

A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF WOMEN'S MAGAZINES IN
JAPAN AND NORTH AMERICA

by

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ABSTRACT

Western feminists have viewed women's magazines as socializing agencies which shape women's perspectives of being female. It has been argued that the ideologically biased and limited content of women's magazines are obstacles for the achievement for gender equality and that more positive images of women are needed. Others argue that women's magazines serve to teach women how to be successful in male-oriented society. This thesis examines the visual and written messages regarding femininity found in women's magazines for young single working women in both Japan and North America. By using both quantitative and qualitative content analyses, the socio-cultural context of the role of women's magazines were compared. Results showed that women in both cultures are given limited positions in the world of women's magazines, although significant cultural differences were also observed. In advertisements, North American women's magazines tend to show both traditionally feminine (sexy and elegant) women and "new" and "active" women. The presence of predominantly macho-type male figures suggested the persisting subordination of women to men. Japanese women's images are narrowly defined, leaving only a few characteristics, such as pretty and cute, for women to choose. An examination of Caucasian female models in Japanese advertisements revealed that their presence could serve to establish Japanese cultural boundaries of femininity. Through the magazine's article content, North American women's magazines tend to have a variety of articles which encourage women to have it all or to become "superwomen." Japanese women's magazines clearly differentiated their content by the career orientedness of their targeted readership and most of the articles in the mainstream magazines are marriage-related. The overall findings suggest that North American women's magazines serve as "survival guides" for women to succeed in male-oriented society by learning both masculinity and femininity. In contrast, the main purpose of Japanese women's magazines apparently is to provide a cultural text for readers to gain femininity as a cultural resource to be successful as women in their society.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Studying Women's Magazines

Women's magazines have received special attention from Western feminist scholars in the past few decades because of their "cultural leadership" (McCracken, 1993), that is, their ability to shape the consensual image and definition of femininity. Along with other social institutions, women's magazines can be considered a socializing agency which propagates normative directions for women. In this way, women's magazines are an important source of knowledge and "survival skills" for women (Smith, 1990; Winship, 1987).

As a medium which is "for women, by women, and about women," women's magazines teach their female readers the current images of femininity, techniques to use new tools and materials to become more "desirable" and "trendy" women, and strategies to utilize their femininity as cultural and social resources. Yet, in order to attract readers, magazines must be sensitive and responsive to the ongoing social changes which shape and expand the experiences of women. By depicting both changing and persisting social norms, women's magazines have helped to "shape both a woman's view of herself, and society's view of her" (Ferguson, 1983: 1). For this reason, women's magazines are good tools to observe historical and current trends of social norms and images of women.

However, although women's magazines act as a socializing agency, they are primarily a form of entertainment. As a kind of "mental chocolate" (Winship 1987), women's magazines provide readers a fantasy world with multi-layered visual pleasures and an escape from everyday issues such as social inequalities of race, class and gender (McCracken 1993). In this way, women's magazines simultaneously entertain women while shaping their perceptions of society. Topics such as sexuality, gender roles, and marriage are presented as "common-sense" matters for readers, thereby enabling researchers to grasp the ideological subtext. Meanwhile, an investigation of what kinds of

images women's magazines are likely to present also reveals what they choose not to show. Women's magazines can thus be viewed as a "means not to know" (Smith, 1975), that is, the way that certain discourses are excluded while others are highlighted in order to construct a "social reality" for readers.

As a form of "gendered" mass culture that provides a social text to learn femininity (and masculinity), women's magazines are very much associated with femininity and women's culture in a given society. However, as Winship (1986:6) argues, "men do not have or need magazines for 'a man's world'." Moreover, Ferguson argues (1983), "the fact that they (women's magazines) exist at all makes a statement about the position of women in society as one which requires separate consideration and distinctive treatment" (1). It is assumed that women have to be taught what femininity is whereas men do not need instruction for the business of being masculine. For example, "how to" articles (e.g., "how to put on makeup," or "how to be good in bed") provide a socializing process for women to become more feminine, a process which varies according to the age of the readership (Ferguson, 1983: 8).

Women's magazines are an interesting and unique form of media and popular culture in a way that they can be seen as senders of ideological messages as well as cultural resources for women to survive in a men's world. Yet, as Ferguson (1983) states, the topic of women's magazines is an under-researched area and too little is known about the cultural significance of the medium (3). In particular Women's magazines from non-western cultures, especially have not previously been researched much. Thus, a comparative analysis of western and non-western women's magazines could reveal whether women's magazines play similar roles in each society, thereby making an important contribution to studies of women's experiences.

Research Questions

This study analyzes and compares cultural models represented through advertisements and articles in current women's magazines targeted toward single working

women in Japan and in North America. Based on the assumption that women's magazines have the ideological role of transmitting current socio-cultural norms to their targeted readerships, I examine what kinds of cultural messages, both visual and written, women's magazines attempt to convey to readers. Specifically, I explore similarities and differences in the ways that articles and advertisements in women's magazines in these two cultures portray "being female." By comparing the patterns of culturally defined femininity, attempts are made to disclose the ideological construction of femininity.

Another important issue for this study is the socio-cultural roles for women's magazines for Japanese and North American women. To be more specific, questions such as why certain women's magazines and their messages are appealing (or at least understood as necessary things to know) to certain targeted readers need to be discussed by positioning women's magazines within a larger socio-cultural context. This is because any representation of femininity in women's magazines is ideologically defined and reflects social relations in society. Women are constructed outside the media as well, and it is their marginality in culture, politics, and the economy that contributes to their subordinate position in patriarchal societies. Thus by providing a variety of sampled magazines targeting different kinds of women within a culture, intra-cultural comparison can also be made to investigate the range of topics and discourses in women's magazines.

There are two important reasons to study women's magazines for young working women. First, in both Japan and in North America, this group of females indirectly constitutes the best readership for magazine publishers because they attract sponsorships from certain types of advertising companies. These women are considered to be among the best consumers as they have relatively large disposable incomes, and social norms require them to "put on appearances" (Barthel 1988) and become more "female." A magazine with a readership of young, mainly single working women is a good vehicle to advertise certain kinds of products. Hence, there are a large number of magazines aimed at this particular readership. For example, in 1992 in Japan there were 78 women's

magazines which had major circulation in Japan. Among them, 50 were targeted at young women in their twenties and early thirties. Half of these magazines were established after 1988, targeting young women's consumption power and material desire in an economically affluent era in Japan (Morohashi, 1992).

Another important characteristic of this demographic group is that these women are in a crucial period of their lives. Mainly situated in their twenties and early thirties, they are facing many important decisions which may determine their life courses, related to marriage, family, or career choices. For example, many single working women are at the so-called "marriageable age," and thus readers may be confronted with a barrage of advertisements and articles regarding marriage. These magazines can transmit social norms relevant to single women's major life decisions.

An examination of the representation of gender in women's magazines should reveal the images that shape "cultural models" in both societies. That is, what kinds of cultural messages regarding culturally desirable roles and appearances for women and men are imparted to Japanese and North American women, and what meaning might these messages have? How is the content of women's magazines presented to convey an understanding of contemporary society and world events? By asking questions such as these, a pattern of cross-cultural differences of desirable females, social values, and social relationships between women and men can be discussed.

A Brief History of Japanese and North American Women's Magazines

Both in Japanese and North American societies, women's magazines have provided women with various information and techniques for a long period of time. Among Japanese women's magazines that existed until recently, the five oldest magazines, for example, *Fujin no Tomo* (Women's Friends), *Fujin Kōron* (Women's Public Statement), were published in the early 1900s. These early women's magazines, which were targeted for housewives of an emerging middle class in urban cities early in the twentieth century, were published in order to educate women in the progressive and liberal atmosphere of

"taisho democracy". Supported by the early stages of the Japanese feminist movement, the articles in these magazines often dealt with gender equality, and women's suffrage rights as well as teaching women how to become good mothers and wives. However, women's magazines are not free from the social and historical settings of their own time. It has been reported that during World War II, as the Japanese government got heavily involved in the Pacific war, the content of the articles changed dramatically from "women's rights" to topics that were favorable to war and promoted nationalism. Women's magazines promoted the war, as did other forms of mass media, by presenting images of "ideal motherhood and femininity" for the purpose of raising children to be great soldiers (Watashitachi no Rekishi wo Tsuzuru Kai, 1987). After the war, during the 1950's and 1960's, many weekly women's magazines were published and became the most popular medium for women. The principle topics were the royal family, fashion, beauty, housework, and relationships (Ochiai, 1990).

A great change in the style of women's magazines occurred in the early 1970's. This change was signified more by the publication of *An-An* and *Non-No* which shaped the basis of the monthly women's magazines that now exist in Japan¹. Towards the end of the 1980's, another "fad" of the publication of women's magazines occurred. Almost all but a few "traditional" magazines which existed since the early 1900's disappeared at this point. Instead, between 1988 to 1990, 28 new women's magazines were published. Most of these targeted young women in their 20's and early 30's (Morohashi 1992). As the level of women's education increased, more women started to delay their marriage and stay in the labor force longer. These women have salaries, as well as time to spend for shopping and leisure. Therefore, this group of people is seen as the best targeted group for the magazine publisher to attract advertisers.

¹Inoue (1986) summarizes the characteristics of this new breed as follows. 1) New magazines have a "cute" sounding Euro-language title, such as *An - An*, *Non-No*, *Can Can*, *Vi Vi*, and *JJ*, 2) new magazines are visually-oriented and devote more pages for advertisements than the traditional ones, 3) new magazines do not deal with the royal family, and entertainment (celebrity) as much as the weekly or traditional women's magazines.

There are some distinctive characteristics of Japanese women's magazines, especially those published after 1970. As Inoue (1989) argues, the new magazines often use pseudo-Euro-languages for the title. *Spur*, *Crea*, *With*, *Orange Page*, *Vegeta*, *Peach*, *She's* and *Ray* are good examples. Unlike their American counterparts, which contain some meaning in the title of the magazines, such as *New Women*, *Ms.*, *Good Housekeeping*, these Japanese magazines have titles that do not make sense in any language. This is probably because by using "foreign" (in this context, Euro-American) sounding names for the titles, they can create a kind of exotic and sophisticated atmosphere that Japanese people might not be able to obtain from Japanese-sounding names. Many of the magazines use Caucasian models for the cover models, probably for the same reasons they use foreign-sounding titles. By eliminating things that are not Japanese from the cover picture, the magazines try to present a fantasy world.

Another characteristic of Japanese women's magazines is their diversification and segmentation according to readers' interests (fashion oriented, leisure oriented, home-making oriented, etc.), age (early 20's, mid 20's and early 30's etc.), and roles (mother, wife, single working women, students etc.). Each large magazine publisher has its magazines lined up according to its targeted readers' ages. For example, Koudan-sha has *Vi Vi* aimed at the women between 18 and 22, *With* for women aged 22 to 25, *Mine* for ages 25 to 30, and *Sophia* for those over 30 years old (Shinoda, 1990). This specification is possible because Japanese people tend to follow similar life courses which are established by social norms, such as marrying by the end of their twenties or wearing certain kind of clothes according to their age (Brinton, 1992). In this way, the content that magazines provide, whether it is regarding tips for making certain important life-decisions or choosing the kinds of clothes to wear, tell readers what they are supposed to want and do at each particular time in their lives. At the same time, specifying the targeted readership makes it easier for the publisher to attract specific advertisements such as cosmetics for single women (but not for housewives), new kinds of kitchen appliances

for housewives, and diamond rings for single working women. In other words, the Japanese magazines could have more normative direction than North American women's magazines in terms of shaping readers' perspectives.

The principal North American women's magazines were called the "seven sisters" by the industry, before a serious drop in advertising volume in 1981. These traditional magazines included *Ladies Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *McCalls* (which have all existed since the nineteenth century), *Family Circle*, *Women's Day*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Redbook* (which were established by the 1940's). These magazines mainly targeted housewives, presenting information on domestic skills, new products for houses, and information regarding becoming ideal wives and motherhood (McCracken, 1993).

However, with over half of the population of women in the paid workforce by 1980, the readership of these traditional housekeeping-oriented magazines declined drastically, due to the changing interests of readers from homemaking to more publicly oriented lifestyle. The feminist movement also criticized traditional sex roles and women's exploitation under the free household labor system, and fostered contempt toward the traditional women's magazines such as the "seven sisters". Similar to the changes in the early 1970's in Japan, the "new breed" of American women's magazines were published one after another. New magazines such as *New Woman*, *Working Woman*, *Savvy*, *Self*, along with the already existing *Glamour*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Cosmopolitan* all targeted working women. As well, *Ms.*, the first widely circulated feminist magazine in North America, was published in 1972 largely due to the women's movement. *Essence*, the first largely circulated minority (black) women's magazine, emphasizing socio-cultural and political issues specifically affecting black women, was also published in 1970.

Both in Japan and in North America, a few large corporations own most of the mass-circulated women's magazines. In North America, however, the distinction among each magazine is not as clear as it is in Japan. In other words, post-teenage women's magazines are read by one large group of women between the ages of 18 to 34. For

example, *New Woman* targets a wide range of women (married or single) between the ages of 18 to 52 (McCracken, 1993). The range of readership is somewhat loose and the topics must be compatible to fit into this wide readership.

It should be noted that the shift from "traditional" women's magazines to "new" women's magazines took place in both societies at around the same time, that is, during the early 1970's. However, the primary cause of the change seems different in the two countries. In North American society, in addition to women's entry into the labor force, the women's movement and the civil rights movement had a certain degree of influence on the content of women's magazines. From such social changes and movements, magazines like *Ms.*, *Essence*, and *Working Woman* came into being. For Japanese magazines, the influence of industrialization and economic growth at that time brought young women into the workplace and gave them spending power. Thus, the publication of magazines was due to the new consumer status of young single women in economically booming Japan. In fact, although the atmosphere of the magazines became somewhat "modernized" and "sophisticated" by using foreign sounding names and visual images, the content of the magazines, especially regarding gender roles, remained almost unchanged compared with the traditional magazines (Inoue, 1989).

This thesis compares, across cultures, the messages in women's magazines which targeted women of a similar age group and status (single and young working women) and analyzes the roles women's magazines have in each society. In Chapter Two, the findings of previous research on women's magazines are discussed from the perspectives of Mass Media studies and Cultural Studies. Chapter Three introduces the methodology (cross-cultural content analysis) I employed in the current research. The categories of advertisements and articles for the thematic analyses employed in this study are provided in this chapter. Results and their interpretations are discussed in Chapter Four for the advertisements, and Chapter Five for the article content. The final chapter discusses the

implications of women's magazines in the two societies by contextualizing the findings within their respective socio-cultural environments.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Past research on the content of women's magazines can be categorized into two paradigms that differ by their theoretical orientation, use of methods, and focus of analysis. The first paradigm, which can be seen to relate to mass media studies, can be characterized as "image" approaches because their primary focus is descriptions of the manifest content of women's magazines. Assuming that media representations of women are somewhat monolithic and that readers passively accept the meaning of cultural forms in the way that they are apparently presented, this paradigm can detect both current and historical patterns of the representations of women. By employing a quantitative content analysis as the primary tool, these studies are designed to reveal the kinds of sex roles and stereotypical images of women that are shown in women's magazines. However, in this paradigm questions such as how these images have come into being, and how images are constructed and presented, are not dealt with extensively. In other words, this paradigm's assumption that women's magazines can be read only in the ways that the magazines superficially present, undermines the social relations and ideological forces that create the cultural images and meanings that readers might receive.

The second paradigm, cultural studies, does not suffer from the drawbacks of "image representation" that plague mass media studies. In culture studies, which originated in the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham, researchers tend to emphasize the latent meaning of cultural objects by analyzing the processes of their construction. Specifically, the way that meanings are produced and reproduced is emphasized. Texts are considered to be multi-layered, non-monolithic structures of meaning that are open to negotiation. Readers are seen to be actively involved in producing the meanings and interpretations of the cultural objects, instead of passively accepting their supposed manifest meanings.

Because of the assumptions of possible multiple meanings of cultural products and the audiences' active role of producing their own meanings, the methods that are primarily used are qualitative ones such as ethnography, semiotic analysis, psychoanalysis, and hermeneutics. In short, mass media studies is interested in *what* kinds of images of women are shown in magazines. In contrast, cultural studies examines *how* the images of women are structured, and how meanings of femininity are constructed and reconstructed in women's magazines. I will first introduce studies within the paradigm of mass media studies.

Women's Magazines In Mass-Media Studies

In her ground-breaking book, *The Feminine Mystique*, which marked the start of the second wave of feminism, Betty Friedan (1963) criticizes women's magazines for creating and perpetuating ideal standards of femininity. By examining the way women's magazines in the forties and fifties portrayed women's goals, their aspirations, and their lifestyles, her conclusion is that the content of women's magazines both reflected and perpetuated the limited lifestyles of American women. Following Friedan's examination of the role that women's magazines play in influencing the social definition of women, much research has been conducted on this subject and the medium of women's magazines has been recognized as a powerful socializing agent for women.

By the early seventies, the issue of gender-role stereotyping in the mass media became a central research question. Throughout the 1970's, the general findings suggest that, whether visual or written, the images of women in the mass media generally and women's magazines in particular, are "negative," "limited," somewhat "distorted" and reinforce traditional norms and values relating to women's role in society (Courtney & Lockeretz 1971; Franzwa 1975; Tuchman, 1978; Wagner & Banos, 1973 and Weybell, 1977).

Others argue that the portrayals of women in women's magazines are catching up to the changing roles of women. For example, Tuchman (1979) states that the image of

women in women's magazines is somewhat more responsive to changes in society than images presented on television even though the range of portrayal is limited. In her study of how women are reflected in Canadian magazines, Wilson (1981) also finds that magazines reinforce aspects of both stability and change of the societal norms for women. For example, Wilson finds that the employment rates of magazine heroines increased, as did the employment rate for Canadian women, but not to the same extent.

Although some researchers report "improvements" in the ways that women have been depicted over the years, researchers of early studies mainly argued that such changes in women's magazines did not reflect the considerable social changes and that mass media perpetuated out-of-date gender stereotypes (Bartos 1982). As the above studies indicate, traditionally mass media researchers are interested in detecting how accurately women are reflected in mass media. Typical assumptions in early mass media studies can be found in the conclusion of a study by Newark (1977) who states that "it would be desirable for all magazines to strive for an accurate and more balanced presentation of today's woman" (82).

In his landmark work, Erving Goffman (1979) introduces a unique way of examining the visual imagery of gender in advertisements in general periodicals. He explores how physical positioning and bodily poses of models act as cues for the transmission of gender stereotypes. He uses the parent/child relationship as an analogy for explaining the representation of gender in ads. According to Goffman, it is often the case that men are shown in the role of the parent and women are shown in the role of the child. For example, women are often portrayed proportionally much smaller than men, they are situated lower than men, and tend to look vulnerable and in need of protection by the men who are likely to be situated in a dominant position. As readers, we take this imagery for granted because it looks natural to us. He argues that this tendency is because the depiction of gender in ads is the representation of "gender display". "Gender display" is understood as a commonsensical portrayal of culturally and socially established gender

relations. In this sense, Goffman suggests that gender displays in ads can be interpreted as rituals which shape people's perspectives and provide them with shared cultural meanings. Although he argues that "gender displays" tend to be "hyper-ritualizations" because of their emphasis on certain subtle gestures and body positioning as signs of femininity and masculinity, the basic premise is that gender displays in ads reflect everyday interactions in society.

More recent research on women's magazines has shifted from the previous "mere reflection" assumption and has paid more attention to the ideological construction of "social reality" that women's magazines try to convey to their readers. Nett (1991) investigates the visual as well as the written representation of middle-aged women in a Canadian women's magazine. She finds that middle-age women are not shown in the covers nor in the fashion and beauty sections, they are underrepresented in advertisements, and overrepresented in fiction. She argues that the way in which middle-aged women are positioned in these magazines reflects an ideological construction of an ideal femininity which emphasizes youth and beauty.

As many more women entered the labor market, magazines started to introduce the lifestyle of "new women" gaining economic independence through their work outside the home. A number of researchers pay attention to this new portrayal of women. For example, Glazer (1980) examines the representation of employed women in *Working Woman*. She finds that women are depicted as either "sociological males" or as "superwomen" in the work place. At the same time, working women are portrayed as also having domestic responsibilities or as somebody that had to give up the possibilities for marriage and/or motherhood because of their career. Rather than suggesting that "the double day" issues facing women is socially created, *Working Woman* presents it as an individual woman's problem. In turn, women are shown to solve their problems by hiring domestic help or through other personal means. In this way, the women's magazines offer little or no challenge to the existing social relations in either the public or private sphere.

In her analysis of seven women's magazines from 1975 to 1982, Henry (1984) argues that the charges against women's magazines for perpetuating the myth of the superwoman are only partially supported. Many problems of combining job and family have been recognized, although nearly one-third of the 64 articles in her sample show working women's "double day" and few articles actually offered solutions or realistic alternatives for these situations. Not many changes are found over the eight year period.

Viewing women's magazines as moral guides, Keller (1992) conducts a qualitative analysis of the development of ideologies for the changing middle class. She argues that women's magazines have played a part in the justification of emerging "new women's" lifestyles, as well as in defending traditional ones, because these magazines are read by both working women and housewives. The magazines have attempted to justify both lifestyles and offer no solutions for the issues of combining work and family. Keller shows how magazines ideologically construct a "social reality" for woman readers and transmit it as a social norm by not showing alternative ways of dealing with problems (such as asking husbands to share the housework or criticizing the patriarchal social structure which give women a double burden).

Using content analysis, Ruggiero and Weston (1985) explore how "established" magazines and "new" magazines differed in their socialization messages about work options for women during the 1970's. Their analysis reveals that some changes are evident in both types of magazines but that more changes are apparent in the new magazines. The working women profiled in established magazines are less likely to perceive themselves as having responsibility and power or influence than those in the new magazines. Whereas working women profiled in new magazines occupy nontraditional jobs, they have full-time jobs and more often careers. They have more responsibilities and power, such as supervising subordinates, having control over their work, and influencing other people's decision-making. Moreover, the core of the socialization messages in new women's magazines is that working for pay is integral to a woman's self-esteem.

Supplementing purely quantitative methods, thematic analysis utilizes quasi-qualitative aspects in content analysis. Geise (1979) compares the themes in nonfiction articles in two women's magazines between 1949 and 1984, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Redbook*. She analyzes 136 different value statements and classifies them into 12 issues (e.g., "Women's Goals and Interests," "Sex Roles in Marriage," "Marriage & Career," "Female Role Models"). She finds that love, marriage, and family are the overriding themes of female goals in the early period, and the idea that a career could be equally important is supported more in the later period. Moreover, traditional sex roles are no longer considered to be the best in both magazines in the later period.

Fox (1990) conducts a thematic analysis of the ads for household appliances appearing in the *Ladies Home Journal* between 1909 and 1980. By examining household technology in advertising in the women's magazine, she investigates how the magazine produced a specific ideology for American housewives. She delineates 15 types of messages in advertisements for household products that appealed to housewives and shows how ideology regarding domestic work has changed over several decades. She finds that themes such as "women's role as household worker" and "housework as service to the family" frequently appeared over the time. Moreover, she argues that by addressing the housewife as a consumer and affirming housekeeping as work, advertisers also shape a traditional ideology about gender identity and encourage women's dedication to domestic life. She concludes that advertisements confine women to unpaid and low-paid work.

Another thematic analysis that compares ads for American and British women's magazines is conducted by Monk-Turner (1990). Advertisements in *Glamour*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Options*, and *Women's Journal* are categorized by seven themes: Beauty, Efficiency, New and Better, Traditional Women's Role, Taste, and Miscellaneous. She finds that the different lifestyles of targeted young working women in these countries are reflected in the different themes which appeared most frequently in them. In the United States, magazines readers are assumed to be independent working women having

economic resources to buy fashionable things. In Britain, since the majority of readers are assumed to live with their families, ads are geared to household products and food, indicating that taking care of family member is central to the lives of the majority of women readers of British magazines.

Examining selected advertisements from more than 2000 copies of the popular press from 1900 to the present, Dispenza (1975) described the cultural standards of femininity for American women. By identifying cultural assumptions about men and women in advertisements, he analyzed the cultural conditioning of gender roles and advertisements' influence on attitudes toward women. In order to detect images predominantly reinforced by ads, he conducted a thematic analysis of the ads. He came up with several themes: facial beauty, women's roles in the household, romance and courtship through engagement, marriage, motherhood, fashion, and weight reduction.

In her book, *Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity*, Ferguson (1983) conducts an historical analysis of the themes of articles in three major English women's magazines between the 1950's and 1980's. The uniqueness of Ferguson's argument is that she considers women's magazines to be a social institution that serves to perpetuate a cult of femininity. Regarding editors as high priestesses and agenda-setters, and the women readers as followers who engage in required rituals, she views femininity as a cult:

This cult is manifested both as a social group to which all those born female can belong, and as a set of practices and beliefs: rites and rituals, sacrifices and ceremonies, whose periodic performance reaffirms a common femininity and shared group membership. In promoting a cult of femininity these journals are not merely reflecting the female role in society; they are also supplying one source of definitions of, and socialization into, that role. (Ferguson 1983:185)

By drawing upon a combination of various sources and methods, such as qualitative and quantitative content analyses, interviews, observations, documentation, statistical data and her prior experiences as a journalist for women's magazines, Ferguson identifies the pattern of messages that women's magazines are sending to readers over

time. Ferguson finds that the most repeated messages in the sampled British women's magazines from 1949 to 1974 are "Love and marriage", with "Self-Help" the second most repeated message.

Ferguson first explores the social, economic and demographic changes in England between 1970 to 1980 as well as women's changing attitudes towards themselves. She notes that "self-help: overcoming misfortune" became the most frequent dominant theme for the "new" women. Together with "self-help: achieving perfection", these two themes make up almost half of the dominant themes. She argues that these values, which emphasize self-determination, are related to Calvinism and Puritanism, as well as Victorian individualism. "Romantic love," which accounted for 59% of dominant themes in the 1960s, accounted for only 12% in the 1980s. However, "romantic love" is still dominant in sub-themes (second-order messages) and is still considered an important aspect of the cult of femininity. Thus Ferguson argues that this juxtaposition of two messages, that is, "self-help" and "romantic love" indicates the dualistic and contradictory nature of femininity. Women have to be autonomous and happy as individuals, yet this happiness is not possible without a romantic love partner.

Ferguson concludes that women's magazines offer women a cheap and accessible source of positive evaluation as well as practical directions to fulfill their potential as members of the cult of femininity. In particular, the editors try to promote a female "social reality," that is, a world of women where a set of shared meanings and social bonds among females are presented. The contradictory messages of self-help and romance mean that women must learn to be successfully feminine in order to be able to catch suitable men.

Replicating Ferguson's work on the thematic analysis of British magazines, Peirce (1985) conducts a historical comparison of the themes found in *Cosmopolitan U.S.A.* between the years 1965 to 1985. Claiming that *Cosmopolitan* is "a representative of one of the most significant yet least studied American social institutions" (2), she examines

how *Cosmopolitan* presents the cultural processes which define the position of women in society. She argues that *Cosmopolitan* can be distinguished from other women's magazines in that it promotes "entrepreneurial femininity". "Entrepreneurial femininity" is a developed skill which enables a woman to get and do what she wants. In this sense Peirce calls *Cosmopolitan* a "woman's owner's manual, the magazine that 'instructs' the reader in how to make it in a man's world." (5)

Peirce discusses the particular world view that *Cosmopolitan* projects for woman readers, as well as its changes over time. She found that despite the social changes that took place during the 1960's and 1970s, *Cosmopolitan* continued to reinforce traditional role expectations in most aspects of women's lives, right up until the present.

Cosmopolitan does not demand any great changes in American men or in American society, but simply asks women to make more effort to achieve their goals.

Cosmopolitan does offer an inexpensive and accessible source of coping strategies for women to make decisions in their lives. Women are asked to be self-assured, independent, beautiful and have successful careers and desirable women without changing their traditional feminine roles. Although the overt emphasis, over the past few decades, changed from "Getting Men" to "Achieving Perfection through Self-Help," covertly women are still being asked to pursue "desirable men." The goal that *Cosmopolitan* presents to readers still remains the same; that is, to preserve traditional sexual roles.

In general, "traditional" research in mass media studies has tended to focus on the depiction of women at a manifest level: that is, the roles and images that are communicated by magazines and debates concern whether these "accurately" reflect social reality. The mass media paradigm prefers quantitative methods to measure and verify patterns of images of women. However, visual images such as advertisements often contain multi-layered and non-monolithic structures of meaning which readers are expected to decode. Moreover, assuming that readers passively accept only manifest

meanings and images of text, mass media studies neglect audience involvement in producing their own meanings.

Another problem of this perspective is that it confuses or fails to distinguish between the representation of women and women who actually exist in society. In other words, there has not been a clear recognition of the notion that the images do not merely reflect reality but are ideologically constructed. This issue of the representation of women in mass media research has undergone severe criticism. Walters (1992:63) argues that "the image perspective," the dominant analysis of women's magazines in mass media studies, assumes that "meaning is perceived as readily apparent and judged in terms of its sexist, or non-sexist, content and characterization." Thus, the mass media perspective is both "limited politically by its liberal assumptions, and intellectually by its reflection model of cultural production and consumption" (63).

Similarly, Janus (1977) and Steeves (1987) argue that the liberal feminist focus represented by the assumptions of quantitative analyses of sex roles naively supports the notion that more women, and especially more non-traditional women, in the media will bring about gender equality. The problem is that this strategy does not challenge the existing social and economic structure. The ways the media reinforce ideologies about the family, class, race, capitalism, and the oppression of women should also be examined. In order to detect how the system of mass media and the creation of femininity works, we should not be focusing only on the images of women but we should also view women as signifiers in an ideological discourse (Betterton, 1987). Thus, analyses that elaborate theoretically the meaning of stereotypical portrayals of women are needed. Content analysis by itself does not account for the ideology of women's secondary status in society.

Women's Magazines in Cultural Studies

The paradigm of cultural studies emerged as an attempt to overcome the weaknesses inherent in mass media studies. Although different theorists tend to focus on particular areas of the popular cultural landscape, one of the characteristics of cultural

studies is recognition of the political and ideological functions of popular culture. Pointing out this tendency of the cultural studies paradigm, Carey (1989) states that British Cultural Studies could be described just as easily and perhaps more accurately as ideological studies." (97)

The cultural studies paradigm sees cultural texts as presenting particular images of the world and as attempting to win readers' consensual views of the world. Moreover, the cultural studies paradigm assumes that cultural objects, such as the images of women and cultural messages in women's magazines, have multiple meanings and that there is room for the readers to actively interpret the meanings of these images and messages. Accordingly, research methods in this paradigm tend to be qualitative in order to have a close analysis of texts and audiences.

Taking the similar view of the ideological function of texts as well as audiences' active roles in popular culture, McRobbie (1992) examines the ideology of adolescent femininity in her study of the teen-age girl's magazine *Jackie*. Rejecting the view of mass media as worthless and of readers as manipulated, she considers that pop-culture and pop music are meaningful activities. She argues that the teen-age girls who read *Jackie* are not cultural dopes of the text, but are actively involved in using the magazines as social and cultural resources. She regards *Jackie* as "a system of messages, a signifying system and a bearer of a certain ideology, an ideology which deals with the construction of teen-age femininity" (81-82). Because of the magazine's emphasis on the codes of fashion and beauty, personal life, pop music, and romance, MacRobbie argues that *Jackie* sets up the primary focus of the world of teen-age girls and defines femininity for them. MacRobbie also claims that "understanding media messages as *structured wholes* and combinations of structures" should be given more significance than their mere numerative existence (91). Thus, instead of using content analysis which is only concerned with the numerical appearance of the content, she employs the "approaches associated with semiology, the science of signs" (91) to analyze *Jackie*. In this way McRobbie draws attention to how

cultural hegemony is operated in the sphere of private and personal life. It is at the cultural level that magazines like *Jackie* become a site of struggle as girls are "subjected to an explicit attempt to win consent of the dominant order" (87), through categories such as femininity.

Janice Winship (1986) qualitatively examines the content of British women's magazines in her book, *Inside Women's Magazines*. She argues that these magazines are not merely entertainment but also serve as a survival guide for women living in a patriarchal culture. Winship argues that this function can be problematic because the ideal femininity that magazines advise readers to aspire towards is always constructed around mythical women who exist outside of powerful socio-cultural structures and constraints. In this way women's magazines are simultaneously acting as survival guides as well as shaping and limiting women's perceptions of society.

Moreover, Winship discusses how the ideological content of women's magazines limits the scope of women's perspectives. She argues that women's magazines appear profoundly committed to the "individual solution." That is, they present articles such as "triumph over tragedy" stories or personal problem pages which highlight how women should solve their own problems individually, while failing to address the societal and cultural causes. As she claims, such personal solutions to the problems cannot change women's disadvantaged position in society.

Paying attention to women's magazines as a producer of a discourse of modern womanhood and/or femininity, Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer and Hebron (1991) closely examine women's magazines since the eighteenth century in an attempt to understand this historical and ideological significance and its social function. They reject the idea that ideology acts as a determining force that shapes people's beliefs, values and actions into the form that best serves the interests of the dominant class. Based on interviews with British readers, they argue that readers are clearly capable of negotiating the complexity of

the representations and messages they read, see and hear, and are aware of the normative and ideological effects of these magazines.

By conducting textual analyses of women's magazines over the decades, Ballaster et al. demonstrate that especially since 1988 the women's magazines they sampled, have continuity in their thematic emphasis; that is sexuality, domesticity, politics, beautification, etc. are emphasized. At the same time, they argue that the contradictory nature of magazines' representations of masculinity and femininity has become more noticeable than ever. It is evident in the messages that, *Cosmopolitan*, for example, sends to its readers. Specifically, *Cosmopolitan* "constructs women as independent salary-earners with sexual existence, yet prioritizing the heterosexual relationship as the determining force in their social existence" (6). Women's magazines take advantage of the contradicting nature of femininity. Because the femininity they portray is unobtainable, women's magazines which mediate femininity can never fully satisfy readers but keeps them wanting more tips and different models of femininity.

Ballaster et al. conclude that "women's magazine must be understood as a cultural form in which, since its inception, definitions and understandings of gender differences have been negotiated and contested rather than taken for granted or imposed" (176). In this sense, although women's magazines are published for profit, the format does offer women a privileged space within which they can search for their female self.

In *Decoding Women's Magazines*, McCracken (1993) pays close attention to women's magazines' visual and verbal systems. Noting that women's magazines "exert a cultural leadership to shape consensus in which highly pleasurable codes work to naturalize social relations of power"(3), she uses semiotics to analyze how advertisements and article content present a cultural hegemony over the construction of femininity. McCracken claims that the editorial material in women's magazines is part of a cultural continuum which includes the advertising texts, a continuum based on the financial necessity of magazine enterprises. The cover picture, overt (pure) advertisements,

advertorials (editorial looking advertisements) as well as editorial features, are all structurally interconnected and channel women's desires into consumerism as a temporary resolution of their problems and pleasure. She concludes pessimistically that even if readers could develop an oppositional interpretation and a negotiated meaning of the text which resists representations in magazines, the negotiated meaning is still unlikely to bring about radical changes in the structure of capitalist society.

As mentioned above, a characteristic of cultural studies is its rejection of a positivistic approach. Particularly for visual analysis, semiotics is often employed as a "system of signification". Semiotic methods are usually used in order to disclose the relations among the parts of messages of communication systems. Those who apply semiotics assert that "it is only through the interaction of component parts that meaning is formed" (Leiss et al., 1986: 198). Thus semiotics is considered useful to understand multiple, not fixed nor readily apparent, meanings of cultural objects, especially visual images such as advertisements and movies. As a result, many critics of advertisements use this method (see Dyer, 1982; Goldman, 1992; Leiss et al., 1986 and Williamson, 1978).

While semiotics is insightful and imaginative in its conceptual framework, its applications to specific cases tends to lapse into vague generalities. Due to the close analysis of cultural objects and representations, semiotics has been criticized for failing to adequately include social and historical contexts (Walter, 1992) or the holistic picture of a cultural object. Moreover, as Leiss et al. (1986) argue, semiology cannot be applied to the same extent to any kind of advertisement. Instead of randomly choosing the advertisements, semioticians carefully select specific advertisements and then apply semiology to illustrate structural relationships. Because of the danger of self-confirming results, conclusions are only applicable to the particular ad and cannot necessarily be generalized to the entire range of advertisements. The close examination of small samples does not lend itself to an overall sense of the constructed meanings.

Moreover, cultural studies are derived from European cultural and social theoretical developments. There has not yet been any analyses of comparative or non-western cultural objects. For this reason the question remains whether the paradigm of cultural studies might be applicable only to the Euro-American socio-cultural context (see McGuigan, 1992).

Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Women's Magazines

Because of the comparative nature of the current study, it is necessary to identify a generalized cultural pattern of femininity within each culture by quantitatively examining a large number of messages. A reliance solely on qualitative and semiotics approaches will not provide adequate information. Nonetheless, the presupposition of cultural studies, that is, the ideological construction of popular culture and meaning, is a great benefit in directing research and contextualizing data in a cross-cultural manner. Thus methods which utilize both quantitative and qualitative approaches should be developed.

One of the advantages of conducting research on material such as magazines is that it is possible to compare the content historically and culturally. By using content analysis, one can see the extent to which certain aspects of the content have changed or remained unchanged over time or across cultures. As previously mentioned, content analysis frequently has been used for historical comparisons. However, thus far, there have been very few cross-cultural comparisons of women's magazines.

One exception is a study conducted by Flora (1979). Based on her belief that many general assumptions about women are based on examinations of North American culture and middle-class women, she compares the fiction of middle-class and working class women's magazines in the United States and in Latin America. She finds more pronounced cross-cultural differences than class differences in female dependence. Middle-class stories portrayed more female dependency than did working-class stories. In particular, American working-class fiction is the least likely to stress the non-traditional image of passive womanhood. However, in most of the sampled articles men exercised

authority whereas very few women are presented as acting in the public realm. Flora concludes that the presentation of female passivity is found in both societies and across social class, although the degree of the passivity varied across culture and class.

Comparing women's magazines from three different countries (Mexico, Japan and United States), Inoue (1989) conducts quantitative content analyses of both advertisements and article contents. She finds that Japanese women's magazines carry more advertisements and advertorials than articles, whereas American women's magazines have a lot of advertisements and articles but not as many advertorials. In Mexico, women's magazines do not have as many advertisements, but the advertisements they carry are likely to be from multinational corporations selling Western products. Inoue does not conduct systematic quantitative or qualitative analyses on the themes of advertisements, but through impressionistic visual techniques, she finds clear differences among these three countries. With respect to models, Japanese female models tend to look "cute," "childlike" "coquettish" and "harmless". In contrast, American and Mexican models emphasized their "sexiness", "maturity", "strength" and "seductiveness", whereas males are portrayed as "father figures" or "aggressive guys" who are often holding women from behind or in front. In the sampled American magazines 95% of models shown in advertisements for cosmetics are Caucasian, which is an overrepresentation of their actual demographic ratio. In Mexican and Japanese women's magazines the majority of models are Caucasian and/or Caucasian looking women (those who have lighter skin texture). In general Inoue finds that these women's magazines from the three countries emphasize "youth" and "whiteness" as the standards of beauty.

With respect to the content of articles, the most frequent topics in women's magazines in the three countries are about "Fashion & Beauty". Japanese magazines in general spent more pages on fashion whereas American and Mexican magazines have more beauty pages. Inoue (1989) also finds that Japanese women's magazines focus on the topic of "Romance & Marriage" more than the others, and that themes of "how to

catch guys" are especially noticeable in Japanese magazines for single women. In Japan the magazines have a very distinctive readership such as married women or young single women. Thus depending on the readership, the themes of articles tend to be different from one another, whereas this is not always the case for American women's magazines. In contrast, "Career & Work" and "Sexuality" related articles are hardly mentioned in any of the three countries, especially when compared to the 1970's. Aside from a few magazines, "Social Issues," especially "politics, economics and society" related articles are virtually absent in all three countries. Inoue concludes that over the years women's magazines transmit unchanging gender roles to readers and that there are not many differences in the content among these three cultures. Moreover, women's magazines serve as a means of "cultural imperialism" for non-Caucasian people.

However these cross-cultural studies did not provide sufficient interpretations for their data within historical, cultural and social contexts. Overall, she ends up providing a mere numerical description of aspects of women's magazines. Thus, special attention should be paid to include the socio-cultural context when data are interpreted, as well as ideological constructions of "reality" that each magazine tries to convey.

In studying Japanese women's magazines, the issue of the prevalence of Caucasian models in advertisements is very important with respect to the construction of Japanese national-cultural identity. Observing advertisements in a few mainstream Japanese women's magazines since the 1950's, Ochiai (1990) finds that around the 1960's the American standard of beauty began to appear in Japanese women's magazines. This frequency suggests that American economic and political power also brought the image of "sexy women" to Japan and influenced the construction of Japanese femininity. Ochiai finds that Caucasian models looked more overtly "erotic" with their mouth half open, whereas Japanese models tended to have big cheerful smiles with their teeth showing. Although the dichotomy of this erotic-beauty of Caucasian women and the healthy-looking beauty of Japanese women had existed in magazines during the 1940's, these

images left a tremendous impact on Japanese women's formation of sexuality in the post-war era. During the 1970's there was a heavy exposure to Caucasian models as well as Japanese women trying to become more like Caucasian women by exposing their body and wearing heavy makeup. However, by the late 70's and early 80's a shift away from Caucasian models became evident. Although Caucasian models are still present, more and more Japanese-looking models (both Japanese and half Japanese) started appearing. The presence of Japanese female models suggests that Japanese femininity finally reached the image of "Japanese" woman. Ochiai concludes that the changing image of Japanese women has been greatly influenced by the shift of Japan's economic power which brought confidence in establishing national gender identity.

Conclusion

Although mass media studies tend to simplify the structure of the system of cultural products, it is also true that they are useful in developing an understanding of the kinds of social values, norms and expectations communicated by these magazines. Speaking about mass media in general, Tuchman (1978) argues that the very under representation of women, including their stereotypical portrayal, may symbolically capture their lower power position in American society or their "symbolic annihilation." She suggests that it is also useful to discuss the media and media content as "myths" rather than "images." Considering women in magazines as myth is to investigate the ideological construction of such myth-making. It is a way of seeing the world that is constructed by particular ideology through mass media, instead of thinking of mass media as a mere reflection of social reality.

Such an attempt to reveal the mythical or ideological construction of women has been incorporated by qualitative content analysis as well as thematic analysis mentioned above (e.g., Dispenza, 1975; Fox, 1990; Glazer, 1980; Wilson, 1981). Meanwhile, historical comparisons of women's magazines clearly show changing social norms, values and attitudes towards women in women's magazines in response to wider social changes

(see Ferguson: 1983, Geise :1991). By placing the data in historical and social contexts, these studies have deepened our understanding of the "ways of seeing" that are provided by the mass media.

Previous research on women's magazines has shown that the representation of women in magazines does not passively mirror social norms and values, but actively constructs and reconstructs "reality" and transmits hegemonic ideology. At the same time, advertisements and women's magazines must be sensitive to changes in societal attitudes and perceptions in order to capture the current values and norms of their targeted consumers/readers. Because of their nature, these media might reinforce or redirect social changes in order to sell their products. Thus, women's magazines provide an important means for depicting socially-constructed cultural models of women. The analysis should focus on the kinds of ideological social reality that are mediated in the women's magazines, as well as why one particular version of the "ideal female" is presented over another. In this sense, I believe that it is useful to conduct a cross-cultural content analysis. By revealing a certain cultural pattern, one can gain a perspective towards cultural models as ideological and arbitrary constructions, just as historical comparisons of femininity make it easier to demystify the image of women.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Definition of Content Analysis

In this chapter, the methods and procedure of the current study are discussed. Content analysis is selected as the method for the present study. This method uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text (Weber, 1991: 9). However expressing a more detailed definition of content analysis is difficult because diverse definitions have existed since the 1950's, ranging from strictly quantitative approaches to qualitatively-oriented analyses. One of the earlier content analysts, Berelson (1952), defines this method as "a research for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (cited by Ball & Smith, 1990: 20). This definition is expanded collaboratively by Stone et al. (1966) and Holsti (1969) who describe the content analysis as a technique to make inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.

Holsti (1969: 11) argues that content analysis should employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to supplement each other so that investigators can gain more insight into the meaning of the data. Moreover, unlike Berelson, he supports analyzing both manifest (utterly and explicitly expressed) and latent (unintentionally and unconsciously expressed) content. He argues that at the stage where researchers interpret data, one should analyze the messages at the latent level by using one's imagination and intuition to draw meaningful conclusions.

Krippendorff (1980: 21) states that "content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context." His emphasis on the relationship between context of data in texts and their cultural and social contexts is crucial and implies that content analysis needs to be conducted not only at the manifest level but also at the interpretative latent level. Thus, he suggests that "content analysis could be characterized as a method of inquiry into symbolic meaning of messages" (22).

To be more specific, qualitative content analysis is concerned with content as a mediator or reflection of less manifest, more latent cultural phenomena. Thus, qualitative content analysis allows the investigator to examine more complex themes which are not easily categorized or quantified. Kracauer (1952) defines qualitative content analysis as "the selection and rational organization of such categories as condense the substantive meanings of the given text, with a view to testing pertinent assumptions and hypotheses. These categories may or may not invite frequency counts" (cited by Ball and Smith, 1992: 29). He argues that the use of primary established categories for manifest content may not necessarily be adequate or appropriate for shedding light on nuances which could have significant meaning. In contrast, qualitative content analysis can pick up such subtle nuances (Ball and Smith, 1992).

Given the diversity of the definitions of content analysis, many contemporary content analysts simply insist on the requirements of objectivity and prefer to treat the issue of manifest or latent content case by case, insisting on the need for replicability. The text classification should be done systematically and consistently so that it brings "objectivity" and high intercoder reliability. Content classification should produce the same results when the same text is coded by more than one coder.

At the same time, it can be argued that it is impossible to conduct completely "objective" research. All research is conducted with some kind of theoretical purpose in mind, for without theoretical insight, there would be no data interpretation or agenda-setting. Theoretical viewpoints and research design hypotheses are all based on the ideological perspectives of researchers, and thus can never be completely "objective." They all influence the results of content analysis to a certain degree.

Advantages of Content Analysis

One of the major advantages of content analysis is that it can provide an "objective analysis" of the data, because the rules of counting are transparent, although the term "objective" in this context may mean nothing more than "satisfactory intercoder

reliability". Researchers can determine whether there is an acceptable level of agreement among different analysts regarding how to interpret certain samples of text by using reliability checks. This means that independent coders who analyze data should each come up with the same descriptive classification, within an allowable range of error. This method allows researchers to treat qualitative data (such as images) in quantitative terms (such as frequency and percentages) and thus helps the research transcend mere individual and impressionistic interpretations (Leiss et al., 1986: 223).

Content analysis is particularly beneficial when the samples are large and the findings are usually expressed in numerical terms. This method can have such a broad and encompassing sample that it helps to detect cultural patterns. Many researchers agree that content analysis is most useful when the research has a "historic or comparative dimension" (Berger, 1991: 94) because it can "reflect cultural patterns of groups, institutions, or societies" (Weber, 1990: 9).

Content analysis is also an economical method, both in terms of time and money. The employment of content analysis techniques is an inexpensive way of getting information about people and cultures. The printed materials which are used tend to be inexpensive and relatively easy to obtain. This method also allows researchers to deal with current subjects since we can analyze the most recent visual texts or printed materials. Researchers are thus given a means to study phenomena such as fads, fashion, and social movements as they develop. Another strength of content analysis is that it can be an unobtrusive or non reactive research technique. Since the presence of a researcher is not likely to affect what one is studying, compared to other methods, the researcher might not necessarily have to be concerned with the possibility that he or she is changing or influencing the results in the research process (Berger, 1991).

Limitations of Content Analysis

However useful, the limitations of content analysis deserve comment. The first problem is the issue of the representativeness of the samples. To get around this problem,

content analysis should only be used with a large number of samples. However, the issue of determining suitable sample size and a reasonable way of sampling them still remains. Thus, the rationalization of the choice of samples must be theoretically and explicitly described.

Another problem of content analysis is that researchers do not know how audiences respond to the materials. That is, content analysis is a study of the *mediated communication* and not specifically the behavior of people. Similarly, it can be argued that the measure of frequency does not always determine the significance of the messages for the audience. "It is not the significance of repetition that is important but the repetition of significance" (Summer, 1979: 69, cited by Leiss, Kline, and Jhally, 1986: 223) and content analysis is unable to say anything about the audience's interpretations or the effects messages have on the audience. Although content analysis cannot tell how audiences "read" the messages or the preferred meaning, the method is able to indicate what makes up the pattern of the messages.

Finally, traditional (quantitative) content analysis methods have been accused of simply providing a numerical description of the manifest content without offering explanations for the ideological or latent meanings of the content (Leiss et al., 1986). Such an exclusion of social and political contexts has been considered to be a major disadvantage for the advancement of theory. In order to overcome these disadvantages, content analysis needs to incorporate more critical and qualitative approaches, instead of seeking to conduct purely descriptive and numerative research.

Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative insight is especially useful in conducting cross-cultural research. Woodrum (1984: 2) argues that content analysis can be a technique for studying culture because it focuses on "natural language sets, laden with symbolic meanings" without being solely qualitative as in hermeneutics or literary interpretations. Thus in order to study culture using content analysis, it is essential to use qualitative content analyses which can

detect latent cultural nuances and phenomena, such as the meanings of symbols, customs and social norms. For example, given the cultural complexity and societal meanings that accompany a system of marriage, a question such as how the system of marriage is portrayed in women's magazines in Japan and North America may not be fully answered by merely counting the number of related articles. Qualitative analysis, in contrast, can provide detailed descriptions and analyses of the data. If this method is coupled with quantified data, it can supplement our comprehension of social relations, as well as more complex themes such as social norms. In support of this, Weber (1990: 10) claimed that the best content analysis are those that use both qualitative and quantitative operations on texts.

In the present study quantitative content analysis methods were used to examine the frequency of dominant themes in magazines by counting related articles and advertisements. Qualitative methods were used to provide in-depth analyses of selected samples as examples of the latent cultural messages. By situating the data in a larger socio-cultural context, more detailed comparative accounts can be given. Although content analysis is not able to conduct as intensive investigations of deep and symbolic meaning of texts as semiotic analyses can, for the purpose of this study systematic standardized observation supplemented by qualitative description is most appropriate.

Sampling Procedure

For the samples of Japanese women's magazines, six issues from each of five monthly women's magazines, *More*, *With*, *Cosmopolitan-Japan*, *Nikkei Woman*, and *Say* were selected. Similarly, for the North American sample, six issues from each of five monthly women magazines, *Glamour*, *Cosmopolitan*, *New Woman*, *Working Woman* and *Mademoiselle* were collected. In total 60 magazines (30 magazines for each of the North American and Japanese samples) were analyzed. Due to the difficulty of obtaining Japanese magazines in Canada, the sampled magazines do not perfectly match in terms of the period of collection. However, I arranged and matched each magazine from the two

samples in a way that minimizes potential biases. This issue of the period of the samples will be discussed in detail later in this section.

The content of both advertisements and articles appearing in these women's magazines is examined. The rationale for choosing these 10 specific magazines are as follows: (1) they are widely-circulated commercially successful "mainstream" monthly magazines that are easy to obtain in both societies, (2) they target mostly single and working women between the ages of 18 and 34 (McCracken, 1993 and Morohashi, 1992), (3) they are not special interest magazines such as fashion magazines or sports magazines, but instead contain a general and wide range of articles and advertisements, and (4) they have been previously used in the study of women's magazines.

In conducting content analyses it is important to assess the representativeness of the samples. In addition to satisfying the above four criteria, a number of these magazines were selected because of their different targeted readerships among working women. Because this study focuses on ideological messages of magazines for young, single working women, it is important to take into account what kind of working women each magazine is targeting. Depending upon who the "constructed readers" are, for example career-oriented women or single women in general, the content of the messages might be different. Thus samples should include magazines of different kinds of readership in order to sample a broad cross-section of representation of women in each culture.

Introduction of the Selected Magazines

(A). Japanese Magazines

1. *More*

Circulation: 850,000²

As a "Quality Life Magazine" (sic), *More* was first published in 1977. Since then this magazine has had the highest circulation figure among "general" (non-special) woman's magazines for young single woman in their late twenties. According to the

²Circulation figures of Japanese magazines came from *Media risaachi katarogu 1993* (Media Research Catalog 1993). The North American figures came from *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory 1994/95*.

Media Research Catalog in 1993, 74 % of *More's* readership consists of single working woman (mainly OLs) in their mid to late twenties³. Before *Cosmopolitan-Japan* was published in 1980, *More* was partially affiliated with *Cosmopolitan-USA*, and advocated ideas and keywords such as "New Lifestyle", "Independence of Woman", and "Career Woman" during the late 70's. In the 1990's, *More's* editorial policy is still "to find a new way of life for women" but most of the content is devoted to beauty and fashion and only occasionally deals with woman-related social issues.

2. *With*

Circulation: 800,000

First published in 1981 by the rival publisher of *More*, *With*, describes itself as a "Culture Magazine for Your Life"(sic). It has also been one of the most popular magazines among young single women. According to *Media Research Catalog*, in 1993 86 % of the readership of *With* are single working woman (mostly OLs) in their mid-to late twenties. Although similarly designed, compared to *More*, *With* tends to be more mainstream and traditional in terms of the topics for their articles.

3. *Say*

Circulation: 590,000

First published in 1983, *Say* refers to itself as an "Informative Magazine for You to Talk and Think About"⁴. *Say* devotes considerable space for its "constructed readers" to interact by asking readers to provide solutions and opinions for other readers' personal problems. This magazine is aimed especially at non-career-oriented OLs between the ages of 19 and 27⁵. The content deals with mainly male-female romantic relationships, marriage, fashion and beauty, with almost no references to career development. *Say* is one of the most "traditional" magazines for single working woman.

³OL (Office Ladies) is a Japanized English term referring to woman who work for a company at the clerical level. Many of their jobs involves making copies for bosses and male colleagues and serving tea. An equivalent English term would be pink color jobs, but in Japan the majority of working woman in white collar organizations are confined to this level. Usually they do not expect promotions and they are expected to quit working after several years to raise their families. In this thesis, I will use the word *working woman* to refer to both OLs and other professional /career oriented women, and will use the terms OL and career/professional woman when it is necessary to make the distinction.

⁴ All Japanese -English translation in this thesis is mine.

⁵60 % of their readership is in their early twenties.

4. *Cosmopolitan-Japan*

Circulation: 320,000

Cosmopolitan-Japan was first published in 1980 as the Japanese edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Most of the articles in this magazine are provided exclusively for the Japanese edition, but sometimes *Cosmopolitan-Japan* contains translated articles from other *Cosmopolitan* editions from all over the world, especially from the United States. According to one editor, *Cosmopolitan's* readers are "the Japanese who do not only live with the Japanese mind" but "are eager to know what is going on in other parts of the world" (Yamada, 1982). Its targeted readers are working women in their mid to late twenties who want to have everything (e.g., success, money, men).

5. *Nikkei Woman*

Circulation: 240,000

Nikkei Woman was first published in 1988 as Japan's first magazine about women and work (the copy on the cover reads "Informative magazine for working women".) Since it is published by the Japan Economic (Nikkei) Newspaper Inc., articles on money and investment are also featured. Its targeted readership is single and married working women who have career aspirations and/or are raising a family. The age of its readership ranges from women in their mid-twenties to late thirties.

(B) North American Magazines

1. *Cosmopolitan*

Circulation: 3,000,000

After Helen Brown took over the editorship in the mid-sixties and modified the magazine which had existed since 1901, *Cosmopolitan* became such a successful magazine that 19 international editions have been published to date. The readership is single working women (between the ages of 18 and 34) who are devoted to looking for men, being sexually attractive, and becoming rich and successful (but probably not in seeking professional careers).

2. *Glamour*

Circulation: 2,081,212

First published in 1939, *Glamour* also changed its content to fit with the contemporary young women's demographic characteristic⁶. In 1983, the publisher (Conde Nast Publication) announced that this magazine (which was aimed at working women between the ages of 18 to 34) needed a more serious image and advocated that *Glamour* should also take on social issues in addition to its historical emphasis on fashion and beauty (McCracken, 1993: 151). As a result *Glamour* started to offer articles regarding women-related social issues (e.g., feminism, abortion, and sexual violence against women etc.), although, career-related articles are rarely seen.

3. *Mademoiselle*

Circulation 1,219,159

Mademoiselle (first published in 1935) has also changed and updated the editorial content as women's lives changed in the 1970's and 1980's. Today the majority of the readership of this magazine is post-adolescent women and working women who are not in career or professional fields. A large proportion of its pages are devoted to beauty (McCracken, 1993: 148).

4. *New Woman*

Circulation 1,300,000

One of the "New Wave" women's magazines, *New Woman* was first published in 1971, and targets a readership of working women in general between the ages of 18 and 54. *New Woman* tends to aim for a safe, middle-of-the-road position as well as offering both modern and traditional viewpoints in order to attract a wide range of readership (McCracken, 1993: 218). Every month this magazine offers a broad range of contents which include career, money, self-discovery, love, sex, health, relationships, fashion, beauty and food.

5. *Working Woman*

Circulation: 900,000

⁶According to Inoue (1989), 80% of the readership are working women and 75% of them are college educated woman.

First published in 1976, *Working Woman* has been the most successful women's magazine that is devoted solely to the issue of women and work (McCracken, 1993). This magazine first tried to attract all working women but then narrowed its focus to professional and career women (McCracken, 1993). The targeted readership probably has a wider and older range of age than the other four magazines that were sampled. *Working Woman* is aimed at both married and single working women.

Choice of Sampled Magazines

In this analysis of women's magazines, I examine and compare cross-cultural differences in magazine content. In addition, I am interested in cross-occupational and class differences within each culture. That is, I explore how "career-oriented working women's magazines" transmit and promote different kinds of messages and images of femininity compared to other women's magazines. The following figure shows the sampled women's magazines based on the relative degree of career aspirations of their constructed readerships.

Table 1: Sampled Magazines According to Readers' Career Orientation

	Career-Oriented		Non-Career-Oriented		
Japan	Nikkei Woman	Cosmo-Jpn	More With	Say	
N- America	Working Woman	New woman	Glamour	Cosmopolitan	Mademoiselle

Due to the difficulties of collecting the Japanese samples in Canada, the period of sampled magazines could not be completely matched, although comparability was ensured by pairing suitable magazines. I first paired magazines between countries according to targeted readership, popularity and general contents. As Table 1 shows, five pairs emerged: *Working Woman* and *Nikkei Woman*; *New Woman* and *Cosmopolitan*-Japan;

Glamour and *More*; *Cosmopolitan* and *With*; and *Mademoiselle* and *Say*. Within the two magazines in each pair, I tried to minimize the difference of the selection of the issues.

Table 2: Paired Magazines and Months of Sampled Issues⁷

1) <i>Working Woman</i> :	8	9	10	11	12	1		
<i>Nikkei Woman</i> :	8	9	10	11	12	1		
2) <i>New Woman</i> :			10	11	12	1	2	3
<i>Cosmopolitan-Japan</i> :			10	11	12	1	2	3
3) <i>Glamour</i> :		9	10	11	12	1	2	
<i>More</i> :	7	8	9	10	11	12		
4) <i>Cosmopolitan</i> :			10	11	12	1	2	3
<i>With</i> :		9	10	11	12	1		3
5) <i>Mademoiselle</i> :	8		10	11	12	1	2	
<i>Say</i> :	8			11	12	1	2	3

It would have been best to obtain issues from exactly the same period, since the mismatched issues introduce potential biases. For example, North American samples have two more issues of February; this over-sampling of February might cause some biases towards romantic relationship articles since February is the Valentine Month and it can be expected that many women's magazines might have more features articles on romance. However, other holiday-related issues (such as Christmas and New Years) or special interest issues (such as June-brides) were matched, minimizing other biases.

⁷Numbers represent months of the year (e.g., 8 = August).

Coding Procedure for Advertisements

In the present analysis advertisements were included if they showed females and/or males and were at least one full page and no more than five pages in length. For the sake of expedience, advertisements were taken only from a sub-sample of the larger sample. The sub-sample consists of three monthly issues (October, November and December) from each magazine (in total 30 issues)⁸.

A thematic analysis was conducted to produce a quantitative base for the qualitative analysis. A theme is defined as a primary idea or single unit of thought (Budd, et. al., 1967) and can be categorized numerically. Specifically, advertisements were classified with respect to the recurring and dominant images and themes which explain being female and male in each society. Pictures as well as written parts of advertisements were considered. The percentage of each theme was calculated to show how gender is represented in each magazine. At this point, the level of analysis operates at the surface and manifest level. Attention was also paid to the use of Caucasian models (hereafter *gaijin*⁹) in Japanese samples as well as the use of non-Caucasian models in North American samples.

In content analysis, it is important to be clear about the operationalization of concepts or subjects under investigation. That is, definitions and the way the concept is to be measured or counted must be described (Berger, 1991: 27). The following are the categorical definitions for the analysis of advertisements. Themes are partially based on those used by previous research, especially that of Monk-Turner (1990) and Inoue (1989). However, most of the categories emerged as I preexamined a smaller sample. All definitions of the categories are developed by the author.

⁸A single exception is *Say* magazine for which I was unable to obtain the October issue. I used the January issue instead.

⁹*Gaijin*, literary meaning "outside people," refers to foreigners in Japanese. It is often the case that Japanese advertisements use Caucasian models, but non-Caucasian models are hardly seen. In this study in order to establish a pattern of the different function of Japanese and Caucasian models in Japanese advertisement, *gaijin* refers to only Caucasian models. The discussion of the use of *gaijin* in Japanese advertisement will be concluded in the later chapters

Categories of Themes in Advertisements

(A) Beauty Standards

1. *Sexy*¹⁰

Sexy refers to an emphasis on sexual attraction by overt facial and body expression. The definitions of sexy could include words such as provocative, seductive, lustful, nude, erotic, voluptuous, suggestive, sexually available, actively inviting, etc. For example, facial expressions such as closed eyes and an unnaturally half-open mouth erotically indicate sexual invitation. Ads that show female models gazing lustfully and seductively into the camera are another typical example. Women and men may be shown as engaging in sexy gestures, such as lying down on a bed and reclining. Pictures that present women who expose full or parts of their bodies (i.e., thigh, shoulders, legs, breast, etc.) for the purpose of arousing male sexual desire are also typical examples of the sexy category.

2. *Pretty*

In the "pretty" category, women promote a sense of beauty and attractiveness but lesser use of sexual cues and appeal than "sexy" women. Compared to the "sexy" ads, women's bodies and facial expressions are not used as much for the purpose of actively sexually arousing the male. Women are typically portrayed with a "natural" smile. This category includes ads in which women are portrayed as lovely, attractive and pleasant.

3. *Cute/Girlish*

In the "cute/girlish" category, women are presented as coquettish, cheerful, friendly, charming and happy. These ads also present women as playful, innocent, pure and defenseless. The typical ad shows women engaging in movements that are childlike (such as jumping around, making funny faces and gesture etc..)

4. *Elegant*

In the "elegant" category, women are set in sophisticated, graceful, and classy atmospheres. Women with mature images are typical and facial expressions tend to be firm and blunt.

(B) Female Roles

5. *Female Friendship*

The "female friend" category is for ads where there are only women friends presented in a picture.

¹⁰Because beauty standards such as "sexiness" are always culturally constructed, these definitions can never be culturally neutral. It is possible to argue that sexiness in Japan and North America are different. However, there are no indigenous Japanese words for what I defined above as "sexy." Japanese use the Japanized-foreign word "sekushii" to express an erotic, sexually suggestive manner. Hence, in this context, Japanese "sekushii" and North American "sexy" mean the same thing. Thus, I use "sexy" as defined by North American culture to contrast each of the themes in the beauty standard category.

6. *New Women*

In the "new woman" category, women are shown with non-traditional characteristics, such as being strong, independent, and confident women or women who try to look like men by wearing men's clothes and copying men's behavior.

7. *Active Women*

The "active women" category shows women engaging in something active and energetic (such as jogging, dancing, exercising, playing sports).

8. *Working Women*

"Working women" portrays women working at jobs outside of the household

9. *Mother/Wife*

The "mother/wife" category involving women playing the role of mother and/or wife and taking care of men and the family.

(C) Heterosexual Relationships:

10. *Marriage*

The "marriage" category includes courtship, engagement and ceremony, such as a woman wearing a wedding dress or receiving an engagement ring. The portrayal of husband and wife is also counted as marriage.

11. *Romantic Love*

Heterosexual couples who are portrayed in romantic relationships which do not indicate a marriage are included in the "romantic love" category. For example, scenes in which women and men are kissing, hugging, and holding one another in romantic ways were included in this category.

12. *Male-Female Friendship*

The male-female friendship category contains friendship between a male and a female or within a mixed sex group. Unlike the "romantic love" category, in this category there is no romantic physical touching between men and women.

(D) Masculinity and Male roles

13. *Macho Men*

The "macho man" category refers to traditional masculinity, that is, presenting men as rugged, tough, aggressive, powerful, and authoritarian. Men are portrayed in charge, in the dominant position and relatively bigger in size than women.

14. *Sexy Men*

In the "sexy men" category, men appear sexually available and are seducing women. Typical "sexy men" ads expose parts of men's body (such as the chest and shoulders) in order to suggest that they are actively inviting women.

15. *Gentle/Nice Men*

The "gentle/nice men" category includes ads with men that are less-macho and less-assertive. Men are shown as gentle and harmless, and non-authoritarian. A typical portrayal of "nice men" is of men smiling warmly and pleasantly.

16. *Cute/Funny Men*

The "cute/funny men" category includes men who appear comical, silly or childlike.

17. *Father/Husband*

The "father/husband" category includes men who play the role of husband or father and are taking care of the house or children.

Based on the above quantitative content analysis, I further analyzed selected advertisements from each category of themes. A close analysis of advertisements allows one to examine more complex phenomena, such as how advertisements and their products are used to reinforce the images of desired femininity and certain cultural norms and values. In this way, more subtle and complex cultural differences in the images of femininity can be detected and illuminated.

Reliability Check for Advertisements

A reliability check was conducted for the analysis of advertisements by a bilingual (Japanese and English) coder. Themes in randomly selected advertisements (50 each from Japanese and North American samples) were coded independently by a coder and compared with the coding previously done by the author. The results of the inter-rater reliability check was 78% for the Japanese sample and 83% for the North American sample. Both of these results are in the accepted range of reliability.

Coding Procedure for Article Content

In the analysis of the content of articles, the frameworks which Ferguson (1983) and Peirce (1985) developed to analyze British women's magazines and American

Cosmopolitan magazine respectively were employed with modifications to fit this study. The articles sampled include editorial features, articles, and regular columns which explain "being female" and gender roles which are at least one full page. Sections such as fiction stories, horoscopes, Question & Answer, readers' participation pages (where readers write their experiences etc.), and letters to the editors were excluded because of possible multiple themes per page and, because some of the Japanese women's magazines do not carry such sections. Specialist departments such as cookery and decorating, as well as beauty and fashion, were also excluded because of its less normative content. All six monthly issues from each of the 10 magazines were analyzed.

The content of articles was analyzed by dominant themes and gender roles which appear in the sampled magazines. Following the previous literature on the content analysis of women's magazines in North America, three dominant topics were chosen as the framework for the analyses: Love and Marriage, Self-Help and Improvement, and Work and Family (Ferguson, 1983; Geise, 1979; Inoue, 1986; and Peirce, 1985). Since these categories have broad definitions, I set up sub-themes on the basis of a preliminary examination of a smaller portion of the sample. The article content was then measured according to the sub-themes in order to assess the frequency and diversity of topics.

Categories of Themes in Articles

(A). Heterosexual Romance and Marriage

1. Finding and Keeping a Desirable Man to Marry

This category communicates the finding that a man is of primary importance in a woman's life. Typical articles include ones that teach women techniques to catch and keep desirable men for either romance or marriage, (e.g., how to figure out if he is husband material?, when a man decides to marry?, where can we find men?).

2. Understand More about Men

This theme sends out messages that women should know and be familiar with men's opinions of women and ways of thinking, (e.g., what kind of woman do men want

to marry?; why don't men want to make commitments?; how men and women think differently).

3. *Avoid Problematic Relationships and Men*

This category refers to themes that offer tips to readers to protect themselves from getting into a bad relationship with men. (e.g., how to get out of a bad relationship, how to detect a wrong man to marry).

4. *Relationship Improvements*

In this category, women are encouraged to fix their relationships and are provided with techniques to improve them, (e.g., how to keep a good marriage, how to change the man you love).

5. *Sexual Activity*

This category deals with sexual activity with men (e.g., how to have fulfilling and gratifying sex, how to improve your sex life, how having sex changes the relationship).

(B) Self-Help

6. *Self-Growth and Fulfillment*

This category sends messages that encourage readers to achieve more, to perfect their inner-self and to obtain healthier self-images and positive attitudes, (e.g., how to be happy, how to have high self-esteem).

7. *Better Self-Presentation*

This category contains messages to encourage readers to seek to improve their self-presentation and related social skills, (e.g., how to handle interpersonal communication at work, acquiring feminine manners, how to be a successful public speaker, how to have more self-control).

8. *Overcoming Misfortune*

This category shows readers that women's physical and emotional disasters, tragedy and misfortunes can be overcome by making effort, having courage and perseverance, (e.g., I survived breast cancer, women coping with AIDS).

(C). Work and Family

9. *Surviving and Competing at the Workplace*

This category sends messages to readers that although working women face many kinds of obstacles at the workplace, they need to break the barriers to compete, (e.g., how to be competitive and efficient at work).

10. Learn from Successful Working Women

This category deals with success stories of working women in many fields and encourages readers to become like them, (e.g., top career women talk about their career, entrepreneur women talk about their businesses).

11. Career Strategies

This category teaches women specific ways to be competent workers and to develop their careers, (e.g., how to make yourself marketable, how to influence others).

12. Juggling Work and Family

This category transmits the idea that working mothers have a hard time balancing their work and child-rearing but somehow manage it, (e.g., working mother's guilty feeling, tips on how to balance work and family).

13. Importance of Motherhood and Wifehood

This category provides blissful images of women who take care of their families and devote themselves to their work at home. This also includes themes which emphasize the importance and responsibilities of mothers, (e.g., how to find a good daycare and baby sitter, the role of the mother as an important function of the child's development).

14. Family Life and Ties

This is a category that discusses the relationships among family members, such as parents and children, siblings, grandparents and so on, (e.g., mother-daughter relationships).

(D) Social Topics

15. Know More about General Social Issues

This category communicates the idea that women should know what is going on in the world, (e.g., politics, economics, international relations, and social problems such as racism, animal rights, environmental issues, etc.).

16. Know more about Women's Issues

This category pays attention to special women's issues, (e.g., abortion, eating disorders, equal employment opportunities (EEO), pregnancy, contraception, etc.).

17. Know more About Gender (In)Equality

This category deals with themes related to gender inequality, (e.g., sexual harassment, violence against women).

18. Others

This category is for anything that does not fit into the previous categories and does not have strong normative content. It includes useful information and topics for women. (e.g., women's health, buying a computer, saving money).

Based on the result of the quantitative content analysis, the frequencies of magazine themes are summarized in table form. Following this, in-depth analyses of selected samples were conducted in order to show the latent cultural messages. By quoting and interpreting some of the articles I try to situate the data in larger socio-cultural contexts, and draw conclusions about what these messages could mean to women in Japan and in North America.

Reliability Check for Articles

A reliability check was conducted for the analysis of articles in a similar manner to the one conducted on the advertisements. Themes in randomly selected articles (25 each for Japanese and North American samples) were coded independently by a bilingual coder and compared with the coding previously done by the author. The result of inter-rater reliability check for the Japanese sample was 86% and for North American samples was 84%. Both results are in the acceptable range of reliability.

Conclusion

Although content analysis has certain methodological limitations, its systematic analysis produces a general pattern of results which can be highly informative. Content analysis which provides both a quantitative and qualitative explanation is most suited for the comparative nature of this study. In this way, the general pattern of cross-cultural differences and similarities of the content of women's magazines is expected to be revealed. In addition, once the quantitative data has been established, examinations of data qualitatively and in socio-cultural contexts would provide more detailed comparative accounts as well as the possible differences in roles that women's magazines play in various cultures.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF ADVERTISEMENTS

General Patterns of Advertisements

In this chapter the analyses of advertisements in Japanese and North American women's magazines are presented and discussed. The quantitative data are shown in table format in order to provide a readily observable pattern of cross-cultural similarities and differences of contents. Some examples and discussions are introduced along with the tables to provide a more detailed description of the data.

**Table 3: Distribution of Content of Women's Magazine
Percentage of Average Distribution of Pages**

	Japanese (N=306)	N-American (N=192)
Advertisements	33.7	44.8
Features	46.7	38.0
Advertorials (Beauty&Fashion)	16.0	12.0
Miscellaneous	3.6	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: N= averaged pages in the entire sampled magazines

As shown in Table 3, advertising makes up a significant amount of the content of women's magazines in both Japanese and North American samples, reflecting the fact that it is an important source of revenue for publishing companies (McCracken, 1993).

Although not shown in Table 3, the number of advertising pages correlates with the circulation of the magazines. For example, *With* and *More*, the two most circulated Japanese women's magazines in the samples, devote 227 and 200 pages for advertisements, respectively. In contrast, the less circulated *Cosmopolitan-Japan* (J-

Cosmo, hereafter) has 38 pages for advertisements. The same point can be made for the North American samples. The two most circulated *Glamour* (Gl hereafter) and *Cosmopolitan U.S.A* (Cosmo, hereafter) have 129 and 114 pages of advertisements, whereas the less circulated *Working Woman* (Wo W hereafter) contains only 54 pages. The actual number of advertisements can be a reliable indicator of the "success" of a magazines since advertising companies tend to prefer having ads in widely circulated magazines with readerships that have spending power. Thus, both advertising companies and publishers benefit by including a great amount of advertisements.

Table 4: Types of Products Advertised In Women's Magazines
Percentage of Products Advertised

	Japanese (n=318)	N-American (n=380)
Beauty Products	37.7	44.0
Fashion	18.0	16.8
Agency/Organization	13.2	5.0
Medicine/health/hygiene	7.5	7.9
Education/Career	6.9	2.1
Leisure/Entertainment	3.5	1.0
Food/Drinks	2.8	4.5
Household/electronics	2.2	2.8
Tobacco	0	6.0
Cars	0.6	4.5
Others	7.6	5.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: N= number of advertisement. Advertisements that were at least one-full-page in length were analyzed. Pages with multiple products were excluded from the analyses. The November 1993 issues from each magazine were used to construct this table.

As McCracken (1993) argues, advertisers can influence editorial content due to the financial resources that advertisers provide to the publishers. Given that more than half of advertisements are devoted to beauty products and fashion, as Table 4 and previous research (Inoue, 1989; Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971; Monk-Turner, 1990) have shown, beauty products and fashion related advertisers especially can extend their influence to the

fashion/beauty pages of a magazine. Indeed, most of the fashion/beauty features function as a kind of "infomercial" or "advertorial" (McCracken, 1993), promoting certain products in the form of editorial features.

In Table 4, the combined percentage of beauty products and fashion was similar in both countries¹¹. This similar emphasis on physical appearance between North American and Japanese magazines suggests that these magazines have similar readerships¹². As for the category for agency and organization ad, many of such Japanese samples had ads from "computerized marriage match-making agencies" which target single women. While no tobacco ads were found in Japanese samples, they were one of the most frequent ads after fashion and beauty products in North American samples. This does not mean that Japanese women do not smoke, and casual observation tells me that more and more female smokers are seen in public places, such as coffee shops, restaurants and bars. However, smoking in public for females might still be considered taboo and may not be widely accepted yet in Japan. There were quite a few ads promoting alcohol specifically for women in both samples. Japanese samples contained more Education/Career ads, but many of those were advertisements for English language schools and "feminine" skills such as calligraphy and typing.

The most important result in Table 5 is the prevalence of *gaijin* females in Japanese samples. In Japanese advertisements, close to one half of females portrayed alone were *gaijin* women. The function of the prevalent image of *gaijin* women is one of the most important topics in studying Japanese women's magazines and it will be discussed later in this chapter. As previous research has suggested (Budgeson, 1993 and MacGregor, 1989), racial and ethnic minority women and men are underrepresented in North-American advertisements.

¹¹This is partially because perfume ads were included in beauty products. Japanese do not wear perfume as often as North Americans do, thereby perfume ads were rarely seen in Japanese women's magazines.

¹²Inoue et al., (1986) found that women's magazines targeted towards housewives and middle-aged women have less advertisements of beauty products and fashion. Instead these magazines contain ads for household electronics and products for family and children.

**Table 5: Relationship, Sex & Ethnicity of People
Percentage of Total Pictures Containing People**

	Japanese (n=207)			American (n=250)		
	Japanese	<i>Gaijin</i>	Total	Caucasian	Others	Total
Female Alone	40.0	37.7	77.7	68.0	3.2	71.2
Female Together	5.8	1.0	6.8	3.6	0.4	4.0
Male Alone	2.9	1.5	4.4	3.2	0	3.2
M/F Couple	2.4	2.4	4.8	11.6	0.4	12.0
Mixed Peers	1.9	1.5	3.4	2.0	0	2.0
Family	0.5	0	0.5	2.4	0	2.4
Males Together	0	0.5	0.5	1.6	0.4	2.0
Others	1.9	0	1.9	3.2	0	3.2
Total	55.4	44.6	100.0	95.6	4.4	100.0

Note: Only one relationship was counted per picture. Pages with 5 or more ads/pictures were excluded from analysis. Categories based on the study of Budgeson (1993). November 1993 issues from each magazine were used to construct this table. N= number of ad with people

Another interesting finding is that North American models are much more likely than are Japanese models to be shown with male models. Japanese women were presented more frequently with their female friends than with heterosexual partners. Close to 20% of pictures that contained people in North American samples show male figures, whereas only 7% of Japanese samples contained Japanese males. Among such figures in North American ads, most of the males were portrayed as heterosexual partners. It can be concluded from the above table that in advertisements in Japanese women's magazines, males and females tend to exist almost independently from each other and form their own worlds. (Only 4.3% of ads portrayed Japanese males and females together). In other words, the presence of men may be considered to be less dominant or peripheral in Japanese advertisements. In contrast, in 14% of the North American ads males and females are shown together, emphasizing the presence of men in the world of women.

Themes of Advertisements

Four main categories were set up for the purpose of analyzing themes found in women's magazines: Female characteristics, Female roles, Male characteristics, Male roles and Heterosexual relationships. These categories were divided into smaller themes and discussed in depth in order to offer more detailed descriptions. In total the Japanese sample had 837 units of analysis compared to 967 for the North American sample. Female characteristics showed an overwhelmingly high frequency in both samples (69% of Japanese themes and 53% of North American), whereas only 12% of Japanese and 12.3% of North American themes were related to female-roles. This pattern suggests that female attributes (e.g., how she looks) is given much more importance than women's roles or activities. Looking at cross-cultural differences, only 6.5% of Japanese themes dealt with masculinity as opposed to 14.8% for North Americans. In addition, North American themes (10.9%) showed more heterosexual couples themes than Japanese ones (5.6%). The sub-themes of each category will now be discussed.

Female Characteristics

From the data presented in Table 6, the major characteristics of females represent ideals of beauty for females within these two societies. However, comparison of the Japanese and North American ideal female beauty can be very complex because of the prevalence of *gaijin* women in Japanese ads. The above table shows that when looking at the entire sample, a similar pattern of preferred female characteristics emerges from the two cultures, except that Japanese themes have less "sexy" ads and more "cute/childlike" ads. In both Japanese and North American samples, "pretty" was the most represented female characteristic. This is especially true when Japanese female models were shown in this category: Japanese women appear as pretty 55% of the time, whereas only about 38% of *gaijin* women and 40% of North American Caucasian women were portrayed as such.

When North American Caucasian woman are not shown as "pretty," they are most likely to appear either as "elegant" or "sexy" which is also true for *gaijin* woman in

Japanese ads. However, Japanese women are not frequently portrayed as "elegant" and hardly ever as "sexy". The second most frequent feminine characteristic for Japanese women was "girlish/cute". More than one out of ten ads in the Japanese sample showed Japanese woman being girlish and/or cute whereas only 3% of the ads portrayed Japanese woman as being "sexy." *Gaijin* and North American women hardly ever appeared as cute/girlish. When non-Caucasian women were shown in North American ads, most of them were black models, and almost no Asians were shown. When black models were shown, they were categorized as pretty or sexy. For example, *Cosmopolitan* and *Glamour* had a series of underwear ads which showed black women wearing underwear against a background of untamed nature, promoting the stereotypical image of blackness as uncivilized and sexy.

**Table 6: Themes of Female Characteristic
Percentage of Females Shown With Each Characteristic**

	Japan (n=577)			American (n=519)		
	Japanese	Gaijin	Total	Caucasian	Others	Total
Pretty	27.7	19.2	46.9	40.2	1.9	42.1
Elegant	7.6	16.0	23.6	25.8	0.6	26.4
Sexy	3.1	13.9	17.0	25.0	1.7	27.5
Cute/Girlish	11.6	0.9	12.5	3.8	0.2	4.0
Total	50.0	50.0	100.0	94.6	4.4	100.0

Note: Advertisements that are more than three pages and/or have 5 or more ads were excluded from analyses. Ads that do not show adult males and/or females were also excluded. Themes refer to the written as well as the visual imagery. The categories are not mutually exclusive. *Gaijin* in this thesis refers only to Caucasian people. N= number of themes with female characteristics

These findings indicate a major cultural difference between North American and Japanese representations of women. North American women (at least Caucasian women) tend to be represented by such themes as pretty, sexy and elegant. Figure-1 is an example of these themes. The sexual theme is emphasized by the model's tight transparent black dress which clearly shows her body line, as well as the positioning of her hand on her

partially exposed breast. At the same time, elegant and classical elements can be seen from the black and white picture of the palace-like background as well as by her graceful atmosphere. North American women are often expected to expose their bodies to male viewers. In another sexy ad for female underwear (Figure-2) women are asked to "Help Keep America Beautiful" by exposing their near-nude bodies in the outdoors. This ad appeared in *Working Woman*, whose targeted readership is professional and career-oriented women. Even if a woman is aspiring towards a professional career, such as a CEO, this ad reminds her where she is positioned and perceived in the patriarchal society.

When Japanese women are portrayed as sexy, clear cultural differences emerge. Japanese women rarely expose their bodies or position them in sexually appealing ways as do their American counterparts. For example, a comparison of the ads for underwear reveals that the dominant purpose of North American ads (see Figure 2) is to seduce men. Women are positioned to attract men or to be looked at by men. Underwear ads by Japanese models, in contrast, seemed to intentionally avoid the theme of sexiness and seductiveness. In Figure 3, a woman tries to cheer up her shy underwear-clad friend who is trying to hide her face. Obviously this is a message exclusively for women -- the main gazer is supposed to be a woman.

When a Japanese woman shows any sexual connotations, quite often the cues are quite subtle. For example, Figure 4 depicts a sexy, pretty and cute Japanese woman. The tone of the ad is softness, purity and cleanliness emphasized by her white clothes and the product advertised (moisturizer). Although her face and the way she sits are girl-like, the presentation of her underwear-clad body could be seen as sexually provocative. However, her body is less exposed compared to North American ads. Her "girl-like" presentation also looks vulnerable and easily conquered by men.

When women in both cultures are shown as pretty, they seem to be presented similarly. Pretty women tend to be presented as warm, charming, and happy women with big "natural" smiles. Figure 5.1 and 5.2 depicts typical North American and Japanese

pretty women. North American women tend not to be presented in cute/girlish ways, whereas being cute was the second most frequent characteristic for the Japanese women.

However, being cute and pretty does not necessarily reduce Japanese women to a subordinate position. For example, in Figure-6, a playful "working woman" is shown trying to buy a diamond for herself. The woman, who looks like an ordinary working woman, says in a sort of girlish tone with a playful gesture and expression: "I don't want it just to be trendy, ...diamonds are forever wonderful." The center ad says "Before reaching thirty, I thought, am I doing O.K.? I am a little bit anxious about what my work and love affair are going to be like. But now a diamond. It will do me good from now on." The targeted readership of these magazines is in a similar position to the models. They are not too eager to get married right away, yet being "working women" they have some money that they can spend. Although the prices in the ads range from \$2300 to \$4300, these are "Diamonds for working women." The message is that readers are supposed to buy diamonds, instead of waiting for men to buy them for them. Buying a diamond for oneself signifies an independent and un-feminine act since it requires economic resources and it goes against a traditional norm that jewelry, especially diamonds, are given by men. Perhaps this is why these women are portrayed in "girlish" ways. It may be un-feminine behavior but this norm-breaking action can be justified by showing the models acting like girls. Being girl-like can be seen as a way of actively negotiating what they desire without being sanctioned. The ad tells us that you do not have to be a mature and elite career woman (who, incidentally, constitute less than 10 % of the working women population in Japan) to buy a diamond, nor do you have to wait for somebody to buy one for you. Instead, an ordinary working woman, like the typical reader, can buy one as a reward for herself. In this way Japanese women could be seen to take advantage of their femininity indirectly as a cultural resource in order to get what they want.

The Image of Gaijin Women

Another important issue in discussing Japanese advertisements is the prevalence of *gaijin* women. According to Creighton (1994), because of the tendency of Japanese advertisements to present pleasant-looking visual images rather than product information, *gaijin* are often used to provide a fantasy mood. Since *gaijin* are not really considered to be real people, at least not as individual people (because they are "outside people"), Japanese advertisements utilize these models in certain ways. Figure-7 is a typical use of *gaijin* as "mere objects" by presenting only fractions of their body parts (their faces). In this way, the advertisement can create a fantasy atmosphere which advertisers might not be able to evoke using Japanese models. Another ad using *gaijin* women (Figure 8) also creates a fantasy atmosphere by showing an elegant and sexy woman in underwear. This presentation of a *gaijin* woman in underwear is quite different from North American underwear ads or ads with Japanese models. In this ad, a *gaijin* model is relaxing and saying "When the scenery of the season is covered by a veil of chilliness, my mind becomes clear. My imagination creates wings and my mind is set free, Pola's body elegance, Sophical (*sic*)". Lying on a couch in a large room in only underwear, she is enjoying her "elegant time" before heading to a party. Although her pose and her exposed body parts indicate her sexiness, elegance is also another important part of this picture. At the same time, her image and the message create the fantasy atmosphere which invites readers to a world of dreamy imagination.

However, Creighton (1994) also argues that *gaijin* are not only used to provide a fantasy mood, but also to serve as norm-breakers who can violate the Japanese cultural code more easily than Japanese individuals. This means that *gaijin* can be presented in a way that Japanese people might secretly desire but cannot achieve due to their social customs. For example, Creighton notes that public displays of affection (such as kissing and hugging) have been restricted for Japanese to a large extent. Because of this cultural norm, advertisers are reluctant to use Japanese models in presenting images of romance. Yet it is all right to use Caucasians because after all they are *gaijin* and are "not us." As

Table 9 indicates, romantic love themes are portrayed more often by *gaijin* than by Japanese.

Creighton (1994) also argues that a similar logic applies to *gaijin* nudity. Using naked or nearly naked *gaijin* women in ads is acceptable, whereas the use of Japanese models may appear too realistic and thus might upset the public. In support of this argument, all the nude images in the Japanese sample were of *gaijin* women. There are a few women that possibly could be Japanese models, but these pictures obscure the model's race, for example, by showing the model naked from the back.

Gaijin women are also used to promote Western beauty standards, for example, by emphasizing the "whiteness" of their skin texture. This is especially true when *gaijin* women appear in ads for multi-national cosmetic companies, such as Chanel, Loreal, and Christian Dior. These ads reinforce the desirability of having skin color that is as close as possible to that of Caucasian women. In Figure 9, a Caucasian model with black hair in a white dress promotes a cosmetic product called "uv-white" from Shiseido. The model says: "the purpose is one; new beautiful white. Its whole purpose is to whiten." By using a *gaijin* who slightly resembles Japanese women (by having black hair and dark eyes), the ads send a message that although one can never achieve the whiteness of the Caucasian model, one can become closer to this ideal by using the promoted product.

In sum, the use of *gaijin* women has specific functions in Japanese advertisements. While they are often used to promote Western standards of beauty, they are also seen as imaginary beings or doll-like objects which exist only in a fantasy world. *Gaijin* women are often portrayed as sexy and shown in the nude while Japanese women do not expose their body to the public.

Female Roles

In both Japanese and North American samples, only 12% of the themes gave women any kind of role. Unlike the category of female characteristics, *gaijin* models in Japanese samples were not given many roles nor was their presence contextualized. The most frequent role for Japanese women was female friendship although almost no such ads were found between or among *gaijin* women. Again, this pattern suggests that *gaijin* models tend to be used as imaginary and fantasy creatures that are not among "us", that is, people who really do not exist.

Table 7: Themes of Female Roles
Percentage of Females shown with Roles

	Japanese (n=102)		Total	American (n=119)		Total
	Japanese	Gaijin		Caucasian	Others	
Female Friend	30.4	2.0	32.4	10.2	3.3	13.5
Working Woman	24.5	5.9	30.4	4.2	0	4.2
New Woman	11.8	9.8	21.6	36.1	0	36.1
Mother/ Wife	8.8	0	8.8	15.1	0	15.1
Active Woman	6.8	0	6.8	29.4	1.7	31.1
Total	82.4	17.7	100.0	96.6	3.4	100.0

Note: Advertisements that are more than three pages and/or have 5 or more ads were excluded from analyses. Ads that do not show adult females were also excluded. Themes refer to the written as well as the visual imagery. The categories are not mutually exclusive. *Gaijin* in this thesis refers only to Caucasian people.

N= number of themes with female roles

Interestingly, the roles of "female friend" and "working women" were the most frequent themes in Japan. Many Japanese models were shown together with their friends doing various activities such as watching horse racing, trying on underwear, playing golf, and taking lunch breaks. In contrast, North American women are less frequently shown

with their female friends than their romantic partners, suggesting that female friendship is not a primary consideration for the depiction of the life of single working women in North America. When North American females are shown with their friends, four out of twelve female friendship pictures are shown among black and Caucasian women together.

However, as Figure-10 shows, the white woman is in the dominant position looking straight ahead while the black woman is looking at her from the side, as if in a supporting position. This positioning clearly reflects their differential power and status in society.

Although Japanese women are often portrayed as working women, the presentations are not realistic, but rather create a fantasy world. Such fantasy-oriented ads include a Japanese woman shown working with fashionable *gaijin* women and men in high-rise office towers in central Tokyo. Another ad portrays Japanese women as "unserious" workers who seem to be more interested in something other than the job. For example, Shiseido's styling hair mousse ad (Figure-11) shows three fashionable women at a trendy restaurant eating lunch saying "on a day like this, when my hair-style looks great, my boss's complaints don't bother me." In addition, the reason for the frequent portrayals of working women is that there are many ads from temporary workers agencies. Thus, although Japanese women may be shown as working, they are not necessarily portrayed as aspiring toward a professional career.

Interestingly, there were few ads showing working women in the North American sample. Instead North American women were frequently portrayed as mothers with their babies. Perhaps this can be interpreted as showing that North Americans take it for granted that women work outside the home, hence these are assumed to be working for mothers who are trying to balance their work and children. These advertisements can also be interpreted as trying to promote the preferred value of motherhood over working women.

North American women were frequently portrayed as "New Women" who were portrayed in non-traditional ways and "Active Women" who were engaging in sports

and/or activities. Some "New Women" emphasized their masculine characteristics, by wearing men's clothes and/or positioning themselves in masculine ways, such as sitting with their legs open like men. Figure 12 shows a woman wearing a tuxedo and trying to look like a man. However, she does not forget to be sexually-inviting to men (an important feminine quality) by giving certain cues such as holding her mouth half-open. Similar patterns can be found in "Active Woman." Figure 13, an ad for fat-burning tablets, shows a woman jogging from the back. Even if she has a tight and masculine body, she is still portrayed as being sexually attractive to males by wearing short jeans with holes in the hip through which one can see her buttocks. These ads show New and Active Women become like men while still preserving their feminine qualities of sexual appeal.

However, there is another type of "New Women" ad that shows women who are confident and assertive and not necessarily sending sexual cues (for example, Figure 14.1 and 14.2). Their confidence is shown by the way they sit and look straight ahead with almost no facial expressions. Although they can appear passive, they are at least apparently trying not to sexually objectify parts of their body. This portrayal could be interpreted as a passive rejection of the experience of being sexualized by the male gaze. These women are neither conventionally feminine or masculine. The "gender neutral-looking" women provide an alternative way of being female without being subject to female's traditional secondary status. In this sense, North American "gender-neutral" new women can be seen as competing with the image of traditional femininity.

Masculinity & Male Roles

In a given culture, femininity is constructed with respect to masculinity. Thus, comparing masculinity across cultures is an important way of identifying standards of femininity. Although the men and women who are portrayed in women's magazine ads might differ from those in male-oriented magazines, the important point of the following

analysis is to explore the kinds of masculinity that are presented as ideals *for women* in Japan and North America.

As noted in Table 5 North American ads show more men than in the Japanese sample (19.2% and 13.0%, respectively). Cross-cultural differences can also be observed here. Close to one half of North American males were portrayed as macho men in contrast to only 11% of Japanese males. In more than half of Japanese samples men were portrayed as the "gentle/nice man." When North American women and men are shown together, many ads position men physically higher than women and show their masculine strength (Figure 15). Figure-16 shows an example of the North American traditional macho man. A man is positioned in the center in control, dominating the scene. In contrast, the woman is positioned so that she appears to comfort him while hiding her face.

**Table 8: Themes of Masculinity and Male Roles
Percentage of Males Shown**

	Japan (n=55)			American (n=144)		
	Japanese	Gaijin	Total	Caucasian	Others	Total
Nice/Gentle Man	45.5	5.5	51.0	18.0	2.1	20.1
Macho Man	11.0	12.7	23.7	45.8	0	45.8
Sexy Man	0	0	0	16.0	0	16.0
Cute/Funny Man	9.0	3.6	12.6	15.3	0	15.3
Father/ Husband	12.7	0	12.7	2.8	0	2.8
Total	78.2	21.8	100.0	97.9	2.1	100.0

Note: Advertisements that are more than three pages and/or have 5 or more ads were excluded from analyses. Ads that do not show adult males were excluded. Themes refer to the written as well as the visual imagery. The categories are not mutually exclusive. *Gaijin* in this thesis refers only to Caucasian people.

N= number of themes with masculinity and male roles

Similar to North American women, North American men are also portrayed as sexy by exposing their body parts. Figure-17 shows a sexy but strong man. He indicates his sexiness by exposing his naked upper body. Although he is lying down and resting, he appears to be inviting women to do whatever they want with his body. Yet his big muscles are shown to signify his strength. Even if he is lying passively, he is ready to use his muscles. Only 4.1% of ads included non-Caucasian men which suggests that minority men are not really considered to be cultural models for women in North America.

Japanese men are not shown as sexy but are mainly shown as non-aggressive and gentle men (Figure-18). They are not likely to show off their masculine strength or hold dominant positions, but instead are just smiling nicely. The relative position and size of men and women are almost the same (Figure-19), suggesting that male dominance and power to control women are not depicted in the same way as they are in North American ads.

Japanese males do not appear much in advertisements, and when they do, their presence does not disturb "the world of women" since the men are typically portrayed as harmless, gentle and non-dominant. This portrayal does not necessarily mean that all actual Japanese males are gentle and nice. However, the important point of these findings is that different kinds of masculinity are presented as *ideals for women*; that is, what women are supposed to want from men, in their respective cultures.

Heterosexual Relationships

Clear cross-cultural differences emerged in the category for heterosexual relationship. First of all, North American ads present the theme of male-female relationships much more often than Japanese ads. Although not shown in Table 7, interestingly, Japanese ads portray more female friendship themes (5.7% of total sample) than those of "romantic love" (3.0%) or "marriage" (4.2%). In contrast, 12% of the North American ads portrayed romantic relationships compared with 2.3% for female friendship.

Male-female romantic relationships are emphasized in depiction's of the life of young working women in North America, but not necessarily so in Japan.

Although there are not many Japanese ads depicting male-female relationships in advertisements, (11.0% of total North American themes in comparison with only 5.6% of Japanese ones), half of these show the theme of marriage. This is because most of the "marriage theme" ads in Japanese women's magazines are from the computer-matching marriage agencies.¹³ When "romantic love" themes are present, *gaijin* women tend to be shown in the Japanese sample, for the reasons that I previously discussed. Such a high frequency of marriage themes shows that the Japanese female readership is within the "marriageable age" (i.e., in their mid-to late twenties). Due to the social pressure for this group of women to marry, they must focus on getting married rather than finding romantic love that might not lead to marriage. For Japanese readers, marriage is a more realistic event and has more priority than romantic and passionate involvement with men.

Table 9: Themes of Heterosexual Relationships
Percentage of Sub-Themes in Heterosexual Relationships

	Japanese (n=47)		Total	American (n=106)		Total
	Japanese	<i>Gaijin</i>		Caucasian	Others	
Marriage	46.8	4.3	51.1	11.3	0	11.3
Romantic Love	8.5	27.6	36.1	78.3	0	78.3
Male-Female Friendship	6.4	6.4	12.8	10.4	0	10.4
Total	61.7	38.3	100.0	100.0	0	100.0

Note: Advertisements that are more than three pages and/or have 5 or more ads were excluded from analyses. Ads that do not show adult females and/or males were excluded. Themes refer to the written as well as the visual imagery. The categories are not mutually exclusive. *Gaijin* in this thesis refers only to Caucasian people. N= number of themes with heterosexual relationship.

¹³In Japan, social norms pressure women into getting married before the age of thirty. This is considered to be a requirement for being a "proper female (and male)" and if they cannot find prospective husbands (or wives) they can apply to computer-assisted matching agencies.

Although the age of the targeted readership for North American samples is similar to that for the Japanese samples, there were fewer marriage themes in North American ads. Romantic love seems more important than marriage for single women in North America, although this could be because marriage is supposed to start from romantic love, not from computer-assisted arranged marriage brokers as presented in many of the Japanese marriage themes.

The married (or to be married) couples in the Japanese ads are shown in equal positions, whereas North American couples are shown as being under the control of the male. De Beers ads of engagement rings in both samples give us an interesting observation of the portrayal of male-female power relationship. The North American ad (Figure-20) shows men having the decision-making power over their relationships. In this ad, masculine strength is emphasized by the voice saying that he could move mountains and by the shadow on the rock of him lifting his fiancée. The woman is not shown participating or having decision-making power but instead is passively accepting her subordinate position.

In contrast, in the Japanese ad (Figure 21) the man's voice on the right says "Let's plan our life schedule together" and the woman replies "First, we will start with finding (my engagement) ring." Here she is not waiting to be given a ring, but is actively involved in making their plans and leading the way. Although it was the man who proposed to her, his absence in the picture suggests that it is she who is in charge now. It is interesting that the ad apparently tries not to show her being too dominant over him. She is wearing a white wedding dress which represents purity and obedience, and displays the girl-like gesture of looking ahead in the soft pink feminine background. In other words, the picture tries to negotiate her leadership in their relationship with her cuteness/girliness. This close reading of the ads tells us that manifest images of being cute/girlish have more meaning when put in the larger context and structure of the advertisement.

Conclusion

The portrayal of women in women's magazines is powerfully ideological both for what it shows and what it does not show. Cross-cultural comparisons reveal the arbitrary construction of femininity. The findings from both samples suggested that women are presented with a limited range of acceptable ways to be female. Although Japanese women are not expected to expose and present their body in an overtly sexual manner, the range of acceptable femininity is narrower than it is in the North American sample. Readers are not really given much choice beyond being pretty and cute. This portrayal is the ideological reflection of male desires of having women under their control. That females do not appear to be taken seriously and are presented as vulnerable and easily conquered by males can be seen as a product of a patriarchal society. Women who are strong, assertive and independent are not welcomed as cultural models.

However, Japanese women are not always portrayed as helpless and dependent on men. As explained with the diamond ads, Japanese women can utilize their femininity as a cultural resource for gaining power. As long as women look as though they are conforming to the socially-accepted and expected standards of femininity, they can exercise power indirectly to achieve what they desire. This does not mean that being cute is the best way to empower women in Japan; in fact, it could perpetuate the status quo. Being feminine within Japanese culture could be understood as a cultural resource for women and not just a passive acceptance of the social norms. In this sense, women learn what society expects them to be, which enables them to utilize their gender as a resource. Moreover, the Japanese sample often showed women with other women and occupying the central role, suggesting that women's magazines create a world for women where men only occupy a peripheral position.

The use of *gaijin* women in Japanese advertisements was also revealing. The *gaijin* model provides representations of "others" or those who are "not us." Just as Western people have used the Orient to represent "others" in order to establish their

identity, Japanese people also use foreigners in order to signify what being Japanese is and what it is not (Creighton, 1994). This view is quite different from the notion of "Cultural Colonialism" which sees Western cultural influences, such as the presence of Caucasian models in ads in non-western countries, to be totally oppressive to non-western women and as something that destroys their local culture. Caucasian models are presented as "desirable but undesirable" precisely because they are somebody that you should look up to, but not to emulate (because after all they are not us). Fantasy-like presentations of *gaijin* women also allow Japanese women to gain an escape from reality.

Some aspects of cultural colonialism in the *gaijin* women ads can be observed, however. There is no doubt that the images of *gaijin* women have influenced beauty standards in Japan. There is an emphasis on having whiter skin and people tend to believe that Western things are more sophisticated. Yet, the images of *gaijin* are modified to fit into the Japanese socio-cultural context. In another words, *gaijin* models have to be "Japanized" in a way that is acceptable and desirable for Japanese viewers.

North American women, in contrast, seem to have more variety and a wider range of cultural definitions of femininity. Women are expected to be sexy, pretty, and elegant. New and Active women are often presented, emphasizing strong and independent female characteristics. Thus it appears that women have the freedom to choose their own *definition of femininity*. Yet, my qualitative analysis suggests that North American women are still confined to a traditional definition of femininity, especially through the emphasis on their physical sexuality, and their subordinate position to men. There are also "gender-neutral" ads that do not emphasize either gender. In these ads women are shown as confident and assertive new women without necessarily fitting into conventional definitions of masculinity or femininity. This new portrayal of femininity competes with the persisting traditional femininity in North American women's magazines. North American women are also frequently portrayed within the context of a heterosexual couple, and men are often shown as traditionally macho. Although women tend to

become more masculine (by being new women), men are not likely to be presented as "non-macho" or "feminine."

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF ARTICLES

General Pattern of Themes

In this chapter the analyses of article content in Japanese and North American women's magazines are presented and discussed. As shown in Table 8 the basic pattern of themes are similar for the two samples. Relationship-related articles were the most frequent in both samples. But unlike the findings in advertisements, more than 40% of the sampled articles in Japanese women's magazine dealt with male-female relationships compared to 30% for the North American samples. The issue of "work and family" is the second most frequent theme for both samples, suggesting the importance of this topic in both cultures. North American "work and family" themes are almost as frequent as "relationship" themes whereas Japanese "work and family" themes had only half the frequency of "relationship" themes. Both Japanese and North-American samples devote similar proportions to "self-help" themes but Japanese magazines dealt with "social issues" almost as much as they did for "self-help". In contrast, North-American "social issues" are presented much less frequently than the other themes.

Table 10 also suggests that within the same culture, depending on the targeted readership, the proportion of article content differs. The Japanese sample shows a clear pattern of the relationship between the degree of career aspiration of the targeted readership and the proportion of themes devoted to "relationships." A similar argument can be made for "work and family" related-themes. The more a targeted readership is career-oriented, the higher the proportion of themes relating to "work and family" and "social issues." In contrast, clear relations between article content and magazine within North American women's magazines were not found. The similar proportion of "relationship" themes and "work & family" themes suggests that North American female readers, whether married or not, are considered to be long-term working women, and that working is as important as catching a man.

Table 10: Distribution of Main Themes in Japanese Articles
Percentage of Main Themes in Japanese Magazines

	Nikkei Woman (n=113)	Cosmo (n=73)	More (n=46)	With (n=52)	Say (n=96)	Total¹⁴ (n=380)
Relationship	15.0	20.5	47.8	69.3	60.4	42.6
Work&Family	42.5	23.4	10.8	7.7	12.5	19.4
Self-Help	15.0	16.4	13.0	11.5	13.5	13.9
Social Issues	21.2	24.7	24.0	0	6.3	15.2
Others	6.3	15.0	4.4	11.5	7.3	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 11: Distribution of Main Themes in North American Articles
Percentage of Main Themes in North American Magazines

	Working Woman (n=67)	New Woman (n=87)	Glamour (n=79)	Cosmo (n=101)	Mademoiselle (n=49)	Total¹⁵ (n=383)
Relationship	0	42.5	44.3	34.6	16.3	29.5
Work&Family	73.0	18.4	15.1	18.8	22.4	27.5
Self-Help	12.0	26.4	9.0	28.7	10.2	17.3
Social Issues	6.0	3.4	24.0	6.0	18.4	11.6
Others	9.0	9.3	7.6	11.9	32.7	14.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: The sampled articles do not contain fashion & beauty pages (advertorials), traveling, entertainment/leisure, cooking, letters to the editor, Q and A, and celebrity interviews. "Others" include articles of useful information such as women's health, buying a car, money saving, etc. n= number of themes in each magazine.

Marriage and Romance

Although not shown in Table 10 and 11, the theme of "finding and keeping a man" consisted of almost 25% of all the Japanese themes whereas it amounted to less than 10% for the North American samples. I further broke this theme down into two categories. The first is "getting and keeping a man to marry" (themes related to marriage) and the second is "getting and keeping a man for romance" (themes related to romantic love). Within the category of "marriage and romance" themes, 21.0% of Japanese articles dealt with the marriage-related-theme and 30.7% of them discussed mainly romantic love. Only

¹⁴The average of the total Japanese sample

¹⁵The average of the total North American sample

10.6% of such North-American samples talked specifically about catching a man to marry and 18.6% of the themes were devoted to finding heterosexual romantic partners.

Table 12: Marriage & Romance Themes
Percentage of all Themes in Romance & Marriage

	Japanese(n=149)	American(n=115)
Getting and Keeping a Man	51.7	28.7
Understand What Men Think	19.5	23.5
Avoid Bad Relationship/Man	16.1	13.0
Relationship Improvement	10.7	17.4
Sexual Activity	2.0	17.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: N= number of themes regarding Marriage and Romance

Even though Japanese magazines emphasize the themes of getting a man to marry and glorify marriage in the interviews of some newlywed female celebrities and readers, some Japanese women's magazines also present readers with negative stories about married life. Often being told by "real-life" wives, these articles transmit the "reality" of the consequences of choosing a husband and becoming a wife. In "The truth of becoming a daughter-in-law" (*More-7*: 5), a reader living in a traditional local area tells her experience of marrying a first-born son. His relatives expect her to take on the role of daughter-in-law, meaning that she is to devote her life to taking care of the whole extended (husband's) family. She is not allowed to go out to work because people do not approve that her baby son would be cared for at a nursery. She criticizes the system of marriage that makes women a servant for the family, but she feels helpless to do anything to change her situation.

In "If I were you, I would do this : My fiancée's parents hate me" (Say-8) four single women (as readers' representatives) criticize one reader's concern for not being able to get along with her future mother-in-law. Their comments were quite stern. "She shouldn't get married if she cannot deal with such a small thing", "It is immature to think that romance and marriage are the same thing", "Marriage is not the unity of individuals but the unity of two families", "You need to put up with each other when it comes to marriage." It is interesting to note that unwed women act as social norm senders informing readers about what they can expect from marriage. The message is that marriage is not a fulfillment of romance nor a fantasy life that is awaiting them. For Japanese women, marriage is presented as the end of their freedom, and they have to expect to experience some hardship or sacrifice. Thus, these articles play the role of preparing unwed women for the sometimes grim reality of married life.

Yet, the social pressure to marry is still very strong for women. Quite a few of the articles mentioned the culturally unique notion of *tekireiki* (proper age to marry)¹⁶. In an article "How to find your own *tekireiki*" (With-1), three actresses who got married at the age of 32, 25 and 23 talk about how they made their decisions. The main message is that it is important not to give in to the social pressure to get married by a certain prescribed age, but to find one's own timing. However, the statistics of women's age at first marriage are shown in the article which reveal that 78% of women get married before the age of 30. The underlying assumption is that women should get married at some point, preferably before 30. Japanese women's magazine not only transmit social norms for women but they also teach readers the techniques and skills necessary to catch a good husband, and the question of whether every woman should get married is never asked.

¹⁶. In Japan social pressure to get married by a certain age (*tekireiki*= "marriageable age" or "suitable -age-to-marry") still exists. Up until the mid-80's, women's *tekireiki* was around 25 (it is slightly higher for men). Since after the age of 25 the marketability of women decreased drastically, single women older than this were called "Christmas Cake." (Something that nobody wants after December 25!) Now statistics show that women have started to delay getting married, and "New Year's Eve" has become the new norm. (It is O.K. to wait until December 31, but there is not much hope after that.)

In an article, "Romance that leads to marriage" (*With-9*) a real-life wife comments:

Every time I started having a relationship with a man, he always ended up leaving me because I had come on too strong trying to figure out whether he was intending to marry me or not. This past time I tried not to make the same mistake. I tried not to look too desperate to get married. I did my best to make him feel comfortable and spend quality time together. I did not mention marriage at all. As we spent our time together, gradually we started talking about getting married. It appears that the quickest way to be proposed to is not to mention marriage. (25 years old, hospital worker)

Here is a female who, after successfully obtaining the "status of wife," tells other readers in similar situations about her technique of snaring a husband. Although the social pressure behooves young women to marry by a certain age, the message is that women must not look too anxious or eager to get married. These almost contradictory messages are characteristic of the marriage-related article in Japanese women's magazines.

It seems that the less the magazine becomes career-oriented, the more it deals with marriage themes like how to catch a husband and when to get married. In *Nikkei Woman* and *Cosmopolitan*, only a few such articles were found. *More* has some articles but gives a somewhat more critical look at marriage as a system. Non-career-oriented women's magazines offer a lot of careful, skillful and calculated techniques to catch good husbands by showing the kinds of women that elite businessmen, doctors, and men in general want to have for their wives.

North American articles tend to discuss heterosexual relationships without mentioning marriage specifically. However, when mentioned, marriage tends to be portrayed as "happy" with a blissful image of the future. ("Diary of a happy relationship": NW-10 and "Happy marriage": NW-3). Marriage-related themes also discuss how to maintain or improve good relationships with their husbands ("Dating your husband": NW-2 and "Affair-proof your marriage": NW-12). These articles indicate that marriage, by itself, is not a complete form of a relationship, and that just being a wife is not enough for one should always try to be a *good* wife.

"From love to marriage: How men get there" (GI-1), an essay written by a marriageable-age man, presents a similar topic to that found in Japanese magazines. The

article consists of case studies of indecisive marriageable-age men and discusses why some men cannot make the final step to become husbands. However, there were almost no North American articles about women being hesitant to marry or offering women techniques of tactfully making men feel like they want to get married.

The only exception is the article from the February issue of *Mademoiselle* called "Hooking him: A Last-Ditch Guide---5 ways to get a man to commit". Five techniques to get a man committed to you (i.e., propose to you) are offered with examples of successful couples. One of the tips is to make an ultimatum. The key to the successful ultimatum is, according to one woman's example, to act as if it was his idea.

You have to let your honey feel as though he's the genius who cooked up his commitment plan---that he's the one at bat (even though it's really your ball game). The upside of his approach is that it can make you feel that you're taking control of your life.

This indirect way of influencing decision-making is similar to themes in Japanese women's magazines. Given that no other magazine had the similar article and that *Mademoiselle* is the least career/professional-oriented magazine in the North American sample, there may be a correlation between the career-orientedness and the degree of marriage-seeking.

As the result of the themes in advertisements for North American women's magazines showed, finding romantic love is given more priority than getting married. One of the cultural characteristic of North American "getting a man for romantic love" is that women are portrayed as being very assertive in finding men. Articles such as "The Night They Auctioned Hunks" (Cosmo-12), "The Love You Want " (NW-62) advise women to get what they want as it is women who hunt men. "Put yourself first" (Cosmo-1) and "Love Courage" (GI-12) suggest that women maintain their self-control and self-esteem in their relationship. "Singleness" is also being affirmed, too. "No man shortage in the 1990s" (NW-1) reports that unmarried women are increasingly comfortable with their single status and that it is a myth that single women (including divorced ones) are desperately looking for men. However, another article " There's no man in your life and

you are lonely. What to do about it" (Cosmo-2) transmits the opposite idea that women's happiness will not be fulfilled until they get men.

Feel as if everybody in the entire universe is coupled off but you? Listen, it's temporary. Somebody is there. Right now, relax---let solitude help you reconnect!

The idea that women's happiness depends on men seems to have validity in the world of women's magazines both in Japan and North America. Yet the completely different message found in *New Woman* and *Cosmopolitan* could be due to the different goals that these magazines present for female readers. For *Cosmopolitan*, getting men is very important for women, while for *New Woman*, to be happy on your own seems to be significant for women whether with or without men.

It is important to note that both cultures put similar emphasis on "understanding what men think". Learning men's opinions, values, behavior and perspectives is very important for women to survive in the "male-dominated" society within which women's magazines exist and mediate cultural messages. However, because of the differences in the social relations of men and women, cross-cultural differences also become evident. Most of the North American articles found in "understanding about men" dealt with learning men's values and ways of thinking. "His point of view" (*Cosmo*), "Jake: A man's opinion" (*Glamour*), "Not for men only" (*New Woman*) are all regular monthly columns written by male writers which provide women with knowledge about male perspectives.

These columns discuss and emphasize how different men and women are in terms of perspectives, values, ways of thinking and so on. The premise is that men and women differ fundamentally so women need to know more about what men are thinking. At the same time, the column delivers the messages which justify the male way of thinking as legitimate. North American women's magazines serve as a guide to know more about male behavior which might be necessary information to successfully live in a "male-dominated" society. Instead of asking men to change or to understand more about women, women's magazines ask women to learn to cope with men.

In contrast, Japanese magazines tend to portray men's opinions about ideal women and often show elite businessmen as potential husbands talking about the kinds of women they want, and do not want, to marry or have as girl friends. Articles such as "Women that men want to marry, women that men do not want to marry" (*Say-11*), "The type of woman's face that men like has been changed!" (*With-10*) have "real-life" men and other male celebrities talk about their "ideal women." In "Shy and uncoordinated women can fulfill the romance" (*With-1*), marriageable age single businessmen express their opinions on ideal womanhood:

A female colleague of mine is always polite and considerate in doing her routine work such as making copies, taking phone messages, and pouring tea for others. When I said thank you to her, she says "I cannot be of your help. I am sorry that this is that all I can do for you." She is not a career type but she can be very considerate. For men that's much cuter. (27 years old, computer-related company)

Men are not just looking for physically attractive, cheerful women. They also want to have a dominant position over woman so they want to get a woman that they can "protect." Or women who can listen to the complaints that men make and support him. (28 year old, construction company)

On the other hand, men appearing in an article "Good luck, young men! Men are confused dealing with women" (*J-Cosmo-11*) discuss a different social situation and gender relation:

I do not want my girlfriend dependent on me too much. We do not live in a day when "men lead and women follow" anymore. (24 years old, system engineer)

If I am going out with a woman, one or two years older than me is the best. She would be more mature and then I can grow more by learning from her. (23 years old printing company)

Woman are becoming too strong, assertive and demanding. So relatively speaking, men look like they are getting weaker and unreliable. (25 years old, service industry)

Here, men do not assert their dominant position over women, but rather question the traditional gender roles and power relationships. With an opinion from an expert (psychologist) the article teaches women how to have better communication with men. The article argues that women have already started to become more economically as well as emotionally independent and self-sufficient, but men have not caught up to this change

yet. Men still want to be taken care of by women and they have not yet become autonomous people who see women as mature partners. The article states that in order for gender equality to be achieved, men must figure out that it is a good thing for both men and women. So, instead of forcing men to change, women should just watch over men and let them figure out how to change by themselves.

The men's opinions presented in this article sound different from those in the *Say* or *With* articles. In *Say* and *With* there is no room for the discussion of gender equality nor changes in men's values. Instead, these magazines present men's comments as an indication of what "ordinary, potential husband" men are expecting from women. The readers need to know what men are thinking about women because it will help their chances to find men and possibly marry them. In contrast, magazines such as *Nikkei Woman* and *Cosmopolitan-Japan* present the themes which convey co-existence with men.

Japanese magazines seem to place more emphasis on how to avoid problematic relationships with men than "how to have a better relationship". This emphasis reflects the fact that although women are encouraged to find partners to marry soon, the stigma of divorce makes them cautious in choosing their husbands. Through articles such as: "How to detect Mario-san (mama's boy)", (*Ni W-11*), "Divorced women talk about undesirable men" (*Say-1*), "Have you noticed the cunning men?" (*Say-3*), and "Women who are easy to be deceived" (*Say-8*), women learn the skills to avoid getting married to the wrong men. *Say*, in particular, had the highest frequency of this theme. This is probably because for those readers of *Say* who tend to quit their jobs to become housewives or part-timers, it is very important for them to know how to avoid undesirable men since their life depends on the person they marry. Thus, this theme offers tips for "survival skills" for women.

North American women's magazines have relationship-improvement themes more frequently than their Japanese counterparts. The existence of advice on "how to improve

your relationship" in woman's magazines suggests that it is a woman's duty to worry about and fix a relationship by understanding men's nature. "Will he ever change?" (NW-11) is a typical "woman as responsible caretaker" article. In order to help change a man (in this case, it was an alcoholic husband), ten tips were offered. It would be interesting to know if there are similar topics found in men's magazines about how to help alcoholic wives to change. This kind of article facilitates the image of women as caretakers of men and families.

Pronounced differences between Japan and North America were found in the issue of sexual activity. In Japan, it is still relatively a taboo to discuss sex and sexual pleasure in public. In the Japanese sample only four articles (less than 1% of the entire sample) dealt with learning about sexual pleasure or activity, whereas this topic was as common as "relationship improvement" in the North American sample. At the same time, the ways sexual activity and female sexuality are presented differ between the two cultures.

In "As a lover, he's merely a lamb? Here's how to turn your man into a bedtime tiger" (Cosmo-11), women take initiatives to have more satisfying sex with men. The article offers women step-by-step advice such as "invade his sexual comfort zone," "insist he be a sexual participant," "teach him how to please you." The primary message of this article is that if you want something, you should speak up and reach out for yourself. The implicit message is that women are independent and assertive enough to get what they want in life, including great sex. Similarly, another article entitled "As sexy as you want to be" (NW-11) encourages women to learn to boost their sexual self-confidence.

In the end, sexual self-esteem is the product of how we feel about ourselves as sexual beings. When we allow ourselves to feel the joys and intimacies of lovemaking without fearing how we'll be judged. And, most important of all, we feel worthy of the pleasure of sexual intimacy.

As these examples indicate, North American women's magazines show women's sexual activity as possessiveness, assertiveness and self-confidence.

Interestingly, when Japanese articles dealt with sexual activity, it was used as a warning for women not to be exploited or be taken advantage of by men sexually. "Is he serious about you or just using you? How to figure out his seriousness when you have sex" (Say-8), "After having sex, your relationship changes" (Say-3), and "The difference between sex that deepens love and sex that breaks love" (With-10). In contrast, *Cosmopolitan-Japan* and *More* had a somewhat "westernized" view in the sense that they had a more positive attitude towards sexual activity. This different attitude might be because women who are more marriage-oriented, such as readers of *Say* and *With*, must use their sexuality tactically as it is one of their resources. Women who read *Cosmopolitan-Japan* and *More*, on the other hand, may tend to use their sexuality as a means to have pleasure and to be liberated from traditional, confining values.

Self-Help

Both Japanese and North American magazines devote a similar amount of space to the theme of "self-help" (13.9% and 17.3%, respectively). However, more than half of the Japanese articles were devoted to "self-presentation" themes. In contrast, close to 60% of North American "self-help" themes appeared as "Self-growth and fulfillment".

Self-fulfillment and growth themes suggest that there are certain pressures in North American culture for one to always strive towards some kind of personal or social achievement and perfection of inner-self. Among North American "Self-growth" themes, articles that deal with personal happiness appear most frequently. "Creating happiness" (NW-12), "Will I ever be happy?" (M-1), "You can feel good again." (Cosmo-12) all remind readers that they must become happy about themselves and offer them ways to achieve this goal. Offering eight tips to become happy, an article, "Wanna be happy? Here's How." (Cosmo-10) suggests:

Simply recognize that you can consciously *choose* to be happy. Do not put happiness on hold. There is only one right time to make your move toward happiness: *now*. You can make happiness a habit just the way you make other types of behavior a habit--- through repeated practice, until it becomes a subconscious act.

The underlying assumption is that if you are not happy as many people often are not, there is something wrong with you as an individual, and it is your responsibility to fix that problem somehow. The difficulty with this is that sometimes people are unhappy not because of personal or emotional instability, but due to larger issues such as sexism, racism etc. Thus, just merely making it a "habit" to think about happiness may not solve the fundamental problem. These articles show an optimistic approach to what individuals can do and neglect to see the complexity of social relations.

Table 13: Self-Help Themes
Percentage of All Themes in Self-Help

SUB-THEME	Japanese (n=149)	American (n=115)
Self-Growth & Fulfillment	28.8	57.0
Better Self-Presentation	54.2	36.0
Overcoming Misfortune	17.0	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: N= number of themes regarding Self-Help

This pursuit of happiness also indicates the tendency for individuals to continuously strives towards inner-perfection. Articles like "Are you sabotaging your career?" (NW-1) tell readers that women have a "success anxiety" due to their low self-esteem. "If success makes us anxious, we may seek to reduce our anxiety to lower, more tolerable level. We may sabotage our efforts to achieve our professional goals". So an expert (a practicing psychotherapist) argues that "we must learn to identify the ways in which we tend to self-sabotage *so that we can make a conscious effort to abstain from doing them*". The presupposition is that everybody should achieve some kind of personal or social goal to become more perfect beings. If you do not want to become successful, there is something wrong with your self-esteem. But there is no discussion on why women are afraid of being successful (especially more than men), or why women have

lower self-esteem than men in general. The reasons for these issues are left unexplored and instead the articles blame individual women for not having higher self-esteem or wanting to be successful. North American magazines consistently present a message that it is possible for individual women to achieve success if they try harder as individuals. But individuals live in a complex web of social structures and women are in a disadvantageous position within this web. The limited range of the kinds of women readers are allowed to be in a male-oriented society is not questioned in "Self-Help" themes nor anywhere in the pages of women's magazines. In this way, women's magazines prevent women from developing alternative viewpoints to examine their social situation.

There were less than one half of the number of "self-fulfillment" themes in Japanese magazines than in North American magazines. There were very few "self-fulfillment" articles in *Say, With and More*. Japanese women's magazines do not advise readers about how to live their personal life or solve their problems. For example, the August issue of *Nikkei Woman* had an article called "Find what you really like and it opens up your life". It encourages women to look for their potential talents in the things that they most like and there is not pressure to become a super-achiever or a perfect women. The reason that themes to become successful or happy do not frequently appear in Japanese women's magazines is interesting to consider. One explanation is that Japanese culture does not really encourage people to strive to become a perfect and outstanding being. Another possible explanation is that social success is not expected for Japanese women (because of their secondary status in society) and that striving to be a successful person may not be considered a part of femininity that women need to learn from magazines.

Another prominent cross-cultural difference in the self-help category is found in the themes regarding self-presentation skills. For Japanese readers, rather than pursuing one's individual happiness and building one's self-esteem, emphasis is placed on how to learn to exist with others in harmonious relationships. The articles emphasize how to

present yourself to others and to know how one is supposed to conform to "social" expectations. Within the "self-presentation" theme, I further categorized themes as "general social skills" and "feminine skills and manners." In the Japanese samples, 30.5% of the themes were about learning feminine manners, making it the most frequent sub-theme in the "self-help" category. Only 7% of "self-presentation" themes were devoted to "feminine skills and manners" in the North American samples.

"How to become everybody's favorite person" (*Say*-11), and "Make yourself a better communication partner" (*J-Cosmo*-2), are two typical articles that contain themes of teaching social skills of a better self-presentation. The main purpose of these articles is to teach interpersonal communication skills especially in group situations such as the workplace. Reflecting the group-orientedness of Japanese society, both of these articles teach readers how to prevent conflict and maintain harmonious relationships with others rather than how to present oneself as an outstanding person in a group.

North American women's magazines had articles with quite different orientations from Japanese "interpersonally oriented" skills. For example, articles such as "How to criticize an employee's work" (*Wo W*-11), "What to do when you are mad" (*M*-2), "Keeping your cool at work" (*NW*-10), and "Speaking in public may not be easy, but shall we get on with it?" (*Cosmo*-2). Almost all suggest techniques of how to present oneself better as an individual to others at a social setting. The emphasis is on how to make yourself look better to others and how to have self-control, rather than how to communicate well with others.

"Feminine skill and manners" articles such as "Those with good manners attract men" (*With*-11), "Do not embarrass yourself: 46 common-sense manners for women" (*Say*-2), and "The manners of the ladies of high society" (*Say*-regular column), show that there are stricter and more specific social norms constituting femininity in Japan. After introducing manners regarding eating and language usages, the article from *With* presents

real-life mens' comments on women that disappointed them by bad manners and women who impressed them with their feminine concerns and manners. For example:

Sure, she (my girlfriend) knows so many things ranging from sub-cultures to international politics and economics. I was proud of her because she could carry on a conversation with anybody. But I can't stand her when she says "Don't you know such things?" She wasn't like that when we started going out. Now she is losing her modesty. Ah, maybe I should change my girlfriend to somebody who I can teach many things." (26 years old, administration office)

This comment transmits the message to women that even if a woman is knowledgeable and intelligent, lacking the consideration to make men look good (one very important feminine skill); will reduce her value. In the same article, a list of feminine manners that 100 men think of as important are provided. It includes "speak with a smile", "consideration toward others", "proper language usage" and "modesty that considers your position". Again, here we can see the "marriageable age man" as a social norm sender.

Although North American magazines present men's opinions regarding women to a certain extent, they do not seem to be directing women in a dominant manner. The fact that Japanese men appear self-appointed to teach women what "ideal femininity" is supposed to be and how females should behave in society reflects the secondary status of women in Japan (unless it is found, of course, that women are doing the same thing in men's magazines). However, it should be noted that the relatively career-oriented magazines such as *More*, *Nikkei-Woman*, and *Cosmopolitan-Japan* do not carry "feminine skill or presentation" themes. It can be argued that feminine skills are considered to be important resources for readers of *Say* and *With* since learning certain manners and social norms may increase their chance of impressing and attracting good husbands.

The theme of "overcoming misfortune" did not have a high frequency in either sample, particularly in the North American sample. These articles were about how people struggled over tragedies such as depression, child abuse, breast cancer and accidents, regaining their hope and self-esteem through extraordinary will power and the support and

love from those close to them. Japanese magazines tended to show slightly more tragedy themes than North American ones. However, there were no "tragedy-related" stories found in *Say* and *With*. It could be that these two magazines do not want to deal too extensively with people's struggles. Rather, these magazines may strive to conceal undesirable things, presenting only fantasy and pleasurable images.

Work and Family

Both the Japanese and North American samples contained similar proportions of themes related to work and family. However, if the themes were divided into the separate categories of family and work¹⁷ at least 88% of these themes in the North-American sample are strictly work-related themes, compared to 63% of such themes in the Japanese sample. Moreover, in the Japanese sample, most of the work-related articles were from *Nikkei Woman* and almost no articles about work were found in *Say* and *With*. Similarly, most of the work-related themes in North American samples were from *Working Woman*, and the rest of the magazines had almost equal proportions of work-related themes.

In the North-American sample, "Learn from successful women," "Surviving and competing at the workplace," and "Career strategies" appeared with almost equal frequency, suggesting that these topics are of considerable importance. For the Japanese samples, "surviving and competing at the workplace" and "importance of wife- and motherhood" had almost the same frequency. This finding indicates the existence of social norms which maintain that although Japanese women work, being a wife and mother is of equal importance. For example, *Nikkei Woman*, the most career-oriented of the magazines, has a regular monthly column called "working mothers."

Table 14: Work & Family Themes
Percentage of All Work & Family Themes

¹⁷ If we combine "Learn from successful working women," "surviving and competing at workplace," and "career strategy."

SUB-THEME	Japanese (n=84)	N-American (n=101)
Surviving & Competing at Workplace	27.3	24.0
Importance of Wife/Motherhood	25.0	4.0
Learn from Successful Working-Women	21.4	27.0
Career Strategies	14.3	22.0
Juggling Work & Family	9.5	12.0
Family Life/Ties	2.5	11.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: N= number of themes regarding work and family

Both Japanese and North American magazines contained similar proportions of themes related to women "Struggling and competing at the workplace" and offered tips to deal with the issue. The Japanese article "Office politics...." teaches *Cosmopolitan-Japan* readers how to deal with younger and less experienced female workers. The article presents opinions from several younger working women (20 to 26 years old) about their senior working colleagues (27 to 33 years old). The article does not just describe what kind of senior working women are preferred, but it also assumes potential conflict between these two age groups. The reason for this conflict is that in mainstream Japanese work settings, it is still a norm for women to quit working around their mid twenties. Those who stay at work either have strong career aspirations or have missed out in the marriage market. Since these two groups of working women may have different values, work ethics and lifestyles, the presence of senior workers are not appreciated by the younger ones. The article tells career women that learning how to handle the younger working women is as important as learning how to compete with men. The problem is that the article is indirectly suggesting to readers that women who work longer must be careful in their behavior because they are not really welcomed by either the men or by

younger women. Instead of criticizing the double standard imposed on senior women workers and the social system which put them in a difficult and disadvantageous position, this article teaches temporary solutions for women to "get by".

Articles that deal with the ways women are competing in the workplace, especially against male-centered work ethic and values, are found in both Japanese and North American samples. *More* had a special 14-page-article in Question and Answer format, titled "Before you quit work, please read this" (More-12). In one of the questions, a reader complains that

I feel that in order to be recognized as equal to men, women have to work three times as hard as men do. Since I am too busy working until late I hardly have time for myself so I wonder if I can keep working after I get married. I do not want to slow down my workload after marriage because I do not want men to think that women are not serious about work. I do not want to go back to easy clerical work merely as a man's assistant. But I also start questioning my days that go so quickly by without having much of a life. (23 years old, fashion industry)

This reader is struggling to compete against her male co-workers and has already started to worry about juggling her career and family as if it would be an impossible situation. She takes it for granted that once she is married, she has to face the double burden and must choose either work or marriage. The answers from the "experts" are:

It's true that if you want to be promoted, unless you work at least as much as the man who works the most, it is not possible to compete against men. But you are still young and looking for something you really want to do. So why do not you devote yourself more to work and challenge until you reach your limit? (Female, writer)

You are trying too hard to become like men. We need to reconsider men's way of working. Men need to slow down and change their ways of living. So you shouldn't be planning your life to choose either marriage or work, but to do both of them. Why do not you relax more? (Male, labor consultant)

If you cannot escape from this gender inequality right away, why don't you try to make it more enjoyable? You may find something that is three times more interesting than it is for men! I think women should take a part in creating new business ethics which replace men's old business ethics of efficiency and productivity. Sit back, look and laugh at men's mentality and principles. If you can help to create a more human-centered business environment, broad-minded men will take your side, too. (Male, advertising critic)

It is interesting that the woman's answer is for her to become more like men and think in terms of men's principles, whereas two of the male experts suggest that she gets away from the male mode of thinking and values. It is difficult to decide whether to compete with men and become like them or to emphasize the difference between men and women's values and perspectives. Although the suggestions were not constructive toward gender equality, it is important to note that at least two alternative views were offered as survival skills for struggling working women.

North American women's magazines are also torn by the issue of either "feminizing" the work environment or of women "masculinizing" themselves. In "Top career women talk about the choices they made" (Cosmo-3), career women with high achievements, such as top executives of big corporations, a Justice of the Supreme court, a TV personality, and a Mayor, talk about their struggle to get to the top:

I'm sure my husband feels I put Penny ahead of him. But most men put the company first, and that's acceptable. How else do you move up in a multibillion-dollar company?
(executive vice president, JCPenny)

We no longer eat what my husband nostalgically refers to as "food made from ingredients." Simple does not begin to describe our meals.
(principal, Lens Inc.,)

I miss the chance to just hang over the fence with other women, the friends you continually unveil your life history to.
(vice President, Gemini consulting)

The article affirms such lifestyle of top career women by saying "sure, they've had to sacrifice in some areas, but the rewards are terrific." The article is trying to convince readers that although these women hardly have time for themselves and might have missed out on a lot of other things, having career with high achievements and jobs they love are worth the sacrifice. The implication is that if women want to become successful, they have to become more like women who are "sociologically male" (Glazer, 1980). This

means that women have to work harder than men and appreciate men's values while relinquishing their personal life.

Despite the above, there are some articles that question whether women should conform to such male values and lifestyles, and see career advancement and power as the sole measure of a successful life. *Working Women* had two articles regarding the redefinitions of "power" and "success". These articles claimed that women in the 90's have started to realize that being successful and professionally accomplished like men is not what they actually want. This is ironic since, more than any of the other magazines in the sample, *Working Women* magazine portrays highly achieving working women who are "sociologically male" as role models. The women quoted in the articles realized that they needed to redefine their goals and meaning of success on their own, not just copy what men have done. In "the face of power" (Wo W-10),

Ambitions to attain power gave way to the more personal, psychological issue of being empowered. For women to really be powerful, the very definition of power has to change. And perhaps, given the corrosive nature of power, the models we need are not women 'in power' at all.

Similarly, in "redefining success" (Wo W-11), many working women say that their definitions of success have started to shift from career advancement or money-making to personal fulfillment. Talking about the necessity of an alternative (non-commander-type) leadership in America, "Leading Ladies" (NW-1) promote "feminized" leadership styles. The article argues that the feminine qualities of facilitating, tolerance, compassion, understanding, generosity of spirit, cooperation, and nurturance are what the American workplace needs in the twenty-first century. The basic logic of this article is similar to that which was offered in the aforementioned Japanese article.

It is important to pay attention to the meaning of these two different approaches that women's magazines introduce to readers. All the articles which urge alternatives to male-centered views, value systems and business ethics came from magazines that have a readership with a career orientation whereas the "becoming sociologically male" articles

came from a magazine with a less career-oriented readership. It is possible to argue that because of the greater number of women readers already possessing highly advanced careers in the career-oriented magazines, these women could claim, demand, and express their own thoughts because they are now relatively free from the pressures to conform to male values. In other words, these women have more power and resources to say no to masculine ways of doing things than those who are still struggling to get their career and achieve social power.

As for the Japanese women, their overall status in the workplace is still low but more and more women are gaining power as the number of women entering the mainstream managerial track is increasing. It is still a transitional phase for working women to figure out how they should work while making a better work-setting for everybody. The fact that two completely different approaches were found for one question in a magazine suggests that the issue must be developed more to become one of the counter-values to a male-oriented society.

The "Learning from successful working women" theme appeared frequently in both samples, but the women who were presented as role models were quite different. In North America, as previous research (Glazer, 1980, Ferguson, 1983 and Peirce 1985) has suggested, women who are portrayed as role models tend to superwomen types who have everything -- a successful career, money, family and a meaningful personal life. For example "Top Career Woman" (Cosmo-3), "Woman of the year" (GI-12), "Ten most admired woman managers" (Wo W-1), "Leading Ladies (Female manager)" (NW-1), and "Our women in Washington" (GI-1) all present highly professional and successful women in the United States, such as CEOs, executives, politicians, Judges etc. The August 1993, issue of *Working Woman* had a seven-page article on Laura Tyson, entitled "A Woman of Influence." She is the first female top economic adviser to the President, a distinguished economics professor at the University of California at Berkeley, wife of a Hollywood screen writer and the mother of an 11 year-old son. The article explains how she got

where she is now and how she handles her many different roles and duties. However, it can be said that sometimes people like her seem too perfect and too distant to associate with the life of an ordinary working woman. Just as the "Self-growth and fulfillment" theme emphasized becoming a perfect woman, in "learning from successful women" themes readers are being continuously presented with superwomen role models. Although these elite women are only a small fraction of society and do not represent women in the general population, the article sends continuous messages to women to become like them because "if they can do it, you can do it, too." The problem with such portrayals is that the "success stories" hardly deal with the social obstacles and problems that ordinary working women face.

On the other hand, Japanese role models tend to be ordinary working-women with career aspirations who are "like one of us" and offer readers "tips" to accomplish something. However there is a tendency to portray women (both Japanese and non-Japanese) working abroad or in non-Japanese environments as enjoying a lifestyle that is attractive, glamorous, and fulfilling. Articles about situations of working women in Sweden, Hong Kong and the U.S.A. are often introduced and compared favorably with the situation of Japanese working women. *Cosmopolitan-Japan* had a special article on what it is like to work for a foreign-capital company in Japan (J Cosmo-11), as well as an article entitled "We see Japanese women's features in a woman-advanced country, Sweden" (Cosmo-12). *Nikkei -Woman* has a monthly column called "Working in a Dream Country" which introduces Japanese women working abroad in places such as Hong Kong, France, Mexico, Canada and Italy. This attention to non-Japanese working environments suggests that women may need to leave their country if they want to have meaningful and successful careers. In a way, these articles offer women a cross-cultural view of women's lives. But at the same time, it could be argued that these articles could turn women's attention away from local problems, that is unequal opportunities and working conditions for Japanese women.

Themes regarding "Career strategies" frequently appeared in the North American sample. *Working Woman*, in particular, carried three regular columns ("Career strategies", "Small business solutions" and "Managing") and articles containing this theme. *Glamour* also has a regular column called "Job strategies" and *New Woman* has "Careerwise." *Mademoiselle* and *Cosmopolitan* do not have regular columns regarding work but occasionally have some feature articles. Most of the content is business-oriented and highly-professionalized with specialized tips.

In contrast, Japanese articles had quite different orientations for their career strategies. Instead of learning business tips, Japanese working women's magazines paid attention to non-mainstream jobs and nontraditional career tracks. *Nikkei Woman* had articles such as "Think about how to work: Top 100 short-working-time-high-paying jobs" (Ni W-8), "Comparison of temporary worker agencies" (Ni W-12), "Language that will be useful for business in the future" (Ni W-10). The reason that women do not learn business tips and skills is that in large mainstream Japanese corporations, there is almost no room for women to reach the managerial level and therefore women think it is not worthwhile to learn business skills. Japanese women tend to seek information not so much about specific business and career strategies, but rather non-traditional and more general skills and knowledge so that they can apply this knowledge outside male-dominated traditional business organizations.

Interestingly, themes on "Juggling work and family" were infrequent in both samples, contrary to the results of previous research. One explanation for this finding is that many of the readers of the sampled magazines might still be single and the issue of balancing work and family may not have become a problem for them yet. When the issue of balancing family and work does appear in Japanese magazines, the typical problem facing married Japanese working women is the unequal distribution of domestic work between husband and wife because typical husbands are reluctant to do housework. There were a few articles on the increasing divorce-rate among newly-wed couples in their

20's due to the problem of sharing domestic chores. However, since divorce is still stigmatized to a certain extent in Japan, the article could be interpreted to carry the message that one should not devote oneself too much to their own work. Instead of criticizing women's double burden of work and family, the article sends an implicit norm that women can have a career only if they also have the time and energy to take care of a family, including husbands.

According to three special articles on struggling working mothers from *Cosmopolitan's* October issue, North American women face similar difficulties. An article entitled "Who's rock-a-bye-ing baby?" assumes that "most working mothers do not have husbands or parents who can care for the kids" so the question is where to find affordable and quality child care. Another article, "Have a great career at home", with a picture of a female architect working while holding an infant in her arms, encourages women to work from their homes. Although this strategy does not eliminate child-care problems, the article claims that, "it softens the line separating work and family." In the article "Do not let the guilt get to you" working mothers express their guilty feelings for not spending enough time with their children.

The article does not show any fundamental solution other than asking women to lighten up their guilt and acknowledge their limits. The article merely claims that "mothers should no longer be expected to do it all. Superwomen vanished a long time ago. But guilt victims are not what we are striving for either." At the end a "wishful list" was provided which included "supportive husbands who are fully participating parents," "supportive employers who allow workers flexibility in workday," and "access to a system of safe and dependable child care." However, only wishing for these miracles will hardly bring any change. Women are still expected to be Superwomen whether they like it or not, and it is still women's responsibility to juggle family and work. Women's magazines do not criticize or challenge the existing system that lets women carry the double burden.

How this equalization of work and other opportunities is to be practically achieved is left unaddressed.

A pronounced cross-cultural difference was found in the "importance of motherhood and wifedom" theme, suggesting a cultural difference in the notion of motherhood and the role of women in the family. In the North American sample, there were almost no articles which dealt with the importance of mother and wifedom by itself, probably because most of the readers of the sampled magazines were still single. When a North American female was portrayed as a mother, she was always shown as a working woman who was also a mother, whereas Japanese working women were often described as mothers who also work outside of the house.

Working Woman hardly discussed the issue of working mothers in its articles whereas *Nikkei Woman* has a regular column called "Working mothers." In the column, topics such as "Daycare that provides doctors and nurses", "How to deal with jobs during pregnancy," "Early child education during parental leave" and other issues that relate to working mothers with small children were discussed. As we have seen in "juggling family and work themes", it is taken for granted that the primary responsibilities of childrearing belong to mothers in Japan.

The importance for children to be properly taken care of by their mothers is also stressed in a monthly article called "Looking for mother" in *Say*. These non-fiction stories are about male criminals and their relationships with their mothers. The writers analyze how these relationships affect men's crimes. The underlying assumption is that these criminals committed serious crimes, such as murder, because of their inadequate socialization by their mothers. Thus the message asks the young single women readers to be prepared to become proper mothers. Blaming mothers' attitudes can lead to the potential argument that women should be full-time mothers; if they become working mothers, children might suffer.

Interestingly, two of the four North American "motherhood" themes dealt with single motherhood: "Motherhood without marriage" (GI-10), and "The new moms on the block" (NW-1) both affirm single motherhood. The *Glamour* article claims "If single women can have sex, their own homes, the respect of friends and interesting work, they do not need to tell themselves that any marriage is better than none." The *New Woman* article provides information on how to find a sperm bank, adopt or bear their own children and become a single mother.

These "motherhood"-related articles show clear cross-cultural differences in the way that motherhood is socially and culturally constructed. North American articles stress that a mother is something that women "choose to become" (even without a partner), and mothers who work are still considered working women. In Japan, the importance of motherhood is stressed and it is taken for granted that all women will get married and become mothers someday and that being a mother is a women's primary identity. It can be argued that because of the cultural emphasis on motherhood in Japan, Japanese working women suffer more than their North American counterparts from the double burden of juggling family and work.

As for themes that focus solely on family relationships, North American topics covered various family ties, such as siblings, parents-children, relationship with grandparents etc., suggesting that family is still a great part of women's lives. However, in the Japanese sample only two articles appeared in this category. Both of these articles concerned conflicting relationships between mothers and daughters. The *Nikkei Woman* article called "Can you love your mother?" (Ni W-90) is about the conflict between mothers and daughters when mothers put pressure on "marriageable-age" single daughters to find nice husbands. The result of a readers' survey shows that two thirds of readers do not want to lead their life like their housewife mothers did, and close to half of mothers pressure marriageable-age-daughters to marry. It is possible that in addition to generational differences in lifestyles and values, readers of *Working Woman* are more

likely to deviate from traditionally accepted femininity because of their career aspirations. However, it should be noted that the article is telling readers that career-oriented women have to stand up for themselves against not only their male counterparts but also against their own mothers.

North American magazines had a variety of articles regarding family relationships. There are images of both blissful family life and conflicting relationships with family members. However, there were no articles that dealt with mother-daughter conflicts.

Social Topics

The Japanese sample had a greater proportion of "Social topics" than the North American sample. Interestingly, the percentage of "Social Topics" in Japanese magazines is close to that of their "self-help" themes (15.2% and 13.9%, respectively), whereas North American magazines devote relatively more content to "self-help" compared to "Social topic" themes (17.3% and 11.6%, respectively). In this category, the major finding is that both Japanese and North American samples show the similar percentage of themes devoted to women's issues. The Japanese sample presents more social issues than North American magazines, but generally speaking the portion of gender equality and general social issues are similar in both samples.

In general, North American magazines paid attention almost exclusively to topics related to domestic social/gender issues. Almost no politics or news (neither international nor domestic) were found in the North American sample. Since regular news and other social issues can be found elsewhere (such as in general news magazines), women's magazines may try to offer women readers topics rarely found in other magazines.

Women can relate more to such issues and they may find them more interesting. If that is the case, it is possible to argue that women's magazines are creating a sort of "cultural space" for women. However, another possible interpretation of the lack of "politics and news" in women's magazine is that this absence reflects the social attitude that women do not need to know "hard stuff" like politics and economics. It might be considered that

these subjects just do not belong in the women's sphere, just as men's magazines do not carry "cooking pages".

Table 15: Social Topics Theme
Percentage of all themes in Social Topic Theme

SUB-THEME	Japanese (n=56)	American (n=41)
Women's Issues	44.5	53.6
Gender-(In)Equality	25.0	24.3
General Social Issues	30.5	22.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: N= number of themes regarding social topics

In the Japanese sample, close to one-third of the themes in the "social topic" category dealt with general social issues, including international and domestic political change, economics and social welfare. However, there were almost no articles of "Social topics" found in *With* and *Say* (0% and 6% respectively). This frequency could indicate that these two non-career-oriented magazines aim to create a somewhat limited view of the world for readers by providing only certain kinds of information (such as how to catch a nice man) in their article content.

The "General social issues" category included topics such as "Guns and violence" (Cosmo-3), "Unemployment" (Mad-10), "AIDS" (Mad-11, 2), and "Animal rights" (NW-2) in the North American sample. Incidentally, there was no direct reference to racism nor drug-related issues, although these are two of the most prominent issues in American society. There was only one article that dealt directly with international politics ("Bosnia: What are they fighting for?" from the November issue of *Mademoiselle*)

Japanese magazines had a wide range of social and political issues outside and inside of the country. One characteristic of the Japanese articles is that, quite often,

Japanese magazines dealt with news and articles from outside of Japan¹⁸. Topics such as "Neo-nazi women" (*J-Cosmo*-2), "Eating disorders and the supermodel phenomenon in the U.S." (*J-Cosmo*-1), "Prejudice against African women and lesbian women in the USA" (*J Cosmo*-2), "American young women with AIDS" (*J-Cosmo*-12), and "Muslim women are being raped," (*Morè*-7) are all about non-Japanese women, living in Western countries. Japanese women's magazines pay more attention to what is happening, and how women are living, outside of Japan, especially in Western countries. At the same time they tend to neglect similar social problems that exist in Japan. Although there is still discrimination against non-Japanese and other minority groups living in Japan, no articles were found that discussed such issues. Issues like eating-disorders, the spread of AIDS, racial discrimination, violence against women and other minority people in Japan are all important issues which do not appear in Japanese magazines. By not mentioning the existence of such issues at the local level, Japanese magazines can be seen to understate these problems, make them "less real" by not informing readers of domestic social problems, or make them seem like foreign problems.

Within "Gender (in)equality" issues, there was also a cultural difference in the kinds of topics that the magazines presented. In North American magazines there were numerous articles regarding sexual assault and violence against women, such as "Murder in the court: Women seeking justice need better protection" (GI-10), "Next time, she'll be dead (protection from stalkers)" (GI-1), "How to spot and resist the rapist you know (date rape)" (GI-2), "The coach and his girls: A dangerous bond (child abuse)" (GI-10) etc. While these articles tell women readers to be alert to potential dangers and criticize the social system for failing to protect women, they also encourage women to fight back.

Just as our consciousness of rape was raised in the last decade, our consciousness of assault and battery must change. We've learned that any social, economic or political development that counteracts sexism and promotes equality of the sexes helps in the long run to eliminate violence by reducing the power men hold, institutionally and individually, over women. (*Glamour*, January 1994)

¹⁸15 out of 50 sampled articles from Cosmopolitan Japan came from another country's edition of Cosmopolitan.

There was only one article on sexual assault against Japanese women in the Japanese sample ("The truth about rape": *J Cosmo*-10). The primary purpose of the article was to demystify rape. By providing readers facts, statistics and advice, the article revealed the prejudices that exist against rape victims and how easily men get away with sexual crimes against women.

These findings can be interpreted as showing that North American women live in a more dangerous society and that these articles function to help women be aware of the dangers and provide information to deal with it. In contrast, the reason that Japanese women's magazines do not contain issues of male violence against women is not certain. Statistically speaking, Japanese women do live in a much safer environment and they do not have to worry as much as North American women about violence against women. Yet it is also possible that these issues are hidden from readers for the purpose of creating a "fantasy" world in Japanese women's magazines. Editors may deliberately avoid taboo issues, such as rape in Japan, as if they are non-existent.

Japanese articles tend to deal with sexism at the legal and societal level and not so much at the personal and every-day level. Topics such as "Taking action to legalize the use of your own maiden name at work" (*Cosmo*-2), "Sexual harassment and legalization" (*Ni W*-11), and "Female college grads are having a hard time finding a job" (*Ni W*-12), were discussed in column-format to a minor extent. Unlike the articles on "romance and love" which were full of readers' personal comments and advice to other readers, articles on gender inequality seem to be presented as though it were not really every woman's issue. Only *Cosmopolitan-Japan*, *Nikkei Woman* and *More* had articles regarding these themes.

There were not many articles that directly and openly discussed sexism in Japan. The only exception was an article entitled "Men's sense of victimization at a highly gender-balanced workplace" from the January 1994 issue of *Nikkei Woman*. The article analyzes

why some "men" are antagonistic towards career women and cannot deal with these "new types" of women. After pointing out three kinds of men who have a superficial sense of gender equality and hidden feelings of male superiority, the article goes on to ask women to change or clarify their behavior so that men can understand them better. The article never suggests to fight against the "sexist attitudes" of men. Instead, it offers ways to deal with these potentially sexist men by avoiding conflict with them. The article does not suggest that women act the way that men want them to, but rather, it offers women skills and tips to modify such sexist men without directly confronting them.

First of all do not be fooled by men's superficial sense of gender equality. Study their behavior, know what their true intentions are. Try to communicate with them but if they are reluctant, do not just keep your mouth shut. Let them know positively that you can do the job. If you can prove that you can do your job well and do not make excuses for being a woman, men will start to understand you as an individual and not as an incapable woman that men have stereotyped. (*Nikkei Women*, January 1994:138)

Here, instead of demanding men to change their attitudes or to work towards better understanding and achieving gender equality, the article claims that women can change men through indirectly proving the error of their attitudes about women. After all, Japanese society and corporations are run exclusively by Japanese men. If women want to be powerful in an organization, the first step is to get into the system and work to transform it from within. Moreover, as a group-oriented society, Japanese people avoid direct confrontations. Instead they change the system slowly by gradually obtaining consensus. The idea is that you may not be able to change the whole picture right away, but at least you can change people nearby through indirect influencing. The notion of trying to change the behavior patterns of people by indirect persuasion is a way of changing the structure of society without making direct demands. This negotiation skill can be a potent instrument for Japanese women to achieve gender equality (Christopher, 1984: 114). Though such indirect persuasion can be slow and quiet, persistent resistance is a key feature of feminine survival skills presented in (career-oriented) Japanese women's magazines.

North American articles regarding sexism tend to identify it straightforwardly and provide strategies to fight it. The November, 1993 issue of *Glamour* introduced an excerpt from Naomi Wolf's best-selling book *Fire With Fire*. In an article called "Women as winners", Wolf invites all women to reject the "helpless victim" image and recognize how powerful they really are. Wolf states,

It doesn't matter any more if "society is ready" for women to attain equal status. Ready or not, society no longer has the power to stop us. The question is not whether society is ready to yield gender equality, but whether women themselves are ready to take possession of it.

(For) now is a time in which real change for women depend on an enthusiastic willingness to change....with power and all its seductions and responsibilities, democracy and all its open conflicts, and money with all its pleasures and dangers. I call this willingness "power feminism." (Excerpt from *Fire with Fire* from *Glamour*, November, 1993; 222-225).

Here, according to Wolf, society and the men who control it should be changed by the power of women in order to bring gender equality. If you want to change the social structure in North America, you first have to challenge the system instead of going around and waiting until you get consensus to make social changes. The approach is more individualistic, reflecting the cultural norms in North America. It is up to individual willingness and responsibility to make things better. North American articles tend to be optimistic about the position of women and overestimate what it is possible for individual women to accomplish. This dependence on individual power to change the world shares similar cultural notions to the individualistic approaches of "self-help" themes. As Winship (1986) states, "many believe, 'if only individuals would ... the world would be a much better place.' They are caught in an ideology which regards self-help and self-transformation as the key to both a personal and a social happiness" (70).

Conclusion

The major findings of this chapter support previous research on women's magazines. The idea that women's happiness depends on men seems to have validity in the world of women's magazine both in Japan and North America. For most of the North

American and Japanese women's magazines (except *Nikkei Woman* and *Working Woman*), themes regarding heterosexual relationships are the most frequently presented topic.

Japanese women are assumed to seek marriage as their personal achievement before the age of 30 and they are provided with techniques necessary to accomplish this feat. In contrast to this strong emphasis on marriage, North American women's magazines pay attention to a diverse array of "relationship" themes. Women receive messages that they should be sexually attractive to men, take initiatives in their relationships, but also nurture and understand men.

Through "self-help" articles, North American women are encouraged to have high self-esteem and become happy by perfecting their inner-selves. Yet these messages offer only temporary solutions for women's problems and ignore the complex social factors that may put women in a disadvantageous position. In contrast, Japanese women's magazines are more concerned with "self-presentation" and learning how to acquire mannerisms necessary to fulfill their roles and positions as women in society. Less-career-oriented magazines especially stress learning "feminine skills and manners." Although these findings reflect the stricter social norms regulating Japanese women's behavior, women can learn what society expects them to be, which enables them to utilize their gender as a resource.

The "work & family" themes frequently show strategies for coping in male organizations in both North American and Japanese magazines. Rather than accusing men of discriminating against women in the workplace, women's magazines in both societies suggest to readers that problems can be coped with by acquiring the appropriate skills and strategies. North American magazines tend to present successful and highly-achieved superwomen as role models, whereas Japanese magazines tend to offer suggestions to work harmoniously in an organization. Less attention to family or motherhood were seen in the North American sample compared to the Japanese, suggesting that motherhood is considered a more important role for Japanese women.

Women's magazines in both societies devote a significant portion of articles for the discussion of "women's topics" that might not be found in other mainstream magazines. In this sense, women's magazines provide a space for women to investigate issues that are relevant to women and neglected by other media. Meanwhile, the articles that discuss sexism in each society show cross-cultural differences in terms of the focus and strategies for achieving equality. Japanese magazines tend to promote gender equality through negotiating with men and gradually changing the social consensus, whereas North American women's magazines advocate gender equality by challenging the male-dominant system and by demanding more power for women. However, women's magazines in both cultures do not encourage women to be politically active in order to improve their lives. Instead of using collective power and influence to demand better conditions for women, women's magazines, especially North American magazines, are likely to urge women to work out their problems individually.

In general, the analysis of cultural messages found in advertisements and article content reveal fundamental cross-cultural differences reflecting the underlying social structure and cultural assumptions of both societies. Japanese women's magazines encourage readers to follow a specific set of social norms. Thus, in a way Japanese women are more likely to be bound by a narrowly-defined femininity. Yet, at the same time, women's magazines demonstrate how femininity could be used as a resource for women to get ahead.

North American women's magazines transmit diverse messages and present women's lives as self-directed. In a way, North American women are given variety of opportunities of being female. However, a closer look at the article content suggest that the readers are given contradictory messages: on the one hand, "self-help" articles encourage women to be more independent, self-reliant and achieve inner-perfection, on the other hand, a woman cannot be really considered a perfect female without a "relationship" with a man. Moreover, the models that North American working women

are often provided as super achievers who are highly successful career women who think and act "sociologically male".

Another interesting finding lies in differences among magazines within the Japanese sample. Japanese women's magazines differ considerably with respect to their representation of femininity and masculinity, depending on the career-orientedness of the readership. The less career-oriented magazines had almost no articles on work and social issues and instead were almost exclusively concerned with relationships. Moreover, the men that appeared in these magazines were more chauvinistic than those in the more career-oriented magazines.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that women's magazines for mainly young and single women in Japan and North America define femininity and ways of being female in narrow and limited manner. Overall, in both advertisement and article content, the findings from the quantitative content analysis confirmed the findings from previous studies since the 1970's in North America. Emphases are put on physical beauty and involvement in heterosexual romantic relationships. However, a closer look through qualitative analysis disclosed the arbitrary construction of femininity and cross-cultural differences in social norms surrounding young working women in Japan and North America.

In the images of women in advertisements, emphases are given to the physical appearance in both cultures, although the characteristics which comprise each beauty standard show some cultural differences. Japanese women are not expected to expose or present their bodies in an overtly sexual manner, but the range of acceptable femininity is narrower than it is in the North American sample. In contrast, current images of North American women provide competing definitions; "traditionally" sexy and pretty women or "new " confident and independent women. The predominant presentation of Caucasian women in both cultures was also revealed, suggesting the universalizing of beauty standards according to Caucasian femininity. However, it was argued that Caucasian models in the Japanese sample should not merely be seen as the Western colonization of Japanese culture, but instead these models also function to establish Japanese femininity.

As for the article content, in both cultures, there was an over-riding assumption that "women cannot be happy without men". In particular, non-career oriented (mainstream) Japanese women's magazines especially focus on the themes of getting men (to marry), and women are presented as "marriage fixated" their goal is not social achievement, but rather finding good husbands. Japanese women's magazines clearly

differentiate content depending on how career-oriented the targeted readership is. This finding reflects the diversity of contemporary young women's lives in Japan. In contrast, most of the North American women's magazines focus on themes of romance and work, and they often present images of "superwomen" who have it all, or women who appear to be "sociologically male."

This study showed similarity in the content and format of women's magazines as well as the socio-cultural diversity of women's lives and the regulation of social norms in two industrialized societies. The content analysis, which incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods, made it possible to investigate a cross-cultural comparison of the arbitrary pattern of femininity. Although content analysis has undergone criticism for its trite examination of data, by quantitatively setting up a pattern of cultural phenomena in table format, followed by its qualitative examination, the data were socially and culturally contextualized, providing deeper understanding of women's magazines as cultural text. Thus methodologically this study showed the strength of content analysis for comparative cross-cultural research.

Ideology of Women' Magazines

Most of the previous research has assumed the ideological role women's magazines play in producing and reproducing the models of dominant (patriarchal) culture. Debate over the ideological function of women's magazines has been the key issue for researchers of women's magazines. Researchers in the paradigm of mass media studies, characterized by the quantitative-oriented content analysis, tend to argue that the images of women presented in women's magazines are "wrong" and "should be corrected." This approach sees women's magazines as an ideological form that determines and imposes a certain discourse on women. In this view women's magazines are seen as reactionary, oppressive to women, and perpetuating women's subordinate position in society. Thus, women's magazines are seen as something to be condemned in order to bring about "true" gender equality.

This approach was greatly influenced by Louis Althusser's view of ideology¹⁹. For Althusser (1971), cultural institutions, such as the mass media, produce ideologies that are imposed on the passive masses. Ideology is a determining force and offers people a distorted view of reality. By offering seemingly true, but "false" resolutions for problems that women have, ideology shapes people's beliefs, values, and actions in a way that best serves the interests of the dominant class. For example, most of the portrayals of women in advertisements emphasize their physical appearance, implying that physical beauty attracts men, which is seen as necessary for women to be happy. A close examination of advertisements reveals that women tend to be presented as mere sexual objects for the male gaze and are depicted in a subordinate position to men. Similarly, marriage themes in advertisements and some articles in Japanese women's magazines show "rosy, happy ever-after" pictures of marriage, even though in reality wives might end up as servants for their (husband's) household or have to carry a double burden of work and family. By concealing the possible negative aspects of married life that might be waiting for women, marriage is typically portrayed in a romantic, idyllic manner as something that should be the goal of every young woman. As well, the use of Japanese men to express their opinions of ideal femininity in magazines is one way to transmit patriarchal ideology regarding women. By letting women know what men are looking for in their prospective wives, women's magazines act as a socializing agent that supports male dominance.

Ideology tries to produce normative meanings that support the leadership of the dominant group. However, viewing women's magazines only as an ideologically determined cultural institution has some problems. In Althusser's theory, ideology was

¹⁹Althusser argued that collectively shared values and beliefs, which constitute the elements of dominant ideology, could be transmitted through social institutions such as the family, school, church, culture and mass media (the Ideological State Apparatuses: ISAs) in order to maintain and recreate the dominant order. The ISA were contrasted by the more violent Repressive State Apparatuses, such as the army, the police and the prison, etc. This view of ideology sheds light on the analysis of ideology as being diffused throughout society via social institutions and not just at the State level. In this way, individuals' adherence to the social order is secured and the interests of the dominant class is maintained. See "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1971).

described as a closed and unified system within which all individuals are expected to receive cultural messages in the same way. There was no room for individuals to interpret information differently from what the dominant group intended. Yet the current study found that messages in women's magazines are often not uniform but contain competing and multiple themes.

In order to explain aspects of mass culture other than determined ideology, Stuart Hall (1981) and some members of the Birmingham University Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies utilize Antonio Gramsci's political concept of "hegemony." According to Gramsci (1971), hegemony is the cultural and ideological domination of one class over another, achieved through the dominant group's exertion of moral, cultural and intellectual leadership through social consensus. In other words, in order to achieve cultural domination, the dominant group needs consensus among people. Subordinate groups are seen as actively supporting and subscribing to dominant values, ideas, and cultural meanings, and are thus incorporated into the prevailing power structure.

But hegemony also implies that social conflict is inherent in social relations. The important part of hegemony is the realization that in order to maintain hegemony, the dominant group must make compromises. Thus, to acquire social consensus, cultural hegemony must continuously incorporate ongoing changes in people's lives and social conditions. Ideology must be modified by the social experiences of people.

The concept of cultural hegemony allows us to think that mass culture, such as women's magazines, is a place in which dominant and subordinate discourses clash and integrate. In this sense, mass culture presents a contradictory mixture of competing discourses, interests and values (McCracken, 1993). From this perspective, the definition of femininity presented in women's magazines can be considered to be a result of negotiation between dominant male and subordinate female cultures through both resistance and incorporation. For example, the representation of "new women" and "traditional women" in North American women's magazines (in both the articles and

advertisements) suggests that some "new" women who do not conform to conventional gender roles can be considered an example of negotiation over traditional femininity. Some of these women are portrayed as confident, independent, and assertive but they do not necessarily behave like men. This is an alternative category of femininity that is neither dominant nor subordinate culture and helps to keep a balance between a resistance to and an incorporation of male culture.

Similar logic can be applied to the case of *gaijin* women in the Japanese ads. The presentation of Caucasian women in Japanese magazines can be viewed as a struggle between the dominant group (Western society) trying to impose their cultural values on the subordinate group (Japanese society). Yet as I have argued, even the dominant cultural values (i.e., Caucasian beauty standards) were somewhat modified to fit into the Japanese context. Moreover, the specific presentations of Caucasian women (e.g., nudity, or objectified as images) suggest that Japanese people do not passively accept Western values. Western values are presented as both desirable and undesirable (incorporation and resistance) to the Japanese audience. Here the clash of Japanese values and Western values produces balance. Thus, it could be argued that Japanese media do not passively accept Western cultural colonialism, rather, they modify the content to create new cultural meanings.

As a transmitter of current social norms, women's magazines must be responsive to ongoing social changes in order to acquire cultural consensus from readers. In Japanese women's magazines, although blissful images of weddings are shown through ads and some articles, there are also articles that criticize the patriarchal system of marriage and present the bitter and harsh reality of married life for some readers. The articles that portray the negative parts of marriage reflect (and produce at the same time) ambivalent feelings and the passive rejection that contemporary women feel towards married life. The reason that the percentage of unmarried females in their late twenties and early thirties has doubled over the past twenty years is understood because many young Japanese women

are not in a hurry to marry²⁰. Although it is assumed that most women will eventually marry at some point of their life (because it is a social norm²¹), since they have economic resources to support themselves for a while, many of them want to postpone marriage as long as possible and enjoy the freedom of being single. Women know that once they get married, their life may be more restricted and confined to the home by taking care of husbands and families. (Bandou, 1992 and Iwao, 1993). Thus, Japanese women's magazines portray competing messages about marriage; marriage is something that everybody eventually must do and one should be prepared and acquire good husband, but marriage is also acknowledged as hardship and confinement due to the embedded system of inequality for women.

Women's Magazines as Resource

Generally speaking, there are many more critical views of male-dominant society in the North American sample compared to the Japanese magazines, and in the more career-oriented Japanese sample compared to the less-career-oriented sample. Similarly, the less career-oriented women's magazines were, the more the normative order was present in the messages in the magazines. Thus, it is possible to argue that certain groups of women may be more vulnerable to the dominant ideology *because they have fewer resources than* other women.

Women are situated at varying positions and statuses in society determined by the extent to which they possess various resources. Pierre Bourdieu (1984) labeled these significant resources as "cultural, economic and symbolic capital." By cultural capital, Bourdieu means the knowledge, skill, educational credentials, and material possessions that give a person social status. Economic capital is defined as the amount of one's

²⁰ According to a National Census, the percentage of single (never married before) women in their late twenties increased from 20.9% in 1975 to 40.2% in 1990 and the percentage of those women in the early thirties, jumped from 7.7 to 14.0%. (Ohashi, 1993: 15)

²¹ By the time Japanese women reach 35, 88 percent of women are married at least once, which is considerably higher than the figure of North American women. (Iwao, 1993)

economic resources, while symbolic capital are resources such as praise, prestige and recognition.

It could be assumed that the readership of the career-oriented magazines probably has more cultural capital, such as educational credentials, higher career opportunities, and more knowledge and skills. In contrast, the targeted readers in non career-oriented magazines probably have less cultural capital and they do not have promising future career opportunities and economic security. The fact that there are more articles which demand a "feminization" of the work ethic and values etc. in the more career-oriented magazines, both in Japan and North America, suggests that the readers of these magazines have more power and resources to say no to masculine ways of doing things than do those who have fewer resources. Similarly, messages supporting patriarchal ideas were more frequent in the less career-oriented Japanese magazines.

The differences in cultural capital among Japanese working women are clearer than among North American readers. Compared to the situation in North America, there is less job mobility and fewer opportunities for women in the Japanese job market, especially in the larger corporations. Despite recent structural changes in the Japanese economy, enterprise-based internal labor markets (coupled with seniority and the lifelong employment system) remain the basic model of work organization in Japan. Promotion and salaries are determined more by seniority than by achievement, and these two characteristics of the Japanese system make it very difficult to utilize women's labour on an equal basis with men²². Thus, under this system, the largest number of women workers are relegated to clerical positions because they are not expected to work at the company for a long time (because of family responsibilities and child rearing)²³. However, the introduction of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) in 1986 made it possible

²² According to International Labor Organization statistics, only 6% of managerial jobs were held by Japanese women, compared with 34% in the U.S. (Cited by Iwao, 1993: 160).

²³ According to a survey by the Bureau of Statistics, Management and Coordination Agency, clerical workers constitute 34.4% of the total Japanese female working population, compared with 1.0% of managers and officials and 13.8% of professionals and technical workers, such as teachers and nurses (Cited by Iwao, 1993: 161).

for minority of women with ambition to obtain career-track positions. The remaining women tend to be placed in non career-track positions. Consequently, most working women are channeled into clerical jobs where they are expected (and pressured) to retire when they get married or have children, so that the companies can hire younger and cheaper labor²⁴ (Brinton, 1992; Iwao, 1993).

Thus, more so than in North American magazines, Japanese women's magazines were very clear about the kinds of messages to readers, and editors seemed to know specifically which women they were targeting. For example, the non career-oriented Japanese women's magazines, such as *Say* and *With*, contained themes that were almost exclusively devoted to catching a good husband, and not related to work. With social pressure to marry by a certain age and with no bright career opportunities ahead, the techniques for "catching" a good man and presenting oneself in a feminine manner may seem more important than learning about career strategies.

Instead of accumulating their cultural capital, OLs need to acquire a certain amount of symbolic capital. For young "marriageable-age" Japanese women, this capital could be the prestige of becoming the wife of a high quality (3H) husband²⁵. The simple recognition of being somebody's wife can be a resource for them²⁶. In order to obtain this symbolic capital, women need to accumulate what I call "feminine capital" such as feminine mannerisms, social characters and personality, as well as the physical appearance necessary to attract men. Feminine capital is a kind of survival skill for women since it brings the possibility of life-long economic security to women²⁷. The more feminine

²⁴ Because many Japanese women withdraw from the labor market in their late twenties and early thirties, and come back after rearing children at their late forties, the overall distribution of employed Japanese women by age forms a skewed M-shaped curve, with the first peak at the age of 20-24 and the second, lower peak at the ages 45 to 49. North American women's labor force participation maintains similar percentages until women reach their 50's (Brinton, 1992: 92-95; Iwao, 1993: 162-163).

²⁵ The now-famous 3H (High height, High education, and High salary) are the credentials for a "good" husband.

²⁶ Social norms in Japanese society consider that one does not become a "complete person" until one gets married. Moreover, marriage can serve as a means for upward social mobility, especially for those who marry through arranged marriages (Lebra, 1984).

²⁷ Although the divorce rate has been increasing in Japan over the years, it is much lower than the rate in Western society.

resources that a woman has, the more likely she is to have a chance of upward social mobility through her prospective husband's economic and material power. In this way, for the OLs, learning femininity and becoming more feminine is a survival skill to get ahead in the social strata.

In general, the more career-oriented the magazines, the less the messages are restricted by certain social norms. For example, Japanese magazines, such as *Nikkei Woman* and *Cosmopolitan-Japan* did not have any *tekireiki* (marriageable age) related articles nor any on how to become an ideal women for men²⁸. Instead, they had a wide range of non main-stream topics, such as gender equality, harmonious relationships with men, successful working women, etc. At the same time, men were presented as more like a "partner" or "colleague" who simply provide their opinions and advice.

However, there are always dangers in acquiring feminine capital because it means women can become entrapped by their femininity within patriarchal ideology. Japanese non career-oriented magazines tend to present femininity in a rather traditional and conservative manner. Some of the men who are presented in magazines show their "male-chauvinistic" manner in their messages of what they see as "ideal femininity" and express the dominant patriarchal ideology which supports women's subordination and obedience to men. Thus it could be argued that OLs are more vulnerable to the dominant ideology because of their fewer economic and material resources (cultural capital) than other career-oriented working women and men.

As I have argued, the diversification of contemporary young Japanese women's lifestyles and values is reflected in the content of Japanese women's magazines. Although judging by the circulation numbers, non-career-oriented women's magazines enjoy more

²⁸Although *Cosmopolitan-USA* is not considered a "career-oriented" magazine in North America, the Japanese version includes a lot of articles on working women, women's issues such as "Feminism," and strives to present a more "global" and "progressive" perspective for Japanese career-minded women.

popularity than career-oriented ones, as Iwao (1993) suggests, widening gap among the lives of Japanese working women bring a polarization of women's social positions;

The well-educated, highly motivated women entering the work force and attaining fulfillment through career outside the home live in a world apart from that of women whose lifestyle is closer to traditional roles and behavior and who take a more passive, easygoing approach to what they perceive as the satisfying life. It is relatively easy for women of ability to achieve success in work or local politics whereas those without outstanding ability or talent will be pushed further into the corners, a process that will estrange women at the two extremes even more (274).

I chose North American magazines which could cover a broad range of career-orientations for readers. Yet the sample did not exhibit the clear relationships between the content and the kinds of readership in the same way that the Japanese sample did. This may be because North American working women are not specifically divided into career-track and non-career-track categories, so that the difference between the targeted readership in the North American samples is more subtle compared to Japanese ones.²⁹ Also it could be argued that North American society is more "advanced" in terms of having women working in the public sphere (at least women are not refused employment on the basis of their gender), coupled with a more open normative order, in general. Therefore, North American women have a wider range of opportunities in their life planning than Japanese women. In other words, because of the limited opportunities given to Japanese women, Japanese women's magazines function as a guidebook for readers in order to maximize the "right" kind of resources (whether it be feminine skill or career development), which differ according to their social position.

Women's Magazines As Cultural Space

The purpose of women's magazines is not only regulating women's perception through ideological messages. As Winship (1987) argues, women's magazines offer a fantasy world for women to escape from reality. Similarly, Radway (1984) argues that reading romance novels could be a positive activity for reader because it allows them to create their own time and space which they may not otherwise have. Following Radway's

²⁹However, there are some different patterns of messages consistent with career-orientation (see Chapter 5 p.74-75)

and Winship's argument, women's magazines could also offer women time for "self-indulgence". By consuming pleasurable visual images through the pages of advertisements and beauty/fashion, women's magazines can create a space and time for readers to escape briefly from dull, every-day life and harsh reality. It is a "trip to a fantasy world" that readers are promised for a few hours. In this sense, Japanese women's magazines seemed to be more "fantasy" oriented than North American magazines. As I have argued, the presence of Caucasian models and products from the Western world, as well as "foreign-language sounding titles" in Japanese magazines could be understood as part of a mechanism which produces a fantasy atmosphere. Many of the social issues and information on certain events in the articles are from foreign countries. By using these images of foreign (mainly Western) worlds, whether it be Caucasian model or social problems, Japanese women's magazines shift readers perspectives away from the local site and the present "world of women" as not-really-reality for readers.

Another aspect that can be positive about women's magazines is the centrality of women in the magazines. Women's magazines are acknowledged as one of the few places that women are assigned the main role, with men relegated to the periphery in the mass media (Ballaster et al., 1991 and Ferguson, 1983). By seeing women and women's issues positioned at the center of attention, readers can acquire a "sense of sharing and belonging...as members of a broad social group, the female sex...and the members of a particular sub-group, the readers of a given magazine" (Ferguson, 1983: 7).

The findings of the current study suggest that the degree of women's centrality is more pronounced in Japanese magazines than in North American magazines. For example, especially in Japanese advertisements, women are clearly in the central role and men's existence is not highly visible, both numerically and symbolically. Japanese women are more often seen with other Japanese women than with men. The article content also suggests that Japanese women readers, as a collective social group, foster intimate bonds by sharing their problems, offering tips, and providing social and moral support for each

other. In comparison, North American women are more likely to receive suggestions and tips from professional experts, editors, or contributing writers who are not really "women like us" but hold a somewhat higher position, who transmit a "cult of femininity" (Ferguson, 1983).

Women's magazines in North America use their cultural space differently from their Japanese counterpart. Instead of fostering an intimate feeling among women readers, women with high achievements are frequently presented as role models for readers. This presentation could be understood as a source of pressure for working women to achieve exciting professional careers and other social and personal achievements. However, it is possible to argue that the editors deliberately present such positive images of women because such women may not exist in readers' everyday lives. As Ferguson (1983) argues, for most women (other than the pages of women's magazines), a space may not exist where they are consistently valued so highly or granted such a high status. Thus, for some women, women's magazines function as an easy and accessible source to enhance their self-esteem and provide them with role models. As well, North American women's magazines teach individual women the power of self-determination through self-help articles which direct women towards fulfilling individual potential.

Women's magazines provide women a unique cultural space which other media are not likely to provide. For Japanese women, magazines can create an intimate bond by dealing with common issues among readers and provide a shared women's social "reality." For North American women, women's magazines often present a role model for readers who are striving to be successful in the male-world, but the existence of a shared and common culture seem to be less common than in Japanese magazines.

The Different Role of Women's Magazines in Japan and North America

The difference between the characteristics of Japanese and North American women's magazines reflects the underlying socio-cultural structures as well as the gender relationships of the two societies. Content analysis of women's magazines revealed the individualistic and "self-directed lives" of North American women, in contrast to the collective and "socially-embedded lives" of Japanese women (Brinton, 1992). To put it in other words, as unmarried women, Japanese readers' lives and behavior are much more regulated and determined by specific social norms for their age and gender than for North American women.

North American women are allowed to be either traditional or new women. Yet, the portrayal of traditionally macho North American men in advertisements suggests that men are not asked to be feminine at all in North American society. As I have argued earlier, it is women who have to conform to the value system and behavior of the male world. As a non-dominant group in society, individual women are responsible to strive towards their perfect selves and become superwomen who embody both masculine and feminine qualities without really improving "women's world" or "women's way of being".

In Japan, the division of the gendered worlds is much more clear than in North America. Being excluded from participation in the dominant world, women have established a separate world and culture of their own. As a result, their activities evolve around members of the same sex. According to Iwao (1993), since men are chained by the institution of the Japanese corporations, many Japanese women feel they have more freedom than men. Besides, the role of wife and mother are given higher status in Japan than in North America. Therefore the majority of women feel that they do not want to, and do not need to, become like men (Iwao, 1993:6). This distinctively gendered society, where culture and roles for each gender exist independently and mutually exclusively, are probably the reason Japan has so many women's magazines.

On the other hand, North American society does not seem to foster a distinctively "women's culture" or "space." Rather, North American women seem to devote much more energy to cultivating their physical appearance and behavior with respect to their relationships with the opposite sex (Iwao 1993:17). As the findings of advertisements show, North American women are positioned more often with men than Japanese women are, suggesting the importance of the heterosexual couple as a social unit in North America. Japanese women are found more with same sex friends than their male partners. Three out of five North American magazines had regular columns written by male writers who provide women with knowledge about male perspectives in general. None of the Japanese magazines had columns specifically learning male perspectives or their way of doing things, except when men are positioned as "potentially good husband material" who tell readers what their "ideal wifves" would be like.

As Winship (1986) notes British women's magazines, one of the purposes of North American women's magazines seems to be to provide a survival guide of how to get by in a patriarchal world by learning male perspectives and values. In Japanese society, where a distinctive gendered culture functions in a way such that as long as one remains in their proper position, one is respected within the system. In contrast, North American women do not gain respect by virtually being a wife and mother. In other words, one does not gain social status by just being in women's territory. Thus, it is important for women to learn how to deal with men, their system, and their world. This is why North American women's magazines tell women that they must become like men and women simultaneously in order to become successful. It is not only do North American women have to be "sociologically male" in the public sphere, women are also expected to take the role of homemaker, thereby creating superwomen who hardly exists in reality. Unless North American women create "supermen," gender equality will not likely be achieved.

The example of the "sociological male" is hardly seen even in the most career-oriented women's magazines in Japan. Instead of striving to work like Japanese men by

conforming to men's values, women find it is better to take advantage of being female by remaining outsiders to the rigid mainstream structure of Japanese corporate organizations, which are well known for demanding workers' total devotion. However, it should be mentioned that the content of Japanese career-oriented women's magazines share some similarity to that of North American ones, suggesting that there are some women who are not satisfied with the narrow range of choices that women are given in Japanese society. The lower circulation of career-oriented magazines suggests that the lifestyle portrayed is not yet the model or ideal type typical of Japanese women. However, the Japanese women who would want to combine work and family are increasing (Iwao, 1993:281). It will be interesting to see how the content of women's magazines has changed and will change over time, as they reflect and reproduce ongoing social trends.

Limitations and Concluding Remarks

Due to the focus of research and methodology of the present study, there are some topics in the study of women's magazine that are left untouched. First, in this study women's magazines were viewed as cultural texts and not as commodities that are advertised for the profit of the magazines. Since most glossy pages are devoted to advertisements and beauty and fashion (advertorials), consumption visually dominates the pages of the magazines (McCracken, 1993). Thus, how female readers might be drawn into consuming commodities in order to become more feminine is another important aspect of studying women's magazines. The relationship between the ideological construction of ideal femininity in women's magazines and the profit-oriented nature of magazine media as a social institution is also a topic worthy of cross-cultural research.

Second, as Steeves (1987) argues, the ideal mass media study would have been one that combines textual analyses with an analysis of audience's reception. The question of how the magazines might be read and what kinds of meanings readers actually produce could not be addressed in this study, although possible interpretations that readers could make were presented. The next step would be to conduct ethnographic research on

readers' lives in order to contextualize the practice of reading women's magazines. At the same time, cross-cultural analyses of this nature should be conducted since it is possible to argue that cultural differences (in terms of gender, class, nationality and ethnicity) might be detected in how people with different cultural backgrounds, as audience, react to cultural objects. As well, the ethnographic research on the organization of the publishing industry, those who actually create women's magazines, could be investigated more³⁰. The investigation of the entire process through which women's magazine (and the femininity defined there) is produced should be covered more.

Third, this current study was limited in that only superficial images were analyzed for the sake of establishing the cross-cultural pattern. Yet, most of the contemporary cultural objects and visual images contain complicated structures and multiple meaning. Thus, a method, such as semiotics, which requires researchers to have a more sophisticated understanding of the ways in which images operate to define femininity, is needed to have a deeper analysis of cultural images.

Throughout this study I have analyzed how women's magazines frame the "world of women" for its readers. Since the definition of femininity in women's magazines is created by a dialectical relationship between the socio-cultural context that women experience and the content of messages found in magazines, a cross-cultural comparison of the themes in magazines reveal the ideological and arbitrary construction of gender. The findings of this study suggest that although the messages transmitted to women are ideologically constructed, women's magazines do not offer a homogeneous presentation of femininity and gender-related social norms. The definition of femininity in women's magazine is not a fixed one, but is always changing to reflect the social position of women. Thus this medium informs women about what women have advanced in society and how society views them currently. In this way, women's magazines, as a form of "gendered" mass culture, can be seen as a cultural form of both change and containment which

³⁰ There is almost no research conducted around this topic, except Ferguson (1983) who interviewed editors.

embodies the possibility to create new ways of being women. Moreover, as a unique cultural space for women, women's magazines have a potential to offer positive meanings and ways of being women.

Finally, as Ballaster et al. (1991) argue, "we cannot look at the women's magazine in isolation from the other cultural phenomena that women consume in order to make sense of their experience as women, or through which they acquire gender identity and gender difference" (175). The kinds of women presented in women's magazines are determined by both the social structure and diverse cultural phenomena, and the ongoing power struggle between genders in society. In this sense, contextualizing the content of women's magazines cross-culturally contributed further to our understanding of the socio-cultural representations of women, as well as to the different cultural roles of women's magazines.

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Figure 1 Estée Lauder, Perfume, *Cosmopolitan*, October 1993(NA)

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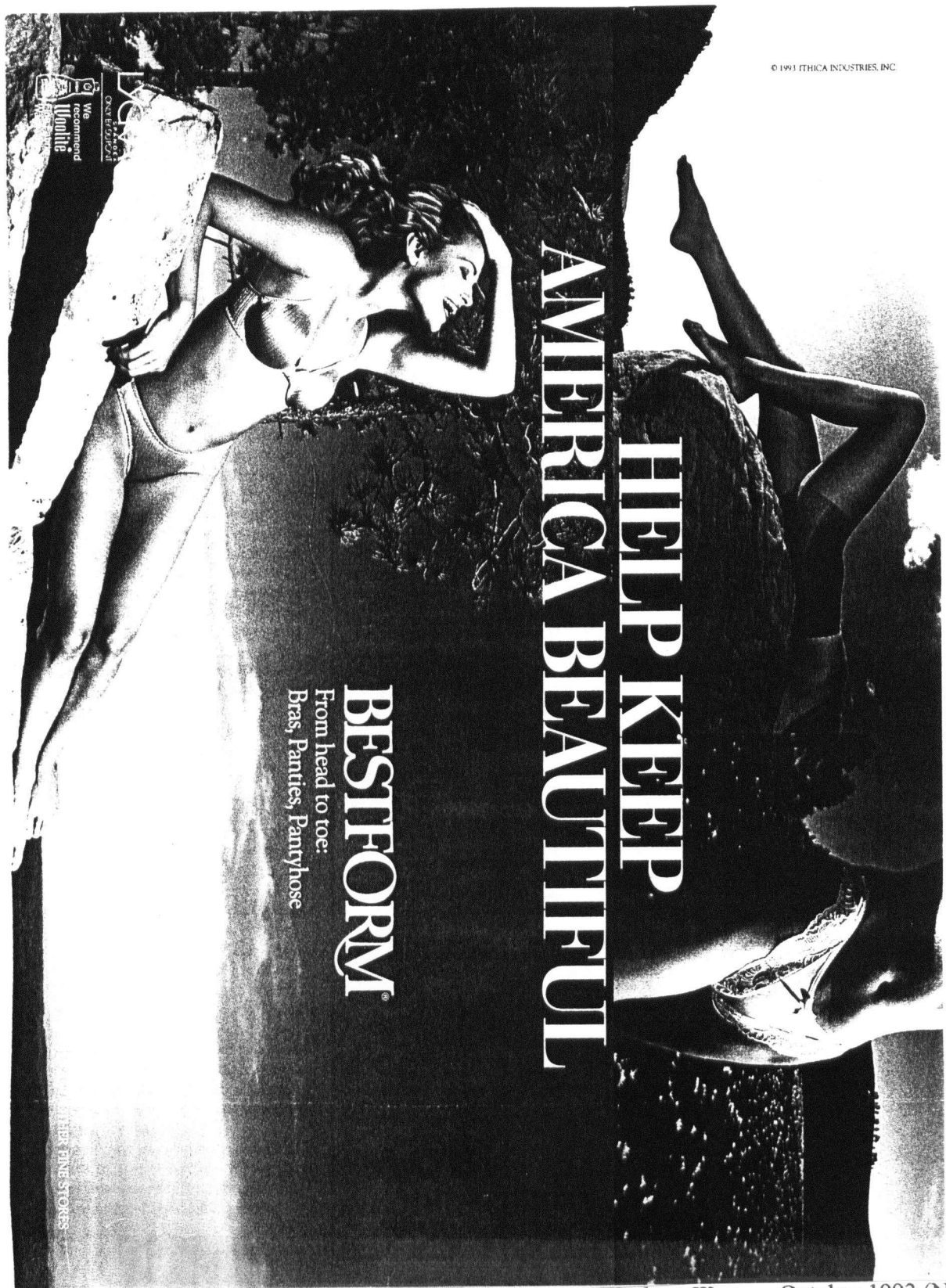


Figure 2 Bestform, Underwear, *Working Woman*, October 1993 (NA)

wing
ウイング

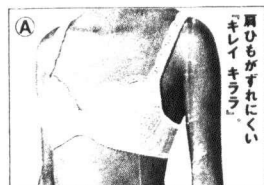
「あんなにいい」を、美しく。

しかも、痛くなりにくいワイヤーの『キレイ キララ』です。
①肩ひもがずれにくいのは、伸縮性に優れた素材使用と、U字型のバックシルエットだから。
②痛くなりくいワイヤーなのは、ボディに沿った形状記憶合金「ミラクルワイヤー」だから。
(実用新案申請中)

KIREI
KIRARA
キレイ キララ

新発売

肩ひもがずれにくいので、知ってた？



肩ひもがずれにくい
『キレイ キララ』



バストをすっぽり包み込む
フルカップタイプ

ますます充実のラインナップ! 「ミラクルワイヤー」使いのブラです。

痛くなりにくい秘密は、「形状記憶合金ミラクルワイヤー」だから。ボディラインに沿った立体的な形状で、特に痛くなりやすい箇所には工夫をこらした、ウイング独自の画期的なワイヤーです。体温を感じると理想のカタチにもどるのも特長。

上キレイ キララ EB-2350 3600円 (Cカップは3900円) Aキレイ キララ EB-2352 3600円 (Cカップは3900円) Bブ (フルカップタイプ) EB-2450 3800円 (C・Dカップは4100円) ※記入価格は標準小売価格です (A費税は含まれてお)

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Figure 3

Wing, Underwear, With, October, 1993 (JPN)

夏。

気になるひじやひざも
うるおい守って洗えます。



いっそう泡立ちゆたかになって、新発売。

ビオレUが新しくなりました。
泡立ちがいちだんとアップ。
はじめからたっぷり泡立ちます。
もちろんビオレUのMAPなら、
うるおいを守って洗うから、
洗い上がりはすべすべ。
素肌を楽しむ季節こそ、
肌にいいもので洗いたいね。

全身洗淨料

ビオレU

90ml.....希望小売価格150円(税抜)
300ml.....希望小売価格450円(税)
780ml.....希望小売価格1,200円(税抜)

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Figure 4

Kaou, Moisturizer, More, November, 1993 (JPN)

SO SILKY
SO LIGHT
SO LASTING
NEW NATURE OF

COVER GIRL RACHEL HUNTER
IS WEARING NEW ULTIMATE FINISH
POWDERSILK BLUSH IN TERRACOTTA.
IT GLIDES ON SO SILKY-LIGHT. THEN
INSTANTLY TRANSFORMS TO THE
SOFT, NATURAL FINISH OF A POWDER.
FOR A LASTING LOOK LIKE YOU'VE
NEVER SEEN. IN 8 BLUSH-FOR-REAL
SHADES FOR EVERY KIND OF SKIN.
NOW, BLUSH NEVER LOOKED SO
NATURAL. NEVER STAYED SO TRUE.
IT'S THE ULTIMATE.

NEW ULTIMATE FINISH
POWDERSILK BLUSH

COVER GIRL

BEAUTIFUL™

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Figure 5.1 Cover Girl, Cosmetic, *Mademoiselle*, November, 1993 (NA)

お肌はもっと、
つるつるになりたい。

5.2 Funkel, Cosmetics, *More November*, 1993 (JPN)

流行だけなら、いやん。

ステキがずっと、ダイヤモンド

ダイヤモンドは永遠の輝き

DIAMONDS for working women

30才を目前にして考えた、このままでいいのかしら。

恋も、仕事も気にかかるけれど、まずは、

ダイヤモンド。これからの自分にいいと思う、

いま、ゆれるダイヤモンドをはじめ、時代に流され

ないステキがいろいろ揃いました。上から、

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Figure 6

De Beers, Diamond, More, November, 1993 (JPN)



お取り扱い: シブヤ西武A館3階・日本橋高島屋4階・新宿小田急6階のアベックス・アイコーナー、または全国のポーラ・アベックス・アドバイザーが承ります。
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 (アベックス・アイの小冊子プレゼント)ご希望の方は、はがきに資料請求券を添付して、住所、氏名、年齢、職業を明記のうえ、〒141東京都品川区西五反田2-2-3 ポーラインフォーメーションデスク「小冊子、MR関係へ」。

Figure 7 Pola, Cosmetics, *With*, October, 1993 (JPN)



アンベルジュ LS28 ラグジュアリー ¥24,800 (¥24,800-95) ¥25,800 (¥24,100) (カラー:グレース・ローズ/ラブリ) 税込

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Figure 8 Pola, Underwear, *More*, November, 1993 (JPN)

目的はひとつ、新美白。

すべての機能は、ホワイトニングのために。天然成分WAA配合の新スキンケア。



目的意識を持つことは、大切です。あなたの人生にも、スキンケアにも。UVホワイトの目的は白い肌。そのために、さまざまな成分、さまざまな機能のひとつひとつは、すべて美白に向かって無駄なく、効果的につながっています。メラニンの生成を抑制するプラセンタエキスなどの成分はもちろん。新しく配合した天然成分WAA（甘草エキス・ニンジンエキス）（保湿剤）も、日やけを考えたい人のおいす。欲しい肌はなんですか。答えを持っている人の、美白スキンケアです。

紫外線が放射される日中は、防ぐことを中心に。紫外線の影響を受けない夜は、いたわることが大切。肌環境にあわせて朝と夜、それぞれシンプルな3ステップです。

Figure 9

Shiseido, Cosmetics, *Cosmopolitan-Japan*, October, 1993 (JPN)

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fashions you find
in department
stores for family
and home, but for
a lot less, every day.

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The maxx for the minimum.

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Figure 10 T.J. Max, Clothes, *New Woman*, October, 1993 (NA)



Figure 11 Shiseido, Hair Styling, *With* November, 1993 (JPN)



Figure 12 Bijan, Perfume, *Cosmopolitan*, November, 1993 (NA)

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NOTHING CAN STOP ME

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Get i
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And no
the high
especial
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shape y
pen with

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fiers, cat
reducers,
vitamin E
your fine

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nutrients
wholesom
the most
remedy the

There's
pop in you
on your bi
Tone 'N
important

Tone
For more in
hotline at
(908) 545

Figure 13 Tough N' Tighten, Fat Burning Tablets, *New Women*, November, 1993

PURE PENDLETON



Figure 14.1 Signature Classics, Clothes, *Working Woman*, October, 1993

SIGNATURE CLASSICS™ The look is luxe. Gold threads its way through the jacket in a desk-to-dinner statement of sultry sophistication. Pure wool bouclé jacket, \$210; trouser, \$108. Sophisticates by Pendleton® blouse, \$78. See where-to-buy listing adjacent. MISSIES. PETIT

you
wa



14.2 Gap, Clothes, *Glamour*, October, 1993 (NA)

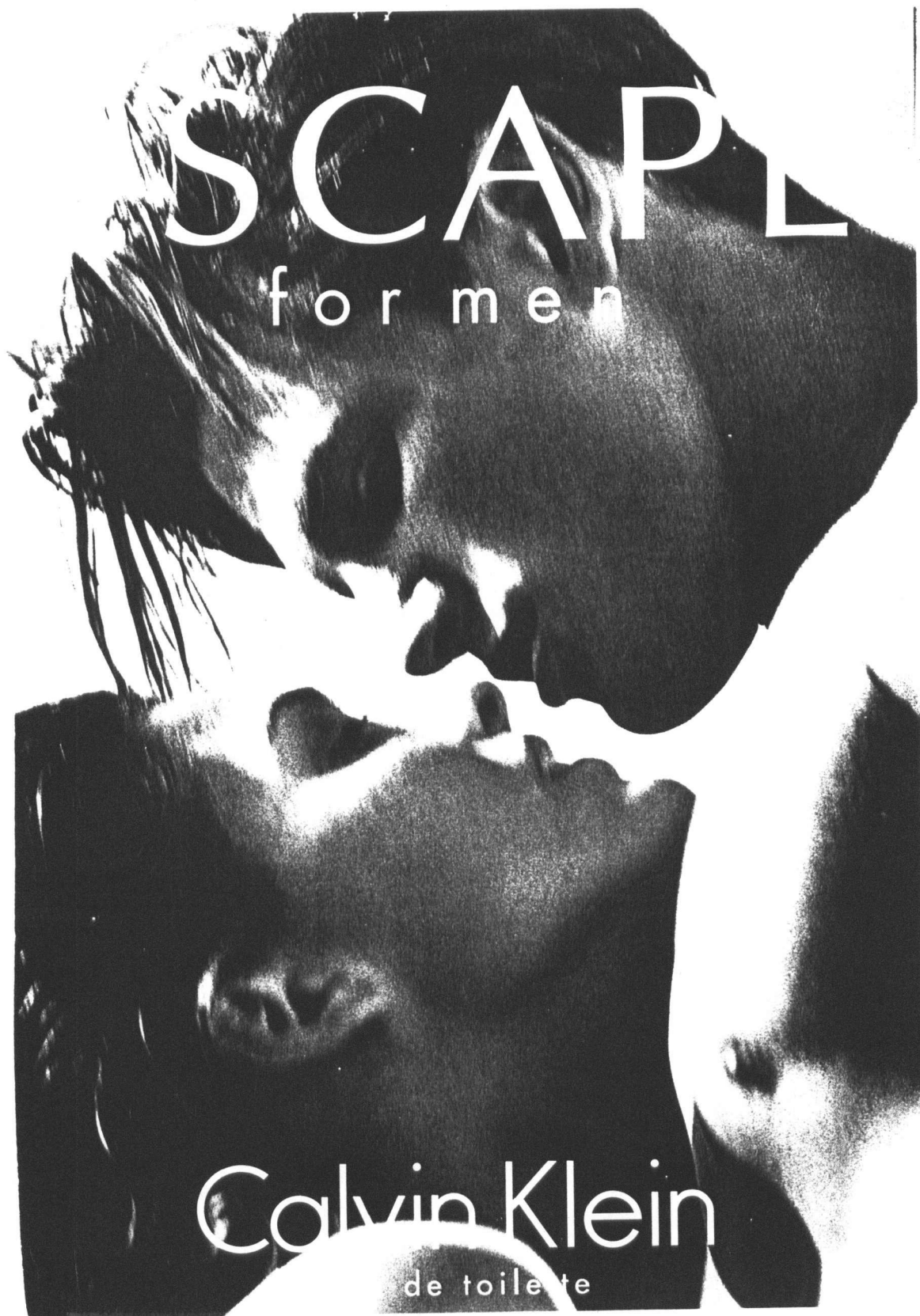


Figure 15 Calvin Klein, Perfume (for men), *Mademoiselle*, November, 1993 (NA)

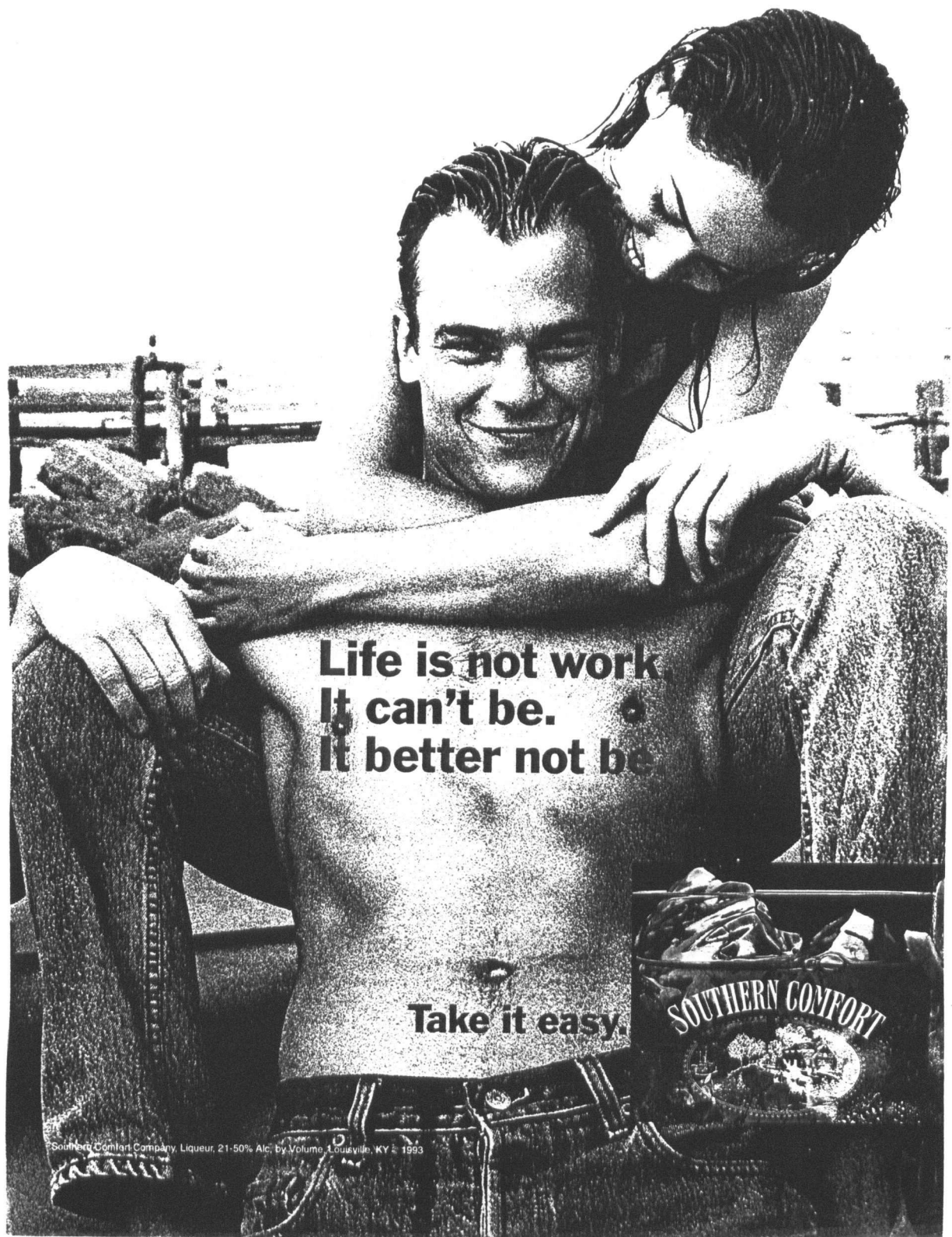
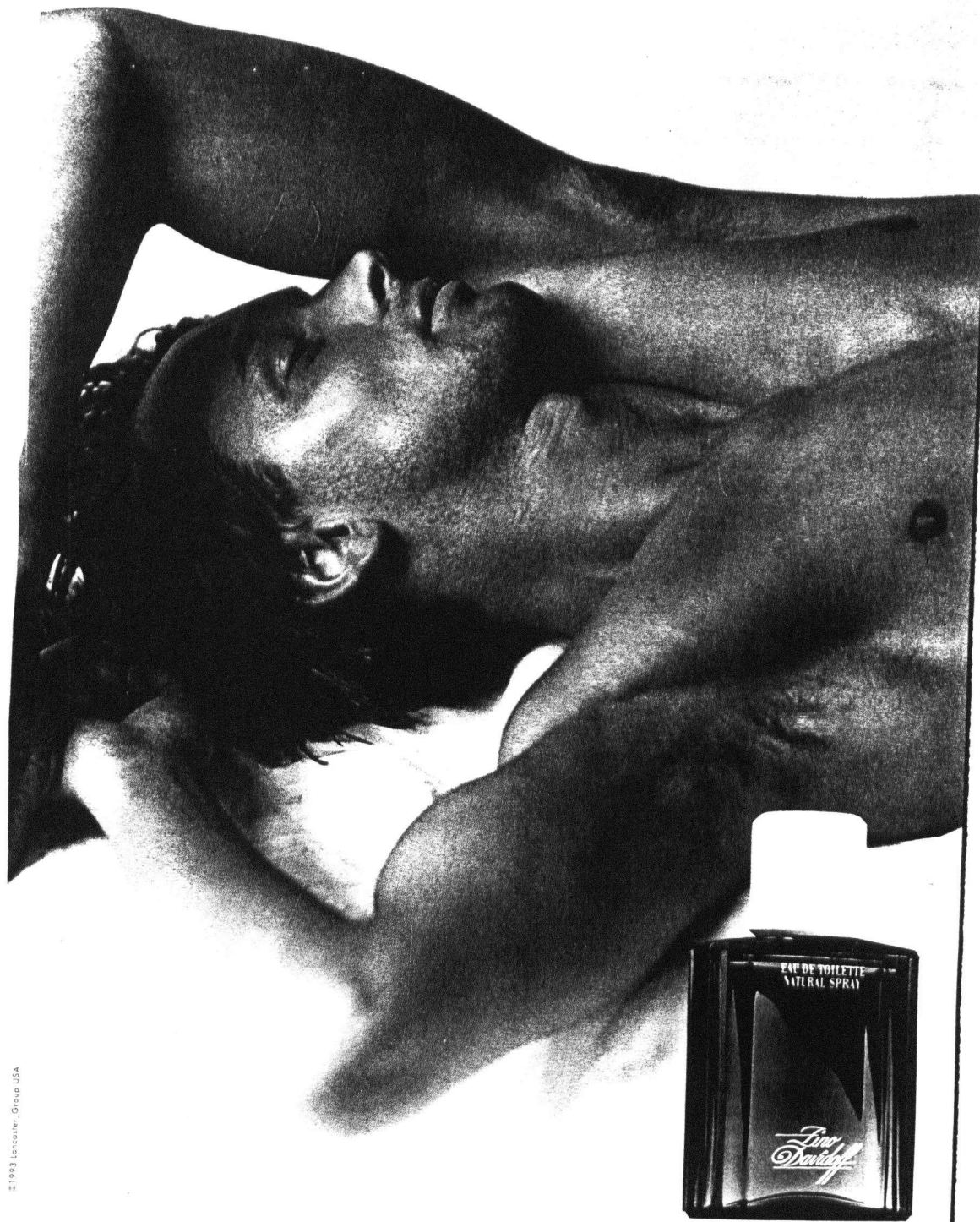


Figure 16 Southern Comfort, Alcohol, *Mademoiselle*, October, 1993 (NA)



©1993 Lencaster, Group USA

Figure 17 Zio, Perfume (for men), *Glamour*, November, 1993 (NA)

秋風が吹くと、
活字の虫がさわぎます。



雨のニューヨーク、愛のファイナル・ゲームが始まる。

垂直の街

森 瑶子

すれ違う想い、ちぐはぐな会話のつる良しみ、愛の終局を迎えたら組の男女の別れの形を描く連作集



すべての男は消耗品である

村上 龍

巨頭の男

独特の金銭感覚で巨富を得た、異相の事業家の数奇な半生

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ひとりの時間を、大切に...

Figure 18

Shueisha, Books, More, November, 1993

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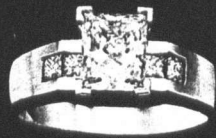
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Figure 19

OMG, Computer Marriage Matching Agency,
Cosmopolitan-Japan, November, 1993 (JPN)

*I'd move
mountains
for her.
But
today
I'll start
with
one
extraordinary
stone.*



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A diamond is forever.

De Beers

Figure 20

De Beers, Diamond, *Glamour*, October, 1993 (NA)

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「まず、指輪を探すところからね。」

タサキ ブライダル クオリティ



自社研磨による最高品質
タサキ・エクセレントカット
ダイヤモンド

 **TASAKI**

Figure 21

Tasaki (De Beers), Diamond, *With*, October, 1993 (JPN)