

Essay on in a much smaller font, this text appears below the larger verbiage

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



## **Analysis of Dodge Ram Print Ad**

A full-page print advertisement for the Dodge Ram pickup truck appeared in a recent issue of MotorTrend magazine. The advertisement used a variety of both overt and subtle techniques to promote the truck as desirable for some of the typical readers of the magazine. MotorTrend's demographics skew toward males, middle to upper class socioeconomic status, and those who have a passion or at least an elevated interest in automobiles as more than just reliable transportation. The advertisement is designed to appeal to those readers who want a truck that conveys power and dominance, pride in their home country of the United States, and a strong sense of masculinity. The advertisement uses a combination of graphics, font, color, and verbiage to achieve this goal.

Visually, the advertisement uses a side-by-side layout with a photo of the truck on the right side and text on the left side. When looking at the advertisement for the first time, attention is drawn to the photograph, showing a large truck on top of a rocky hill or small cliff, with waves crashing below and the spray from the waves splashing toward the truck but not quite reaching it. The sky is overcast with gray clouds; there is no trace of a calm blue sky. The overall impression is of an impending thunderstorm or possible hurricane, given the intensity of the waves crashing on the rocks. The truck is placed at the pinnacle of the hill, obviously indicating that it is above the reach of the storm and superior to it. The angle of the shot emphasizes the front end of the truck, showing it to be bright and shiny, in addition to broad and sturdy.

After viewing the image, one would naturally turn to the text itself. In large

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letters, the most prominent text asserts, “ TO TAKE THE WORLD BY STORM, YOU HAVE TO BE A STORM.” [Font size here indicates the relative size of the font in the advertisement.] Obviously, the word “ storm” here correlates with the image from the photograph of an incoming storm. On a subconscious level, this resonates with the strong waves crashing, the idea of a major thunderstorm or hurricane being strong and powerful, and the truck itself as a symbol of power. Yet there is also a subtle play on words with the expression, “ take the world by storm,” which is typically used in a figurative sense to mean to demonstrate one’s prowess or talent in such a way as to impress others and gain admiration and envy, to be the center of attention. The connotation here is definitely one of the truck being a symbol of something as powerful as a storm, and that if the reader purchases this truck, then his friends, colleagues and perhaps even enemies will notice the truck, admire it, and be jealous of the buyer. This approach is interesting psychologically, because so many people typically feel powerless against a storm or other severe force of nature. In this sense, a man who feels impotent against a physical storm can acquire potency by purchasing the truck as a sort of talisman of power.

“ THIS IS THE TRUCK THAT GUTS AND GLORY BUILT.  
THE NEW 2013 RAM WITH BEST-IN-CLASS 25 HIGHWAY MPG.  
ENGINEERED TO MOVE HEAVEN AND EARTH.”

The first line of this text clearly is meant to establish that this pickup is designed for men, not women, with its allusion to “ guts and glory,” characteristics associated with stereotypical males obsessed with their sense

of masculinity and in particular who take great pride in living within the United States. With this one line of text, the advertisement essentially states that this is not a truck for women, for homosexual men, or for sophisticated men. It is for “manly” men who will use it for overtly “masculine” activities such as hunting, fishing, hauling kegs of beer, and so forth. The reference to the gas mileage is there to help counteract the notion that trucks typically get bad gas mileage; while 25 MPG on the highway is definitely not good compared to smaller automobiles, it is significantly better than that of many large vehicles such as SUVs and many other trucks. This sentence reassures the typical potential purchaser that he will not experience buyer’s remorse because of egregiously bad gas mileage.

The font used and the color scheme of both the text and the truck reinforce the masculine appeal of the truck as a power symbol. The font is sans serif to complement the “no frills” masculinity of the truck. The text appears in gold and pewter/slate, colors that remind one of literal gold and silver, again representing financial power but in a subtle way so as not to convey that the truck is so expensive as to be out of reach for a typical reader. The truck itself is mostly a dark copper/gold, with silver chrome across the front end. These colors also are designed to appeal to men; this is not a truck in a “fashion” color such as a sporty red or casual blue. There are in fact no bright colors in the advertisement; the closest to anything bright is the chrome on the truck’s front end. At the same time, the colors are not muted; there are no pastels, just solid neutral tones of black rocks, gray water, gray skies, copper and silver truck, and gold and silver text.

The advertisement as a whole does not in any way subvert gender

stereotypes; rather, it reinforces them. In the sense that while on an intellectual level, many people would acknowledge that women might also want or need a pickup truck, on a visceral level this advertisement appeals primarily to men, and for that matter, men of a certain type. Nothing about the ad would appeal to most women. The advertisement does not offer any practical uses for the truck; for example, it does not show the truck in use but simply sitting on top of a hill, showing its superior position. It reinforces the idea that a vehicle makes a statement about one's personality rather than serving primarily as a means of transportation. It seeks to offset any qualms about the amount of gasoline required to use the truck and the possible environmental damage done by using fuel-inefficient vehicles by pointing out that in a class of vehicles known for bad gas mileage, it is best and so therefore, by implication, not really all that environmentally harmful. Overall, the advertisement's design shows good audience analysis of the type of men who would read the magazine and a very targeted approach to appeal to one segment of that demographic.

## **Works Cited**

" Dodge Ram 1500 Advertisement." MotorTrend. February 2013. Print.