positioning of the women (i.e. legs spread open) and the lack of clothing commonly found in pornographic magazines (80/204).

Ten of the components were only identified in one or two images (less than 12% of the total images) in non-pornographic magazines: the depiction of whips, emphasis on the buttocks, legs spread open, submissive positions, covering their body (i.e. their breasts or genitalia) with their hands and tossing their head back in ecstasy. All save for one of these components, were only found in *Maxim* magazine. The single exception was when women were depicted covering their breasts or genitalia with their hands in a display of modesty;

one image was found in each of *Maxim* and *Men's Health*, respectively. The remaining components function to blur the line between pornographic and non-pornographic magazines, again providing evidence of Mooney's (2008) "soft-soft" pornography (p.250). The frequency of these components found in *Maxim*, closely resemble the frequency of the same components in *Playboy*: depictions of whips (*Maxim*1; *Playboy* 0); legs spread open (*Maxim* 2; *Playboy* 4); submissive positions (*Maxim* 1; *Playboy* 3); and tossing her head back in ecstasy (*Maxim* 1; *Playboy* 1), suggesting that as magazines progress along the continuum in each category, the line between the categories themselves begins to blur. Both magazines also have a tendency to depict women as available to the reader to view, placing them apart from the more explicit pornographic magazines (*Hustler Canada* and *Club*) which depict women as sexual objects engaging in sexual activity.

In pornographic magazines, the most common component was the tousled hair (133/204). The remaining most frequently occurring components were: "come hither" eyes (125/204), legs spread wide open (89/204), full nudity (80/204), pubic hair removed (75/204) and "o" mouth (63/204). These six components were found in at least 30 percent of the images.

Tousled hair and "come hither" eyes are also commonly found in non-pornographic magazines (133/204 and 125/204, respectively). Two components common to non-pornographic magazines are relatively uncommon in pornographic ones. Women are depicted lying down in only 19 of the 209 images in the pornographic magazines and women are depicted caressing their own body in only 30 of 204 images.

In establishing the continuum, certain components are more commonly found in non-pornographic magazines (the left side of the continuum) and certain components are more

commonly found in pornographic magazines (the right side of the continuum); lastly certain components are common in both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines.

Specifically, non-pornographic magazines alone contain images of women lying down and caressing themselves. Images of tousled hair and “come hither eyes” are found in both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. And finally, sexual behaviors, open legs, full nudity, no pubic hair and “o” mouth are found in pornographic magazines alone.

This quantitative evidence suggests that women are sexualized, and constructed as sexual objects, across the two categories of pornographic and non-pornographic magazines – the difference between the two types is that non-pornographic magazines are subtler softer in their depiction of sexualized women. As mentioned previously, the similarities include the components of tousled hair and “come hither eyes”, both of which function to create an image of a woman as sexual object available to the reader for consumption. With the remaining components that are common to both types of magazines, the frequent components in non-pornographic magazines represent the subtler versions of the components that are frequent to pornographic magazines. To exemplify, one of the most common components in pornographic magazines is that women are depicted naked, whereas in non-pornographic magazines women are depicted wearing lingerie. Similarly, women in pornographic magazines are commonly depicted with their mouth shaped into an “o”, mimicking an orgasm, whereas the women in non-pornographic magazines have their mouth parted in a coy, half smile. In both of these examples, the women in non-pornographic are depicted in a softer, more sensual than sexual manner. This is illustrated further in the remaining two most frequently components in non-pornographic magazines: women depicted caressing their own body and positioned lying down. By caressing their body,

women are conveying to the reader they are a “delicate, precious thing” (Goffman, 1976: 31), and by lying down, they both put themselves in a position of submission to the reader and convey that they are positioned for sexual activity, coyly implying they may engage in sexual activity – but not promising anything. In comparison, in pornographic magazines the remaining two common components are: legs spread wide open and pubic hair removed. Both of these components convey to the reader that the woman in the image is available for sexual activity, in particular vaginal penetration by drawing attention to that particular orifice. In answering my research questions, pornographic and non-pornographic magazines are similar in their construction of women as sexual objects; however, the constructions differ in that the non-pornographic magazines represent a coy version of the female sexual object seen in pornographic magazines.

Table 5. *Content inventory of sexual depictions of women by magazine.*

	Men's Health	GQ	Maxim	Non-pornographic total		Playboy	Hustler Canada	Club	Pornographic total		Total	
				<i>n</i>	%				<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Touching (caressing - like their body is a delicate precious thing not masturbation)												
Touching oneself												
Body				8	47.1%	10	11	9	30	14.7%	38	17.2%
Hair	2	0	6	3	17.6%	2	2	2	6	2.9%	9	4.1%
Clothing												
Naked (where fully nudity can be determined)	2	0	0	2	11.8%	8	11	61	80	39.2%	82	37.1%
Lingerie	0	3	3	6	35.3%	4	11	9	24	11.8%	30	13.6%
Underwear/bottoms only	1	0	2	3	17.6%	2	2	8	12	5.9%	15	6.8%
Unbuttoned/unzipped/pulled up/pulled down clothing	0	1	3	4	23.5%	1	8	23	32	15.7%	36	16.3%
Top only (no bottoms – not including images where only the top is visible – must be clear there is no bottoms)	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	1	15	16	7.8%	16	7.2%
Postures												
'Canting' posture (bowing their head – eyes downcast)	1	1	1	3	17.6%	6	0	3	9	4.4%	12	5.4%
Covering up their body (with their hands)	1	0	1	2	11.8%	0	1	0	1	0.5%	3	1.4%
Head tossed back (in ecstasy?)	0	0	1	1	5.9%	1	1	4	6	2.9%	7	3.2%
Positioning												
Submissive (on their knees or squatting down on the floor)	0	0	1	1	5.9%	3	0	10	13	6.4%	14	6.3%
Legs spread open	0	0	2	2	11.8%	4	7	78	89	43.6%	91	41.2%
Leaning forward	0	0	1	1	5.9%	0	0	2	2	1.0%	3	1.4%
Lying down	3	1	2	6	35.3%	3	6	10	19	9.3%	25	11.3%
Bent over (doggy style)	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	3	21	24	11.8%	24	10.9%
Expressions												
Smiling	3	0	0	3	17.6%	4	9	24	37	18.1%	40	18.1%
'O' mouth	0	0	0	0	0.0%	1	5	57	63	30.9%	63	28.5%
Parted mouth with a coy half smile	0	0	6	6	35.3%	11	10	17	38	18.6%	44	19.9%
												Continued...

	Men's Health	GQ	Maxim	Non-pornographic total		Playboy	Hustler Canada	Club	Pornographic total		Total	
				n	%				n	%	n	%
Body Parts (emphasis)^[1]												
Breasts	0	1	3	4	23.5%	1	14	8	23	11.3%	27	12.2%
Buttocks	0	0	1	1	5.9%	3	6	26	35	17.2%	36	16.3%
Vagina	0	0	0	0	0.0%	1	6	51	58	28.4%	58	26.2%
Mouth (bright red lipstick, glossy pouty lips, close up of her mouth while performing fellatio)	0	4	0	4	23.5%	1	1	27	29	14.2%	33	14.9%
Eyes												
'Come hither'	3	2	9	14	82.4%	16	25	84	125	61.3%	139	62.9%
Closed in ecstasy	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	5	46	51	25.0%	51	23.1%
Child-Like Manner												
Tousled Hair	3	4	9	16	94.1%	16	23	94	133	65.2%	149	67.4%
Body (pubic) Hair removed (clear images where the pubic hair is removed)	0	0	0	0	0.0%	2	4	71	77	37.7%	77	34.8%
Violence												
Whips	0	0	1	1	5.9%	0	1	2	3	1.5%	4	1.8%
Painful intercourse (uncomfortable positions, spanking, hitting, clawing, whipping)	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	5	5	2.5%	5	2.3%
Sex Toys (not including whips)	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	18	18	8.8%	18	8.1%
Sexual Behavior												
Vaginal Intercourse (with a man or a dildo)	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	1	48	49	24.0%	49	22.2%
Anal intercourse (dildo or man)	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	8	8	3.9%	8	3.6%
Woman performing oral sex on man	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	1	37	38	18.6%	38	17.2%
Woman with semen on her face or body	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	6	6	2.9%	6	2.7%
Man performing oral sex on woman	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	3	3	1.5%	3	1.4%
Double penetration ^[2] with two men/ one man and a dildo/ two dildos	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	5	5	2.5%	5	2.3%
Girl/Girl Sexual Behavior												
Two women	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	19	19	9.3%	19	8.6%
Two women and a man	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	2	2	1.0%	2	0.9%
Group sex/threesomes ^[3]	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	17	17	8.3%	17	7.7%

[1] This includes, positioning the women whereby those body parts are emphasized and close up images of those body parts.

[2] Images of double penetration are not counted in vaginal/anal intercourse.

[3] Includes all images where there are three or more individuals clearly engaged in sexual behavior.

3.1 The Continuum

The continuum established by the total count of sexualized images is reproduced in the inventory. Rather than looking at the total number of sexualized images in the magazines, the inventory examines each particular component and determines how many sexualized images contain that particular component.

GQ and Men's Health

In examining the inventory, *Men's Health* and *GQ* emerge as the two magazines which feature the least number of the components identified. Neither magazine contained images depicting a woman: caressing/touching her hair; wearing only a top (bottom half of their body is left exposed); with her head tossed back in ecstasy; in a submissive posture; with her legs spread open; with her body leaning forward; with her mouth parted in a teasing, coy smile; buttock's emphasized and lastly, the depiction of a woman using a whip.

Certain components are found more often in *Men's Health* than in *GQ* and other components are found more often in *GQ* than in *Men's Health*. The component of tousled hair is found in three of the three images identified in *Men's Health* and four of the four images identified in *GQ*. However, "come hither" eyes are found in all three of the images in *Men's Health*, but only in two of the four images of *GQ*. Furthermore, these specific components, as pointed out earlier, are common to magazines across the continuum, which functions to establish the similarities in all the magazines in my sample in constructing women as sexual objects.

Significant differences between the two magazines emerge with the components involving the level of clothing that the women in the photographs are wearing. The only one of the three non-pornographic magazines to depict a woman naked is, strangely, *Men's*

Health, which depicts two images of a naked woman. These two images are found in the article “Read her (dirty, thoughtful, irrational, rational, suspicious, sentimental) mind” an article which discusses how men can unlock the sexual mystery of women. The woman posing naked is cleverly positioned so that her genitalia are not visible; her buttocks and her vagina are covered by her knees and arms, and only the top of her breasts, or her cleavage, is visible. For this component, *Men’s Health* with its nude images appears more explicit than the images of women in lingerie in *GQ*. However, there is a difference between these images. To demonstrate, in an act of coyness, the woman in *Men’s Health* is cleverly positioned so that her breasts, buttocks and vagina are not visible. She is using her hands to ensure her breasts are covered; however, her hands are gently covering her breasts, teasing the reader with a side glimpse of them. She is smiling in a devious manner as she stares over her shoulder at nothing. Her hair is wet and tousled, as she if she had finished bathing; therefore it is only natural that she is naked. In the second image, the same woman is lying down on a bed, with her hands again covering her breasts. She is smiling coyly at the reader, further inviting the reader to take a closer look with her “come hither” eyes. In these images, this woman is constructed as a sexual object, as well as a sexual puzzle that men need to solve. This emphasizes the sexualization of culture (McNair, 1996; 2002), where pornographic themes, such as nudity, have broken the boundaries and appear in non-pornographic material.

In comparison, the first image in *GQ* consists of January Jones wearing an unzipped leather jacket, with, what appears to be, nothing underneath. She is staring at the camera with a stoic expression on her face and her breasts/cleavage on display for the reader. This image is very provocative, in that it draws attention to January’s very visible breasts; this

emphasis also helps to construct January as a sexual object to be looked at. This construction is also evident in the remaining three images in *GQ*, which consist of January wearing lingerie. In comparison to *Men's Health*, the images of January Jones in *GQ* can be said to be more provocative. To exemplify, January makes no effort to hide her body in the images; her entire body is on display clad in lingerie, or in the case of the first image, an unzipped leather jacket. Additionally, her mouth, colored in bright red lipstick, is emphasized in all four images. By emphasizing this particular body part, *GQ* is both using the mouth as a marker for sexualization and penetration. Moreover, January's expression further constructs her as sexual object; unlike pornographic magazines where the woman's expression invites the reader to sexually consume her, January is not inviting any such activity, rather she is passively allowing herself to be looked at as a sexual object, but not touched. It is in images such as these where women are reduced to their sexual body parts (breasts, mouth, buttocks and vagina) and become sexual objects to be viewed. As such, the women depicted in *Men's Health* and *GQ* are constructed as sexual objects to be viewed, but as the magazines become more explicit (and move from left to right on the continuum), the women in the magazines change from sexual objects to be viewed to sexual objects to be used by the reader to engage in sexual activity.

Expressions also signify a difference between *Men's Health* and *GQ*. Women are depicted smiling in three of the images in *Men's Health* (Figure 2), whereas *GQ*'s January has a stoic expression, neither smiling nor frowning (Figure 3). The smiling woman in *Men's Health* conveys to the reader that she is happy; however, this expression is not meant to tease or entice the reader with the promise of sexual activity. Applying Benedict's (1992) construction of women as "virgins" or "vamps", this woman represents the "virgin" or "the

nice girl”; she is naked, objectified, but “nice” since she is not engaged in sexual activity, compared to the seducing vamps in the pornographic magazines. Furthermore, her wet hair implies that she had been swimming or bathing, so it appears natural that she is naked. In addition, both swimming and bathing connote a certain purity, as she has been “washed”. Conversely, while January’s attire invites readers to stare at her, her stoic expression says to the reader that he can look, but he cannot touch. There is a progression with how women’s mouths are pictured in men’s entertainment magazines—from smiling and “nice” or “clean” in *Men’s Health*, to the stoic, neither smiling nor frowning expression, of January Jones in *GQ*, to the coy half smile of the women in *Maxim*. There is also progression with the construction of women as sexual objects; the women’s expressions in both *GQ* and *Men’s Health* are not teasing the reader, whereas the coy smile seen in *Maxim* (to be discussed in the next section) teases the reader, thereby shifting from passive, to more active sexual communication as the continuum progresses left to right (See Figures 2-5 below).



Figure 2 Smiling Woman from *Men's Health* Figure 3 Stoic Expression from *GQ*

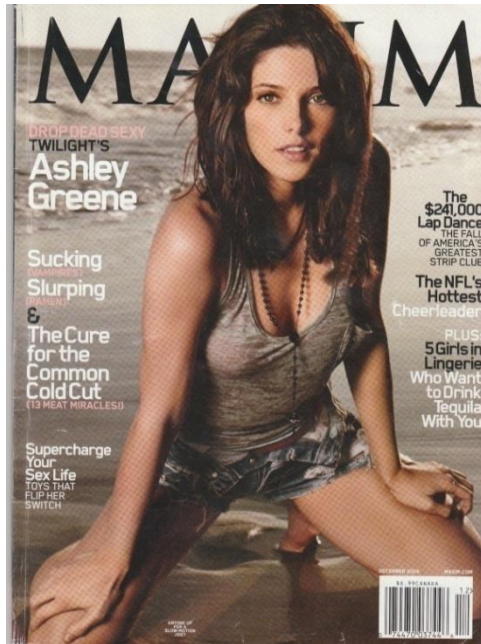


Figure 4 Coy-Half Smile from *Maxim*

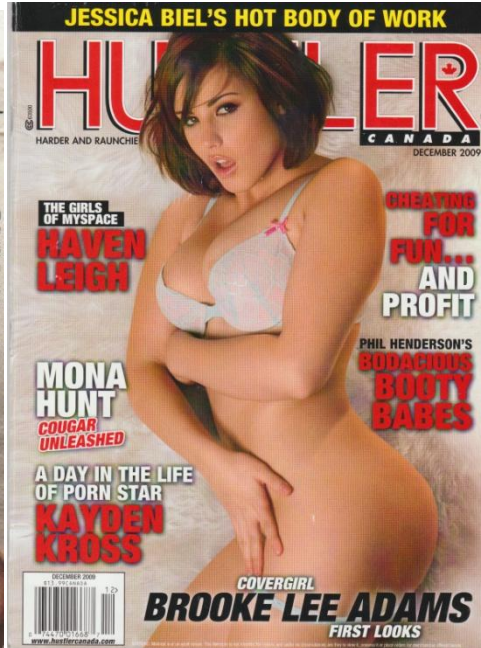


Figure 5 "O" Mouth from *Hustler Canada*

With non-pornographic magazines, the least explicit magazines fall on the left side, with *Men's Health* further left on the continuum than *GQ*. Interestingly, both magazines construct women as sexual objects, although *GQ* emerges as a more explicit magazine, in terms of sexualized images, than *Men's Health*.

Maxim and Playboy – The Gray Area

Of the three non-pornographic magazines, *Maxim* stands out as the most explicit non-pornographic magazine; it contains components that are more commonly found in pornographic magazines and that are not found in the remaining two non-pornographic magazines. In this sense, it more closely approximates *Playboy* than *Men's Health* or *GQ*. For example, the components of a woman posing with her legs spread open is found in two images in *Maxim*; it is not found in any other non-pornographic magazine and is found in four images in *Playboy*.

Maxim, in one instance, goes further than *Playboy* in its depiction of sex toys. In *Maxim*, there is one image which contains the depiction of sexual paraphernalia used to hurt women (a whip). This particular component is not found in any non-pornographic magazine in my sample; more importantly, *Playboy* contains no images of whips, or any other sexual paraphernalia that can be used to hurt women, within its feature articles.

Lastly, a woman with a coy, teasing half smile was found in six images in *Maxim*. This component was found in 11 images in *Playboy*. *Playboy* also features one image where a woman has her mouth shaped into an ‘o’, mimicking the shape her mouth would if she was having an orgasm. Both *Maxim* and *Playboy* also feature one image where a woman is tossing her head back in ecstasy.

With respect to the emphasis upon sexual body parts, differences between the magazines emerge. The emphasis upon the breasts, for example, is found in no images in *Men’s Health*, one image in *GQ* and three images in *Maxim*. The same trend applies to the emphasis on a woman’s buttocks; there is one image in *Maxim* which emphasizes this particular body part, and none in the remaining two magazines. Unlike pornographic magazines, which include 58 (28.4%) images emphasizing a woman’s vagina, the non-pornographic magazines include no such images. And although *Maxim* is the only magazine that contains sexualized images emphasizing the buttocks and the most images emphasizing breasts, this is not true for the emphasis of one particular body part, the mouth. The mouth is emphasized in four images in *GQ*; there are no images that emphasize the mouth in *Maxim* or *Men’s Health*. The mouth is constructed in a similar manner as the vagina – both are sexual orifices available for penetration. This similarity is further explored in the discussion section.

Like the non-pornographic magazines, *Playboy* features none of the components in the sexual behavior thematic category. This supports the position that *Playboy* falls closer on the continuum to *Maxim* than to *Hustler Canada* or *Club*. However, there are certain components identified in *Playboy* that are not found in *Maxim*. This allows some level of distinction to be made between the two magazines, giving insight into why *Playboy* is classified as a pornographic magazine and *Maxim* is not. To exemplify, *Playboy* features eight images where women are depicted nude; *Maxim* features none. *Playboy* also features two images where the woman's pubic hair has been removed; *Maxim* features none. Likewise, *Playboy* features a single image where a woman's vagina is emphasized; *Maxim* features no such images. *Playboy* is distinguished from its non-pornographic counterpart, *Maxim*, through its emphasis upon sexual orifices (vagina, anus and mouth), versus *Maxim's* emphasis upon breasts and mouth; the latter depicts body parts which construct the woman as a sexual object to be looked at, rather than penetrated as in *Playboy's* construction.

Hustler Canada and Club

Club magazine stands out as the most explicit magazine on the continuum established by the total count of sexualized images in the magazines. It also contains the clear majority of images within the sexual behavior category (a thematic category only commonly found in the extreme end of the continuum in the pornographic magazines) in Table 4: 48 images of vaginal intercourse; eight images of anal intercourse; 38 images of a woman performing oral sex on a man; three images of a man performing oral sex on woman; and five images of double penetration (simultaneous anal and vaginal intercourse). By comparison, *Hustler Canada* contains one image of vaginal intercourse and one image of

a woman performing oral sex upon a man; none of the other components identified in *Club* were found in *Hustler Canada*.

This trend carries over in other components as well. In the category of violence, *Club* again features the most images of women being whipped (2) or engaging in painful intercourse (5). *Hustler Canada* features one image of a whip being used on a woman, and *Playboy* features none. The relatively low incidence of images of violence in the pornographic magazines raises interesting points, to be discussed in the analysis section.

Club further distinguishes itself from the other two pornographic magazines in its depiction of non-traditional sexual behavior. It is the only magazine in the sample to have images featuring two women engaged in sexual behavior with each other (19) and images of *ménages-à-trois* (17) in which two men and a woman, or two women and a man, are engaged in sexual behavior together.

The amount of clothing that the women are wearing in the images acts as another indicator of explicitness in pornographic (and non-pornographic magazines). *Playboy* features 8 images of nude women, where as *Hustler Canada* features 1.38 times the number of images (11) of nude woman that *Playboy* has. *Club* features the most images (61) where a woman is depicted completely naked and contains 5.54 times the images that *Hustler Canada* has and 7.63 times the images *Playboy* has.⁵

There is also an increased emphasis on body parts from the least explicit to the most explicit pornographic magazines. In *Playboy*, there are three images where a woman's buttocks are emphasized, one image where breasts are emphasized, one image where a woman's vagina is emphasized, and one image where the mouth is emphasized. In *Hustler*

⁵ While there are nude images found in *Men's Health*, these images are not on par with the blatant depictions of nudity in the pornographic magazines. This aspect is discussed further in the section on sexually available women.

Canada, there are six images where a woman's buttocks are emphasized, 14 images where her breasts are emphasized, and six images where a woman's vagina is emphasized; there is only one image where a woman's mouth is emphasized. In *Club*, there are 26 images emphasizing the buttocks of a woman, eight images emphasizing her breasts, 51 images emphasizing a woman's vagina and 27 images emphasizing her mouth. Comparatively speaking, there are twice the number of images of buttocks, 14 times the number of images of breasts, six times the images of vaginas and an equal number of images emphasizing the mouth in *Hustler Canada* as there are in *Playboy*. In *Club*, at the farthest end of the spectrum, there are nearly twice (1.85 times) the number of images where buttocks were emphasized, 8.5 times the number of images where the vagina was emphasized, and 27 times the number of images where the mouth was emphasized than there are in *Hustler Canada*. In a rare instance, *Club* featured 0.6 times the number of images where breasts were emphasized, when compared to *Hustler Canada*. This represents a link to images in the non-pornographic magazines, where breasts are a commonly emphasized body part; this is one reason why *Hustler Canada* is further left (closer to the non-pornographic magazines) than *Club*. Furthermore, this represents a trend for non-pornographic magazines and those pornographic magazines left of *Club*, where the more "acceptable" female body parts, such as breasts, are commonly exposed. For the more explicit magazines, the further right on the continuum you go, the more hidden body parts, such as vaginas and buttocks/anus, are revealed.

This trend continues with the ways in which women are positioned in the three pornographic magazines. For example, in *Club*, there are 78 images where a woman is pictured with her legs spread wide open; in *Hustler Canada* there are seven and in *Playboy*

there are only four. Women are depicted bent over on their hands and knees ('doggy style') more frequently in *Club* (21 images) than the other two magazines (three images in *Hustler Canada* and no such images in *Playboy*). This particular position implies that the women, like female dogs in heat, are "ready for penetration" by their male co-star, and perhaps, by extension, the reader. The women in *Hustler Canada* and *Club*, in contrast to the coy women in the magazines to the left of them on the continuum, go beyond teasing the reader to actively inviting the reader to participate in their sexual consumption.

The frequency of the sexually explicit components, including sexual behavior, emphasis on body parts, positioning and violence, is useful in determining where the magazines in my sample fall on a continuum of sexual explicitness. The above examples demonstrate that *Club* is the most explicit magazine, followed by *Hustler Canada*; *Playboy* comes in last as the least sexually explicit pornographic magazine.

3.2 Women as Child-Like

Lebrun (2010) found in her analysis of ladies' night bar flyers that the women in the images were sexualized and infantilized; in other words they were depicted as carnal, yet child-like. In her definition, the adult women in these images wore skimpy outfits, their hair was loose and messy and they were positioned in a sexualized manner with their legs spread open and their breasts covered (p. 226). These components were found in the magazines within my sample. In 97 out of 221 images (in both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines), women were depicted in lingerie, wearing only a top, wearing only a pair of underwear, or wearing clothes that were unzipped or pulled up/down to reveal their breasts, genitalia, buttocks, or underwear. If the women who were depicted naked are included, the figure raises significantly to 179 out of 221 images (81%). Tousled hair was one of the most

common features, with 149 images out of 221 depicting a woman with tousled, child-like hair. The position of legs spread open was more commonly found in pornographic magazines (89/204) versus non-pornographic magazines (2/17). An additional example of child-like features which Lebrun (2010) does not identify is the absence of pubic hair; this component is only found in pornographic magazines. The lack of pubic hair on adult women infantilizes them to a pre-pubescent age. Although found in all three pornographic magazines, this feature is most prevalent in *Club*. Henceforth, this particular component is useful in further identifying a continuum of explicitness in the pornographic magazines.

In *Playboy*, there are two feature articles where the women depicted have no pubic hair. In the first article, featuring Joanna Krupa, she is depicted with no pubic hair in two images; however, as mentioned previously, these depictions are subtle. Her genitalia are not blatantly on display for the reader to see; rather she teases readers by offering them a glimpse of her hairless nether region. In *Hustler Canada*, there are also four images in the magazine where Brooke Lee Adams' hairless vulva is visible to the reader. In the last three images of *First looks – Brooke Lee Adams*, the main feature of the image is a close up of Brooke's hairless vulva (p. 18-21). In the three images, Brooke is not only spreading her legs open, but her pants have been removed, her underwear has been pushed aside and she is using her hands to spread her vaginal lips open. In the first two images, nearly half the page is devoted to her genitalia with Brooke herself being blurred in the background, neatly separating Brooke from her vagina, and reducing her to that particular body part. The last image of the spread is a two-page photograph of Brooke lying on her back, again with her skirt hiked above her hips and her underwear pushed aside. Like the previous images, Brooke is using her hands to pull her vaginal lips apart, further revealing the sexual orifice

which most men would like to penetrate. The difference between this image and the previous two is that an entire page is devoted to Brooke's pubic area, including an outline and of the cheeks of her buttocks and her thighs (p. 20-21). The close-up portrayals of Brooke's vagina are vastly different from the seductive, natural poses of Joanna where glimpses of her vagina appear almost accidental or covert.

Club represents the most explicit of the three magazines with respect to this component with every feature article having at least one image where the woman is depicted without pubic hair, for a total of 71 images (17.75 times the images seen in *Hustler Canada*). Like *Hustler Canada*, *Club* often features close up images of hairless vulvas; however, the frequency of these images is much higher in *Club* than in *Hustler Canada*. To exemplify, compare two similar articles in *Hustler Canada* and *Club*. In the images featuring Brooke, she is depicted alone on the magazine cover, she engages in no sexual activity and she is the only individual depicted in the photographs; there were four depictions of her hairless vulva. *Brittany*, a young woman featured in *Club*, is also depicted on the cover page, engages in no sexual activity and is the only person depicted in the photographs. There are nine images of *Brittany* where her shaved vagina is visible, and of those nine images, five are close up images. This represents 2.25 times the number of images found in *Hustler Canada's* article featuring Brooke. This particular article is representative of the other articles in *Club*.

3.3 The Sexually Available Woman

When you look at the most common components in pornographic and non-pornographic magazines and examine them as a whole, magazines across both categories construct women as sexual objects available for the reader's consumption. Similar

components are found across the genres (pornographic and non-pornographic), although there is also a shift from subtle to overt depictions of availability. The components of tousled hair and “come hither” eyes are the first and second most commonly found components, respectively, in both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. The parted mouth with the coy smile commonly found in non-pornographic magazines has been replaced with the ‘o’ mouth (63/204) in pornographic magazines illustrating a transition in pornographic magazines to depictions that are orgasmic, where women are presenting themselves as actively engaged in sexual activity. Furthermore, the mouth is transformed from a sexual indicator in non-pornographic magazines to a sexual actor available for penetration in pornographic magazines. The same is true with respect to the depiction of sexualized women in lingerie, which in pornographic magazines has been replaced with the depiction of completely naked women (89/204). Again, we have a shift from the teasing images in the non-pornographic magazines, to the images in pornographic magazines where the women are naked and ‘ready to go’. This represents a difference between the two types of magazines – in non-pornographic magazines the women are enticing the readers and in pornographic magazines the women are activity engaging in sexual activity. However, in both categories women are sexualized and constructed as sexual objects to be consumed by the male reader.

This is exemplified by the single feature article in *Men’s Health*. The woman posing naked is cleverly positioned so that her genitalia are not visible; her buttocks and her vagina are covered by her knees and arms, and only the top of her breasts, or her cleavage, is visible. Similarly, in the final image in *Men’s Health*, the woman depicted is Olympic athlete Tanith Belbin. She is depicted wearing only a pair of black underwear; however, like

the previous images of nude women in *Men's Health*, she is depicted laying face-down on a couch, thereby preventing the viewer/reader from seeing her breasts. Additionally, since the angle of the camera is from the side, the reader is only given the silhouette of her buttocks. Surrounding Tanith's body with images of technological 'toys' or consumer goods helps to construct her as a sexual object to be consumed. This depiction of nudity contrasts with the depiction of similar levels of nudity, i.e. women wearing only bottoms, in pornographic magazines, which display every square inch of a woman's body in active sexual solicitation or activity (See Figures 6 and 7 below). These subtle differences between (partial) nudity in non-pornographic and pornographic magazines is best emphasized in the two images below, taken from *Men's Health* and *Club*. In comparison to the image of Tanith (described above), the image of Brittany in *Club* is more provocative and seductive, despite the fact that they are wearing the same amount of clothing. They are both positioned lying down, but Brittany is lying down on her back, allowing her breasts to be visible to the reader. While Tanith appears bored lying on the couch holding a pair of headphones, Brittany appears sexually engaged with the reader; Brittany's eyes are inviting and she is tousling her hair with hands in a seductive manner. Additionally, her opposite hand is partially down her pants, teasing the reader by suggesting she is touching herself sexually. As such, Brittany presents herself as sexually available to the reader for consumption, while Tanith presents herself as a sexual object to be looked at.

Figure 6 Partial Nudity in *Men's Health*



Figure 7 Partial Nudity in *Club*



The depiction of women in lingerie, seen in *Maxim* and *GQ*, is more sexually overt. The woman depicted in *Men's Health* is positioned in such a way as to cover both her breasts, buttocks and genitalia. In fact, in both the images in *Men's Health*, while the woman is clearly not wearing any clothing, she appears to be hiding her body from view, while simultaneously teasing the reader with the fact that she is naked. As such, the reader's eye is drawn to the woman's entire body, with no specific body parts emphasized. Conversely, the women's entire body is entirely visible in the images in *Maxim* and *GQ*. The women in these images are making no effort to hide their breasts or buttocks; rather they are putting themselves on display by dressing themselves in sexy lingerie. There is no teasing in these images – they appear to be blatantly putting their body on display for the reader's consumption.

The women in non-pornographic magazines present an illusion of availability as they make no promises about engaging in sexual activity – they are in fact teasing the reader by mimicking the poses of women in pornographic magazines in order to sexually engage the reader. However, they are not the same women; the women in pornographic magazines overtly come on to the male reader and are sexually consumed by the reader as they strip themselves of their clothing and commence sexual activity thereby involving the reader in the sexual process. The women in pornographic magazines are not just flirting with the reader, but instead are promising sexual activity on the covers of the magazines and making good on those promises within the magazine.

3.4 Submission

White (2006) defines pornography as subordinating material which can include women being depicted “in postures or positions of sexual submission” (p. 90). These images

of submission can be found in both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines as evidenced within the sample. However, these type images are not as common as previous research from MacKinnon (1993) and Dworkin (1993) would suggest. In total, there were 14 out of 221 (6.3%) images where a woman was depicted on her knees or squatting down, 91 (41.2%) images of legs spread open and lastly, 24 (10.9 %) images where a woman was bent over on her hands and knees with her buttocks showcased to the reader. These particular positions, in addition creating the illusion that the women is sexually available to the reader, puts the women in a position both subordinate to the reader, and in some instances, to the men or women also present in the image.

In the non-pornographic magazines within the sample, the only magazine to feature submissive components, including squatting or kneeling down and legs spread open is *Maxim*. Both of these components are found in the cover image of Ashley Greene. In the full page image, Ashley is depicted on a beach, kneeling at water's edge in sand with her legs spread wide open. Her clothing is ripped, torn, and revealing, further emphasizing her pelvic region and her breasts. Ashley is leaning forward allowing a glimpse down her shirt. She has both hands on her thighs, one of which is gripping her thigh so tightly that her nails are digging in. This particular image is representative of the gray area of the continuum, bordering the line between non-pornographic and pornographic.

Similar, but more provocative, images of submission are found in *Playboy* in the article *Boogie Nights! Joanna Krupa Dances with the Stars*. In the following images model and activist Joanna Krupa is photographed “in her sexiest shoot ever” (p.134). In one of the images, Joanna is depicted from the side as she squats to the floor, her buttocks sitting on the back of her ankles with her legs spread open and her hands between her legs (p. 138). In the

second photograph, Joanna is pictured from the side, on her knees, with her buttocks clearly visible and emphasized to the reader, using her right hand to toss back her hair (p. 139).

Joanna is depicted in submissive positions vis-à-vis the reader. The theme of submission is useful in determining the differences between those magazines which fall in the middle of continuum (*Maxim* and *Playboy*), or the grey area, and those magazines which fall on the right side, or the more explicit side of the continuum (*Hustler Canada* and *Club*). While the above images do not depict the women engaged in any sexual activity, their postures mimic those of women engaged in sexual activity – specifically, sexually activity which positions the woman as inferior to the man. Displays of submission are more overt in the two remaining pornographic magazines.

In *Hustler Canada*, the images of submission are slightly more explicit than the images in *Playboy* and *Maxim*. While there are no images where a woman is squatting or on her knees, there are three images where she is bent over doggy style (compared to no such images in *Playboy* and *Maxim*), and seven images where a woman has her legs spread open (compared to two images in *Maxim* and four images in *Playboy*). However, the images in *Hustler Canada* are closer to depictions of sexual submission than those in *Playboy* or *Maxim*, evidenced in large part by their depiction of women in penetrating positions (i.e. “doggy style”), and their overt images of women spreading their legs open while naked, engaging in masturbation⁶ in some instances. On the other hand, the women in *Hustler*

⁶ I am not interpreting the depiction of women masturbating as the meaning of such a depiction to women; rather I am examining how this type of portrayal is targeted to men and what they read – again from MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin (1981;1993;1995) lens.

Canada, like those in *Maxim* and *Playboy*, are not engaging in sexual activity, they appear to be simply mimicking the action⁷.

⁷ *Club* magazine is discussed in the textual analysis, as it is the only magazine to feature both images of submission and accompanying text which discusses women in submissive positions or humiliation within a feature article.

Chapter 4: Textual Analysis and Discussion

In this section, I discuss the findings that emerged through a qualitative analysis of the text of the articles featured on the front covers of the six magazines in the sample. In total there is one article in *Men's Health*, one article in *GQ*, five articles in *Maxim*, two articles in *Playboy*, six articles in *Hustler Canada* and six articles in *Club* which discuss women. My analysis of these articles is organized around five themes: the construction of women as sexual objects reduced to their body parts; the construction of women as child-like; the depiction of women in positions of submission or humiliation; the construction of women as deriving pleasure from painful sexual activity; and lastly, the overarching construction of women as a sexual puzzle. Throughout the discussion, I compare and contrast the themes identified in the texts of the articles with the themes that emerged through my image inventory. In this section, I am not discussing what I think about pornography or sexually explicit materials; rather I am taking note of the type of language that is used to describe women's pleasure. More importantly, I do so by using the lens developed by MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin (1981;1993;1995) at the beginning of the pornography debate within feminist scholarship.

4.1 Women as Sexual Objects – Reduced to Their Body Parts

In keeping with the findings of previous research on media representations of gender (Lebrun, 2010; Goffman, 1976; Andersen, 2002; and Farran, 1990), and the use of a MacKinnon and Dworkinian theoretical approach, the image analysis in Chapter 3 illustrated how photographs in both pornographic and non-pornographic men's magazines construct women as sexual objects. The text of the articles in my sample tends to reinforce

this objectification, referring to women as a sum of their body parts, especially their breasts, buttocks, and vaginas.

As we saw with the image inventory, an analysis using a MacKinnon and Dworkinian lens would read the text as women being constructed as sexual objects, which falls across a continuum. Although all six magazines in the sample objectify women to some degree, the objectification becomes more blatant as we move from the non-pornographic magazines at the left of the spectrum, through the mid-point between *Maxim* and *Playboy*, to the right of the spectrum with *Club*. At the far right of the continuum, *Club* reinforces this by referring to women as objects available for penetration.

Text used in the magazines on the left side of the continuum reinforces the construction of women as sexual objects. *Men's Health* contains only one feature article that discusses women, entitled *What Sexy Women Love*; the article is discussed below under the theme Women as a Sexual Puzzle. However, the text on the back cover of *Men's Health* is an excellent example of the way in which the magazine's text works with the images to construct women as sexual objects. In the image analysis above, I described a back cover advertisement featuring Olympic athlete Tanith Belbin, posing topless in a pair of black underwear face down on a couch and holding a pair of earphones. The caption reads: "Naked girl not included." The words connote a commercial transaction; when you buy the headphones, you would have to pay extra for the naked girl. This reinforces the construction of the woman in the image as an object, a commodity to be purchased and consumed like a pair of headphones. It is particularly noteworthy that this is not just any girl; the woman in the picture is easily recognized for her outstanding athletic accomplishments. However, the caption obfuscates her identity as an athlete, and subsumes it in her body as an object for

male pleasure/consumption; she becomes objectified as a sex toy. Furthermore, by focusing on her nudity, *Men's Health* is constructing Tanith as sexually available to the reader; however, by depicting her as passive and naked, the "Tanith" constructed in *Men's Health* is enticing or teasing the reader with her nudity, without promising that she will engage in any sexual behavior. Her body is revealed and becomes fully available for consumption by the male gaze. Her objectification is reinforced by an absence of any text within the magazine that discusses her athletic achievements or personal life; she remains an object used to position the magazine as "cutting edge" and "high-tech".

As we move to the right on the continuum but still within the non-pornographic category, a similar construction is found in *Maxim*⁸. For example, the article entitled *Supercharge your sex life – toys that flip her switch: Sex – Girl Meets Toy: Wanna supercharge her sex drive? Just add batteries and flip the switch* begins with a full page image of a near naked blonde woman. Her g-string underwear neatly separates the cheeks of her buttocks. The g-string ostensibly attempts to provide some coverage for her naked body, while simultaneously increasing the emphasis on her buttocks. She has her back towards the camera, fully exposing her buttocks to the reader. She has turned her head to face the reader, sending a "come hither" glance from underneath a jeweled eye-mask. She is also holding a feather boa in her arms. Text in upper left hand corner states: "I just want to thank the wardrobe department for making this moment possible' said the thong" (p.51). The tongue-in-cheek comment connotes that the reader is in a similar position: both are beneficiaries of the fact the woman's nudity allows one to feel sexual pleasure from the viewing of her body as an object. As in *Men's Health*, there is no mention of her in the article save for the smart remark from the thong. Her thoughts or experiences regarding the

⁸ An outlier in *GQ* is discussed below.

subject matter of the article – the female sex drive – are irrelevant even though the article purports to provide information about increasing her sexual pleasure; her mere visual presence is enough to satisfy the desire to look.

The pornographic magazines develop this theme more fully throughout the text of articles that accompany the images of women; they reinforce the same construction of women as sexual objects but they do it more blatantly and consistently. This is exemplified in the following examples from *Hustler Canada*⁹.

One of the six articles that discuss women in *Hustler Canada* features Brooke Lee Adams, whose image appeared on the cover. Adams discusses her career as a porn star in the article, saying, “I love being naked” (p. 16). She goes on to describe her “turn-ons” to readers, which include honesty, tall men, and a perfect eight-inch penis (p. 20). All the information provided in the text relates to sex, and furthers the association between Brooke and sexual activity. Interestingly, there is more text than in the non-pornographic magazines, but the amount of information is still relatively brief; like the articles in *Men’s Health* and *Maxim*, the text consists of a few lines printed in the corner of three pages of an eight page spread.

The following two articles represent the most blatant examples of objectification in *Hustler*. In *Cougars Unleashed*, which features “the world’s hottest older women” (p. 27), 48-year old Mona Hunt, seductively poses for readers. This particular monthly column is unusual in that the text and the images are not created by *Hustler Canada* authors or photographers; rather it is the male readers who send in the images and accompanying text. In this month’s feature of Mona, it was her husband who took the photographs and wrote the article. Therefore, it is Mona herself who asserts that, “Women do not achieve their full

⁹ The two articles that discuss women in *Playboy* are discussed below.

sexual power and beauty until they are well into their 30s and beyond”, and supports it by posing half-naked for *Hustler Canada*. This assertion implies that women’s sexuality is most powerful when they reveal their bodies as objects to the male gaze. According to the author, by “knowing what men want, [she] is completely engaged in being the object of [men’s] desires and fantasies” (p. 27). Mona has successfully turned herself into an object of desire in the images emphasizing her breasts and buttocks, and this is confirmed by the text as “she lustfully shares her charms with you in a manner most intimate” (p. 27).

Mona, who is represented not as a porn star but as an average Canadian woman, puts herself on display in order to induce arousal in the male reader. By posing in lingerie and without clothes in *Hustler Canada*, Mona is presenting herself as sexually available for the reader’s consumption; this is reinforced by her inviting “come hither” eyes. While sexualization of porn stars and up-and-coming actresses may be something to be expected, Mona is not this type of woman; her “appeal” is in her claim to being average. Or rather, since all women are sexual, the article constructs a notion of sexuality that applies ostensibly not just to objects of male fantasy who sell their sexuality in a commodity exchange (e.g. models, actresses), but to all women. This naturalizes the sexual objectification of women throughout all social roles. This parallels what McNair (2002) calls the “pornographication of the mainstream” (p.12) and the “sexualization of culture” (p. 7). It also reinforces the notion that all types of women are sexual objects available for consumption by men.

In the second article, *Movies Mammaries: Jessica Biel’s Hot Body of Work*, Hollywood actress Jessica Biel is depicted. The article focuses on the films where Jessica is in lingerie, skimpy clothing, or naked. The authors applaud Jessica for leaving her role on the television show *7th Heaven*, a television show about a family where women and girls

were represented in non-sexualized roles, and where morality sought to contend with media pressures to conform to stereotypes. The authors boast that this allowed “the budding piece of ass to pursue more creative (and scantily clad) ventures” (p. 84). Rather than being portrayed as a role model for young women, her new roles construct her as eye candy for men. *Hustler Canada* downplays her actual acting abilities and turns her into something consumable, namely a sexual object, a “budding piece of ass” (p. 84). This construction is emphasized in the article’s discussion of the film, *Powder Blue*, which is described as “a must-see because Jessica finally lets her true talents shine. We are, of course, referring to her incredible jugs” (p. 84). Jessica becomes reduced to her body – her breasts or “jugs” in this instance. She is no longer a woman, she is a sexual object – she is “jugs”. This example also reconstructs her role as an actor, rather than someone who inhabits a role and gives it life, Jessica is constructed as someone who bares all for the camera. Jessica, like Mona in the previous article, is only given importance within the text based on her sexualized body parts and what she can offer to entice the reader to consume her as a sexual object.

In the magazine that falls the farthest right on the continuum, the construction of women as a sexual object is the most blatant and obvious. The article *Natalli* exemplifies how women are constructed as sexual objects in *Club*. Like the previous examples, the images are the dominant focal point, representing the majority focus of the 14 page feature article. The accompanying text consists of a one-quarter page storyline that describes the images. In the images, Natalli is constructed as a sexual object with every orifice available for penetration. In this construction, Natalli is depicted in positions which focus on the following orifices: buttocks; vulva; and mouth. She uses two dildos to alternately penetrate herself in all of these orifices. This construction is furthered in the accompanying text.

Natalli tells readers that she's "having the time my life traveling the world to sample all the hard dick and juicy pussy" (p. 138). Natalli is attempting to put her native country Slovakia on the map in the porn industry; "When you think of Slovakia, I want you to think of me stuffing my cunt and asshole with toys, before I take cocks in both my holes too, until they're dripping with cum. And then I eat every last drop!" (p. 138). The text mimics the images by drawing attention to her vagina and anus as sexual orifices for penetration.

The construction of women as sexual objects is seen across the continuum in non-pornographic and pornographic magazines alike. There is a general trend in both types of magazines; the women tend to be constructed, within the images, as sexually available to the readers, through their "come hither" eyes, tousled hair, sexualized positioning and minimal clothing. Moreover, the women who inhabit the articles are only given text space based on what they can offer the reader sexually.

Although both *Men's Health* and *Maxim* construct women as sexual objects, *Maxim* is more obvious in its construction and the representations are also more sexualized. Compared to the Tanith Belbin in *Men's Health*, *Maxim's* article on female sexuality features a woman who is wearing less clothing, and is nameless. This is consistent with the findings of the image inventory, which placed *Maxim* in the middle zone of the continuum; once again, *Maxim* contains more overt representations of women's sexuality, and more closely resembles the representations commonly found in the pornographic magazines.

Comparatively speaking, the construction of women as sexual objects is subtle in *Playboy* and *Hustler Canada* when compared to *Club's* reduction of women to their body parts, and their subsequent construction of women as sexual objects. In the feature articles, it is the norm for women to be objectified in the both the images and the text. Women are

consistently depicted naked in sexual positions with up-close images of their breasts, buttocks/anus and vagina on display. Within the text, women are further reduced to their body parts in that they become sexual orifices to penetrate with any foreign object. They are described as enjoying any sexual activity which provides even the minutest form of pleasure to the reader, akin to Caputi's (2010) finding that women are displayed as objects for purposes beyond their own sexual gratification. Within each feature article, the women remain inconsequential in the text; the focus is always upon their role as sexual objects for the male gaze.

Outliers

Within my sample of magazines, there are two outliers to the construction of women as sexual objects. The sole article in *GQ* and the two articles in *Playboy* construct the women differently within the text compared to the ways in which they are represented in the accompanying images. Specifically, the highly sexualized, pornographic images are accompanied by non-sexualized text. While one may expect these outliers to fall on the left of the continuum, one of these two examples is found in middle of the continuum and the other is immediately to the left of the middle. The fact that the far left of the continuum objectifies women underlines how prevalent this construction is across the spectrum; however, in the middle or grey area, a different narrative emerges.

The *GQ* article is about the actress January Jones; the images of her within the feature article are highly sexualized. As discussed in Chapter 3 above, she is depicted on the cover of the magazine wearing an unzipped leather jacket, allowing her breasts to be on display. The text on the cover underlines the element of display; the headline, in large bold letters, reads "Mad Men's January Jones Unzips", followed by the caption, in smaller letters,

“Did somebody say golden globes?” The image and the accompanying caption draw attention to January’s breasts. Additionally, together, the image and the text suggest that January will be undressing herself inside the magazine. This, in fact, occurs when the reader opens the magazine, where, in all of the three images in the feature article, January is depicted wearing lingerie. However, these images go beyond the depiction of traditional lingerie. In the first two images January is wearing clothing that is highly fetishized, including high heels and stockings complete with a garter belt, in addition to a black one-piece teddy (p. 159-160); as fetishized objects¹⁰, these items induce “intense and recurrent sexual arousal to non-living objects” (Kafka, 2010:357). As discussed in Chapter 3, attention is drawn to January’s red painted mouth. In addition to her mouth being emphasized as a sexual indicator, rather than an object for penetration, her stoic expression does not invite the reader to engage in sexualized communication. Rather her expression allows the reader to gaze upon her, and dares the reader to try and touch her; in the images, she presents herself as a sexualized object to be looked at and not touched.

Like the other magazines in my sample, the focus in the January Jones article is upon the images. However, unlike the examples from *Men’s Health* and *Maxim*, where the accompanying text only consists of a caption, the text in *GQ* covers two and one half pages of the six page article. Moreover, the text is incongruent with the suggestive byline on the cover and the sexualized images of January. While the “unzips” on the cover may be referring to her unzipped jacket, it may also refer to the content of the article, which focuses on revealing, or “unzipping”, January’s life story. January still plays the role of sexual object to some extent; despite giving the appearance of focusing on her life story as whole,

¹⁰ Fetishized objects are typically non-sexual objects, and therefore exclude objects such as vibrators, and are more often than not types of clothing, such as women’s lingerie or high heels, both of which are represented in these images of January.

the author neatly puts it into a stereotypical sexualized package by focusing on the sexual aspects of her life. January was named after a character in a romantic novel, whom January describes as: “someone [who] was spreading her legs...in and out...in and out...fuck...suck...everyone was loving her” (p. 160). In attempting to defuse this association with a highly sexualized character, January asks the interviewer to “imagine realizing you’re named after *that* character” (p. 160). January further identifies herself as a South Dakota hippie, exemplifying free love, a model and an actress, typically representing “loose” women. Furthermore, her sensual role as Betty Drapper on the television show *Mad Men* is emphasized; her character is described by the author as an “obsessive fixation of, and bold provocation to, male desire” (p. 160). The author describes her performance on the show as “seductive”; however, January does not identify herself as an object of sexual desire like her character Betty. She instead tells readers, “Dear men of America, I like beer, I like football. I’m probably the most interesting girl you’ll ever meet” (p. 163).

However, in spite of her overt attempt to contextualize her life and career, January herself acknowledges the resiliency of the sexualized frame around her. In concluding the brief article, January points out that whatever she says in her interview with the author is irrelevant: “What am I even saying? These are just ridiculous sound bites that you’re going to put in the caption next to me being naked” (p. 162). In this quote, January recognizes that despite her attempt to present herself as more than a sexual object by revealing her life story, *GQ* will subsequently reduce her to the sexual object presented in the images. Although January participates in her sexual objectification by posing in fetishized apparel, in the text she does not celebrate or encourage it.

A similar outlier is present in the pornographic magazine *Playboy*. One of the feature articles in *Playboy* depicts Joanna Krupa, star of the reality show *Dancing with the Stars*. The caption on the front page on the article draws readers in: “*Dancing with the Stars* phenom and world class model Joanna Krupa reveals all in her sexiest shoot ever” (p. 134). Like the article featuring January, Joanna is also given the opportunity in the one page of text that accompanies the eight page article to reveal to readers her story life. Joanna poses provocatively in ten images; in all of these images Joanna is depicted either completely nude or wearing lingerie that emphasizes the body parts shown. Additionally, her facial expressions and hairstyle display sexual availability: tousled post coital hair; the classic “come hither” eyes; and a mouth open in slight smile. Like January Jones in *GQ*, Joanna is wearing fetishized apparel including black stilettos, stockings and a waist-cinching garter belt (p. 137). While Joanna is naked and poses provocatively, the fact that she is completely naked is cleverly concealed by the way she poses. In one image, Joanna is standing in an open shower with her face in front of the shower stream. Although completely naked, she is posed so that the readers get a view of the side profile of her breasts and a full profile of her buttock, thus cleverly preventing a glimpse of her vagina (p. 140). In the two images where her shaved vagina is actually visible to the viewer, Joanna is still coyly positioned so the viewer only catches a glimpse of her shaved pubic area. As a sexual object in the images, Joanna is teasing the viewer with glimpses of her infantilized vagina (Lebrun, 2010).

However, the accompanying text, like the text in *GQ*, conveys to readers Joanna’s life story. Once again, certain portions of the text reinforce the construction of Joanna as a sexual object. For example, *Playboy* describes Joanna as “built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht” (p. 134) and “simply delicious” (p. 137), thereby reducing her to first a yacht,

and then something edible. Moreover, the majority of the article focuses on Joanna's "versatile talents" (p. 134), which are all sexualized talents, including her roles as an actress, model, dancer and activist, as discussed below. This is emphasized in *Playboy's* description of Joanna's PETA campaign: "I'd Rather Go Naked than Wear Fur" (p. 137). According to the magazine, she is most famous for her appearance on the reality show "Dancing with the Stars", a reality television show which challenges Joanna to work hard for four or five days to learn provocative dance and perform it live on television. Again, her role is sexualized. On this television show, she is required to dance around in skimpy outfits for the pleasure of viewers. She is also, according to *Playboy*, a skillful actress; she has appeared on the movies *Planet of the Apes* and *Ripple Effect*, as well as the television crime show *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and *The Man Show*. *Playboy* uses the example of *The Man Show* to highlight Joanna's talents as an actress. However, Joanna's special appearance on *The Man Show* was as a "Juggy Girl"; the "Juggy Girls" were buxom women who danced around in specialized costumes with beer in their hands. *Playboy* thereby turns Joanna's skills as an actress into her skills as a sexual object posturing for the male gaze.

In the few textual pages allotted, *Playboy* describes what they love most about Joanna: "She's a fighter and She's afraid of nothing" (p. 137). To support this, *Playboy* talks about how Joanna has called out Paris Hilton for being a brat and P. Diddy for wearing fur. *Playboy* uses these examples to construct Joanna as an activist, actress, model and overall fearless woman. However, even these descriptors of her life are sexualized to some degree by focusing on how these aspects of her life relate to her sexuality. With increased space devoted to the ten images, and the relatively small space given to the text, *Playboy* is emphasizing the depiction of Joanna as a sexual object. This is indicative of the resilience of

the sexual objectification of women, even when the text brings in other elements, such as Joanna's role as an activist or actress, this trend towards sexual objectification still trumps that and gives the overall article (text and images) their interpretive frame.

Two distinctions are therefore evident in *Playboy*'s and *GQ*'s construction of the women. These two examples are the only feature articles within the sampled magazines which give the women depicted the text space to discuss their life stories. However, both *GQ* and *Playboy* refocus the text to relate those stories to their sexuality. Furthermore, while both *GQ* and *Playboy* focus the text on the sexual aspects of women's lives, there is a difference in the reactions of the two women. Joanna embraces her construction as a sexual object, and emphasizes it by telling readers she'd rather go naked than wear fur, and listing *The Man Show* as one of her acting achievements. On the other hand, in *GQ*, January attempts to focus the accompanying text on her life story, but by the end of the article she recognizes that anything she says is irrelevant. No matter what she says, *GQ* will still construct her as a sexual object. January accepts her construction as a sexual object by *GQ*, but does not celebrate it, nor make it part of her persona, like Joanna does in *Playboy*.

The second article found in *Playboy* also represents an outlier in both its construction of female sexuality and its discrepancy between its images and accompanying text. Unlike the previous examples, this particular article does not construct female sexuality in terms of women as sexual objects; rather it infantilizes women, specifically constructing the woman in the article as child-like. This particular theme was found by Lebrun (2010) in her analysis of ladies night bar flyers. She defined the "infantilizing and sexualizing [of] young women" (p. 226) as adult women who were portrayed as young women dressed in skimpy outfits

with their hair loose and messy, often depicted on their knees with their legs spread apart and their breasts covered.

This six page article, entitled *Sasha Grey unleashes her inner Lolita*, includes one page of text that talks about how the book *Lolita* was turned into a movie; the remaining five pages of (pornographic) images serve as “homage” (p. 51) to the movie. Unlike the previous examples from *GQ* and *Playboy*, the text does not give Grey the opportunity to offer her own opinions or perspective on life. But the text, especially when compared to the sexualized images, is relatively non-sexual and focuses more on the issues faced in turning a provocative novel into a movie. As such, the author, Roger Ebert, does not focus on the sexual aspects of the novel, *per se*, but rather focuses on the issues faced by Stanley Kubrick in creating the film. He further noted that the problem with the film was the difficulty in portraying a “sexual liaison between a twelve year old girl and a middle aged man” (p. 51). As such, Ebert identifies how Stanley Kubrick changed the sexuality of the novel, first by using a 15-year-old girl instead of a 12-year-old to portray Lolita as the “nymphet” (p. 54) and then by containing no nudity and fading to black when sexual activity occurred. However, Kubrick further was instrumental in infantilizing and sexualizing Lolita by turning the lecherous Humbert into a polite gentleman; Lolita therefore became the seductress who seduces the normal man, rather than the lecher seducing the young woman.

The six page article features five pages of images suggesting that the real focus of the article is the sexualization and infantilization of Sasha Grey - turning her into Dolores Haze, a sexual 12-year-old girl. In the photographs, Sasha is made to look like a young girl, innocent and inexperienced: she has small breasts; and her vulva and therefore her pubic hair are visible to the reader, with her hair trimmed along the sides creating the illusion that

Sasha is a young woman who is just starting to get pubic hair. In all of the images she is either naked or topless, wearing a pair of sheer red stockings. She coyly looks at the reader from over her sunglasses, inviting him to take a closer look with her “come hither” eyes. In the first three images Sasha is depicted lying down on a bed, which Goffman (1976) identified as a conventionalized expression of sexual availability (p.41). In one of the final images, Sasha is posing as if she is dancing for somebody as she caresses her body (p. 55). In all of the images, Sasha portrays the look of a young girl who is sexually available but at the same time appears unsure of what to do, and looks to the reader for guidance and reassurance. As she touches herself in these photos, her eyes stay on the viewer as if she checking to make sure that she is posing or touching herself the right way. With respect to the images of Sasha portraying a 12-year-old girl, she appears powerless. In fact, by continually looking to the invisible viewer as if to get cues, she is in fact embedding the viewer with power over her, the power to tell her or show her what to do. This represents the power relationship described by Weibel (2002):

In Mainstream cinema, the man is subject of the gaze and the woman is the object of seeing. The male gaze controls and not only enjoys dominance and the pleasure of power to the point of sadism, but also enjoys the infantile scopophilia, the pleasure involved in looking at other people’s body as (erotic) objects. The woman becomes an image, a spectacle. Men do the looking: women are there to be looked at. The situation of the warden in the panoptic prison is repeated in the cinema. In the darkness of the auditorium, neither the figures on the movie screen nor the members of the audience see the observer, whereas they see the persons on the movie screen (p. 218).

This power relationship is further emphasized by the following caption appearing in one of the photographs: “Stanley Kubrick focused on the novel’s theme of erotic obsession and sorcery” (p. 52-53). Obsession and sorcery have been bolded in red, drawing emphasis to those particular themes within the movie and within the image as well. Mulvey (1988) links

the theme of obsession with the othering of women, whereby women represent the “male other” whose purpose is to provide an outlet for men to live out their fantasies and obsessions (58). In constructing Hubert as the polite gentlemen, Lolita becomes the sexual predator and Hubert is the one who falls prey to her. Lolita as the female “other” becomes the dangerous one, she needs to be controlled or the male fantasy will end up controlling him.

This construction of women as child-like is unique, in that *Playboy* is the only magazine in the sample to devote an entire article, including text and images, to the construction of women as child-like. However, this article is unique within *Playboy* as it represents homage to the movie *Lolita*, and therefore may not be a recurring theme within the text of the magazine.

4.2 Submission

As discussed in Chapter 3, women in the images in non-pornographic and pornographic magazines are depicted in positions of submission. The two right-most magazines on the continuum, *Hustler Canada* and *Club*, further this construction of women as submissive within the text of one article in *Hustler Canada* and four articles in *Club*.

The examples discussed below do not suggest that these women are being humiliated by having their face, breasts or any body part ejaculated on. Rather, these women boldly inform their partners that they want to taste their semen, and they want them to ejaculate on their face or on any other body part for that matter. The women in the images do not appear debased or disempowered; being ejaculated upon in *Club* has become normalized, as per McNair (2002), and the women ask for it and enjoy it.

The displays of submission are overt in *Club* magazine; all of the images of submission consist of women on their knees with a naked man towering over them, exhibiting strong characteristics of domination. *Club* subjects the women in the images, and in the text, to further submission in the depiction of men ejaculating upon the face or body of a woman (or multiple women in certain instances). Dworkin (1993) identifies this particular sexual activity as akin to a fetish, where women are turned into a sexual fetish. She compares women to nonhuman objects, like shoes, and similar to men who have a shoe fetish and ejaculate upon shoes, men ejaculate upon the fetishized woman. Dworkin therefore sees the ejaculation upon women as akin to objectification, whereby women are humiliated by being treated like a fetishized object.

Within *Club*, there are six images where a woman is depicted on her knees with a faceless naked man towering over her with his penis on or near her face after having just ejaculated upon her. This is exemplified in several images from the article *Funny Bones - Sitcums!*, which is a behind the scenes look at pornographic movies which are spoofs of hit television shows. In an image taken from the movie *Not the Bradys XXX*, two girls are kneeling beneath a man, or rather beneath his penis, with mouths wide open and semen all over their faces (p. 64). In another image, taken from an unidentified movie, there is a close up image of a woman's face with her mouth wide open and her eyes closed, with one hand gripping the penis of a faceless man; like previous photos, it appears to have been taken post orgasm as there is semen all over her face and chest (p. 68).

The ejaculation upon women is not only depicted in the images in pornographic magazines but is discussed in the text as well. Among the examples in *Club*, three of the spreads have text accompanying the visual image of ejaculation, offering a play-by-play for

the reader. The feature article *Madison's Avenue* is a spread about a woman named Madison who visits a bar and accidentally ends up in the men's bathroom. Once there, she immediately proceeds to ask the gentleman in the bathroom if he wants a blowjob. As she proceeds to perform fellatio upon said gentlemen, a second man enters the bathroom; when he begins to leave upon witnessing the sexual scene "she grabs him by the crotch too. Soon she's jacking one dick while she sucks the other" (p. 24). As the threesome moves their escapade to the bar, Madison begins to describe in detail what she wants them to do: "she wants her ass fucking...she wants them in both holes at once...she tells them she wants two shots of creamy ball juice..." (p. 24). In the final image, Madison's face is featured close up with a penis on each side of her face and her mouth is wide open; she has semen all over her face and is smiling at the reader (p. 31). Madison also appears to be on her knees in this image with the two men towering over her, mimicking the postures of the women in *Maxim* and *Playboy*. In this example, Madison appears happy and smiling after being ejaculated upon giving no indication that she is being submissive to the men by having bodily fluids on her face. It appears that Madison got exactly what she wanted – "two shots of creamy ball juice" (p. 24).

In another example, entitled *Jessica and James*, a couple is engaging in sexual behavior (p. 152-161). The focus for the spread is outlined in the one quarter page article where Jessica describes her breasts as a "passport to a hard dick" (p. 155). While the majority of the article involves relatively reciprocal sexual behavior, such as reciprocal oral sex and vaginal intercourse in a variety of positions, the end of the article features James ejaculating on Jessica's breasts. When James is ready to reach orgasm, the authors point out that "there's only one place to aim those jizz blasts", i.e. her breasts (p. 155). In a small

insert on the last image, Jessica is pictured from her breasts up with “come hither” eyes, “o” mouth, her manicured hands cupping her breasts, while James’ semen drips down her lips and onto her chest, and James continues to rub his penis against her breasts coating her further with his semen (p. 161). In all of the images, Jessica is fully engaged with the reader as she stares straight out at them while James copulates with her. She appears intense and eager as she performs fellatio upon James and in ecstasy as she “slaps it [his penis] between her titties and shoots him some deadly eye-contact and she tit-fucks him almost over the edge” (p. 155). Jessica appears to be fully enjoying engaging in sexual activity with James. Even when he ejaculates on her breasts, Jessica appears in ecstasy with her “o” mouth and desiring more with her “come hither” eyes (p. 161). She does not appear upset, angry or humiliated, but rather consenting and pleased. Jessica thereby embraces her submissive role, negating any sexual desires she may have. The sexual activity which occurs becomes all about the pleasure of the male, or the “phallus” (Smart, 1989: 28), and it does not matter where he ejaculates, just as long as he does orgasm.

There is one example of submission theme present within the text of *Hustler Canada*. In the article *A day in the life of (porn star) Kayden Kross*, an average day in Kayden’s life is discussed; her typical day includes her job as a porn star, cooking, writing and horseback riding. The images in the article are diverse. Of the nine photographs of Kayden, four of them are of Kayden going about her daily life and the remaining five photographs are taken from her roles as a porn star. These latter images include Kayden in submissive positions, such as bent over on her hands and knees copulating with her costar Erik Everhard, and on her knees performing fellatio on the same costar. In comparison to the images discussed in *Playboy* and *Maxim*, these examples take the sexualized postures

presented in gray area of the continuum and show the women engaged in sexual activity in those same postures.

However, *Hustler Canada* extends the elements of submission implicitly present in the images through the text of the article. The author discusses his experiences attending a taping of Kayden's webcam program, *The Kayden Kross Show*. It is during the end of this taping that that author notes that the program finishes with Everhard's (Kayden's co-star) "cum splatter[ed] across Kayden's lovely face" (p. 26). There is no image to give a visual depiction of this particular sexual activity. However, the previous text within the article suggests that Kayden enjoys her job, having no qualms about the unusual activity she engages in; including the following instance where during the filming of her webcam broadcast, *The Kayden Kross Show*, Kayden, "insists on performing fellatio on him [Erik Everhard] while his penis is shoved between the legs of giant stuffed animal" (p. 26). The reason why Kayden became a more popular porn star was "because she was able to make a more genuine emotional connection with her fans than her competition" (p. 25), suggesting that Kayden is not humiliated by the act of being ejaculated upon; it is part of her job and she enjoys it and accepts as a means to appeal to her viewers/readers.

The magazine *Club* has extended the images seen in *Playboy*, *Maxim* and *Hustler Canada*, by completing the narrative implied in photographs of an open-mouthed woman in the other magazines in the sample by penetrating the mouth or ejaculating on her face after receiving oral sex. The woman's submission to her role as the vehicle to male sexual pleasure – regardless of any pleasure on the woman's part – is explicitly completed and embraced within multiple articles in *Club* magazine, while *Hustler Canada* implies the

submission in only article. As the other magazines feature no such theme within the text, this further separates *Hustler Canada* and *Club* from the other magazines on the continuum.

The additional extension of submission, seen when men ejaculate upon a women's body, further differentiates the pornographic magazines from non-pornographic magazines on the continuum. Pornographic magazines are more explicit than non-pornographic magazines because they depict bodily fluids upon a woman's body. However, it is also a factor that distinguishes the level of explicitness between the three pornographic magazines within the sample. *Playboy*, having no images that depict semen or text that discusses women being ejaculated upon, represents the least explicit of the three pornographic magazines. *Hustler Canada* represents the second most explicit pornographic magazine as it contains one feature article that talks about the presence of semen upon a woman's body. *Club* represents the most explicit pornographic magazine; it contains an image or text depicting a man ejaculating upon a women's body in all of its feature articles where a man and women are pictured together which totals five of the eight articles in *Club*; the other three articles do not feature this particular component because they depict only women, leaving no chance of ejaculation. *Club* thereby finishes the story implied in the images in the magazines to the left of it; the "o" mouth gets stuffed. Furthermore, in all of the above examples, the woman is constructed in a subservient role, who happily submits to her responsibility of sexually pleasuring her male partner.

4.3 Violence

White's (2006) definition of pornography includes the depiction of:

women as dehumanized sexual objects who enjoy humiliation or pain, experience sexual pleasure in rape, incest or sexual assault, tied up or cut up or mutilated or bruised or physically hurt... or presented in scenarios of degradations, humiliation, injury, torture, shown as filthy or inferior,

bleeding, bruised or hurt in a content that makes these conditions sexual (p. 90).

Notably, in this definition, it is only women who are physically or mentally abused in the pornographic material. MacKinnon (2005) confirms that in many pornographic scenarios, women are characterized in a manner that implies they enjoy being violated, humiliated, abused or hurt (p. 31). MacKinnon (1993) and Dworkin (1993) extend this definition to all pornography; they see all pornography as being harmful to women to some degree because it implicitly or explicitly contains such material as described above.

Club is the only magazine in the sample which depicts sexualized violence against women. However, even in a pornographic magazine as sexually explicit as *Club*, the portrayals of violent and aggressive behaviors are few. On the cover page of *Club*, two feature articles use violent and aggressive wording: *Filled to the brim: Krissy gets Krammed!* and *Juicy Jessica gets...JAM-PACKED!* The choice of wording suggests that the sexual activity that Jessica and Krissy engage in within the magazine will be an act of aggression on the part of the males doing it to them, i.e. both Krissy and Jessica will have some thing or things shoved into their genitalia and/or any other orifice to the point of discomfort or pain.

There are also several instances within the magazine articles where sexual violence is discussed in the text without an accompanying visual representation of the sexual violence. *Funny Bones!* as mentioned above, discusses movies that are designed to show what would happen if “television showed pussy, tits and ass” (p.63). In one of the many scenes that are highlighted from the pornographic movie *Not the Bradys XXX*, Jan “get[s] fucked by boyfriend Tee Reel in a scene that showcases her cocksucking skills as well as her tantalizing coochie that get spread wide open when Tee shoves his length deep inside for a

dirty grassy fuck” (p. 63). In this example, sex is referred to as “getting fucked”; this language does not have the same connotations as making love, engaging in intercourse or having sex. “Getting fucked” implies that the woman is passive; she does not welcome the man but instead has her vagina “spread wide open” which then allows him to forcefully penetrate her. This spreading of one’s legs is often uncomfortable and even painful (MacKinnon, 1991).

The description of sexual intercourse as “fucking” is further exemplified in the spread *Krissy & Danny*. After an oral sex warm-up Krissy “spreads her legs as wide as they’re gonna go and tells Danny to fuck her as hard and as fast as he can”, Danny “then [is] blazing at her cunt with relish, deep-dicking it until she’s squirming, cumming and screaming for more” (p. 108). The text in this article suggests that Krissy is *asking* Danny to be violent and rough with her during sex. Despite the violent wording in these examples, the accompanying images do not suggest that the intercourse is painful to the women. Rather, the women in the above examples appear to be enjoying themselves in every image which may be due to the static nature of images; it is difficult, if not impossible, to convey “blazing” or “fast fucking” in a static image. The notion that the woman is screaming for more is also ambivalent; she may be screaming from pleasure or pain, but the two collapses into pleasure for the man regardless of her experience.

In the feature article, *Club Goes down on Set: Ass Clowns – Hardcore Circus XXX*, there are five images of violence accompanying the violent text in the article. These images account for all five images of violence within my sample (2.3 percent of the total number of images). The images and quotations are taken from the aforementioned circus themed

pornographic movie *Hardcore Circus*. Both the text and images work together to create an article centered on violence.

For example, on the third page of the article Audrey is featured in four images. She is depicted as a wild woman with tangled, frizzy red hair, with eye shadow extending from her eyelids to her forehead and dozens of pearl necklaces around her neck. In the top image, Audrey is pictured laying on her side with her legs spread open while engaging in vaginal intercourse with a faceless man, named Otto, whose penis is the only part of his body present in the image. In the second image, Otto is holding one of Audrey's legs up with one hand, and a riding crop in the other. In the image Otto is whacking Audrey's thigh with the riding crop. Audrey is also holding a whip with tails in her mouth. Her gaze is directed at Otto and is saying "come hither". The caption underneath the photo reads: "Otto whips Audrey into shape" (p. 124). In another image, Audrey is having anal intercourse with Otto; her face is contorted in a snarl as she holds one end of the whip with tails in her mouth, while the other end of the whip, which is a dildo, is inserted into her vagina. She is depicted in the reverse cowgirl position, where she is on top of a man and facing away from him; the man is holding her buttocks up as they copulate (p. 124). The caption for this photograph is: "Audrey is pussy whipped" (p. 124).

The text accompanying the photographs of Audrey and Otto further exemplifies how violent these sexual encounters are. Otto is described as handling Audrey "like a wild lion, stool in one hand, whip in the other" to tame her while he "shove[s] his cock in her mouth while instructing her not to bite, helping her by holding her mouth wide open" (p. 125). In the images Otto also makes use of a dual whip/dildo and a riding crop to "tame" Audrey. Otto "pulls the crop out [of her pussy] and shoves it in her mouth" and is "screwing her butt

while demanding she pull her ass cheeks apart” (p. 125). In the images and the text, Audrey is subjected to abuse when Otto whips her. Furthermore, Audrey’s body is forced into painful positions by Otto; he holds her mouth and her legs open while she contorts her body into uncomfortable positions including kneeling on her hands and knees in order to accommodate Otto (p. 124). In the final sequence of the scene, Otto tells Audrey “to get down on her knees so he can lay load on her tongue. The animal has officially been tamed” (p. 126). In this passage, Audrey is dressed to look like an animal with her wild hair and makeup, and Otto treats her like such by referring to her as an animal and whipping her into submission. Otto is described as having to tame Audrey, and unfortunately for Audrey the only way to tame this wild woman is through violence. Otto ejaculates upon Audrey as both a means of humiliation and to tame her; he thereby dismisses any sexual desires she may have and turns Audrey into in a submissive vessel for the purpose of attaining pleasure solely for himself. Through the use of whips, painful positions and sex toys, the wild woman can be tamed and the dominating man can have his release.

The article *Club Goes Down on Set: Ass Clowns – Hardcore Circus XXX* features another woman, named Kimberly. While there are no images of Kimberly engaging in sexual activity, the text, which describes the sexual activity occurring in the film, suggests an element of violence and aggression in the encounter. Kimberly initiates intercourse with her partner Evan by telling him “you give me that big fucking cock or I’ll kill you, I swear” (p. 126). Their sexual encounter is described, rather painfully, as “pummeling” and Kimberly, naturally, “is a most willing participant” (p. 126). The sexual encounter concludes when Evan “stands above her, ripping out a load into her gash as she holds it open, smiling at the warm sensation of their mutual satisfaction” (p. 127). The use of

“ripping” to describe the orgasm and the word “gash” to describe her vagina suggests that the activity was painful – yet even in the example, Kimberly is smiling as Evan rips “out a load into her gash” (p. 127). The violence inherent in the text is normalized when Kimberly begs for him to “pummel” her implying that the sex between them is uncomfortable and painful but is still something she craves and desires. Her submission is therefore both violent and complete; the man’s use of force puts her in her place and she learns to embrace her pain as the antecedent of his pleasure.

It is interesting to note that the women in the images described above at no point in the images or within the text indicate that they are in fact feeling any pain whatsoever. In fact, in all of the images the women appear to be enjoying being whipped, fucked or forced into uncomfortable positions. Audrey, during her sexual encounter with Otto, is described as “purring” as Otto penetrates her anus (p.125). Other women are smiling as their partners pummel them, their “come hither” eyes asking for more. The images and text within the articles in *Club* confirms both Dworkin (1993) and MacKinnon’s (1991) argument, that women depicted within pornographic magazines are explicitly depicted as enjoying violent sexual behavior. However, the absence of similar material in the other articles in the sample – both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines – is noteworthy.

4.4 *Women as a Sexual Puzzle*

The construction of women as subservient to men, and as masochists who attain pleasure from pain, erases the sexuality of women; the sexual needs and desires of women are superseded by the desires of men. This is further evident in the construction of women as sexual objects, whereby women become reduced to vessels or orifices whose sole purpose is to sexually pleasure any man by allowing themselves to be penetrated. However, the

images and the articles in the magazines represent this construction as what women want. The female body represented in the images is visible in its entirety; body parts are exposed, stretched open and shaved etc., and women passively accept their role or celebrate it. However, paradoxically, the women in the images recede in the male fantasy of his pleasure – the images and text cannot penetrate what she actually is or wants. As per Smart (1989), in a phallogentric culture, the focus is on the male and masculine sexuality, and the female and female sexuality are only understood in terms of the “pleasure of the Phallus, and by extension the pleasures of penetration and intercourse – for men” rather than in terms of a woman’s own sexual pleasure (p. 28). As such, women become constructed as a sexual puzzle, possessing a sexual secret that men need to unlock (Sanders, c.f. Smart, 1989: 29). Interestingly, both the non-pornographic and pornographic magazines claim that they can help men learn how to unlock and understand female sexuality by reading the articles within.

In the non-pornographic magazines, there are two articles that directly address and attempt to solve the constructed sexual puzzle that is women. In the article *What Sexy Woman Love - Read her (dirty, thoughtful, irrational, rational, suspicious, sentimental) mind*, found in *Men’s Health*, readers are offered the following advice: “Of course you don’t understand women. Sometimes they can’t even explain themselves. But often their secrets are universal, like these 25 things she wishes you knew” (p. 137). The very title of this article identifies women as “irrational”; in so doing *Men’s Health* constructs women as unknowable, as a sexual puzzle that men cannot figure out. Of the 25 things that women (according to *Men’s Health*) wished men knew, seven of them are related to female sexuality:

- #5 - Always tell me when I look hot¹¹
- # 8 - Of course you're the best lover I've ever had – all other cease to exist when I fall in love
- #15 - A little jealousy is good...the right balance shows you care, and it's even flattering
- #16 - I don't withhold sex to punish you
- #17 - I can, will and do fake it
- #18 - I love sex. With or without you, as Bono might say. My mind is filthier than you might think¹²
- #23 - I once kissed a girl and liked the taste of her cherry ChapStick. No I didn't. That's your fantasy. Sincerely sorry.

According to this list, women need to be reassured by men that they look good and are still sexually appealing to their men. This does not actually provide any insight into female sexuality. Rather it appeals to men to reassure women that they still find them sexually appealing; again the woman becomes the object who needs to be admired by the man. The eighth and fifteenth components deal with the jealousy that men feel, namely reassuring men that they are the best lovers their women have ever had. These components deal with male sexual insecurity, again without actually saying anything about female sexuality. Women also “love sex” and have “dirty” minds, suggesting that they have sexual secrets and desires of which men are often unaware. This item tempts men with the knowledge that there is something behind the women who embrace the male sexual fantasy, i.e. that there is something unknown and perhaps unknowable in the female mind. This also helps to construct women in terms of the male sexual fantasy; if her mind is dirtier than he knows, he can reconstruct her sexuality in terms of his own fantasy. Moreover, the knowledge that women have “dirty” minds represents the construction of sexuality as something “dirty” or unclean, rather than something than natural or loving.

¹¹ The numbers indicate the priority listed by *Men's Health*.

¹² By adding “with or without you” *Men's Health* acknowledges that women have their own sexual agency, and can choose to be sexually active individuals with or without a partner. However, my thesis does not focus on the agency of the women in the images.

The sixteenth component, claiming that women do not withhold sex to punish men, also contributes to the sexual mystery of women; namely the question of why women refuse to have sex with men. This fact dispels the myth that women withhold sex to punish men, but it does not answer the question as to why women may withhold sex. The notion that women “fake it” furthers the sexual mystery of women. Men need more information, more tips, and more ideas to figure out exactly what it takes to make a woman reach orgasm. Interestingly, one of the last items in the list dispels the myth that all women are secretly attracted to other women and want to make out with them; it is distinctly identified as the fantasy of men and not a real desire of women.

In this entire list of 25 items that, according to *Men's Health*, women wished men knew, none of them relate to what it is that women want sexually. Rather the list links female sexuality to the male fantasy, and provides male readers with a means to help them deal with their insecurities about their own inadequacy.

Maxim attempts to demystify the puzzle of women's sexuality in the article *Supercharge your sex life – toys that flip her switch. Sex – Girl Meets Toy: Wanna supercharge her sex drive? Just add batteries and flip the switch.* The article discusses the notion that women cannot always reach orgasm during sex and assures men to “rest easy, that [a woman failing to reach orgasm] doesn't necessarily have anything to do with you or your technique” (p. 51). Like the previous example from *Men's Health*, the sexuality of women is reduced to male (sexual) fears of inadequacy, and does not reflect what women want or need. A lack of sexual pleasure on the woman's part is not the man's responsibility or fault, as the problem is clearly identified in the article as the woman's and not the man's. The author asserts that women often do not know how their own bodies work, at least when

it comes to attaining orgasm; in this, they are as ignorant as men. However, the article provides men the tools necessary to unlock the mystery of attaining orgasm. The article urges men to purchase a sex toy (think of it as your “trusty sidekick”) in order to sexually please their partners and assures them that by learning how to use them “you’ll be the lone hero who can rescue her from the clutches of sexual dissatisfaction” (p. 52). *Maxim* thereby turns men into superheroes and the crime of women not achieving orgasm becomes villainous. According to *Maxim*, “women just want home runs – they don’t care if it takes a little unnatural help to get there” (p. 52). This article turns sex into a commodity exchange, whereby men get access to women’s vaginas and in exchange they will use a toy to help them achieve orgasm. *Maxim* cites cases from real women who “came in 15 seconds flat” with the use of a toy to support their argument that men should try sex toys in the bedroom. In this article, sex is no longer about communication, caring, loving or support, which typically occurs in a sexual relationship. Rather sex becomes reduced to fulfilling the desire of the phallus, with female orgasm becoming an afterthought which functions to reinforce the sexual prowess of the man. *Maxim*, like *Men’s Health*, constructs women as a sexual object which exists to pleasure men and that finds fulfillment in submitting to male desire. As such, they have no idea what it is that women want beyond being penetrated; their sexuality still remains a mystery.

The explicit construction of women as a sexual puzzle within the text of the sampled magazines is limited to the two examples discussed above in *Maxim* and *Men’s Health*, both of which fall on the non-pornographic side of the continuum. In the pornographic magazines, there are no specific articles which focus on the construction of women as a sexual puzzle. However, the images within pornographic magazines offer an interpretation

of what women want sexually, thereby offering readers a means to unlock the sexual puzzle of women.

For example, in *Playboy*, the two feature articles which discuss female sexuality construct the women depicted as sensual as opposed to overtly sexual. Both the porn star Sasha Grey and the actress Joanna Krupa are depicted in such a way as to tease and seduce the reader. They are both depicted in various stages of undress and posed in tantalizing ways. Joanna teases the reader by being fully naked, but offers discrete glimpses of her genitalia, mocking the reader with the fact that she is naked but offering no more to him. Sasha Grey, by posing naked, is obviously sexualized; however, her childlike appearance conveys an air of innocence despite the images of suggestive dancing and provocative poses in bed.

Comparatively, the six articles in *Hustler Canada* construct women – all women, including porn stars, older “real” women, younger “real” women online, and actresses¹³ – as readily available sexual objects. In contrast to the women in *Playboy*, who are represented as sensual beings and whose nudity appears natural and seductive, the women in *Hustler Canada* are blatantly posing to make them appealing to the male reader. There is an increased focus on their sexual body parts with entire images consisting of breasts or buttocks, or in the case of Brooke Lee Adams, an entire image devoted to her vagina. Unsurprisingly, the overt depiction of the sexually available woman is most evident in *Club*. The seven articles examined reveal that women are sexually available to the reader and willing to engage in any form of sexual activity including physical violence during sex, *ménage-a-trois*, sexual activity with a woman, oral sex and anal sex. In all of *Club*'s

¹³ The sixth article features cartoon women.

depictions, the women are clearly enjoying themselves and are described as such within the accompanying text.

In both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines, the sexually available woman is constructed as a sexual puzzle; and similar attempts to make sense of female sexuality are found in the articles in *Maxim* and *Men's Health*, and within the images of the pornographic magazines in the sample. Throughout, female sexual desires, wants and needs are subordinated to the wants and desires of the man. In fact, the women in the images derive pleasure from doing anything and everything which sexually pleases both the men with them in the images and the male reader. The readers are given the opportunity to identify and interpret the sexual cues women offer in the images, and thereby determine whether or not the women in the images are available to gaze upon or to engage in sexual activity. In the images in non-pornographic magazines, the reader is given an opportunity to interact with flirtatious women; however, there is no assumption that sexual activity will occur now or at a later point in time. The sexual come-on is more overt in the pornographic magazines, but both types of magazines create the illusion that the reader is involved in the sexual process and is successfully able to sexually consume the woman in a one-sided interaction between the viewer (subject) and the woman being viewed (the object) (Mulvey, 1988). It is the subtle differences outlined above that illustrate the differences in perceptions of availability. The women in non-pornographic magazines are selling the illusion of availability as they make no promises about engaging in sexual activity – they appear to be teasing the reader by mimicking the poses of women in pornographic magazines in order to engage the reader. However, they are not one and the same; the women in pornographic magazines overtly come on to the male reader and are sexually consumed by the reader as

they strip themselves of their clothing and commence sexual activity thereby deeply involving the reader in the sexual process. The women in pornographic magazines are not just flirting with the reader, rather in these images the women are promising sexual activity on the covers of the magazines and making good on those promises within the magazine. As such, the images in both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines represent an attempt to unlock part of the mystery of women, namely, interpreting the sexual cues present in the images.

Overall, in both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines two trends emerge: women are consistently constructed as sexual objects, to view in non-pornographic magazines, and to consume in pornographic magazines; however as objects, they are unknowable, calling for the need to unlock the puzzle of their sexuality in both types of magazines.

Conclusion

This study built on the work of Goffman (1976), Farran (1990) and Lebrun (2010) to analyze, from a feminist perspective, the social construction of women's sexuality in six men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. The study focused on the question of whether patriarchal representations of women as sexual objects were present across the spectrum of pornographic and non-pornographic magazines (Smart, 1989). Specifically, my research examined the following questions: How is women's sexuality constructed in men's magazines? Is the construction of women's sexuality in pornographic and non-pornographic magazines similar/different?

As demonstrated in Chapter 1, early feminist literature on pornography was policy-oriented, and focused primarily on violence and the causal implications of consuming violent pornography. MacKinnon (1989; 1992; 1993; 1995) and Dworkin (1974; 1981; 1989; 1993; 1995) focused on the presence of violence, aggression and submission as dominant themes within pornography. My research focused on whether violent themes were present within both pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. A content analysis was conducted to determine the number of representations of violent sexual behavior and the presence of violent paraphernalia in the images contained on the covers and feature articles in the six magazines in my sample. There were a total of four images where violent sexual paraphernalia (i.e. whips) were found; one image was present in a magazine in the middle of the continuum, and the remaining three were found on in a magazine on the right side of the continuum. Representations of violent sexual behavior were only found in five images in the magazine to the far right on the continuum, the pornographic magazine *Club*. The thematic textual analysis also found only a few references to violent themes, on the cover page and in

one article in *Club* magazine. Interestingly, the element of violence and aggression, which MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin (1981;1993;1995) found to be so prevalent within pornographic material as a whole, was restricted to the most explicit magazine with the sample; and even there, the element of violence was restricted to one feature article. This is consistent with the unsupported argument put forth by Rubin (1993). These results contradict earlier findings that argued that violence was inherently embedded in all forms of pornography and men's entertainment, from non-pornographic magazines, through soft porn magazines, to hard porn magazines. This is a significant finding, and suggests that there may have been a shift away from sexualized violence in pornographic material.

Another shift is revealed in the continuum. As discussed in Chapter 3, a quantitative inventory approach revealed there is not a distinct black and white dichotomy between pornographic and non-pornographic magazines; rather, the magazines in the sample progress along a continuum with the least explicit magazines falling on the left and the most explicit falling on the right. In the middle of the continuum lays a grey area which blurs the boundaries between pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. It is through the continuum that the differences between the magazines emerge; as the continuum progresses from left to right, the magazines become more explicit. The grey area in the middle, including *Maxim* and *Playboy*, represents what Mooney (2008) described as "soft-soft" pornography. This also provides empirical support for McNair's (2002) argument that we have undergone a pornographication of mainstream popular culture, and that through the sexualization of culture, pornographic themes, such as the construction of women as sexual object, are now found throughout non-pornographic material. Furthermore, this confirms the arguments of Smart (1989), Mulvey (1988) and McNair (1996; 2002) regarding the

resiliency of patriarchy. In spite of increasing legal equality, women's sexuality is still constructed as an object to be defined by men's desires/fantasies, and for male consumption. This pornographication is also evident in the types of women who are portrayed in sexualized ways in pornographic and non-pornographic magazines. It is not only the women who work in the adult entertainment industry who are constructed as sexual objects; rather, all types of women are objectified within the sampled magazines. This includes, in addition to "porn stars", "real" women, Olympic athletes, and Hollywood actresses. Interestingly, the "hardest" pornographic constructions (found in *Club*), including those that involve violence, still predominately feature "porn stars." Although all women are sexualized throughout all types of men's media, violent sex is restricted to professional sexual objects.

The overarching theme which emerges in the magazines is the construction of women as a sexual puzzle, a mystery which men need to solve. This confirms the results of a survey conducted by Sanders (1987, c.f. Smart, 1989: 28) which focused on how men view female sexuality. The results indicated that men tend to view women as a sexual puzzle in that women possess something, namely their sexuality, which they are unwilling to share with men. This "puzzle", the desiring of something which is both unknowable and withheld, is confirmed in the sampled magazines; the magazines ostensibly help men uncover the mystery by depicting and discussing what women want sexually. However, in this process, female sexuality is reconstructed solely in terms of the pleasure of the male, or the Phallus, to use Smart's (1989) term. Within the images and articles in the magazines, the women's agency is rarely discussed, at best the articles superimpose the heterosexual male fantasy on the women depicted.

Accordingly, this study has filled two gaps in the current literature on gender representation. Many researchers choose to focus on the effects¹⁴ of consuming men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines and do not concern themselves with the actual content of the magazines they are examining. Furthermore, the few researchers who do comment on the content of the magazines they are examining tend to narrow their focus to the image, with only one study (Mooney, 2008) focused on the articles. This study focused on the content of men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines, and analyzed both the text and images in the magazines to obtain an overall picture of how women's sexuality is constructed. Secondly, while researchers have commented on how non-pornographic media contains pornographic themes; a side by side comparison had not yet been done. My comparative analysis also enabled me to develop a continuum or spectrum of explicitness, which is a useful analytic tool to examine both the similarities and differences between the two categories of magazines. Furthermore, this study has revealed that the perspective developed by MacKinnon (1991;1993;1995) and Dworkin (1981;1993;1995) is still useful because the patriarchal male perspective found within the sampled magazines still tends to objectify women and impose a phallogocentric view of women's sexuality.

The major limitation for this study is its narrow scope. This particular project only analyzed the feature articles in one month of the three most popular men's pornographic and non-pornographic magazines in Canada. The findings, therefore, cannot be generalized to other magazines, or other months. Additionally, while the research was guided by previous

¹⁴ See Straus and Jaffee (1987); Lawrence and Herold (1988); Johnson, McCreary and Mills (2007); Gunter (2002); Faison and Orcutt (1984); Carr and VanDeusen (2004); Taylor (2005b); and Boutellier (2000).

research in the field, there is still a concern that the research represents the subjective interpretation of the researcher and may be difficult to replicate.

Future research is required that includes a larger sample of pornographic and non-pornographic magazines that would also include magazines which are not as popular, such as specialty pornographic magazines, and online pornography. In addition, future research could examine the entire content of such magazines, rather than restricting the analysis to the covers and feature articles. A larger sample could test the usefulness of the continuum as a tool for comparative analysis. Further research could also confirm whether sexualized violence is less common than McKinnon and Dworkin found in the 1970s.

Additional research arising from this project could also examine the effects of the consumption of such magazines on male readers, with particular attention paid to the perceptions and interpretations that male readers make in regard to the material within men's magazines. Previous research has focused on the possible harm caused by consuming pornographic material which contains elements violence. Lastly, given the results of this study, namely the construction of women as sexual objects across a spectrum of magazines and the mainstreaming of pornographic representations of women, future research should address the possible harms of consumption of such material, beyond and in addition to the risk of physical harm to women. For example, research could be undertaken to examine how young girls construct their own sexuality, when presented with the images and textual constructions of female sexuality present in magazines marketed towards men.

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