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Senior Capstone

Sexualization of Women in The Media

Every day, teenagers are prone to seeing advertisements. Whether they are broadcasted on television, in magazines, or on billboards, advertisements are everywhere. Despite this, there is a problem that we do not realize enough; how women are represented in these ads. The sexualization of women in the media has become normalized, and continues to affect adolescents as they develop. In a time where technology is improving and social media websites are used more than ever, there are more ways for teens to view material that could affect them, such as eating disorders, depression, and low self-esteem. Women are already unrepresented in the media, but when they are, it is commonly in a negative or degrading way. I would like to show that advertisements use the sexualization of women to sell products, and it does have an affect on our society whether people think so or not. For this project, I will be explaining the ways in which women are portrayed in the media, the differences in reactions to this portrayal over time, and the possible effects this can have on girls and boys. Included will also be an analysis of select advertisements and the hidden meanings within them. Companies need to be more conscious and aware when producing advertisements that blatantly sexualize and degrade women, as it will only continue to normalize this behavior.

Negative Portrayal of Women

Due to decades of women being stereotyped in negative ways, much of society (particularly men) have acquired the mindset that women are allowed to be degraded, and that their bodies are their most important aspect. Some of the most common stereotypes regarding women are that they should strive to look “young”, “attractive”, “sexy.” But when it comes to characteristics, they are considered “outspoken” and “incompetent.” (Wood 32) Most of the time women are represented solely by their looks and attractiveness, almost never by inner qualities. They are also commonly portrayed as dependent on men. For example, men are expected to have more money and be the breadwinner for the family, while women are expected to do the housework. In an analysis of MTV music videos, it was found that females were characterized as submissive and waiting for a males’ attention. Meanwhile, males are frequently shown ignoring, exploiting, or controlling females. This study was conducted in the 1990’s by Brown, Campbell, and Fisher, but still remains prevalent today. (Wood 34)

Particularly, in rap and hip-hop music videos. In the majority that have been publicized in the past few years, women are blatantly objectified. Women are shown half naked, and behaving provocative, usually by dancing in a sexual way or giving off sexual expressions with their body language. The main focus of females in these types of videos are their bodies and the assets of their bodies. They are openly being portrayed as sex objects while the man is the center of attention, and the women are only present to cater to his needs. Even if it is a female rapper, for example, Nicki Minaj, her body is the focal point of the video. Sex sells, which is why people use this tactic to sell their products, music, etc. Other content analyses of hip-hop music have found similar results. In hip-hop songs and music videos, men are generally portrayed as “tough, and potentially violent, and women depicted as play-toys and routinely referred to as

'bitches' and 'ho's' (Martino et al. 2006).” (Bogt 846) It is not uncommon for male rappers to refer to women by using degrading terms in their music. Even the most popular of rappers do this, for example, Eminem. Being one of the most famous rappers in the world, his music must have an influence on other rappers, and the fans listening. Constantly referring to women as “bitches” only gives the impression that it’s acceptable and normal to use that word.

One of the biggest and most used social media applications today is Instagram, which allows users to post pictures and videos at their own desire. It has become an important outlet especially for upcoming models who want to be exposed to the world and become more “popular”, or “Instagram famous.” It has also become an outlet to put other people down and degrade them, particularly women. A solid example of this is present within the sports world. Most NFL Cheerleaders have Instagram pages, as do the football players themselves. Although the rules surrounding social media are supposed to be equal, they are not. There is a huge disconnect between the policies forced upon football players and their cheerleaders, which is completely unfair. Cheerleaders social media accounts are extremely restricted, yet the football teams still find a way to market the women as sex objects. Talia Minsberg was able to find proof of the unequal treatment of NFL Cheerleaders, when Bailey Davis, a former cheerleader for the New Orleans Saints, posted a provocative photo of herself on her personal Instagram page. Davis was accused by the Saints officials of violating rules that “prohibit cheerleaders from appearing nude, semi-nude or in lingerie.” (Minsberg) Ironically, a photo was also posted to the official Instagram page for the Saints cheerleaders called the “Saintsations.” I looked and compared both of the pictures that were posted, which ended up being almost identical, besides a small difference in the amount of skin being shown.



(Minsberg)



The picture that was posted by the Saints Instagram page (left) shows Davis in a revealing, tight top, and extremely short and tight bottoms. I believe that this would be considered “semi-nude,” and breaking the rules, but the page that is controlled by those who are NOT cheerleaders, were able to post it anyways. Davis was “breaking the rules” when she posted something similar (right). It is clear that these officials are only worrying about their profit, and what they want to be seen. They do not want the cheerleaders to have a voice or a say in what they post. They want the cheerleaders to portray themselves in whatever way they are told to. This is controlling, manipulative, and degrading. Minsberg also pointed out the comments left on pages created and controlled by officials for the cheerleaders are regularly vulgar. After reviewing NFL teams’ social media accounts, a lot of sexually explicit and offensive comments were discovered directed towards the women. (Minsberg par. 19) If this doesn’t show that the women are being objectified, then I don’t know what would. To make it even worse, the cheerleaders are normally identified by their first names only, and rarely even an initial of their last name. Some teams even demand their cheerleaders to send friend requests to their directors for approval. These restrictions are almost never placed on football players.

(Minsberg par. 13) Usually the women aren't even tagged in the pictures posted of them, meaning that the team does not care about their overall following or popularity. When an institutional account posts a photo of a football player, they are usually tagged, helping the athlete to promote themselves. (Minsberg par. 12) It is clear that cheerleaders' affiliations with football teams are hidden, as they aren't even allowed to associate with the players online. And why is that? They are completely separated from the football players in the media, the football players that they cheerlead for. Both of them are teams, the only difference is gender. There is a huge divide between the rights of the cheerleaders and football players, and it is just another example of how women are controlled and degraded in the media.

Magazines also play a notable role in the stereotypical portrayal of females, particularly by focusing on a women's duty to please others (men). In a study done by K. Pierce in 1990, it was found that magazines targeted towards women stressed looking good, and doing things to please others. For example, advertising tells women to dye their hair to look younger, to lose weight so that they will still be attractive, and learn how to cook decadent meals to please their significant other. (Wood 35) There is a hidden but bold message behind all of these advertisements, and it is that women need to look good and please her partner, or they will leave. It is a sad truth, but it is constantly promoted in the media and has become a cultural norm. Men rarely have these negative stereotypes held over their heads. "Typically men are portrayed as active, adventurous, powerful, sexually aggressive and largely uninvolved in human relationships." (Wood 32) These are mostly positive stereotypes, compared to the stereotypes placed on women. This only comes to show that men are the cultural standard, and they have been since the beginning of time. Although before the internet and social media,

women have always been unequal to men, it is only worsened further by the power of advertisements and multi-media outlets.

Data

To illustrate the data behind advertisements and their portrayal of women, I found a content analysis which evaluated the portrayal of women in advertisements from 58 of the most popular U.S. magazines. The researchers predicted that around one-half of advertisements featuring women would portray them as sex objects, and they were correct. "On average, across magazine categories, 51.80% of advertisements that featured women portrayed them as sex objects." (Stankiewicz 584) To identify a woman as a sex object in the advertisement, her sexuality had to be used in some aspect to sell the product. These determinants were based on facial expression, make-up, camera angle, posture, and the amount of skin shown. (Stankiewicz 583) It was also predicted that these rates would vary depending on the type of magazine. For example, a male-based magazine would be the most likely to have the highest rates of sexual objectification, while a news or business magazine would have lower rates. "On average, only 32.36% of advertisements in men's magazines included images of women. However, when women did appear in advertisements in men's magazines, they were portrayed as sex objects 75.98% of the time." (Stankiewicz 585) That is a staggering statistic, but it is not at all surprising. Women are portrayed as sex objects more than they aren't, and it sends the message that a woman's value is solely based on her appearance and sexuality. It also causes women to be viewed primarily as objects, and a pleasurable sight to look at. And all of these stereotypes have been socially constructed, and sown deeply into

our everyday culture. Advertising is an inescapable form of media, especially in a time where technology is advancing. Most people do not pay much attention to the actual connotations following advertisements, therefore the societal messages are rarely questioned. Such as, women being objects and only valuable for the pleasure of men. As long as these advertisements keep providing negative attitudes and values towards women, they will continue to be normalized. Recently and more frequently, advertisements have begun to consider women's developing roles in the professional world. Although this is a positive change, it was found that there has been a considerable rise in the percentage of images that depict "women as less sexually powerful than men and as objects of men's desire." (Stankiewicz 582)

And there could be a possible reason for this dramatic change. Feminist writers Faludi and Wolf have claimed that men feel hostility towards women because of their rising position in all aspects of society. "Increasing prospects of equality for women have been met with oppositional reactions intended to maintain men's dominance (Faludi 1991; Wolf 1991)." (Stankiewicz 587)

Despite the current inequality between men and women, I believe that men feel intimidated by the thought of women gaining too much power, or having more power than them. Men feel the need to be dominant and powerful, and they usually are in most aspects of life. This is due to the fact that men are taught from childhood to be dominant, tough, and successful, because the image of being "weak" is not ideal for men. Degrading women in advertisements only maintains men's dominance over women and their bodies, especially because there are rarely images of sexualized men. But, another reason for the rise in sexualized ads could also serve as empowerment for women. The rise of feminism has stressed the idea that women should be able to wear whatever they want, whenever they want, without

being called degrading slurs. And they should be, but there is a gap in gender equality, where women are put down for how they display themselves, and if they look too sexual. But there is no rule for men that they can't wear certain things. Advertisements portray women as sexualized beings, but in reality it is not as easy as it looks in the ads.

Change in Women's Attitude Over Time

Although there has been a significant increase in the amount of advertising that sexually objectifies women, the attitudes of females have changed over time. A survey combining elements of two previous studies was administered to 94 female undergraduates. (Ford, LaTour, and Lundstrom, 1991; Mittal and Lassar, 2000) The goal of this study was to compare young women's attitudes to being sexually objectified in advertising, from 1991 to 2008. The results showed that all females agreed that they were portrayed as sex objects in advertisements, but they were less offended by these portrayals than female respondents from 1991. This study makes it clear that there has been a significant change in attitude and how females see themselves. It also poses the possibility that feminism has made this issue more mainstream and less offensive. "Today's college females were raised in a very sexualized world. Sexual content dominates the media, and new feminists see female sexuality as power. It would only naturally follow that advertisements portray women as sex objects. These portrays apparently do not offend young, educated women because of this culture." (Zimmerman 77) I do believe that women today are less offended by the portrayal of women as sex objects than women in the past because it has become the cultural norm. It is something that we see everyday, so it has become normalized. Around the country, feminism has been on the rise, in

hope of the equality of all genders. Feminists around the world want women to be equal to men, but it is difficult when a certain stereotype of women is embedded in our heads because of our culture. Comparing the attitudes of women from 1991 to 2008 showed that we have become too comfortable with degrading women. In the past, women were very critical of the ways they were portrayed in advertising. Women believed that advertisements treated them mainly as sex objects, dependent on men, and believed it was overall an offensive portrayal. (Zimmerman 72) Sex and sexual advertisements were still present and publicized throughout the 1900s, but it wasn't as common and accepted as it has become today. From the time this study was conducted in 2008, it has become normalized. And that becomes a problem, because it makes it seem acceptable to degrade women.

Negative Effects on Girls and Women

To decipher the actual effect of these negative portrayals, a study was conducted by Rochelle Hine, who has added to the conversation in several other articles dedicated to gender equality and social justice at a social worker perspective. Hine interviewed women over the age of sixty-years old about their own thoughts, feelings, and reactions to sexualized media. I believe this research is helpful because these women have had the most exposure to the changes in advertisements over time. Although these are not adolescents, it comes to show that that the media affects people of all ages. The study found that sexualized images in the media appeared to affect the mental health and well-being of some women interviewed. Women described that these images contributed to a decrease in their self worth, while others expressed feeling "marginalized and invisible." (Hine 544) Emotionally, women

described feeling sadness, anger, and feeling judged by others by their own physical appearance. (Hine 638) One thing that all of the participants agreed on was that images in the media did not portray “ordinary” women. A few of them even said, “women ‘like me’ are absent entirely due to prejudices regarding age, body shape and general physical appearance.” (Hine 637) And I agree with that completely. The expectation of a women’s physical appearance is heightened when only a certain body type is praised. Additionally, with the use of Photoshop and other devices, women are edited to look flawless in every aspect. It is not realistic, and we need to all be aware that most images of women are not real or attainable. We also need to be aware that these images do not only affect adolescents, but women of all ages. “Nine women on a total of 34 occasions named emotional responses they had experienced when viewing sexualized media content. Language used to describe the material included disgusting, derogatory, scary and offensive. Women reported experiencing strong emotions in response and these were named: anger, depression, desensitization, discomfort, concern, envy and stress.” (Hine 638) The result of this research opposes the assumption that as women age they become immune to the effects of sexualized images, whether it be mentally or physically.

Not only do certain advertisements affect a person’s self-esteem, they also create concern for the ways that teenagers define gender roles. In a research conducted by Tom Bogt, he strived to figure out the relationship between media and how that affects the social definitions of gender roles during adolescence. The study reinforced the idea that men are stereotypically seen as sex driven meanwhile women are sexual objects, but also brought up that adolescents may naturally have these ideas and are drawn to certain media choices and have certain sexual attitudes. In this study, exposure and preferences for three different types

of media (TV, music styles/music TV, internet) were observed in relation to adolescents' sexual attitudes and gender stereotypes. (Bogt 844) Media is well used and can be a source of knowledge, so it's understandable how it has an affect on how we view the world. It is important to note the term Schema theory, created by Bem in the 1980s, which suggests that during adolescence, the understanding of social definitions of male and female roles are cultivated. (Bogt 845) Using heavy metal music as an example, researches Arnett and Weinstein determined that there are two dominant roles of women involved, "that of sexy seductresses and that of threatening and devouring women." (Bogt 846) There has also been an overrepresentation of "leather, lingerie and latex clad, large-breasted females in song lyrics, album covers, and music videos." (Bogt 846) It is possible that these portrayals of women are catering to men's fantasies. When being exposed to this type of media everyday, both genders can be affected and get the wrong idea. It will become easy to believe that women's most important feature are their looks and sexiness. For example, social learning (Bandura 2002) and other theories in media (Huesmann 2007; Steele 1996) imply that certain portrayals affect a viewer's sexual attitudes and behavior. Predominantly during adolescence when children and teens are progressing in terms of understanding their identity and sexuality. "Empirical research bears this out; content that sexually objectifies or degrades women can alter adolescents' sexual beliefs (Ward 2002) and behavior (Martino et al. 2006)." (Collins 294) Bogt and other researchers have found that during adolescence is when media affects them the most, and significantly has an impact on how they view others, specifically the opposite sex. Therefore, the media's portrayal of women has more effects than we think.

An important figure in the world of advertisements is Jean Kilbourne, an internationally recognized speaker and filmmaker who dedicated her life to analyzing the image of women in advertising. She started collecting ads and learning about this issue in the 1960s, which was during the second wave of the women's movement. Kilbourne travels around the country and does presentations about her experiences as a woman, and the results she has found from her research. Kilbourne's objective aims to make it known that advertising affects us from the beginning of our lives, "...babies at the age of six months can recognize corporate logos, and that's the age in which they're starting to target our children, at the age of six months." (Para. 5, Baker) Advertisements are not avoidable. We are exposed to so many advertisements every single day, that it becomes natural to stop paying attention to the messages. We will hardly bat an eye even if we see a blatantly sexist advertisement. Maybe it is because we don't care, or maybe it is because we have more important things to do in life and we don't pay attention. But either way, it affects us. Especially teenagers who are constantly scrolling through social media and reading girls magazines that are telling them how to get guys and how to be pretty. In a Ted Talk performed by Kilbourne, she made the point, "Girls tend to feel fine about themselves when they are 8, 9, 10 years old. But they hit adolescence, and they often hit a wall, and certainly, part of this wall is this terrible emphasis on physical perfection. Men's bodies are very rarely dismembered in ads." (TEDxTalks) Which is true. Why is it acceptable for women to be portrayed in such a negative way, but not men? There is a clear gender divide in the ways that women and men are treated, overall, men receive higher respect. And advertisements only make men's power and dominance stronger.

It is a common theme for teenage girls to care mostly about their appearance and striving to look their best. I remember in my early teenage years I would read magazines targeted towards girls my age, 14 and 15 year olds. The magazines constantly pushed the idea of wearing makeup, and gave tips on how to impress guys. I didn't realize it back then, but now I realize that all of those magazines like "Seventeen" and "J-14", were constantly emphasizing the importance of impressing others. At the age of fourteen, girls should not be so focused and invested on how they look and impressing guys, but it is the way our culture has become. Much of it due to advertisements. Negative images keep becoming more prevalent, especially due to new technology, and continues to affect young girls in destructive ways. Kilbourne speaks of the overwhelming desire to look and be 'sexy'. She explained that this desire isn't particularly wrong, but it becomes a problem when it leads to an obsessive pursuit to achieve unattainable qualities. This only results in more young girls being exposed to the possibility of having depression, low-self esteem, and eating disorders.

Possible Solutions

There are possible solutions that have been discussed by many scholars on how to decrease the effects of negative portrayals of women. In an article written by Rebecca Collins, she gives commentary on another scholars' content analysis of gender roles in the media and highlights the themes that emerge. The main themes being, women are under-represented throughout all ranges of media, and when they are represented they are portrayed in a negative manner. This scholar added to the conversation by offering the idea that increasing the representation of women in media would be valuable, but the most critical aspect would be

changing the way that women are portrayed. Collins believes that would avoid the increasing negative stereotypical depictions, “In the realm of ‘be careful what you wish for,’ simply increasing the prevalence of women among characters in media might exacerbate any problematic effects of media use unless the manner in which women are portrayed is also addressed.” (Collins 294) Collins also implies that effects are more possible when certain body types are idealized or hyper sexualized, or there are characteristics that the woman is subordinate. “Exposure to sexual content or partially clothed women is not, in itself, likely to foster problematic body image among girls, or reduce their self-esteem. Nor will sexual content or nudity necessarily lead boys to see girls and women as objects.” (Collins 294) For instance, companies need to start showing all different body types, shapes, and sizes. Teens girls and women need to be exposed to natural bodies, the body types that are realistic and attainable. With every magazine and advertisement solely featuring thin women with hourglass figures, it is difficult to not believe that that is the ideal look. There have been few campaigns that portray women of all shapes and sizes, like Dove, who started a “Be Real” campaign. The advertisement showed multiple women who were diverse in body types and skin color. This ad broadened the ideal definition of female beauty by showing real, untouched women. (Bahadur)

Analysis



“Magazine Ad for Skyy Vodka, #49 Riviera Rendezvous, Man Standing Over Sexy Woman, 2000.”

In this advertisement promoting Skyy Vodka, a man is shown standing over a woman. He is holding a bottle of Skyy vodka in one hand with a tight grip, with two cocktail glasses in the other. Although his face is not shown, he still signifies dominance in this photo. The woman is laying under him, looking up at him, making her appear vulnerable. Her face is hardly shown, but her breasts are on full display, taking focus of the ad. Even though this is a beach scenery, the man is fully-clothed in a professional suit, but the woman is wearing a bikini and very exposed. It is clear that there is a significant difference in the way each gender is displayed in this ad. Just the body language says it all. The man standing over the women is reinforcing the belief that women are subordinate to men, and that their sole purpose is to please them. He is in a position of power, while she is beneath him and laying on the ground. There is clear sexualization of her body that subliminally suggests to viewers that this woman’s worth comes

from the man's interest in her. "When women are objectified, there is always the threat of sexual violence, there is always intimidation, there is always the possibility of danger. And women live in a world defined by that threat, whereas men, simply, do not. The body language of women and girls remains passive, vulnerable, submissive, and very different from the body language of men and boys. Probably the best way to illustrate that is to put a man in a traditionally feminine pose: it becomes obviously trivializing and absurd." (TedxTalk) It would be shocking to see a man in an extremely sexualized posed, or being objectified in the way that women are. It seems normal that women are portrayed as less than men, and that men have more power, etc. If the roles were reversed, people might be shocked. But since women have been portrayed as submissive and vulnerable for decades, it has become part of our culture. The way that we view the world is created, we are not born with it. We grow up and see things that could alter our minds and make us see certain things in different ways. If a girl grows up believing that women are less than men, and are weak compared to them, that could affect how they see themselves as they get older. Just as boys are taught to be tough and brave when they are young, these are gender roles that are embedded in our culture.



(Nudd)

This is an advertisement for Popchips that was displayed in 2012, featuring famous singer Katy Perry. The campaign was made by a company called Zambezi, Los Angeles. (Nudd)

At first glance, this advertisement doesn't seem inappropriate or sexualized. Especially because Perry's body parts are not on display. But, there is still a hidden message. The positioning is the most important aspect of this ad. Perry is holding the Popchips over her breasts, covering up what would usually be shown in other advertisements, but still putting focus on them. Her facial expression comes off as ditzzy, as she is looking up to the side with her mouth open, and not looking directly into the camera. Does this indicate that she is distracted or doesn't have the ability to focus? That could be possible since those are common misconception about females. Either way she looks unaware of her promiscuous pose. Featured at the top of the ad in bold white letters, it reads "nothing fake about 'em." Pop Chips are depicted as all natural and not "fake," and they are trying to convey that how natural their product is. But this slogan

and the placement of the chips have a hidden correlation. Perry is shown holding two bags of chips, each one in front of her breasts. Coincidentally, Perry has been scrutinized by the media about whether or not her breasts are real or fake but has always stood by the statement that they are real. The Popchips slogan “all natural” is written in comparison to her breasts. This further enhances the norm that women who acquire plastic surgery are fake and undesirable, the opposite of how Popchips are presented. This advertisement is playing on the common insecurities that women have about their bodies. The layout draws the eyes to the bags of chips, placed over her breasts, which would attract viewers and catch their attention. Some people could view this advertisement as demeaning, as they are using her breasts as advertisement. This ad also reveals the common misconception about celebrities and plastic surgery. It is common in society for women to be insecure with their bodies, and go through drastic measures to change. Scholar Jean Kilbourne has acknowledged the large number of surgeries obtained by women at a young age, “91 percent of cosmetic surgery procedures are done on women, and sometimes these surgeries are given as gifts to girls for their high school graduations.” (Baker Para. 11) Receiving some type of cosmetic surgery is not particularly bad thing for girls who have self-esteem issues. If it is something that has bothered them throughout their lives, then it is their choice. But, advertisements most definitely push girls into wanting the ideal body, featuring big breasts, a small waist, and many other features that are not realistic for all women. The result is women are pushed to drastic measures to achieve the “ideal” look.



(Stewart)



("Michelob Beer.")



(Mrozowska)

Here are a few examples of advertisements that only feature certain parts of women's bodies, or turn their body into an actual object. In this way, a woman is separated from her own being, and seen solely as an object. Many advertisements use this tactic; in which they use parts of women's' bodies to sell their products. "Women's bodies are dismembered in ads, in ad after ad, for all kinds of products, and sometimes the body is not only dismembered, it's insulted." (TedxTalk) Even though the actual products do not particularly relate to sex, they are turned into sexualized ads so that they will receive attention and create a long-lasting image in viewers' minds. Bratu indicates that advertising encourages women to buy certain products because it will empower them, and empowerment links to having a slim and seductive body. "The body is portrayed in advertising as the primary source of women's capital. Possession of a 'sexy body' is presented as women's key source of identity." (Bratu 168) Advertisements use this tactic to make women believe that they need the product, otherwise they won't look or be

good enough. Especially ads that are geared towards cosmetics and material items, women feel the need to buy these items so that they will fit in with the rest of society.



(Walano)

This ad was published in 2017 endorsing Dolce and Gabbana, and received a lot of harsh feedback. (Walano) Although this is a classy and expensive designer brand, this ad makes it seem otherwise, as it features a woman being pinned down on the ground surrounded by four muscular men. All the men are looking down at her, while she is staring away and looking helpless, dazed, and confused. This ad uses what is called the male gaze, which indicates power relations in favor of men. There is a sexual imbalance, where men are viewed as active, while women are viewed as passive. “The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are

simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.” (Mulvey 11)

In this particular ad, the men are in full control of this situation, and seems to mimic a “gang rape” scenario, which was met with a lot of controversy. According to Jean Kilbourne, these types of ads don’t directly result in violence against women, but they normalize harmful attitudes. “...turning a human being into a thing is almost always the first step towards justifying violence against that person, and that step is constantly taken with women and girls. So the violence, the abuse, is partly the chilling but logical result of this kind of objectification.” (TedxTalk) It is not right to publicly display women in positions of vulnerability, especially when it is a common occurrence in every day life. Women are constantly put in situations where they could be vulnerable or treated as less equal, such as a work place. If women keep being portrayed in this way, when will people ever stop thinking that this is acceptable?

Conclusion

Advertising plays a significant role when it comes to cultivating gender roles and sexual identities. These images have power, and we realize that because we interpret them everyday. There are hidden messages that further reinforce “traditional” gender roles, the woman as passive, and the man as active. The woman is likely portrayed in a sexual way, as an object, or any degrading form. Even if the message is nonsubtle, it is shocking to find the hidden meanings in these advertisements. Men are rarely seen in these types of ways, which shows there is a gender imbalance, which media only worsens further. Many advertisements put women’s bodies under intense scrutiny, causing them to believe that altering their appearance is the

right choice. Some women may accept the sexual objectification, but it is still a topic that needs to be discussed. The way that women are portrayed in the media needs to be reevaluated, so that incoming generations do not have the same stereotypical gender roles that we have today. Sexualizing women has become a cultural norm because of how common it is, even if people do it subconsciously, we all place certain stereotypes. The media has created an outlet where people's views can change, it is a powerful source. Big companies should also be more aware of the messages they are possibly sending to teen girls and boys, as it can affect how they view further view gender roles.

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