

In a study about gender and the media, conducted by professor Garry M. Leonard, he recognizes that from a young age girls are taught that their ultimate purpose is to secure a man (Leonard 29). While modern feminism and feminist media seem to masquerade these motives, this trend is persistent. People consume tons of advertisements, whether that is through social media, commercials, or billboards, society is always trying to be sold something. Contributing writer at the Atlantic, Rachel Monroe corroborates that social media has infiltrated our lives by noting how it reshaped the perspectives of trends and clothing (Monroe 15). The constant scroll and click algorithm becomes perfectly tailored to one's interests, thanks to advertisers. People can see their current desires and future indulgences. According to Lucy Handley, a journalist for CNBC, 73% of major marketing jobs are filled by men. The men on top are exercising complete control by choosing how the media, and society will perceive women with minimal perspective from females. Most advertisements directed toward women reflect traditional misogyny, such as the women staying home to look after the kids or to clean, and the idea most often portrayed; pleasing the man. Iconic American painter Norman Rockwell exposes the ideas of manipulative men swaying women to believe whatever their agenda. Rockwell depicts this scenario using a 1950s jury room. Where a group of men are attempting to push their opinions about a verdict onto one woman. Advertisements do relatively the same thing. Women are suffocated with ideas of being the "perfect women" in order to secure the best man through subtle shameless advertising. Men want quiet, calm women to submit to them so they do not have to lift a finger for anything, and marketing executives have a similar agenda since the themes of misogyny and manipulation are incredibly prevalent in advertisements. The circulation of manipulative, sexist principles begs the question: to what extent do modern-day marketing tactics, pit women, against women? Advertisers market their products to pit women against each other. Advertisers

maliciously market products that pit women against each other, by promoting the ideas of enhancement and perfection, brainwashing peers to pressure sexualization, and the reinforcement of traditional gender roles.

The media is responsible for spoon-feeding women the ideas of perfection and enhancement. According to María Pilar Rodríguez and Mirren Gutierrez Almanzor, activists for women's rights noted from their study of gender in the market that "Different feminist slogans about equality in the workplace seem strangely disconnected from the product to the extent that the feminist message is trivialized" (Almanzor and Rodríguez 343). Advertisers strategically integrate patriarchal values into advertisements, through messages that give off a false sense of empowerment. These manipulative tactics trick women into believing that they are powerful by using whatever product, but in reality, they are succumbing to the agenda put in front of them; meaning, that the interpretation of power is enhancing themselves to be the "perfect" partner candidate. To corroborate, a man's misogynistic understanding of women regards any female who conforms to a media-produced standard of femininity (Leonard 37). As long as a female surrenders to the carefully loomed idea of what a woman really is, the woman can only then be truthfully accepted into society. Whether this idea involves wearing a certain type of makeup and/or clothing, receiving cosmetic surgery to enhance a woman's physique, or completely altering a woman's personality to be a "boss", the reality of this mentality is just encouraging women to be in high spirits in the bedroom. Studies depict the direct correlation between the time spent online and the number of goods purchased (Monroe 19). Since the creation and expansion of social media use, advertisers have had a simpler time sharing their messages to a variety of people. Marketers can easily send a wave of "empowerment", to trick women into adopting a seductive personality. Since the idea of enhancing a woman's appearance is spread

constantly. Manipulative men behind these enhancement ideals are continuing to push their agendas onto women, with the hope that they will then “perfect” their appearance and personality, so they can receive the best possible women to please them. The advertisements promote beauty standards aligned with men’s misogyny and superficial empowerment masks these motives, and women end up competing to fulfill these standards.

Women’s peers encourage them to engage in scenarios where they are sexualized. However, some argue that women reduce men to pigs with the skillful use of their charisma (Leonard 43). Leonard describes how women form alliances in response to male misogyny, so men can not infiltrate the bonds and strength women hold. Although women may have this capability, it is fair to say that women have a potent influence on each other. According to members of the Boston College Sociology Department, much of women’s perception of body image and attitude comes from social settings (Hesse-Biber et. al 212). Women have developed the feeling that they need to be better than their friends; because by being better they can become the more desirable candidate for men. Friends can use toxic rhetoric such as diet culture or encouragement for other types of physical alteration. Furthermore, Stephen M. Collarelli and Joseph R. Dettman, psychology professors at Central Michigan University reinforce this notion that females compete because they want the most superb male, as the best marriage partners to have the best genes for their children (Collarelli & Dettmann 851). A woman's primary goal in life is to reproduce, she takes immense pride in her family. Thus, women prioritize finding an ideal candidate, and advertisers use women’s nature to be successful. Advertisers bank on this strategy. The manipulation by men of women through familial values is undeniable. In the Holdout, men attempt to push the desired verdict on the woman, but she's not giving in. Similar to marketing tactics, the men behind the big decision continue to try and push their plans and

ideas onto the women. However, contrary to advertisements, in the Holdout, the woman does not give in, she stands her ground. In marketing, the woman succumbs to the will of the marketers (Rockwell). When it comes to the peer set, personality and attitudes of empowerment and bedroom submissiveness tend to become blurred together. Professors of marketing at Oxford University, Darren W. Dahl, et. al, claim: “Women’s peers offer reinforcement when sexual episodes are framed in the center of an emotionally intimate relationship” (Dahl et. al 217). Women’s peers discourage them from engaging in random sexual acts, in hopes that they find a monogamous relationship and “come off the market”. By deliberately peers from the competition for a mate, these women can have more options. The media constantly reinforces the value of having a mate, which pressures women to be competitive over mates. Ultimately, advertisement manipulation prompts women’s adherence to male standards. This recurring cycle of sexual submissiveness and degradation is detrimental to women and friendships.

Advertisers use traditional gender roles to reinforce the patriarchy to make women feel dependent on men. One drawback to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles is portrayed in the Holdout (Rockwell). Namely, a woman is standing her ground and defying gender roles by refusing to yield to male beliefs. During the 1950s, women were allowed to take part in juries, but it was still relatively rare. This woman defies the odds and takes part in a male-dominated setting. While it may be true that women have the power to revolt against traditional gender roles, it is also true that the reinforcement of gender roles is persistent. Women are assumed to partake in housewife roles, rather than in powerful important settings. Professors at Boston University Lawrence H. Wortel, and John M. Frisbie develops that “Traditionally women tend to be portrayed in advertisements as homeowners, fashion objects, and/or sex objects.” (91). Advertisers continue to push the ideas of traditional gender roles on women and reinforce the

concept that male dependence is necessary. If a woman is dependent on a man, he consolidates control over her life. This idea of reinforcing misogyny is dated and reminds women that their place in society is to procreate, please, and be quiet. Professors at York University, Alice E. Courtney and Sarah Wernick Lockeretz build on the idea that female isolation from other females within ads promotes dependence on males (95). In many advertisements, females are portrayed with men or alone, which subtly suggests male dependency and competition along with the idea that women are not to flee from their parameters. This blatant misogynistic manipulation is what encourages women to break each other down. Over time, this advertising has become so widespread that it is considered relatively normal. Further confirming this is, Academic Researcher of Gender Relations, Deniz Kandiyati, who acknowledges that “Patriarchal bargains exert a powerful influence on the shaping of women’s gender subjectivity...” (275). Women constantly face typical misogynistic principles to the point where they developed a warped perception of what is and is not blatant sexism in the media. After years of deceitful and subliminal tactics, advertisers have blinded women to the return of sexist roles. The supplementation provides further approval that advertisers bank on traditional gender roles to market their products and put women against women. The basis of these ideas is that women are portrayed as objects, and they are a “prize to men”. The decades of objectification have been integrated and facilitated for 19th-century gender roles to be prevalent in society today.

Historically, women have been constantly put against each other. Marketing has extended this trend into the modern era. The unhealthy competition stimulated by marketing is enforcing hostile behavior between women, and the notion that women must compete for “resources”. Members of the University of British Columbia’s Sociology Department remark that girls’ aggression towards one another tells us about more societal standards (25) Society has not only

authorized and developed the ideology that girls feel the need to constantly be aggressive towards each other for them to receive any desired outcome. These noxious behavioral standards set society back thousands of years, and rather than showing women how strong they are together, women believe that they are stronger on their own. Misogynistic marketing tactics have tainted and distorted women's perceptions of each other. Attempts at positive ideals being integrated into marketing are prevalent. For example, in recent Spanish commercials, women are being shown in a variety of races, ages, sizes, body types, and appearances (Almanzor and Rodriguez 340). While showing women from all walks of life may seem like a good idea, in reality, it still encourages women to be the skinniest and prettiest of them all. Women use the heavier and more unattractive women as a springboard so they can make themselves the best. The initiative to encourage and incorporate a wide variety of women shows that marketing executives are aware of women and their cutthroat nature. Yet, these attempts at reform are unsuccessful because of the years of manipulation pushed onto women.

The empowerment of women in advertising will promote female unity and help demolish any reminiscence of the patriarchy. Senior research officer at the Women's Ministry of New Delhi, Sunita Sangar asserts that empowerment of women promotes the well-being of families and the wealth and morale of a nation (2241). Empowering women is not just good for boosting the self-esteem of women, but it can help society. Women are the heart and soul of society, and if advertisers continue to pit them against each other, eventually the matriarchy will deteriorate, and the patriarchy will augment. Advertisements should present ideas of strength in numbers, building each other up, and including women in high-level careers and leadership roles. If these images were presented, over time the continual integration can change the mindset of people about how women should be portrayed in society. In theory, this solution is ideal, but it holds

some limitations. Changing the ideas that have circulated for centuries will not eradicate misogynistic marketing. This could take decades for true equality to come to light. Another arguable factor is that women like being submissive and housewives. While the majority of modern-day females and feminists advocate for women to go to college and achieve high standards, many women choose to be housewives. This solution could drastically alter women and their perceptions of each other. However, advertisers need to overall modify their goals from just selling products to also sincerely empowering women, and promoting unity and diminishing competition.

Clearly, modern-day marketing tactics pit women against each other. Enhancement ideas demonstrate to women that they must present themselves in the best way possible. The apparent sexualization and manipulation of peers to influence the pleasure of males are malicious and destructive. Traditional misogyny's relevance in modern society is also alarming. Women are so powerful united, but when made to believe that they need to be better than one another, they lose sight of what's important in life and focus on trivial temptations. To undo years of misogyny and manipulation pushed onto women by advertising giants, advertisers must begin to encourage female unity. This solution will entail significant effort on both the advertiser's end and the consumer's end, but with dedication and time, women can rise up together instead of preying on each other's downfall.

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