



1-1-2003

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Recommended Citation

Sender, K. (2003). Sex Sells: Sex, Class, and Taste in Commercial Gay and Lesbian Media. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 9 (3), 331-365. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/113

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Abstract

A teenage girl kneels on the backseat of a car in short shorts, turning toward the camera with a look both innocent and wanton. A young man lounges shirtless, his top fly button open, gazing with lazy invitation through the frame. "What's the story in these ads?" I ask students. "Well, you know," they shrug, "sex sells." Frustrated at how this aphorism closes down discussion, I have begun to consider its status as a commonsense response to some advertising. Antonio Gramsci and others have written about how "commonsense" beliefs become naturalized, taken for granted as "the way things are," and thereby obscure their own ideological foundations. "Sex sells" precludes further analysis: "Well, what can you say? We all know that sex sells and that advertisers use sexualized images of women/men/ teens/whomever to market products." The common sense of "sex sells" masks the relationship between sexuality and commerce, discouraging analysis of the particular ways that sex is articulated to marketing and ignoring the limits placed on visible manifestations of sexuality in advertising and commercial media. To put this another way, when might sex not sell? What manifestations of sex are not commercially viable? How do some forms of sex preclude selling?

Disciplines

Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication

SEX SELLS

Sex, Class, and Taste in Commercial Gay and Lesbian Media

Katherine Sender

A teenage girl kneels on the backseat of a car in short shorts, turning toward the camera with a look both innocent and wanton. A young man lounges shirtless, his top fly button open, gazing with lazy invitation through the frame. “What’s the story in these ads?” I ask students. “Well, you know,” they shrug, “sex sells.” Frustrated at how this aphorism closes down discussion, I have begun to consider its status as a commonsense response to some advertising. Antonio Gramsci and others have written about how “commonsense” beliefs become naturalized, taken for granted as “the way things are,” and thereby obscure their own ideological foundations.¹ “Sex sells” precludes further analysis: “Well, what can you say? We all know that sex sells and that advertisers use sexualized images of women/men/teens/whomever to market products.” The common sense of “sex sells” masks the relationship between sexuality and commerce, discouraging analysis of the particular *ways* that sex is articulated to marketing and ignoring the limits placed on visible manifestations of sexuality in advertising and commercial media. To put this another way, when might sex *not* sell? What manifestations of sex are not commercially viable? How do some forms of sex preclude selling?

The question of when and how sex sells takes an interesting turn when we consider the cultivation of the gay market, especially since the distinguishing feature of this market is its nonnormative sexuality.² The past thirty years have witnessed an exponential rise in attention to gay consumers, increased representations of gays and lesbians in mainstream and niche media, and the diversification of gay and lesbian media. Interest in gay and lesbian consumers from national corporations such as Seagram, Subaru, and American Express has helped take gay media from small, local newspapers and journals (such as the earliest days of the *Advocate* and the Daughters of Bilitis’s *The Ladder*) to a plethora of increasingly segmented, nationally distributed glossy magazines and Internet affinity portals.

The gay market is now even considered to have sufficient size and spending power for MTV and Showtime, both owned by Viacom, to announce that they are developing a new gay cable channel.³ As Joseph Turow comments on the increasing diversification of markets throughout the twentieth century: "Curiously, advertising and media practitioners' way of complimenting a group was to further divide it. Generally, the more attractive a population segment was to marketers, the more they segmented it."⁴ As gay consumers have become more identifiable, reachable, and desirable as a target market, gay media have blossomed to address more and more narrowly defined niches: gay entrepreneurs (*Victory!*), parents (*Alternative Family*), youth (*XY*), investors (*gfn.com*), tourists (*Passport*), and many more.

With the explosion of national ad-supported gay and lesbian media, one feature has remained relatively consistent: the sequestering or removal of sexual advertising and editorial content.⁵ Anxieties about gay men's sexuality, embodied in the two stereotypes of the hypersexual, predatory, possibly pedophilic gay man and the promiscuous AIDS victim, have shaped the constitution of the ideal gay consumer. Local and national gay and lesbian print media and Internet sites have either eliminated their sexual content or debuted with an express policy to ban it.⁶ Yet this closeting of queer sex leaves us with an interesting paradox: a market that is constituted as distinct through the nondominant sexuality of its constituency could be brought into being only through the effacement of that sexuality. If "sex sells," why must gay sex be so contained? How must gay marketers construct the gay market if not through its sexuality, and with what consequences for queer sexuality and politics?

This research starts from the assumption that, in Richard Ohmann's phrase, "markets are shaped, not discovered."⁷ Ohmann looks at how family magazines such as *Munsey's* and the *Ladies Home Journal*, at the turn of the twentieth century, cultivated audiences drawn from the nascent professional-managerial class and sold them to advertisers.⁸ He argues that these magazines offered training in "socially correct participation" to readers who were unfamiliar with the expectations of a new and somewhat plastic class position. Part of this training concerned the appropriate place of sexuality: Ohmann finds that "sex could be thematized in these magazines if (a) it was framed as Art; (b) it was a vice of the lower orders; or (c) it was brought under moral censure."⁹ Sexual content was not banished, then, but was contained by aesthetic "tastefulness" or was used as a class-based foil against which "respectable" families could compare themselves. Sexuality was thus deployed in clarifying new formations of social stratification; a respectable professional-managerial identity was distinguished both from the "rude" classes and from a degenerate social elite in part through the training in sexual decorum

that family magazines offered. While Ohmann is concerned with a specific historical period and medium, his research suggests how the containment of sexuality helps produce a class-specific identity among readers, and prompts us to consider the relationship between sexual content and social position in gay and lesbian media.

In her seminal essay “Thinking Sex,” Gayle S. Rubin offers us a model with which to analyze the intersections between social and sexual stratification. She addresses the processes whereby some sexual practices are legitimized inside the “charmed circle” of sex:

According to this system, sexuality that is “good,” “normal,” and “natural” should ideally be heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive, and non-commercial. It should be coupled, relational, within the same generation, and occur at home. It should not involve pornography, fetish objects, sex toys of any sort, or roles other than male or female. Any sex that violates these rules is “bad,” “abnormal,” or “unnatural.”¹⁰

Rubin’s model suggests a process through which nonnormative sex is ejected from the charmed circle, and in which some delegitimized practices are subject to even tighter constraints than others, with queer sex requiring specific restrictions. She acknowledges that “some forms of homosexuality are moving in the direction of respectability,” that is, those that are vanilla, coupled, and monogamous, but that “most homosexuality is still on the bad side of the line” (15). In the production of the gay market and its personification of the ideal gay consumer, we must look at how marketers struggled with the abject stereotypes of the hypersexual, promiscuous gay man and at how the “charmed” (or at least less abject) manifestations of homosexuality have become the public face of gayness.

Laura Kipnis looks at the relationship between social and sexual stratification in her study of pornography. She argues that the condemning discourses that surround porn reveal deeper anxieties about the relationship between sexuality and the social order:

Control over the body has long been considered essential to producing an orderly work force, a docile populace, a passive law-abiding citizenry. Just consider how many actual laws are on the books regulating *how* bodies may be seen and what parts may not, *what* you may do with your body in public *and* in private, and it begins to make more sense that the out-of-control, unmannerly body is precisely what threatens the orderly operation of the status quo.¹¹

The representation of sex, therefore, has ramifications more far-reaching than a simple display of desire and pleasure: it reveals deeper structures of power and control. Kipnis reminds us, however, that not all porn is equally challenging. She suggests that publications that refuse to contain sexual explicitness in broader aesthetic or gender-normative codes (by showing obese or transsexual models, for example), or that are deliberately class-antagonistic (such as *Hustler*), receive even greater censure than others. Kipnis's work helps us make sense of how sexual content is treated differently in gay and in putatively heterosexual magazines; there is no absolute boundary between acceptable and unacceptable sexual content, but such content is positioned in a "hierarchy of legitimacies," depending on what kind of sexual content is presented (gay, straight, commercial, arty, images, words, etc.) and in what context (gay and lesbian glossy magazines versus general-market magazines or local gay papers).¹²

Kipnis also demonstrates how pornography's hierarchy of legitimacies is produced through taste; the most antagonistic images are not only those that transgress gender boundaries but those that blur class distinctions. Pierre Bourdieu discusses how tastes, far from being arbitrary, simultaneously manifest and reassert cultural hierarchies.¹³ For Bourdieu, taste includes both culinary implications (certain foods taste "good" or "bad") and aesthetic ones (classical music is "better" than pop). Given how centrally he positions the body in taste cultures, however, it is striking that he does not include sexual decorum as a third sense of taste, since sexual tastefulness is surely as embodied, naturalized, and yet ultimately cultural as culinary and aesthetic preferences. I extend Bourdieu's analysis to include a consideration of sexual tastefulness and its role in producing a desirable—that is, "respectable"—image of the ideal gay consumer. Hierarchies of food, art, and sex function semiautonomously from each other, although aesthetic valuation features strongly in judgments of sexual decorum (as in the distinction commonly made between "artful" erotica and "sleazy" pornography). Further, each sense has an intricate relationship with social hierarchies, including class, race, gender, and sexuality. Only through recognizing the role of sexual taste in these hierarchies can we understand how gay marketers use claims of "good taste" to distinguish acceptable from offensive manifestations of queer sex in different media.

Collectively, tastes reflect and reproduce what Bourdieu calls "cultural capital." As Sarah Thornton explains, "Cultural capital is the linchpin of a system of distinction in which cultural hierarchies correspond to social ones and people's tastes are predominantly a marker of class."¹⁴ Bourdieu primarily focuses on four kinds of capital: cultural (what you know), economic (what you own or earn),

social (whom you know), and symbolic capital (prestige and social honor).¹⁵ These operate semiautonomously: while it is likely that higher economic capital affords access to the training necessary for high cultural capital, for example, the two are not necessarily or fully articulated (hence the snobbish disapproval of nouveaux riches by impoverished but elegant “old-money” classes). Thus tastes are not merely cultural but are signals of, and differentially afford access to, other kinds of power and privilege.

Nor is there a single, absolute hierarchy of cultural capital: different standards of knowledge and taste operate in distinct subcultures. Thornton argues that “subcultural capital” can function independently of dominant hierarchies of cultural capital: “Subcultural capital confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder.”¹⁶ Thornton investigates the subcultural hierarchies of British rave cultures; taking her lead, I argue that gay media and marketing deploy gay-specific subcultural capital to appeal to gay (and lesbian) readers. Those elements of gay subcultural capital commonly represented in the gay media are concerned with elevated displays of taste (fashion, grooming, home furnishing, food, etc.) and with entertainment (celebrities, art, and media). While subcultural capital is not tied directly to economic and educational capital, I am interested in how taste hierarchies and, in particular, sexual and aesthetic tastefulness are articulated in gay subcultural capital to produce a class-specific ideal gay consumer.

In my work on gay media and marketing, then, I extend Bourdieu’s analysis in four ways. First, while he discusses taste in its aesthetic and culinary senses, I also apply it to sexual propriety, looking at the distinctions between “decorum” and “tastelessness.” Second, he takes occupation, education, and gender as the dominant variables in the formation of taste; I argue that practices and sensibilities are also organized around other social positions and identifications, including sexuality. Third, I look at how sexual and other taste hierarchies function specifically in a gay and lesbian cultural context to produce gay subcultural capital. Fourth, Bourdieu sees the family and schools as primary transmitters of cultural capital. I suggest that media, marketing, and popular culture also have a profound role to play, especially with gay subcultural capital that is not likely to be inculcated through dominant social institutions hostile to, or ignorant of, gay tastes and mores.

In my research on the *Advocate* magazine’s articulation of class to the ideal gay consumer, I showed that in recent years the magazine has emphasized the ideal image of the gay consumer as affluent, white, male, thirtysomething, gender-conforming, and sexually discreet.¹⁷ The publishers and editors have circulated this image to interpellate those readers most desirable to national advertisers and

to offer the most “positive” (i.e., class-aspirational and politically and sexually respectable) image of gays to both readers and advertisers. Yet constructing such an image has meant effacing some constituencies of the gay community. The ideal image of the gay consumer does not accurately reflect the readership of gay and lesbian magazines, much less the gay community (insofar as it can be imagined as a cohesive whole); it may, in fact, reflect the demographics and tastes of particularly gay- and lesbian-identified marketers and media producers more than those of anyone else.

In this article I develop some of the themes laid out in my *Advocate* research. While most studies of advertising are text-based, I use ethnographic methods to approach the construction of the gay market from the perspectives of its producers, including magazine publishers, editors, writers, advertising executives, and public relations consultants. Using interview and documentary data, I analyze how the gay market acquired its contours, how gay men and lesbians have been represented in marketing, in what media venues gay marketing appears, and what effects this process has had on the public image of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, both in their communities and in the mainstream. I look at the boundaries placed on sexual content in gay and lesbian media, particularly what constitutes a “sex ad” and what dimensions of taste govern publishers’ arbitration between acceptable and unacceptable content. I investigate marketers’ and publishers’ anxieties about commercial manifestations of sexuality, especially ads for phone sex lines and escort services, and the risks these are assumed to pose to a discreet gay sexuality. I consider the exceptions—the instances in which sexual content is permitted—and the characteristics of these cases that allow them to appear in gay media. Using the theoretical approaches of Ohmann, Rubin, Kipnis, and Bourdieu, I analyze how manifestations of gay sex are contained through hierarchies of legitimacy, structured predominantly through appeals to taste. Finally, I consider how sexual tastefulness helps produce a class-specific ideal gay consumer, whose image is beamed back at gay and lesbian readers as a lesson in “socially correct participation.”

Method

Between January 1998 and November 2001 I interviewed thirty-nine professionals who worked in gay marketing and media, including gay-, lesbian-, and bisexual-magazine publishers, ad directors, marketers, sales representatives, and editors; advertising agency creatives and account executives; corporate marketers; public

relations consultants; and journalists. Twenty-two interviewees were men, sixteen were women, one was transgendered. Twenty-six were gay-, lesbian-, or bisexual-identified; four identified themselves as heterosexual; and nine did not disclose their sexual identity. I acknowledge the complications of interviewees' identifying themselves as "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual," or "heterosexual" and that these terms can suggest an overly reductive, essential, or stable sexual identity. For my purposes, however, they proved valuable in making claims about the investments of marketers in their gay-specific work. Only one interviewee identified himself to me as a person of color.

In follow-up interviews with ten openly gay interviewees, eight identified their socioeconomic status as "professional," "upper middle class," or "bourgeois"; one as "educated working class"; and one as "Class X" (i.e., with much educational but limited economic capital). Five described their family backgrounds as working-class, and five called their upbringing middle- or upper-middle-class. Their present socioeconomic status corresponds to what Barbara Ehrenreich and John Ehrenreich define as the professional-managerial class: "salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor may be described broadly as the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations."¹⁸ These authors argue that the role of the professional-managerial class is to oil the administrative and ideological cogs between the owning class and the laboring classes. Marketing, advertising, and public relations professionals are all "cultural workers" who facilitate the circulation of products, revenues, and ideologies through marketing.

With the exception of journalist Patrick Califia-Rice (formerly Pat Califia), I call these professionals "marketers," insofar as they have all been involved in producing the gay market, whether by creating ads that represent gays or lesbians, doing market research, or writing about the gay market and thus bringing it to readers' imaginations through the advertising trade and popular press. Each interviewee's occupational position required her or him to construct and respond to gay marketing in specific ways, and not all positions were similarly burdened with the responsibility of sexual containment. Yet while these marketers occupied very different points in the circuit of marketing—from working in corporations interested in courting gay consumers to publishing ads in gay and lesbian magazines, for example—the differences between them were in many ways less significant than what they had in common. There was a high level of consensus among them, especially concerning the taken-for-granted view that a commercial gay sexuality must be removed from gay media and other marketing venues to attract national adver-

tisers. While marketers articulated different personal views on the appropriateness of sexual imagery and tastefulness, I found remarkably little friction between their commonsense views of what was or was not permissible in gay and lesbian media, irrespective of their specific occupational expertise or obligations.¹⁹

Marketers' shared class position may have contributed to the level of common sense in their responses. The underlying class demands of marketers' professional roles raise interesting questions for interviewees who identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, since the respectability required of members of the professional-managerial class may be undermined by their less "respectable" (because nonnormative) sexual identity. This contradiction is acute for gay-, lesbian-, and bisexual-identified marketers involved in gay marketing, since their sexual identity constitutes a significant portion of their professional expertise: these marketers do not just "happen" to be gay; their gay subcultural capital is part of their skill set. How they negotiate between their dominant professional identity and their minority sexual identity shapes the strategies of sexual containment that they pursue.

In addition to conducting interviews, I attended four presentations about different aspects of the gay market, such as how gay and lesbian magazines court national advertisers and how marketers advertise to gay and lesbian consumers on the Internet. I also examined a range of documents, including ads and consumer-related content from gay, lesbian, bisexual, HIV-positive, pornographic, and other magazines and Web sites; more than one hundred articles on gay marketing that appeared in the advertising and marketing trade press from 1972 on; and articles on the gay market from large newspapers and weekly magazines.²⁰ These data enabled me to investigate how the routines of gay marketing intersected with the contested position of homosexuality, and of queer sex in particular, to produce a sexually discreet image of the ideal gay consumer.

Sexual Containment in Gay and Lesbian Media

Spend some time browsing at your local newsstand, and you are likely to see gay magazines displayed not alongside pornography, but alongside men's magazines or the ethnic press. It's *Playboy* and *Penthouse* that now come in plastic envelopes, not their mainstream gay counterparts.

—Joseph Hanania, "Closeted No Longer"

Most marketers take it for granted that a visible, commercial gay sexuality is incompatible with mainstream advertising; as advertising agency president Jack Sansolo once asked, “You think I’d tell clients to advertise next to a 900 number? Give me a break.”²¹ This commonly held belief is reflected in the removal of sexual content and advertising from the gay press since the 1970s. *Advocate* publisher David Goodstein began to sequester sexually explicit content and classifieds at the back of the magazine in 1975, hoping that mainstream advertisers would find the magazine a more hospitable context for national ads. “We’ve come a long, long way,” Goodstein commented. “We are being desleazified.”²² This decision was followed by the diverting of sex ads first into a pullout section, the “Pink Pages,” and then, in 1992, into a separate, mail-order publication, the *Advocate Classifieds*, later called *Unzipped*.²³

The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the flourishing of new gay and lesbian publications, including *Outweek*, *Curve* (formerly *Deneuve*), *Genre*, *Square Peg*, *Ten Percent*, *Out*, and *Anything That Moves*, among many others (some of which soon folded). The mid- to late 1990s saw the appearance of gay and lesbian Internet sites, including PlanetOut, gay.com, and gfn.com. Most of these media debuted without sex ads or dropped them in early issues. Advertisers and publishers, directing their opprobrium especially at phone sex advertisers, claimed that sex ads created an inhospitable environment for national goods and services. One article announcing a new Miami-based gay magazine, *miamigo*, boasted that it “dumps smut, keeps flair, aims for upscale.” Journalist Dana Calvo quoted the publisher’s reason for refusing sex ads: “We’re still a very sexual, artsy magazine but not in advertising with triple XXX ads. . . . we want to upgrade people’s impression [of gays].”²⁴ Calvo’s article makes explicit the inverse relationship between elevated cultural tastes (upgrading to the highbrow) and a debased advertising genre (XXX sex ads), and shows how the class position of gay men is made precarious, in part, by public evidence of their sexual culture.

How the incompatibility between sexual content and national advertising is negotiated differs among gay and lesbian media. While glossy magazines such as the *Advocate*, *Out*, and *Curve* refuse sex ads, publishers of local gay and lesbian newspapers tend to be more relaxed about sexual content. Because of their modest circulation, monochrome printing, and low-quality stock, most local papers do not expect to win many lucrative national advertisers. Further, since many are free publications and thus survive on ad income alone, they tend to remain dependent on sex-related advertising. To encourage national advertisers in the earlier pages, most shunt the sex ads to the back.²⁵ However, the presence of sex ads at all remains a barrier to increased national and “respectable” advertising in these

publications. For instance, to attract “Mom and Pop businesses in Du Pont Circle” that might be squeamish about appearing next to sex ads, the *Washington Blade* reportedly made it “difficult” for sex-oriented businesses to advertise.²⁶

The gay and lesbian consumer medium most stringently monitored for sexual material is the Internet. Web sites such as PlanetOut and gay.com have distanced themselves from sexual advertising; a gay.com spokesperson explained that “that’s not the business we’re going to be in. We’re in the business of community, news and other services.”²⁷ Given the almost unlimited interconnectivity of the Internet, marketers for gay and lesbian Web sites obsessively revisit the question of whether visitors to gay portals will click their way through linked sites to “adult content.” As IBM’s advertising account executive, Jim Consolantis, explained, “The concern that most major advertisers have, like IBM, is making sure that they don’t get linked to any site that has high sexual content.”²⁸ The pressure that large advertisers can bring to bear on Internet sites has produced an environment of hypervigilance. Jeffrey Newman, president and chief operating officer of the personal financial Web site gfn.com, said: “We have a strict policy: we don’t have any [links] with adult content sites, and we do everything to make sure people can’t get through at least three or four clicks from our site to adult content. We are very, very careful about that issue.”²⁹

Wanting to contradict the stereotype of gay men, in particular, as hypersexual and/or pedophilic may be the most important single reason marketers gave for taking sex out of advertising. Commenting on gfn.com’s campaign in mainstream as well as in gay and lesbian media, president and CEO Walter Schubert observed: “The ad campaign was not only something that was meant to be tongue-in-cheek and cute to the gay community, but it was also something that would show corporate America and the straight community that we’re really not all sex fiends and monsters.”³⁰ Yet counteracting this stereotype was rarely given as a rationale for the removal of sex from advertising and editorial content. Far more often publishers commented that they refused sex ads because they alienated national advertisers. As Michael Shively, former associate publisher of the *Advocate*, recalled:

There was always this internal dialogue about the embarrassment of the [sex] ads, and when push came to shove, [national advertisers] always said, “Well, because of the sexual content we can’t put an ad in your magazine.” No matter how far it went, once you got through to the decision makers, they would say, “Well, you’ve got a great vehicle, and we would love to do this, but you have all these sex ads.”³¹

Sex ads were perceived to reduce the quality of gay and lesbian media, making them appear sleazy and less viable as mainstream marketing vehicles.³² Michael Kaminer, *Out*'s original director of public relations, explained that the publisher's decision to refuse sex ads was "a gamble, but it's a simple fact of life that you're not going to attract major advertisers with [sex ads] in your magazine. . . . The ads are lucrative, but there's no way you are going to get the big names."³³ Dan Baker concurred: among publishers of lesbian and gay glossy magazines in the early 1990s,

there was a feeling that there were never going to be, quote, "mainstream"—and every time I use *mainstream*, I put it in quotes—advertisers in gay publications as long as there was sex connected, and that was a significant step forward, or at least in their *minds* it was, when they decided that the only way to do it was to have a, quote, "general-interest" gay magazine that then would get "general-interest" ads.³⁴

Another pressure on magazine publishers is distribution: some interviewees noted that sex ads restricted where magazines could be sold or given away. According to publisher Sean Strub, large numbers of *POZ* issues were distributed free through HIV/AIDS clinics, social services, health services, and so on: "I think that if we had sexually related advertising, or ads that were more sex-related, we would limit where the magazine could go, in terms of schools and AIDS educators and a lot of community-based organizations."³⁵ Some magazine publishers were also concerned about international distribution. Frances Stevens, publisher and editor in chief of *Curve*, said that it "service[s] a large Canadian distribution so . . . we want all the women who want to get the magazine to be able to get it."³⁶ Stevens worried that including sexual advertising might put the magazine at risk of seizure by Canadian customs. This anxiety may be overstated: as the marketing director of the lesbian porn magazine *On Our Backs* commented, while the lesbian S/M magazine *Bad Attitude* "saw a lot of problems with the Canadian distribution, we haven't had any problems with [foreign distribution] yet."³⁷ This suggests that fetish, kinky, or S/M sex is more at risk of seizure than what Kipnis calls "run-of-mill [*sic*] 'fuck and suck' pornography."³⁸

Not only advertisers and customs officials but marketers and readers may not want to see sex ads. Don Tuthill decided to exclude them from *Genre* and, more recently, *Q San Francisco* less because he wanted to court national advertisers than because he himself disliked gay publications that were "full of sex" and that "you can't have on your coffee table for your mother to read."³⁹ Henry Scott attrib-

uted *Out's* discontinuation of sex ads to readers' wishes: "What people say is, 'Sex is important in my life, and I can buy a magazine oriented to sex'—again, it's a segmentation thing—'[but] that's not what I buy *Out* for.'"⁴⁰ Scott claimed that many of his readers might be interested in sexual content, but not in a general-interest gay and lesbian magazine; he acknowledged, too, that the presence or absence of sexual content facilitated market and publishing segmentation.

Some interviewees attributed the removal of sex ads to a desire to broaden a magazine's gender appeal. Both journalist Grant Lukenbill and Joe Landry claimed that lesbians did not want to see evidence of gay men's sexuality in gay and lesbian publications: "When we did the redesign six years ago [in 1992] and took the sex advertising out of the [*Advocate*] and changed the title to 'National Gay and Lesbian Magazine,' the readership went from 2 percent female to 25 percent, and between the last two readership surveys that we've done, it's been constant at 27 percent."⁴¹ Landry echoed the stereotype that lesbians are antisex in general and are repelled by male erotic activity in particular: by removing sex ads, he made the *Advocate* a more "lesbian-friendly" environment. He justified the magazine's national-advertising-friendly policy in terms of a more "ethical" framework: protecting dour, sexless lesbian feminists from male or, indeed, any sexuality.

The containment of a public, commercial queer sexuality also conforms to the most respectable aims of the gay civil rights movement. Patrick Califia-Rice, who wrote a sex advice column in the *Advocate* for many years as Pat Califia, reported that the removal of the sex ads and his advice column from the magazine "was largely driven by marketing, but the marketing was also backed up by a certain kind of understanding of what gay politics should be about, what the agenda should be, who should be in the movement, what we should tell straight people about ourselves."⁴² These dual concerns produced a desexualized, class-respectable venue for national advertisers and, in turn, offered mainstream culture more broadly an image of a sexually discreet group of gay and lesbian readers and consumers.

The different institutional positions occupied by my interviewees may suggest some friction between them on the topic of sexual containment in gay-themed advertising and publications. Yet there was remarkably little dissent: most interviewees assumed that explicit sexual content in national magazines and on Internet sites precluded national advertising and that sex ads tainted local publications. There were two notable exceptions to this view, however. First, staff at the pornographic publication *On Our Backs* criticized the double standard that

allowed national advertising in heterosexual-targeted pornographic magazines but not in lesbian porn. Second, Shively, who sold advertising for the *Advocate* from 1980 to 1990, described a contentious debate about what could and could not be permitted in the magazine. One of his roles as associate publisher was to be

the general of the penis police. There was this whole thing in the *Advocate* that our line was that you could not show a penis. So then it was, like, how much of a penis could you show when it's not a penis, right? We're talking about hot debates in the production room when it's supposed to be going to the printers! And taking the Exacto knife and shaving an eighth of an inch off the bottom of a halftone to make it penisless. And so it was like you could show pubes and then you could show just the very top of the penis. And of course the advertisers are always arguing that sex sells, and they would send photographs of people totally nude. And so back and forth it went.⁴³

Shively described himself and Robert McQueen, then editor in chief, as “very pro-sex” and caught in a dilemma about exactly how explicit representations of sexuality could be. There were “screaming, yelling fights” between production and advertising staff while the courier waited in the reception area to take the magazine to the printers. Yet “what you see in [its] pages does not reflect what formed [the content]. It is impossible to infer the process from the result.”⁴⁴ While the process invoked the competing demands to be sex-positive and to win national advertisers, the outcome reflected the more conservative argument: the bottom line won out over sexual politics.

Thus even if magazine staff held different personal positions on the acceptability, indeed the desirability, of sexual content in their publications, and even if the line between acceptable and unacceptable was constantly negotiated, the commonsense view that sex was incompatible with national advertising usually prevailed. Interviewees commonly faulted someone else for this: magazine publishers blamed customs officials and others responsible for regulating distribution; magazine and Internet publishers blamed national advertisers for pulling out if sex ads appeared in those venues; publishers saw it as their duty to protect readers—both gay men and lesbians—from coming into contact with “offensive” material; and some marketers had an overriding concern to protect the image of the gay movement from those who denounced its proponents as “sex fiends and monsters.” Ad agencies, often positioned as the most conservative force, in turn blamed clients for their unwillingness to transgress sexual boundaries and distri-

bution channels for limiting what could be shown. Liz Gumbiner recalled the fine lines drawn between what was and what was not acceptable during the shoot for the Mystic ad showing a lesbian couple:

We had lingerie just hanging out to dry in the bathroom, and it would have been just the quickest shot, but it implied intimacy, and so we couldn't show that. And it's so funny, that we could have a woman [say], "Here's the person I want to spend the rest of my life with," but we couldn't show their lingerie hanging in the bathroom. But if it was a husband and wife? Sure, of course you could show a slip or something. . . . And we thought it would be really good to have a really quick flash of them kissing at one point, but [our lawyer] was, like, "No way, no way! It'll never get on the air."⁴⁵

By attributing sexual conservatism to other elements in the production and distribution process, most interviewees suggested that they would like to be less sexually conservative, whether in the creation or in the acceptance of ads, but that their hands were tied by prudish others on whom they depended for business.

Respectability, the need to be taken seriously by mainstream advertisers, ease of distribution, and the providing of a comfortable environment for women and men readers (and their mothers) were some of the reasons marketers gave for banishing sexual advertising from or limiting it in gay and lesbian media. Yet interviewees such as Joe Landry emphasized that removing sex ads alone was not sufficient to court national advertisers; another effort was to emphasize the desirable demographics of the *Advocate's* readers and the high quality of the magazine's editorial content. Indeed, Landry's linking of desirable demographics and high-quality editorial content with the desexualized environment assumed that the former could be produced only in a sex-free context.

The Boundaries of Sexual Containment

Both the trade press and my interviewees took it for granted that the presence of sex ads in lesbian and gay media precluded mainstream advertising. Yet the ads and the content of a range of lesbian and gay magazines called this assumption into question. For while the publishers of most magazines emphasized that they refused "sex ads," they evidently accepted ads for sex stores, books, catalogs, toys, and lubricants. How, then, could these ads slip in under the radar of rules against sex ads? What was it about them that allowed them a place in gay glossy magazines that supposedly eschewed explicit sexual references? What, in turn, was the

relationship between sexual editorial material and the presence of national advertising?

Sex-Related Advertising in Lesbian and Gay Media

From the testimony of magazine publishers, it appeared that there was a great deal of ambiguity about what constituted a sex ad. While *On Our Backs* and *Girlfriends* are published by the same company, the latter aims to be a lesbian “lifestyle” magazine and so, according to ad director Catherine Draper, is “friendlier to mainstream advertisers” than the porn publication *On Our Backs* by rejecting sex ads. It does, however, take ads from the women’s sex store Good Vibrations, which Draper saw as “more like a New Age music store, . . . a very wholesome . . . sex store for the nineties.”⁴⁶ At the same time, *Girlfriends* turns down ads for pornographic videos and phone sex lines even though, as Draper put it, “it kills me to turn down money.” She explained that they do not print phone sex ads because already nervous mainstream advertisers see this category as sleazy; in contrast, Good Vibrations does not pose such a threat. Similarly, while both *Out* and the *Advocate* turn down “sex ads,” they accept ads for lubricants and would welcome condom ads. Scott said that his main concern was with ads for phone sex and escort services, both of which are services exchanged for money. Stevens also said that at *Curve* they “do not carry 900 or sex-based ads,” but she agreed that they would carry ads for sex toys and the Good Vibrations store; they accept ads on “a case-by-case basis . . . depend[ing] on the explicit nature of the ad.”⁴⁷

In the case of advertising for sex-related products, advertisers are extremely careful to err on the side of respectability. Deborah Isherwood, promotions manager for a well-known sexual lubricant, explained that her company had begun to advertise in gay and lesbian publications because its share of the lubricant market had slipped as newer brands began to target gay men exclusively.⁴⁸ Isherwood was careful to emphasize that her company’s marketing approach treated gay men as “just another demographic group”; its ads were neither gender- nor sexuality-specific, so they could be placed in a range of publications. Yet while its advertising strategy did not single out gay men as a distinct market, the company downplayed the sexual connotations of its own product, and the name of the parent company was kept separate from that of the lubricant, lest the product’s sexual purpose taint the company’s association with babies and children. Further, Isherwood explained that the company’s advertising and sponsorship campaign attempted to link the lubricant to health (including safe sex) rather than to sex per se, aiming for “a professional manner and not promoting sexuality.” This strategy minimized the product’s sexual uses to maintain the conservative image of the parent com-

pany as well as to render its ads sufficiently tasteful to appear in gay and lesbian magazines.

In contrast to the potentially sterile images in lubricant ads, some of the sexiest images in gay publications are for products that have little to do with sex or even with sexual identity. Ads for Calvin Klein, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Gap portray handsome, boyish young men enjoying sexually ambiguous, athletic intimacy. Images that may appeal to gay men only covertly when they appear in other magazines convey at least an implicitly homoerotic message in gay publications. Stuart Elliott discussed Abercrombie & Fitch's fall 1999 "magalogue," which explored the theme of "college wrestling": The campaign's creative director, Sam Shahid, talked frankly about the sexual connotations of the images as "in the eye of the beholder. . . . Gays love it; straights love it; girls love it."⁴⁹ This wrestling campaign played with a familiar tension between the homosocial and the homoerotic;⁵⁰ what was new was how readily the Abercrombie & Fitch agency and head office acknowledged the range of its appeal.

It is clear, then, that the touted refusal of sex ads applies to a narrow range of services: 900 phone sex lines and escorts. Although publishers may protest that they refuse sex ads, some products and stores do advertise, and some degree of generalized sexiness is accepted, even welcomed. What distinguishes sex ads from other sex-related and sexy advertising is their offer of an explicitly commercial sexual exchange, an exchange likely to occur between strangers. Phone sex and escort services are thus positioned outside Rubin's charmed circle, while ads for sex products that can be used in an established, private, noncommercial sexual relationship (sex toys, videos) can be recouped, to some extent, in the inner circle. Further, the increasing willingness of advertisers to acknowledge the homoerotic potential of fashion advertising suggests that sexiness has not been phased out of gay and lesbian publications but, rather, has been shifted from sexual services and products to more generalized, homosocial, arty scenarios. The Abercrombie & Fitch ads, like all "image advertising," sell the fantasy that the product's sexy attributes will be bestowed on the consumer; they do not sell the real possibility of sexual exchange, as sex ads do. While explicit ads for commercial sexual services are banned and only oblique references between sexual practices and products (lubricants, sex stores) are permitted, tasteful sexiness can be explored in myriad ways with products that are not expressly sex-related.

Advertising in Pornographic Magazines

The presence of advertising in pornographic magazines raises further questions about the relationship between commercial sexuality and mainstream ads. Since

the relaunch of *On Our Backs* in June 1998, most of the magazine's advertising has come from the sex industry, and the publishers have found it a real challenge to get national advertising. Advertising director Megan Ishler had courted alcohol and cigarette companies as most likely to advertise in "sophisticate" titles such as *On Our Backs*, but they had yet to take the plunge. Ishler had tried a variety of strategies:

I've asked advertisers who are in *Girlfriends* to [advertise in *On Our Backs*] dirt cheap or free—to bundle in the back cover of *On Our Backs* at half price, if they come in as part of their *Girlfriends* contract: I've been told no for that. I've been told no to try it for free one time, and then we can talk about a contract. . . . [Or] as part of an incentive for marketing: "If you sponsor this event, Alizé, . . . we'll give you the back cover of the magazine"; they said no because they did not want to appear on the back cover of our publication.⁵¹

Ishler was keen to get national advertisers because a good response from free advertising was likely to induce them to pay for space in the future. More important, perhaps, once one national advertiser in a given category enters a publication, others tend to follow. Yet mainstream advertisers have proved recalcitrant, for several reasons: *On Our Backs* has an unaudited circulation of forty thousand, a small market by many magazines' standards; it is monochrome-printed on low-quality stock; and it lacks significant market research data on lesbians generally and on readers of lesbian pornography in particular. Further, many advertisers are squeamish about an association with lesbian sex, despite the cachet of girl-girl sex in mainstream pornography, and they may be worried about a backlash from other consumers.

A preliminary review of pornographic magazines revealed large differences in their advertising, which suggested the more or less scrupulous maintenance of boundaries between some categories of ads. In counting the types of ads in single issues of a variety of porn magazines, I found an inverse relationship between the presence of sex industry ads and the amount of national, mainstream, non-sex-related advertising.⁵² The majority of *Playboy's* full-page ads were for alcoholic beverages (twenty-seven pages) and tobacco products (twenty-three pages); electronics, nonporn media, and apparel ads also appeared, including a wholesome Tommy Hilfiger ad on the back cover. The magazine had only one ad for an explicitly sex-related product (a couples erotic video) that did not bear the *Playboy* brand. *Penthouse* had fewer alcohol and tobacco ads (two and five full-page ads,

respectively) and far more sex ads (twenty pages), mostly for phone sex lines and videos. *Hustler* had only sex-related advertising: in addition to two full-page ads for penis enlargers, it offered forty-five pages of phone sex and porn video ads. With pornographic magazines marketed to straight women, gay men, and lesbians, the picture got more complicated: *Playgirl*, ostensibly directed at heterosexual women readers, had only sex ads (seventeen pages);⁵³ the gay men's pornographic magazine *Blueboy* also had only sex ads (thirteen pages); *On Our Backs* had eight pages of sex ads, in addition to three ads for non-sex-related products; and the lesbian S/M magazine *Bad Attitude* had three pages of sex and lesbian information ads.

In pornography directed at heterosexual men, then, more sex ads correspond to less national advertising. The presence of national, nonsex advertising reflects in part Kipnis's hierarchy of taste among magazines: *Playboy's* and *Penthouse's* "high-class" image wins national ads, whereas *Hustler* gets only sex ads. The class implications of this contrast was affirmed by a *Playboy* advertising representative, who explained that it was a "corporate decision," in keeping with the "upscale image of the magazine," not to accept "chat room, sex toys, or other [sex] ads."⁵⁴ This suggests that *Playboy's* publisher, like lesbian and gay glossy magazine publishers, had chosen to avoid the sleazy image of sex ads. Yet the cultural legitimization that national advertising offers is less available to heterosexual women and queer women and men: while *Playgirl* contains less explicitly sexual images than, say, *Penthouse* and interpellates readers as members of—or as aspiring to—the professional classes, it does not contain national advertising. These magazines' comparatively small circulations, lower-quality stock, and lack of market research data may contribute to mainstream advertisers' reluctance to buy space in them, as Ishler explained, yet the very presence of sex ads (in the absence of ads for other products) may perpetuate these magazines' image as less "respectable" than their "high-class" cousins.

Sexual Editorial Content

Relationships among sex, class, and advertising also determine editorial content. Advertisers expressed anxiety about being associated not just with sex ads but with "racy" editorial content. David Mulryan, partner at a gay-specific ad agency, explained his reservations about placing ads for a national advertiser—in this case, Chase Manhattan Bank—in some gay and lesbian publications, including *Girlfriends*:

Some of that editorial is pretty hot, right? And again, we do not want to hand all of the detractors at Chase a weapon to sink us with, you know?

Because what does that help? So it's very tough. We are caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place: on the one hand, we have these rabid publications, and then we have this conservative bank, and frankly, I have to side with the conservative bank: they are writing the check, right?⁵⁵

This comment suggests that publishers are not overly paranoid about the risks of printing sexual content in their magazines: advertisers and agency executives do monitor gay and lesbian publications for editorial content that is "pretty hot." Yet publishers' caution challenges journalists' long-held commitment to uphold editorial decisions independently of advertising. Asked if there was a relationship between advertising and editorial content, *Out's* Kurt DeMars responded: "Church and state. We need to keep the integrity of the magazine solid, and believe you me, if we had a choice, we would plaster our advertisers all over the editorial, but you can't really do that and keep a good product."⁵⁶ Draper told me that at *Girlfriends* "the editorial department can write anything, including stuff that is hurtful [to advertisers], if it's necessary and relevant."⁵⁷

Further discussion with DeMars and Draper suggested that the "church and state" separation went only so far. In its early days *Girlfriends* dropped its sexy centerfold after the editor in chief, Heather Findlay, bought *On Our Backs*. Moneka Hewlett, marketing director of both magazines, explained that removing the centerfold helped differentiate the two publications and segment their audiences: "When we purchased . . . *On Our Backs*, it made perfect sense to have all the sexual content be covered in that publication and have *Girlfriends* as more reflective of entertainment, politics, and culture."⁵⁸ Draper added, however, that a centerfold "doesn't fly with mainstream advertisers." She recalled that when the Quality Paperback Book Club began to advertise in *Girlfriends*, a senior executive "freaked out" because of the centerfold and canceled future ads. Draper hoped that Quality Paperback would reconsider advertising in *Girlfriends* now that the centerfold was gone. This example suggests that appealing to national advertisers does affect editorial content in *Girlfriends*, even if the removal of the centerfold was also motivated by the need to diversify titles and readerships.

The boundaries of church and state also broke down for *Out's* publisher and editors. DeMars stressed that

editorial would never do anything that would jeopardize the value of a particular advertiser's message. . . . [For example] we wouldn't have someone having sex in the book. We try to make things sexy; our fashion spreads have changed over the last few years. Now they are very sexy. . . . I guess

we wouldn't write about these kinds of things, but it's all in how you present it: it's just got to be tasteful.⁵⁹

DeMars's comment affirmed that editorial was indeed responsive to the demands of advertisers, mediated through the magazine's advertising department. His statement that "it's just got to be tasteful" indicated that judgments of taste, rather than a cut-and-dried distinction between the too sexual and the acceptable, ultimately determined what was and was not permitted. While advertisers are kept as separate from editorial as "church and state," in terms of their wish to be "plaster[ed] . . . all over the editorial," this separation is not upheld when it comes to protecting advertisers from explicitly erotic or otherwise "tasteless" content.

Publishers and marketers believed that there were different sexual standards for gay and general-market publications, standards that reflected the enduring stereotype of the hypersexual gay man, in particular. Gay and lesbian magazines have to be much more scrupulous about sexual content than other publications do, and what might be construed as sexy playfulness elsewhere may be seen as controversial in gay magazines. Todd Evans, president of Rivendell Marketing Company, said that he understood publishers' motives when they were accused of "whitewashing" gay culture to get national advertising, since showing a bare-chested man in *Out* has very different implications from showing one in, say, *Newsweek*.⁶⁰ As one journalist recalled, *Ten Percent's* art director "once pulled a heavily beefcaked cover at the last minute because 'what works for *Vanity Fair* is too sexual for us. This is a new market for advertisers, and we're fighting a misconception that this group is obsessed with sex.'"⁶¹

The different standards of appropriateness in gay versus apparently heterosexual magazines mirrored other ways in which taste is not an absolute measure of degrees of eroticism but depends on the interaction of gender, sexuality, race, and class. What is within the bounds of good taste in *Vanity Fair* exceeds those bounds in *Out*. What is possible in a gay or lesbian magazine's editorial is inappropriate in advertising. What is appropriate advertising in straight pornography has yet to make its way into women's and gay porn. But how do marketers decide on and maintain the boundaries of what is acceptable, and in what contexts? How do appeals to taste determine representations of sex in gay and lesbian consumer venues?

Sexy or Sleazy? The Dimensions of Taste

Most good magazines have got some kind of sex appeal, and that goes for everyone from *Vogue* to *Wallpaper*. A gay magazine can be sexy without being sleazy.

—James Collard, quoted in Stan Williams, “Securing the Out Post”

How do marketers negotiate the boundary between sexy and sleazy? If publishers said that they refused sex ads while allowing some sexual advertising and other content, how did they arbitrate between the permissible and the offensive? In their discussion of sex ads and sexual content more generally, many publishers both explicitly and implicitly appealed to standards of taste, in aiming for an “upscale,” “highbrow” image. Yet taste is not measured against an absolute standard of sexual explicitness but is constantly under negotiation. How, then, do gay marketers use taste to protect publications, advertisers, and the public image of gayness from contamination by a vulgar, commercial, public sexuality, and how, in turn, do such measures produce other forms of gay sexual culture?

Most marketers who appealed to standards of taste to justify their banning sexual content did not, or could not, articulate how they had arrived at these standards. However, *Out*'s Scott described adjudicating between more and less acceptable images according to “dimensions of taste.” He invoked three overlapping criteria of tastefulness: aesthetics (art versus pornography), erotic discretion (homosociality versus explicit homosexuality), and value or necessity (essential information versus gratuitous lasciviousness). With respect to aesthetics, Scott explained: “We have calculated lapses of taste on the editorial side, and so we do things that we think are sexual and provocative but tasteful at the same time. And usually our own rationale is there’s something artistic about the presentation. . . . You know, what’s the difference between Michelangelo’s *David* and a still from a porn film?”⁶² “Lapses of taste” were recuperable when they were “artistically” presented, which suggests a commonsense division between what is aesthetic and what is not, even in the absence of a reliable language with which to describe this distinction.

As for erotic discretion, Scott contrasted Bruce Weber’s Abercrombie & Fitch ads, characterized by “innocence and playfulness” and taken by a famous commercial photographer, with ads for gay-specific products “where you also have men who don’t have clothes on, but there’s a . . . sense of grimness about them that makes it look like it was filmed in a sex club as opposed to some guys playing football together.”⁶³ In the implied eroticism of Weber’s series of ads, sexuality is circumscribed in the charming, playful homosociality of young men’s sports.

According to Scott's third dimension of taste, sexual or intimate bodily references were permissible if essential for conveying an important message. Scott compared a "tasteful" ad for a sexual lubricant with the "gratuitous tastelessness" of an ad for an HIV-related nutritional supplement that declared, "Your mom doesn't know dick about nutrition": *Out* declined to run this ad.⁶⁴ As long as they were tastefully rendered, Scott accepted ads related to safe sex or sexual health, but not ads that sold commercial sexual exchange or made "gratuitous" references to sex or genitals.

Scott's dimensions of taste confirmed that the presence of sexual editorial and advertising has less to do with absolute markers of sexual explicitness than with how sex appears and how it is contained through aesthetic and other judgments. Beneath Scott's and other publishers' claims that sexual content is antithetical to respectability and mainstream advertising, marketers made subtle distinctions between taste and vulgarity (not knowing "dick"); between private, domestic sexual consumption (sex toys) and public, commercial sexual exchange (phone sex, escort services, soliciting ads); between explicit sex and arty sexiness; between open homosexuality and sexually charged homosociality; and between editorial content and advertising.

Containing and Proliferating Perversity

These finely calibrated distinctions between sexual decorum and sleaze serve a prophylactic function, prompting us to ask exactly what such boundaries protect lesbian and gay media, their publishers, other advertisers, and their readers from. As Larry Gross reminds us, advertising shows life not "as it is but as it should be—life and lives worth emulating."⁶⁵ Limiting explicit, commercial sexuality in gay and lesbian media "desleazifies" these media, their advertising, and the image of gay people more generally, suggesting that gay lives worth emulating are sexually discreet. Yet the class dimensions of taste and cultural capital that are brought to bear on manifestations of public gay sexuality demonstrate that the relationship among sex, sexuality, and social position is not fixed but operates in constant tension.

The containment of sex in gay media protects gender boundaries by shielding lesbians, perceived as "naturally" less sexual (indeed, as antisex), from the risk of being confronted by gay male sex. The constraints historically placed on women's sexual expression have been naturalized to appear as a consequence of (particularly white, upper-class) women's low sexual drive, prudery, attachment to monogamy, and sexual vulnerability. Female sexual reserve is brought to bear on

the containment of public, commercial sexuality in gay media in a number of ways: publishers such as Lukenbill and Landry see lesbian readers as needing protection from evidence of gay male commercial sex; serially monogamous lesbian relationships are posited as a standard for promiscuous gay men to emulate;⁶⁶ and lesbians are cast as sexual conservatives. The stereotype of the desexualized lesbian is thus used as a moral standard against which professional-class gay male sexuality must measure itself. Women's supposed sexual reticence justifies the desexing of gay and lesbian media, a process that reinscribes a vulnerable female sexuality, strengthens the division between the erotic lives of lesbians and those of gay men, and continues to burden women's sexuality with the role of preserving a respectable—that is, a professional-managerial—manifestation of gay sexuality. In light of this, it makes sense for publishers to solve the problem that overt gay male sexuality poses to women by banning it rather than working to increase the presence of a complementary, overt lesbian sexuality. Removing all sex ads (rather than, say, increasing sexual content for women) is seen as a remedy for the lack of interpellation of lesbian readers.

While white women, in particular, are seen as less sexual than their male peers, black people tend to be stereotyped as endowed with excessive sexuality.⁶⁷ Black people appear infrequently in gay marketing for a number of reasons. First, marketers may be less interested in queer consumers of color because of their smaller market size, their lower average income, and consequently their relative unprofitability. Second, the construction of black people as hypersexual intersects with the same construction of gay men, meaning that the image of black gay men is doubly invested with sex.⁶⁸ Thus advertisers may shy away from casting black men in ads for fear of epitomizing the stereotype of the hypersexual gay man. When they do appear in such ads, black men are usually associated with HIV medications, offering a healthy, athletic ideal (presumably achieved through drugs) that contrasts with the earlier stereotype of the emaciated gay man with AIDS.⁶⁹ As Peter Jackson argues, however, casting men of color as athletes helps deflect the overdetermined sexuality of black male bodies.⁷⁰ If the constant threat posed to the image of the respectable gay consumer by the stereotype of the hypersexual gay man is exacerbated by casting men of color, this in part explains the bleached public face of gay and lesbian consumer culture.

Rubin argues that sexual stratification is not simply mapped onto but complexly interacts with other forms of social stratification: "The system of sexual oppression cuts across other modes of social inequality. . . . It is not reducible to, or understandable in terms of, class, race, ethnicity, or gender. Wealth, white skin, male gender, and ethnic privileges can mitigate the effects of sexual stratifica-

tion.⁷¹ The relationship between social stratification and sexual stratification returns us to Bourdieu, who argues that the former is produced through cultural and other kinds of capital. While there are no natural correspondences between Rubin's charmed circle of sex and a respectable, professional-managerial sexuality, critics of pornographic sleaze represent practices outside this circle as not only sexually offensive but offensive to dominant class values. The term *sleaze*, as class-coded as it is sexually coded, evokes a debased class position as much as a lack of sexual propriety. As a judgment on tastelessness, it demonstrates the extent to which sexual stratification is imbricated with economic and cultural capital.

Rubin's model of the charmed circle of sex, delineated by contaminated outer limits, works productively with Bourdieu's model of cultural hierarchies. It suggests that a further dimension of capital, *moral* capital, works in combination with other forms of capital—cultural, social, and so on—to structure power relations between groups. Moral capital is a symbolic resource accumulated through charmed sexual tastes and practices. These endow people with cultural privilege, which ranges from relative freedom from legal, psychological, or familial scrutiny to acknowledgment and celebration of one's sexuality by the media. In contrast, those activities and representations that breach the charmed circle bring low moral capital to their practitioners: people selling or buying pornography, queer people, nonmonogamous people, and people who participate in group, intergenerational, kinky, or S/M sex all occupy positions of low moral capital and, as a result, risk disapproval. Sex ads, in particular, operate at the outer limits by placing sex in a public, commercial context; by offering low-commitment, relatively anonymous sex; and by enticing heterosexually identified people to make forays into queer sex.

Just as different types of capital are interdependent for Bourdieu—such that high cultural capital, manifested in “good taste,” is likely to be produced by and to reproduce economic, social, and educational capital—so moral capital is reciprocally dependent on other hierarchies. Occupying Rubin's charmed circle increases one's moral capital, which is likely, in turn, to afford privileged access to economic, legal, educational, and familial resources. The stakes in having a deviant sexuality are higher for working-class people, people of color, women, and queers, since moral capital is articulated with class, race, gender, and sexuality hierarchies. For example, while many people work in the sex industry because they have limited economic and educational capital, their access to legal, economic, and other resources is further restricted by their trade.⁷² Thus while those who are already socially privileged can afford to indulge in greater sexual trans-

gression, others may be more invested in a respectable sexuality, both because their sexuality is more closely scrutinized (sexual privacy is proportional to social power) and because sexual transgression tends to be a barrier to upward social mobility. Stigmatized social groups may attempt to raise their social position with high moral capital; marketers (and others who seek to produce “positive images” of lesbians and gays) are particularly invested in a desexualized image of gayness to compensate for the fact that both queer and commercial forms of sexuality occur outside the charmed circle. Since an openly homosexual identity already puts gay and lesbian people on the outer limits, conforming to the inner circle in other respects—practicing monogamous, coupled, noncommercial, at-home, private, same-generation, vanilla sex—may recoup some moral capital for them, potentially gaining them broader social acceptance, access to economic and other resources, and protection from harassment.

Sex ads are viewed as such not necessarily because they portray erotic products but because they situate queer sex in an expressly commercial, potentially public sphere, inviting a morally debased form of sexual exchange. In the distinction marketers draw between sex ads and other sexual content, however, some manifestations of sex are redeemable, particularly when tastefully rendered: the risk of low moral capital that sex poses may be mitigated by tethering sex to other forms of capital, such as cultural capital. Yet rather than reveal its social and cultural origins, taste “present[s] itself in the guise of an innate disposition”;⁷³ like other hierarchies of legitimacy, sexual tastefulness is naturalized when its ideological roots are denied. A primary method of naturalizing sexual decorum is to appeal to aesthetics: marketers monitor representations through aesthetic hierarchies that stand in for sexual ones (Michelangelo’s *David* in lieu of a porn film). Moral capital is thus mediated in part through cultural capital: aesthetics protects the genteel classes from a contaminating association with a vulgar (i.e., explicit, nonaesthetic, commercial) sexuality. By means of aesthetic judgments, sexual appropriateness is hitched to legitimized cultural capital. This relationship between moral capital and cultural capital obscures the relationships among taste, art, the privileged sexuality of Rubin’s charmed circle, and their combined influence in maintaining cultural hierarchies.

The containment of sexuality in gay and lesbian media protects readers, publishers, and advertisers not just from the stereotype of the hypersexual gay man but from its “sleazy” impact on the ideal image of the professional-managerial gay consumer. Insofar as this image has become the dominant characterization of gayness both in gay and lesbian and in mainstream media, sexual containment pro-

fects the respectability of the newly visible gay and lesbian professional-managerial classes. Further, the construction of a sexually discreet ideal consumer aids marketers both professionally and personally, especially those who are gay-identified. This image offers advertisers, advertising executives, and publishers a desirable image of gayness to sell to potentially homophobic advertising executives, corporate marketers, journalists, and the culture at large. Since gay-identified marketers are also likely to be readers of gay and lesbian media, they can enjoy the aspirational or reassuring sense of the ideal gay consumer as an upstanding member of the professional-managerial class, tasteful and sexually discreet: an ideal “like them.”⁷⁴

Just as Bourdieu’s approach shows how Rubin’s model of sexual stratification is imbricated with social stratification, so Rubin offers Bourdieu a nuanced analysis of how sexual hierarchies function in the distribution of social and cultural resources. I do not want to imply, however, that class, race, and gender hierarchies map directly onto hierarchies of moral capital, since the greater one’s social marginalization, the higher the stakes of sexual respectability. Nor am I suggesting that low moral capital automatically corresponds to low cultural capital, since, for example, the threat of the former that is produced by explicit sexuality can be redeemed by cultural capital, in the form of aesthetics. What I am suggesting is that the reputation of an openly gay group of professional marketers and, more broadly, of professional-managerial gay readers and consumers depends more heavily on vigilance regarding sexual decorum than does the reputation of heterosexual or closeted professional-managerial groups, since public manifestations of queer sex, in particular, threaten their movement into or their membership in this class. The containment of sexual content, and especially of “sleazy” sex ads, therefore, is a question not just of sexuality but of class, at a time when increasing numbers of gays and lesbians are coming out at work. By banning sex ads and ensuring the aesthetic quality of other sexual content, publishers and marketers facilitate the accommodation of an emergent, openly gay professional-managerial class by mainstream media and occupational environments.

The sexually respectable class image of gayness thus protects the reputations of the ideal gay consumer, actual gay readers and consumers interested in a sexually respectable model of gayness, and marketers and publishers themselves, who wish to be both professionally successful and openly gay. Yet the prophylactic operations of taste can never be fully achieved. In opposition to the “repressive hypothesis,” the commonly held belief that sexual topics were eliminated from polite discourse by a prudish, bourgeois society, Michel Foucault describes the

processes in nineteenth-century France whereby the containment of sexuality in some quarters, such as polite conversation, was accompanied by the proliferation of discourses about (deviant) sexuality in other areas, including medicine and pedagogy.⁷⁵ Foucault's argument applies to a specific historical period and region, but a similar process obtains in advertising-supported gay media, where strategies of sexual containment do not produce a total repression of queer sex so much as a proliferation of sexual deviance and pleasures. Although the boundary work of taste is at one level *protective* of both "polite" gay and lesbian subcultures and a sexually insecure dominant culture, at another level it is also sexually *productive* in gay subcultural and mainstream spheres. In gay commercial culture, taste-based strategies of containment facilitate the multiplication of pleasures through diversified, segmented media and reinvoked the image of the hypersexual gay male.

Paradoxically, increasing scrutiny and production of discourses about the risks of gay public sex encourage the diversification of gay publications. As Scott mentioned, his readers consider sex important, but "that's not what [they] buy *Out* for." Sexual containment fosters media and market segmentation, with the result that the gay and lesbian glossy magazine *Out* and the gay porn publication *Jock* meet some different—and some of the same—readers' needs. Segmentation also meets advertisers' and publishers' needs: Shively recalled that when the *Advocate* started to publish *Advocate Men*, a pornographic magazine, the senior staff told advertisers: "'You can run one ad in the [*Advocate*] *Classifieds* . . . and you can run the same ad, only with full-frontal nudity, in *Advocate Men*.' And that made them very happy, and of course we got double revenue."⁷⁶

When the *Advocate* abandoned sex ads in 1992, the independent publication, the *Advocate Classifieds*, rapidly became overtly pornographic, with images of nude men with erections, short stories, phone sex and solicitation ads, and Califia's "Sex Adviser" column. Califia relates:

I was told that my column couldn't remain in the main book because letters about foreskins did not belong in a serious newsmagazine. . . . The *Advocate* proper still runs advice columns—about AIDS. It seems that the only way we can legitimately talk about our sexuality is under the rubric of death and disease. We can't celebrate, defend, or describe queer pleasure even though it was the quest for pleasure that made so many of us HIV-positive. This hypocrisy and prissiness robs the gay press of much of its old feistiness, earthiness, and power to rock the world.⁷⁷

The segmentation of sexual advice—AIDS from foreskins—suggests the precision with which gay male sexuality is segmented by offering a reticent (if diseased) image of queer sex in “serious newsmagazine[s]” while profiting from the diversification of pornographic publications. The distancing of respectable gay and lesbian publications from sexual content fits in neatly with the logic of niche marketing: by segmenting gay and lesbian content from pornography, readers subscribe to more publications and media publishers reap greater profits.

If one consequence of the containment of sex is the proliferation of gay sex through segmented media, another principal effect is the “incitement to speak.” Foucault argues:

More important [than the proliferation of illicit discourses] was the multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of exercise of power itself: an institutional incitement to speak about it, and to do so more and more; a determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause *it* to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail.⁷⁸

Marketers’ constant invocation of the risk of sexual contagion somewhat undoes their attempts to construct an assimilable, desexualized public face of gayness. Almost every article and public presentation about the gay market reminds readers and listeners of the risk of coming into contact with pornography, sleaze, or “adult content.” Ironically, constant references to public manifestations of gay sex remind us that “adult content” is part of many gay men’s lives: if you pay attention to all this anxiety, gay men seem to seek out “adult” content more than any other kind. In their participation in the incitement to speak about gay sex, and in their efforts to produce a newly respectable gay and lesbian consumer, gay marketers reinscribe the stereotype of the hypersexual gay man: we cannot think about the gay market without being reminded of the risk of contamination by pornography. Attempts to limit gay sex produce, then, the very image of the hypersexual queer that marketers struggle so hard to avoid.

Productive as dimensions of taste may be in proliferating and voicing sexual desires, they do not create a space for rational or irreverent considerations of gay sex, or for the gendered, racial, class-inflected, power-riven dimensions of queer sexual subcultures. While gay and lesbian pornography suggests that there are still some public spaces in which to view transgressive queer sexuality, the commitment to good taste has had a chilling effect on lesbian and gay publications and their younger cousins, commercial Internet portals. Unwilling to offer a rich

and varied erotic marketplace, these media limit the space available for debates about queer sexual practices, sexual radicalism, and the place of sex in readers' identities.

Public manifestations of sexuality question the tenuous relationship between sexual freedom and political participation. The threat posed to liberty and political leverage by low moral capital suggests that not only fulfillment and pleasure but also the freedom to participate in democratic processes is at stake. As Kipnis warns, "Democracy is no longer an entitlement of citizenship; rather, democracy accrues to those who adhere to proper participation in culture."⁷⁹ The costs of low moral capital are exacted not only by dominant discourses and institutions but by some self-monitoring gay critics as well. Although authors such as Gabriel Rotello, Michelangelo Signorile, and Andrew Sullivan do not address gay marketing specifically, their sexually conservative messages surface in the assumptions of many of my interviewees.⁸⁰ In the introduction to their anthology of writings about public sex, the *Dangerous Bedfellows* editors ask: "Who will be privileged to speak on behalf of whom, through what venues, and with whose approval? How will the mainstream media be allowed to frame discourse on public sex? How will the 'gay community' be defined: who will be included, who will assign blame, who will make decisions?"⁸¹ The dominant voices of gay and lesbian media argue that the fundamental goals of the gay rights movement should be fought within Rubin's charmed circle: the right to have married, monogamous, coupled, private, vanilla sex. Gay men and lesbians stepping outside that circle into the realm of dangerous, commercial, sleazy sexuality—whether in magazines, in stores, in theaters, or on the streets—are on their own, since the legitimate goals and principles of gay communities lie elsewhere.

Does sex sell? In national lesbian and gay glossy magazines, on many Internet sites, and in some local papers, sex does not sell nonnormative sexualities, nor does it sell commercial sexual products and services. In certain aesthetic and informational contexts, sex may sell, but selling sex itself risks a lowering of moral capital and the alienation of national advertisers. The stereotype of the hypersexual gay man, the fear of queer sex, the AIDS epidemic, and the associations among explicit sexuality, low moral capital, and sleaze mean that in ad-supported gay and lesbian media, the ban on selling sex desexualizes the audience sold to advertisers as well as the consumers themselves. To the extent that sex can sell in gay and lesbian media, it must be contained by being distanced from an expressly commercial sexual exchange through appeals to aesthetic tastefulness. Yet if the homosexual is a person produced by same-sex desire, what does it mean to be gay or lesbian if we do not talk about queer sex? What are the consequences of being interpellated—

“Hey, you’re gay!”—by media vehicles in which sexuality is emptied of the open, lusty, joyous acknowledgment of queer desire? We are left with the irony that what makes the gay market distinct—its sexuality—is expelled, and into the vacuum marketers pour other means to differentiate the gay niche: what replaces the ideal gay consumer’s sexual specificity is his class-specific, gay subcultural capital, marked by aesthetic tastefulness and sexual discretion.

Notes

This article is part of a larger project, forthcoming from Columbia University Press, on the formation and contours of the gay market. I would like to thank Lisa Henderson, Kathy Peiss, and *GLQ*’s anonymous reviewer for their helpful feedback on earlier versions of it.

1. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International, 1971).
2. While marketers and journalists use the term *the gay market* as an all-encompassing one, it is in fact carefully delineated in practice. Marketers’ interest and investment are mainly focused on affluent gay men; some attention is paid to lesbians, but mostly marketers hope that lesbians will interpret ads to gay men as appealing to them as well. Marketers occasionally acknowledge bisexuals and transgendered people in their consideration of the gay market, but most, like one of my interviewees, consider this “slicing the baloney a little too thin”; that is, they believe that these groups are too small to warrant marketing attention. To reflect the predominant focus on gay men, and to remain consistent with marketers’ terminology, I refer to *the gay market* throughout this article.
3. David Goetzl, “Leading Edge: Showtime, MTV Gamble on Gay Net,” *Advertising Age*, 14 January 2002, 4.
4. Joseph Turow, *Breaking Up America: Advertisers and the New Media World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 56.
5. This trend does not include gay and lesbian pornography magazines.
6. Katherine Sender, “Gay Readers, Consumers, and a Dominant Gay Habitus: Twenty-five Years of the ‘Advocate’ Magazine,” *Journal of Communication* 51 (2001): 73–99.
7. Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Verso, 1996), 91.
8. For a summary of the formation and effects of the professional-managerial class in the twentieth century see Barbara Ehrenreich and John Ehrenreich, “The Professional-Managerial Class,” in *Between Labor and Capital*, ed. Pat Walker (Boston: South End, 1979), 5–45.
9. Ohmann, *Selling Culture*, 245, 253.

10. Gayle S. Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 13–14.
11. Laura Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 134.
12. Pierre Bourdieu et al., *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), 95.
13. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).
14. Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1996), 10.
15. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991).
16. Thornton, *Club Cultures*, 11.
17. Sender, "Gay Readers."
18. Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, "The Professional-Managerial Class," 12.
19. I use *commonsense* here in the Gramscian sense. Marketers sometimes talked about the contradictions between the common sense of marketing codes—what was professionally possible—and their own preferences. For example, as associate publisher of the *Advocate*, Michael Shively saw himself as "a really sex-positive person" and also took the role as "the general of the penis police," whose task was to arbitrate between acceptable and too sexually explicit images in ads in the magazine (telephone interview, 21 August 2001). Interviewees' job titles applied at the time of the interviews. Some interviewees subsequently changed jobs and/or companies.
20. Among other sources, I examined the *Advocate* (since 1967); *Alternative Family* (August–September 1998); *Anything That Moves* (fall 1998); *Bad Attitude* (since 1997); *Black Sheets* (no. 16, 2000); *Blueboy* (December 1999); *Cliqque* (March 2000); *Deneuve*, later *Curve* (some since 1991, every issue since September 1998); *Drummer* (no. 211, 1998); *Girlfriends* (since September 1998); *Hustler* (December 1999); *Lesbian News* (May 1998); *Men* (April 2001); *Metrosource* (summer 1998); *On Our Backs* (since its relaunch in June 1998); *Out* (some issues since 1992, every issue since February 1997); *Penthouse* (November 1999); *Philadelphia Gay News* (16–22 June 2000); *Playboy* (December 1999); *Playgirl* (November 1999); *POZ* (September and October 1998); and *Q San Francisco* (November 1998). Web sites included Gay.com; gfn.com, the gay financial site; and PlanetOut.com. The daily newspapers and weekly magazines I consulted included *Advertising Age*, *Adweek*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*, among others.
21. Quoted in Thomas A. Stewart, "Gay in Corporate America," *Fortune*, 12 December 1991, 56.
22. Quoted in N. R. Kleinfeld, "Homosexual Periodicals Are Proliferating," *New York Times*, 1 August 1978, D4.

23. As the *Advocate's* owner, Liberation Publications Inc., prepared to buy *Out* and merge with PlanetOut in the summer of 2000, it sold *Unzipped* and at least two other pornography magazines to Specialty Publications LLC, a company also owned by LPI's owner.
24. Dana Calvo, "Sex minus XXX," *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, 24 November 1998, 10.
25. Todd Evans, president of Rivendell Marketing Company, telephone interview, 17 September 1999.
26. Christy Fisher, "Local Print Bumps into National Ad Walls," *Advertising Age*, 30 May 1994, S2.
27. John Schwartz, "Online Gays Become a Market for Advertisers," *Washington Post*, 22 May 1999, E1.
28. Jim Consolantis, senior partner at Ogilvy and Mather, "Advertising to Gay America," Times Talks presentation given at the *New York Times* offices, New York, 8 April 1999.
29. Jeffrey Newman, president and chief operating officer of gfn.com, "The Boys in the Bandwidth," Times Talks presentation given at Lincoln Center, New York, 29 February 2000.
30. Walter Schubert, president and CEO of gfn.com, telephone interview, 24 August 2001.
31. Shively, interview.
32. Catherine Draper, advertising director of *Girlfriends* and *On Our Backs*, telephone interview, 21 January 1999.
33. Quoted in Cyndee Miller, "Mainstream Marketers Decide Time Is Right to Target Gays," *Marketing News*, 20 July 1992, 15.
34. Dan Baker, former publisher and editor in chief of *Quotient*, interview, 17 September 1998.
35. Sean Strub, publisher of *POZ* and president of Strubco, interview, 28 October 1998.
36. Frances Stevens, publisher and editor in chief of *Curve*, telephone interview, 10 November 1998.
37. Moneka Hewlett, marketing director of *Girlfriends* and *On Our Backs*, telephone interview, 23 October 1998.
38. Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged*, 67. See also Janine Fuller and Stuart Blackley, *Restricted Entry: Censorship on Trial*, ed. Nancy Pollak (Vancouver: Press Gang, 1995); and Neil Hartlen, "Out of the Courts and into the Press: An Analysis of Media Representations of Little Sister's v. Canadian Customs," *Paradoxa* 2 (1996): 217–33. Both of these works review Canadian customs policies and their differential application to certain media, as well as their intended destination: customs seizes more copies of publications destined for lesbian and gay bookstores than of the same publications destined for general outlets.
39. Don Tuthill, publisher of *Q San Francisco*, telephone interview, 21 October 1998.
40. Henry Scott, president of *Out*, interview, 2 February 1999.

41. Joe Landry, publisher of the *Advocate*, telephone interview, 5 January 1999.
42. Patrick Califia-Rice, journalist and writer, telephone interview, 10 May 2001.
43. Shively, interview.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Liz Gumbiner, creative director at Deutsch advertising agency, interview, 7 September 1998.
46. Draper, interview.
47. Stevens, interview.
48. Deborah Isherwood [pseud.], promotions manager at a pharmaceutical company, telephone interview, 23 September 1998.
49. Stuart Elliott, "Abercrombie & Fitch Extends a Print Campaign to TV," *New York Times*, 6 August 1999, C5.
50. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1–2.
51. Megan Ishler, advertising director at *On Our Backs*, telephone interview, 3 December 1998.
52. These magazines include *Bad Attitude* (vol. 11, no. 1, 1997), *Blueboy* (December 1999), *Hustler* (December 1999), *On Our Backs* (October–November 1999), *Penthouse* (November 1999), *Playboy* (December 1999), and *Playgirl* (November 1999).
53. The publishers have acknowledged their gay readership, however, and the magazine's ads reflect this. See Clare Harth, "Fan Male," *Out*, December 1999, 52.
54. Kara Sarisky, advertising representative at *Playboy*, telephone interview, 19 April 2000.
55. David Mulryan, partner at Mulryan/Nash advertising agency, telephone interview, 24 January 1999. Mulryan/Nash closed in early 2000.
56. Kurt DeMars, advertising director of *Out*, interview, 1 April 1999.
57. Draper, interview.
58. Hewlett, interview.
59. DeMars, interview.
60. Evans, interview.
61. Eve M. Khan, "The Glass Closet," *Print*, September–October 1994, 30.
62. Scott, interview.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. Larry Gross, *Up from Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 233.
66. Gabriel Rotello, *Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the Destiny of Gay Men* (New York: Dutton, 1997).

67. This characterization is not shared by Asian men, who tend to be seen as less sexual than white or black men (Richard Fung, "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Porn Video," in *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*, ed. Bad Object-Choices [Seattle: Bay, 1991], 145–68). See also Kobena Mercer and Isaac Julien, "Race, Sexual Politics, and Black Masculinity: A Dossier," in *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, ed. Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988), 97–164; and Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).
68. See Mercer and Julien, "Race, Sexual Politics, and Black Masculinity"; and Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the 'Other,'" in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Open University Press, 1997), 225–79.
69. Since these ads are also placed in general-market media and usually offer no clear indication of the relationships between people in the ads, the sexual identification of the models is commonly ambiguous.
70. Peter Jackson, "Black Male: Advertising and the Cultural Politics of Masculinity," *Gender, Place, and Culture* 1 (1994): 49–59.
71. Rubin, "Thinking Sex," 22.
72. Pat Califia, "When Sex Is a Job, Cops Come A-Knocking on Your Door," *Out*, April 1999, 54. As Pat Califia, Patrick Califia-Rice wrote a monthly column for *Out* from November 1998 to November 1999. He told me that his contract was not renewed, in part, because the owners were "fluffing the magazine to be sold" (Califia-Rice, interview). Further, his last column responded to Scott's public acknowledgment that *Out's* publisher and its advertisers are interested only in their most affluent gay (and lesbian) readers ("For Richer or for Poorer," *Out*, November 1999, 66, 68, 142). Califia-Rice criticized Scott and lesbian and gay publishing generally for reproducing the myth of lesbian and gay affluence and for ignoring the real concerns of queers across all socioeconomic classes. He suggested that his outspoken criticism of the class politics of the gay and lesbian glossy magazines, more than his sexual writing, was the ultimate reason for the nonrenewal of his contract. In the new incarnation of a "less PG-rated" *Out*, Califia-Rice's sexual writing may have been welcome, but a discussion of class and affluence was more controversial. I do not know if Califia-Rice knew that his days of writing for *Out* were numbered when he concluded this article, "Like other queers from poor backgrounds, I don't belong here" (142).
73. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 99.
74. Asked whom he had in mind as the audience for his ads, Mulryan explained that he saw them as "like me: . . . gay, white, whatever, you know? That they have the same things that I want. That's what I assume. That they've had a tough time and they've re-created themselves and they live in New York" (interview).

75. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1978).
76. Shively, interview.
77. Pat Califia, *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex* (Pittsburgh: Cleis, 1994), 21.
78. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 18.
79. Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged*, 184.
80. Rotello, *Sexual Ecology*; Michelangelo Signorile, *Life Outside—The Signorile Report on Gay Men: Sex, Drugs, Muscles, and the Passages of Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997); Andrew Sullivan, *Virtually Normal: An Argument about Homosexuality* (New York: Knopf, 1995).
81. Dangerous Bedfellows, *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism* (Boston: South End, 1996), 18.

