Women and media essay sample

Media has taken a significant part in our society. People in twenty first century are exposed to media everyday and everywhere due to dramatic advance in technology. As sex became more explicit, sexual content in media, especially in advertisement, become a social norm. Sexual matter is everywhere: in television, radio, movies, music, and sexual imagery in print media. Therefore, sexuality became a very powerful media. However, when talking about sexuality in advertisement one imagines attractive female's body. Content analyses have consistently demonstrated that such content sexually objectifies women more than men. (Jocken. P) The number of advertisements with alluring images of women, measured on the content scale, increases annually. Such tendency negatively affects on next generation perceptions of sexuality and on women's position in society . One way in which individuals are connected to a larger social group is through socialization. Socialization is the process whereby we learn and internalize the values, beliefs, and norms of culture. In contemporary society, the mass media serve as a powerful socializing agent. (Zimmerman, A.)

Viewers learn and internalize some of those beliefs and norms presented in media products. Sexually objectified portrayals of women in advertisements can also affect the views of sex and sexual behavior. It may be difficult for society not to be influenced by the overwhelming message to objectify women. Approximately two-thirds, or 68 percent, of television programs examined between October 1999 and March 2000 contained sexual content, compared to 56 percent in the 1997-1998 season; and this percentage is increasing annually. (Zimmerman, A.) Girls exposed to these images become more sexually aggressive. Moreover, recent studies shows the link between

early sexual experiment and this study showed that young women today are ore forgiving of companies that portray females offensively their advertisements than young women were a decade ago. Studies show that girls see so many if these sexual oriented ads that it did not negatively affect them.

They were and are constantly surrounded by sexual images of females. (Coleman, B) Constant portrayal of women as sex objects in advertisements, however, seems to have subconscious effects on the American population. It remains to be argued and studied whether society should find it surprising, alarming, or empowering that young, educated women, formerly the group most critical of sexualized advertising, now casually accept the sexual objectification of their gender. When a woman is in a position of power she tends to be a cold-hearted, detached career woman with sociopathic tendencies.

This sends the message that a powerful woman sacrifices a healthy relationship, family, and possibly even her sanity to be extremely successful at her career. (Ford. J) For the young girl who dreams to run a company, or become a famous journalist, astronaut, or scientist, the media does not provide enough models for her to look to for encouragement and inspiration. The media's portrayal of women affects the self-image of girls dramatically. Concepts of beauty and personality are found in movies, magazines, and video games; as long as there are enough positive examples, young girls can be free to be themselves. When there are not, the pressure is to be thin, physically attractive, and pleasing in order to be likable and popular. According to the National Institute on Media and the Family, studies have

found that the media's focus on body image and submissive female stereotypes has affected children's thinking. Women's position in society

Content analyses have consistently demonstrated that such content sexually objectifies women more than men.(Ford. J). Even in studies from 1972 shows, that advertisers had made some changes in their advertisements with more use of female voice-overs and more use of female on-camera product representatives, but women were still being predominantly portrayed in the home while men were more often portrayed in a business setting. It also entails a strong concern with women's sexual activities as the main criterion of their attractiveness and the depiction of women as sexual playthings waiting to please men's sexual desires (Zimmerman. A). Despite the consistent findings of these content analyses, only a few studies have concerned the potential link between exposure to media coverage that sexually objectifies women and notions of women as sex objects.

Ward (2002) presented correlational evidence that young adults who frequently watched television were more likely than young adults who watched television less often to believe that women are sex objects. In an experiment, Ward and Friedman (2006) were able to show that exposure to a television clip that objectified women increased notions of women as sex objects. (Jocken. P) . Women still thought that advertisments treated them mainly as sex objects, showed them as fundamentally dependent on men and found the portrayal of women in advertising to be offensive (Zimmerman, A). Since the rebirth of the women's movement in the 1960s, critics consistently have raged against the way advertising treats women. In the 100 top grossing films of 2007, 2008, and 2009, women represented only

one-third of speaking characters for all three years. When there was at least one woman involved with directing or writing for a film, there were more female characters on screen. Female characters were more likely to be depicted wearing sexy clothing, partially nude, and referred to as attractive in comparison to male characters.

Girls and women from ages 13 to 20 had a 21. 5% chance of being referred to as attractive opposed to 13. 8% of women aged 21 to 30 years old. Typically, female characters in film and television were not portrayed in leadership roles and were less likely than male characters to achieve their goals. Amongst the 10 top-grossing films of 2010, three of those films were considered " woman-centric." Only 19 out of the 100 top-grossing films were given that title. (Sifad. A) The representation of women in film and television also plays a major factor with the status of women.

The Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film found that only 5% of movie directors were women in 2011; this is a decrease from the reported 9% of female movie directors in 1998. (Young. S) One may argue that such negative attitude towards women's sexuality in advertising is old-fashioned. There is a new third wave of feminism that embarrasses sexuality and views it as a sex power. Sexuality separates women from men and sees women as a dominant sex. Third wave feminism also believes that females can be strong and powerful, they can be anything they want to be, and " they look hot doing it". This theory supports using women's sexuality as long as they are doing it of their free will (Young. S).

To sum up, women's portrayal in media as a sex objects and " home keeper" negatively effects on society's perception of women and on forming next generation's attitude towards beauty and sex. The media is a powerful instrument of change and change can only occur once we are able to see the type of force this tool has cast on society. It's up to us to use the force of media to influence positive change and correct the representation of women.

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