

Escaping June Cleaver: The Domestication of Women Through Advertising

by

Allison Hawn

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Graduate Supervisory Committee

Lindsey Meân, Chair
Majia Nadesan
James Sanderson

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ABSTRACT

June Cleaver, and the women who attempted to emulate her perfectly dressed, “happy homemaker” ideal, were considered the epitome of “womanhood” in the 1950s. However, the image of the quintessential domestic diva, in pearls and floral dress is surely a tired and no longer relevant label for the modern woman, right? This research aims to examine whether the “domesticated woman” is still the prevalent social script provided by American advertisers and to determine if there has been a significant change in how often women are portrayed as having an existence not predicated on the home or domestic duties over time. To accomplish this 1,250 American television commercials, spanning from 1970 to 2016, were gathered and analyzed using critical content analysis via a specially designed test, The June Cleaver Test.

The commercials garnered were further broken down into 11 pertinent categories (Food, Household Goods, ect.) and results from each of these categories were also tracked. The overall results showed that 54.4 percent of commercials failed to show women outside of domestic or caregiving roles. When broken down by decade, not a single decade managed to pass over 50 percent of those commercials sampled using The June Cleaver Test. This means at no point over nearly 5 decades were the sampled commercials able to show women outside of domestic role more than 50 percent of the time. The implications the continued failure rate above 50 percent across the decades shows is that the trope of women as homemakers and caretakers, instead of employed or having other demands outside of the home, is still being mass produced as a cultural norm. Pertinent and prevalent trends, tropes and stereotypes about women and domestic

throughout the sample were also noted and discussed. These findings have significant implications for not only the options available to women in society, but also in moving towards a place where women find economic equity and fight for equal respect in their chosen vocations. June Cleaver has not so much left the kitchen; instead she has just updated her wardrobe.

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1. INTRODUCTION

June Cleaver: “Well, that sounds exciting. Is there anything I can do to help?”

Theodore Cleaver: “You can make the food, but no women are allowed to come, unless they're a father.”

June Cleaver: “Well, that lets me out” (Connelly & Mosher, 1958, p. 73).

Amid the canned laughter, Ward Cleaver’s fatherly advice, and Theodore’s adorable hijinks was June Cleaver, the media hailed epitome of “womanhood” to the 1950s and 1960s woman. The demure wife to working man Ward Cleaver, June prepared dinner, kept her house spick and span, and doted on her children as she sashayed in her conservative floral dress into the lives of the American public from 1957 until 1963 (Applebaum, 1998). *Leave it to Beaver*, and June Cleaver’s “Stepford Wives-esque” demonstration of womanhood, was nominated for two Emmy Awards and received over 55 media awards total (Liebman, 1995). It is worth noting that conservative civic and church groups mostly gave those awards to the show. *Leave it to Beaver* was watched by thousands, and the depiction of the Beaver family was even perceived as “typical” and as what an American family should look like by viewers during CBS’s audience testing in 1957, “Relatively few commented on Mrs. Cleaver. The comments were mostly favorable. She was felt to portray successfully an average mother” (Liebman, 1995, 27).

Of course, in modern times we like to think that as a society we have moved past the traditional, rigid homemaker and mother tropes and social roles portrayed in the 1950s. However, as the 1990s historian and social critic Meyerowitz in her book *Not June Cleaver* pointed out, these social norms still existed in popular culture at that time:

“Most of us are familiar with a well-entrenched stereotype of American women in the post-World War II years. Domestic and quiescent, they moved to the suburbs, created the baby boom and forged family togetherness. Popular since the 1950s, this tenacious stereotype conjures mythic images of cultural icons – June Cleaver, Donna Reed, Harriet Nelson – the quintessential white middle-class housewives who stayed at home to rear children, clean house and bake cookies. The stereotype persists today in television reruns of situation comedies, in popular movies and sometimes in scholarly historical accounts of the postwar years” (Meyerowitz, 1992, p. 6).

A study performed, around the same time as Meyerowitz’s writings, by Coltrane and Adams (1997) examined 1,699 television commercials from the 1990s to examine the gender stereotypes prevalent in advertising. What they found was that women were far less likely to be seen in occupational roles than men, more likely to be seen as sex objects and far more likely to be shown primarily within a family setting.

Of course, these observations and studies were made about twenty years ago. The question then remains, do these persistent stereotypes of women’s roles in the home, being that of the quiet homemaker, content to raise children and pursue domestic pursuits, still exist in the media that we see today? Beyond the question of these stereotypes and tropes existing, there also lies the question of how predominantly they continue to be a staple or standard of the mass culture? In particular this research aims to explore to what degree that domestic stereotype is still widespread in video based advertising compared to past decades in the United States. Have we truly liberated June Cleaver, or is she just scrubbing the same kitchen counters sporting a more modern hairstyle and a new dress?

1.1 Why Media Representations of Women Matter

American women are a force to be reckoned with. Specifically, as a population, they are a workforce to be reckoned with. The United States Department of Labor (2016) reported that in 2015 129.7 million women were employed and they project that by 2024 that number will increase to 138.4 million. Currently, 57 percent of women are employed. According to a 2016 Bureau of Labor Statistics report, 69.9 percent of women with children under the age of 18 were employed or actively seeking employment. Women who were married with children had an employment rate in 2015 of 67.7 percent, while women classified as having a different marital status were employed at 74.8 percent, which means that a majority of wives and mothers in the United States are members of the workforce. Yet, despite women being such an active part of the workforce, according to another 2016 Bureau of Labor Statistics report women still only make 81.8 cents for every dollar a man makes in comparable occupations. One of the major factors in closing that wage gap and cracking the glass ceiling is changing the way that women are perceived in the workforce. If women's contributions are more valued and respected in the workforce at large, that wage gap diminishes. A study performed by Cohen and Huffman (2007) found that companies that had more women in positions of management also had a lower wage gap than the national average. When women are valued as integral parts of a company, not just token figureheads, those companies are more willing to be equitable towards their female employees at all levels. Of course, for women to be respected and valued in the workforce, the messages shown about working women in mass media must match that level of respect and value. This is where media on the whole, and in this case advertising, becomes pertinent.

At this juncture the efficacy and impact of advertising on the public at large and how it impacts a society's social norms must be explained. Many people, scrolling past hundreds of ads a day on the internet and getting up to go to the bathroom during TV commercial breaks, may think that they have no real impact on their lives. However, marketing has a much more pervasive and lasting effect than most people think. In 2012 the United States spent a total of 71.8 billion dollars on television advertising and 32 billion dollars on online advertising. According to the Nielson ratings, those advertisements reached an estimated 283,302,000 television viewers and 211,633,000 internet users in just three months of that year (Gleeson, 2012). But again, many people doubt how much of an impact advertising can have. After all, just because one sees an ad for Tide, doesn't mean one will immediately rush out and buy the product. However, the research shows that oftentimes that is exactly what people do, although, maybe not on such an instantaneous level. For example, a study of adolescents followed and surveyed their purchasing habits and found that they were far more likely to buy items and brands of items that they had seen on television. These messages were reinforced and ingrained by the constant repetitive nature of the advertisements, even though many of the teens were probably not consciously aware of the commercials' effects on them (Deepa, 2013).

However, whether one runs out to buy Tide or not, advertisements have a tendency to send more messages than those just encouraging consumers to buy products. These ads also contain messages about beauty standards, what is appropriate for men and women to do and how people should behave in society. These commercials can have positive messages, like encouraging people to be more environmentally friendly (Visser, Gattol & van der Helm, 2015) or negative, like advertisements that convey that women

must be ultra-thin, which has been shown to increase the instances of anxiety and eating disorders in women viewers (Halliwell, Dittmar & Howe, 2005). A study performed with Russian adolescents showed that even just being exposed to commercials for a short period of time greatly affected both the male and females adolescents' self-esteem, the way that they viewed proper gender roles and made the adolescents want to self-identify and emulate those they saw in the ads (Lupukhova, 2015). Culturally, we want to be like those that we see as representationally successful on TV and imitate what patterns and behaviors seem to make that individual so popular or powerful. In some cases that means buying Axe Body Spray to make you more attractive to females (though, in reality it is more effective as a female repellent) and in other situations it makes you want to act and look like the women and men in the ads. These choices, conscious or not, on the part of those consuming this media make, end up becoming widespread patterns that shape the everyday life of those in the community, whether they are directly exposed to the media in question or not.

This kind of repetition can lead to reinforcing stereotypes about what is acceptable in society. What we see in ads can help to create social norms and perceptions of gender roles in both men and women. For example, Ozmete (2009) examined the influence that advertising had on 240 adolescents who were interviewed about their perceptions about television advertising. Results of these interviews showed that the advertising only somewhat informed adolescent's personal buying choices. However, the advertisements did influence what the adolescents found socially acceptable. Furthermore, Ozmete also found that parents were likely to help reinforce the social behaviors and consumer practices in advertisements with their children. This generational

passing down of ads is also reinforced by peoples' nostalgia. This has been noted by Muehling (2014), who found that commercials that used nostalgia (for instance Ronald McDonald for McDonald's, who has been around since current adults were children) raised brand loyalty among viewers and made them more likely to buy that produce. After all, this generation is not the first one exposed to commercial advertising, we have now reached the place where the lessons taught to us by Whisk, McDonald's and Geico have been passed down both on our TV screens and inter-generationally.

The advertising agencies and executives, for their part, are fully aware of the effects that advertising can have. Zayer and Coleman (2015) interviewed 25 advertising industry executives and producers about the display of gender roles in the commercials that they were producing. The interviews revealed that all of the advertising executives interviewed were aware that their advertisements had some affect on public opinion in regards to gender roles. They also found that most of those executives gave very little ethical thought to the accuracy or content of their messages. In fact, a majority of those interviewed only had ethical concerns about what was being shown if they thought it might offend viewers to the point where they might not want to buy their products (2015). These findings drive home the point made by Lawrence Frey, "...questioning our research practices and conceiving them in new, socially conscious ways, is of vital importance to the future of applied communication research" (1998, 156). As communication scholars it is important that we examine the ways in which our media might be negatively impacting social norms in regards to women, particularly since the sources of those media may not be acting ethically on their own.

Jean Kilbourne, the main contributor behind the *Killing Us Softly* series, summed up the dangers presented to women through advertising nicely in an interview for CNN, "...my point was the image of women in advertising has an impact on all these things. The objectification of women leads to violence, and the stereotyping of women makes it less likely that women will get equal pay and decent jobs" (Anglely, 2015, p. 1). Advertising has both obvious (violence) and subtle (the lack of equal pay) effects on shaping our norms. Commercials impact viewers, whether they want it to or not. Therefore, it is important to understand what advertisements say about women, notably how much they are encouraging future June Cleavers to stay in the kitchen. If consumers are constantly shown messages in which women's work is devalued in the workforce while reinforcing the idea that women are the only competent domestic caregivers, creating equality for women will forever be an uphill and unwinnable battle. So, does American televised advertising primarily show women engaged in domestic tasks, caring for children or in a spousal role, or does advertising show women as competent members of the workforce? Additionally, have U.S. televised commercials significantly adapted over time to show more women in the workforce or has it stayed consistent in its portrayals of women as primarily domestic figures solely?¹

1.2 Overview of Chapters

The domestication of women is a broad topic with a multitude of facets. To begin with, the term "domestication of women" needs to be defined to provide for clarity. In this case the domestication of women refers to women being shown, or compelled to function in, a singularly domestic fashion or role. This would include tasks like

¹ See Chapter 5 for the methods used to explore these questions.

housekeeping (cleaning, cooking, etc.), caring for children and being shown as a doting spouse or significant other. “Domestication of women” also, inherently by its phrasing, denotes a certain amount of lack of choice for the women involved. It is not necessarily that they choose these roles, though some do, but social norms and perceptions compel women to act in these roles.

These concepts will continue to be explored through the chapters of this work. As this is a rather complex topic, Chapters 2 through 4 provide historical context so that not only where society currently rests is understood, but so that how the status quo was developed can be grasped as well. Chapter 5: *The June Cleaver Test* provides a detailed breakdown of the methods used to collect and analyze the data provided. It also gives a clear exploration of The June Cleaver Test and how it was implemented to answer the research questions provided in that chapter. Chapters 6 through 10 are an in-depth analysis of the data by decade, beginning with the 1970s in Chapter 6 and concluding with the 2010s in Chapter 10, with notes on emergent trends in the data. Chapter 11: *June Cleaver Time Travels* discusses the data as a whole, examining how the data traversed decades and what it means for modern tropes around and portrayals of women.

2. KEEPING JUNE CLEAVER IN THE KITCHEN

It's difficult to imagine a scene in which June Cleaver comes home, swinging open the door, exhausted, after a day at the (non-job-specified) office, setting her briefcase down as her husband rushes to meet her with a perky, "How was your day dear!? Dinner is almost out of the oven!" The domestication of women is neither a new nor a culturally specific phenomenon, which is why that scene might feel a little incongruous, even comical, in most peoples' minds. The June Cleavers of the world, gliding around the kitchen in her ever-impractical heels and flower-patterned dress, have been the main message provided to American citizens in a plethora of ways (Meyerowitz, 1992). However, more agrarian, less Westernized, societies tend to have more equal sharing of household duties. For instance the Aka Pygmy Tribe has famously been known for nearly entirely flipping the script on domestic gender roles by being a society in which men are the primary home and child caregivers, while the women go out to hunt and farm (Abramovitch, 1994). Domestic and caregiving roles are not a biological imperative, but if you looked at American society as a whole, one might think they were.

So why is it in American culture it is often the mother who is pictured in a natural setting, with some exceptions, as the primary child and home caregiver while the Aka Pygmy Tribe's father-caregiver dynamic seem so foreign and exotic? The reasons are many and often complex. Amy Burce does an excellent job in summing up some of these key issues;

"Industrialization and 'modernization' of developing countries often have meant the institutionalization of patriarchal controls over women. Protective legislation, phrased in terms of safeguarding the 'weak and defenseless,' crystalizes a sense of women's inferiority. Furthermore, the

introduction of the sexual division of labor typical of Western societies, which makes the care of children exclusively women's responsibility, destroys the commitment of traditional societies to the dual role of both parents and breaks up the extended household typically found in non-industrialized societies" (1981, p. 499).

A myriad of religious, societal and heavy-handed patriarchal excuses have been used throughout history to explain why women "should" be sequestered to home life, that reinforced with a "women are the weaker" sex social script has left far more women cooking over hot stoves instead of helping create the technology behind the stove itself. It isn't just that this is a model, with women staying home and men going to work, that is presented as a logical and defensible position based in fact or research, instead it is framed as just the way things are done and should always be done.

However, this "women tend the home mentality" is limiting to the very potential of a family unit. The co-parenting model, where both parents equally share in the domestic duties and raising of any children, has proven benefits. Studies have shown that when both parents truly invest in the home life and effectively co-parent it can positively affect everything from how prepared the children are to enter school and succeed academically (Cabrera, Scott, Fagan, Steward-Streng & Chien, 2012) to how well a first-born child will adjust to having siblings (Kolak & Volling, 2013). By painting women as only useful at home it both devalues the level to which the man can contribute in that sphere and limits the economic effectiveness of the woman in the workplace. This mentality also puts extra pressure on women who work to not only be responsible for their occupations, but be largely responsible for the running of the home as well. Walzer (1996) in her book posited, and proved through subsequent interviews with working mothers, that women coming home after a day of work end up working a "second shift."

What she means is that aside from whatever responsibilities a woman may have at her job, she will come home and have to logistically figure out how to get her kids to soccer practice, remember if the house is out of toilet paper or not and figure out how everyone is going to be fed. Even when men help out in regards to the chores or transporting children, the overall expectation is that the mother will be the one to coordinate, remember important dates and keep track of the household and its needs. The expectation is that this is the mom or the wife's responsibility not because of its inherent biological mandate, but because it is what is expected. Remember, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) 67.7 women married with children also worked in 2015 who are also culturally expected to take on this second shift.

Sadly, even as the proof that sharing of domestic duties leads to stronger relationships and healthier families (Cabrera et al., 2012, Kolak & Volling, 2013), the institutionalized image of women as primarily domestic caregivers tenaciously persists placing all domestic and caregiving responsibilities solely on the shoulders of women. Sociologists Berger and Luckmann (1966) in *The Social Construction of Reality* argued that how language and discourses around topics are framed can lead to ideas being institutionalized and solidified in the public mind. "There we go again' now becomes 'this is how these things are done.' A world so regarded attains a firmness in consciousness; it becomes real in an ever more massive way and it can no longer be changed so readily" (Berger & Luckmann, p. 77). In this way the representational image of a woman in the kitchen, playing with children, or the happy bride, have become institutions that we schematically recognize as being inherently "feminine," thanks to

dominant, hegemonic gender scripts that are reproduced and perpetuated by patriarchal power.

Of course, progress in the area of women's rights, from garnering the right to vote to protections around employment and reproductive rights cannot be discounted from the overall progressive narrative. Before we, as a nation, can truly pat ourselves on the back, however, it is important to analyze the areas in which change has been much less forthcoming, particularly in areas where we believe we have "solved the problem of gender equality." Again, recall that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics women, a majority of whom work, still only make 81.8 cents to every dollar a man in the same position makes (2016). We may have come a long way towards creating more equity between genders, but in the United States we still have several places where improvements need to be made. To understand where the situation currently sits, however, it is important to understand the forces that produced it in context. Why were June Cleaver, Harriet Nelson and Samantha Stephens (a powerful witch in her own right) placed in their televised kitchens to begin with?

Post World War II America was a land of confusion and rough adjustment. America had been on the winning side of the war, but the world had rapidly shifted in ways for which no one was adequately prepared. The Second World War had pulled over 15 million American men for service overseas, and the drawn out conflict not only drained the United States of much of its productive workforce, it increased the demand for everything from munitions to medical supplies. With the majority of traditional manufacturing workers and laborers fighting Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito overseas, women were quickly called upon to fill their male counterparts' places. Desperate for

workers to fabricate crucial items needed for the war effort, the United States government became involved in recruiting women to work outside the home calling on their “patriotic duty.” Figure 1 provides an example of on such government created calls to action aimed at women and specifically asking them to take on male occupations. Women took up the call and flooded factories and production lines with the much-needed workers to help keep both the American war effort and economy afloat (Bellou & Cardia, 2016).

Figure 1: Do the job HE left behind, 1943



1943; Courtesy of NY Daily News

The importance of women in these efforts, however, reached far beyond the factory doors. In her book, *The Girls of Atomic City*, historian Denise Kiernan details a secret military installation, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, which employed mostly women to

help create the parts that would one day be the first atomic bomb. Women were also essential in helping create design improvements to these parts, monitoring complex mechanical systems and finding ways to make the parts more structurally sound. Without the women of Oak Ridge, the Manhattan Project would have slowed considerably, if not completely ceased (Kiernan, 2013). Additionally women, who had been mostly restricted to home life or to taking the few jobs deemed “suitable” for a woman, suddenly were being allowed into the traditionally male fields of science, business and manufacturing in ways that had never been available before, albeit still limited (Bellou & Cardia, 2016).

At World War II’s end, however, this newfound labor liberation for women ran into resistance. As men returned home from overseas, they returned to an America full of working women, women who had *their* jobs, and could do these jobs proficiently. While some women were content to quit their jobs and return to the home upon their husband and boyfriends’ returns, not all were so eager. Additionally employers found that they had a much cheaper labor force with women, and therefore were hesitant to send them back home (Bellou & Cardia, 2016).

In response to this there was a general attempt by men, and some women, to return America to the norms it followed before World War II. As men continued to try, and often succeeded, to get their occupations back, the efforts of wartime women and their contributions were swept under the male dominated rugs of media and history. The discrimination against women in traditionally male fields became so fierce that many women chose male monikers, or even allowed their accomplishments to be credited to males to keep working. “Warren – and the rest of the Manhattan Project – relied almost exclusively on Geiger counter tubes made by one woman at the Chicago’s Met Lab,

Nancy Farley Wood... She later went on to start her own company, the N. Wood Counter Laboratory. The “N.” was so that no one would know she, a woman, owned it” (Kiernan, 2013, p. 288).

The reason that so many of women’s contributions to the World War II efforts have gone greatly unsung, is the same reason that one can be hard pressed to find women’s contributions to nearly every historical event; history has mostly been documented by men. Furthermore, women’s roles as historians have often been downplayed or entirely ignored, their perspectives and experiences not deemed as noteworthy or reputable as that of their male counterparts (Spongberg, 2002). As historian Mary Spongberg so eloquently words this phenomena:

“It is not the case that women have failed to engage with history, but that their historical endeavors have not been regarded as “proper” history. Women who attempted to write history were rarely considered “real” historians: rather they have been characterized as biographers, historical novelists, political satirists, genealogists, writers of travellers’ tales, collectors of folklore and antiquarians. Occasionally a woman, such as Catherine Sawbridge Macaulay, would be allowed the title ‘historian’ because she engaged in the masculine activity of writing political history. Such rare figures were considered exceptions that proved the rule. More often than not, women’s writings about the past, regardless of their historicity, have not been treated seriously as history” (2002, p. 1-2).

At the same time that women’s contributions in the workforce were being ignored by history, a campaign was launched via American media companies and to some extent the government,² owned and operated by men, to “restore” what it conceptualized as traditional “family values.” It was during this era that the idea of a “separation of work from home” became almost as familiar as the Constitutional directive of a “separation of church and state.” The world of “work” became a sphere all its own, set far apart from

² For example, home economics courses aimed at young girls being implemented in public schools.

the sphere of “home,” where once the two had at least intersected on some basic levels (Davies & Fink, 2014). “...labor – including tasks such as cooking, child care, raising chickens, churning butter, caring for boarders, spinning cloth, and cleaning – was viewed as legitimate work that supported the household’s larger economic operation” (Davies & Fink, 2014, p. 21-22). With this new separation, the “work” realm, marked by the actual garnering of money in exchange for labor, became more lauded and respected, while the labor associated with the “home” became less valued and viewed as requiring lesser skills and abilities. Furthermore, the “work” sphere became a highly male gendered realm. Women, specifically single women, were allowed to enter that sphere, but only under certain allowed professions such as teachers, secretaries, actresses, maids, domestic servants and waitresses. Furthermore, women were expected to leave their positions of employment if they became married. While “women’s work” was being devalued, in a strange double-standard, women were also informed by the media and the society around them that motherhood and that same thankless domesticated work, being a mother, wife, or girlfriend was the highest honor women could achieve (Davies & Fink, 2014).

A major contributor to this “work” and “home” separation, along with it establishing what “types of work” were acceptable for women, came from advertisements, radio programs and the newly proliferated visual medium, the television. As the 1950s and 1960s progressed, women in television programming who were considered “good mothers and wives” devoutly kept the house clean, listened to their husband’s instructions, and performed all of this while sharply dressed with perfect make-up. These women were placed on a cultural pedestal. The perfect domestic woman was seen as being central to keeping the family happy and together, essential for healthy

childhood development and for the success of the home in general. Figure 2 shows an excellent example of this type of advertising narrative. June Cleaver and Harriet Nelson were the media hailed saints of womanhood, while women who dared to step outside the home and “abandon” their husbands and children to enter the work world were either painted as villains (Samantha’s mother Endora from *Bewitched* for instance) or seen as silly, incompetent, comedic relief (such as Lucy from *I Love Lucy*) on the television screens of people all across America (Davies & Fink, 2014).

Figure 2: Successful marriages start in the kitchen, 1958



1958; Courtesy of BuzzFeed.com

Advertisements of the time also reflected these domestic stereotypes. Women were shown greeting husbands at the door, cooking delicious meals and industriously cleaning the house, all while taking care of the children. Examining the narrative in Figure 2, lines such as “...those girlhood dreams – planning lovely meals for her man...” showed women that they were not only to be happy taking care of the “not-so-glamorous tasks of the kitchen...” but they were supposed to have been dreaming of their subservient housewife position since childhood! This is the type of consumer socializing from a young age that the work of Valkenburg and Cantor (2001) discussed. Not only do advertisements impact their target audience of adults, but they train the children, even when they are not the intended audience, who also see these advertisements. If little girls are told, as the ad suggests, that they should be dreaming of, “...preparing all sorts of interesting dishes...” then that is the socialized message they will absorb from the media.

According to this advertisement, housework is “fun,” if you use the correct items, like Pyrex of course. This kind of “gamifying” tasks to make them seem less burdensome further trivializes the work by labeling it as something that anyone, anywhere, could complete sufficiently. Conway (2014) points out that while in many cases gamification, or, in less technical terms, turning work or necessary tasks into a game, can be useful. However, if that gamification does not give the proper dues to the motivational context and psychological needs of the person in that system, it can turn the work into something of lesser value or perceived need.

Some advertisements even sought to shame women who did not live up to their domestic duties. For instance, Wisk detergent’s long-running “Ring Around the Collar” advertisements consistently showed women absolutely distraught and ashamed because

they could not get the dirty ring of their husbands' shirts. These women would be taunted with others chanting, "Ring around the collar" until Wisk detergent came to the rescue of the husband's collar and the woman's domestic honor. The advertisements that accompanied these early daytime televised programs were targeted specifically at women, who were assumed to be the ones home from work, and obviously not busy, to see them. These advertisements focused on how women could be better wives, girlfriends and mothers (Stole, 2003). Women who fell in line by fulfilling these roles were placed in the "successful woman" box, while those who did not were abnormalized.³

This domestication not only kept the industrial jobs women had held during WWII open for men, but became an important piece of the general social capital, particularly for companies wishing to sell products. The June Cleaver ideal became consumerist capital:

"The middle-class homemaker was an important basis of this social economy – so much so that it was necessary to define her in contradictions which held her in a limited social place. In her value to the economy, the homemaker was at once central and marginal in that she was positioned within the home, constituting the value of her labor outside the means of production. Yet she was also central to the economy in that function as homemaker was the subject of consumer product design and marketing, the basis of an industry" (Haralovich, 2005, p. 238-239).

Corporations and marketers had discovered a powerful new buying force in the American housewife. To keep their audience, however, it was important that women stay as domestically confined as possible to keep them buying "time saving" and "helpful" products that would ease their domestic work burden. Marketing campaigns were therefore designed not only to sell products, but also to continue to socially pressure

³ See previous examples of Endora and Lucy.

women to stay at home and away from holding jobs. These advertisements also sought to show women as dependent on their husbands, boyfriends or other male assistance to survive out in the world, further reinforcing the need for women to remain confined to the home (Haralovich, 2005).

Even when women in advertisements were shown as employed the representation was one of subordination to men and a lack of competence and belonging in that role. A study performed by Lusk (2000) of advertisements featuring women nurses from this time period showed that a vast majority of the ads portrayed women nurses as being incompetent, young⁴ and subordinate to their male counterparts, whether they be male doctors or male nurses of equal employment standing. In this view, women were to be home tending to the children or making meals for the “real” breadwinners, and when someone let them out of the house they were automatically less capable and less valuable than their male coworkers. Women were to be derided for working outside the home, the objects of sexual desire by being the office “eye candy,” and seen as incapable in nearly all spheres outside of their domestic one. In less than a decade, American women had gone from brave defenders of liberty on the home front to straightening Ward Cleaver’s necktie and handing him his briefcase as he set out to do “important” work.

⁴ Implying that they were unmarried, otherwise they wouldn’t be working, obviously.

3. LOWERING JUNE CLEAVER THE FEMINIST LADDER

On October 24, 1975 the entire country of Iceland ground to halt. Businesses, banks and factories reluctantly closed their doors and lost business, all schools cancelled lessons for the day and transportation became slow, if not impossible in major metro areas. The cause was not a natural disaster or a war; it was the day approximately 90 percent of Iceland's women went on strike. Organized by a feminist group called the Red Stockings, on The Women's Day Off⁵ women refused to go to work, take care of the children at home or do housework, instead taking to the streets to speak out and protest for women's equality (Brewer, 2015).

The country descended into a kind of disorganized chaos as men suddenly had to take on the roles that their wives and partners had previously covered. Sausages, an easy to cook food, sold out everywhere and men rushed to buy coloring books and candy to keep their children entertained. Even on the newscasts that day one could hear children playing in the background, the newscasters had been unable to find childcare and out of necessity had to bring their youngsters to work. As Vigdis Finnbogadottir, a participant in the strike who later became Iceland's president, recalled, "Things went back to normal the next day, but with the knowledge that women are as well as men were the pillars of society," she says. "So many companies and institutions came to a halt and it showed the force and necessity of women - it completely changed the way of thinking" (Brewer, 2015, p. 1).

By 1975, Iceland was not the only place in the world where women were beginning to resist the notion of a patriarchal power structure that kept men at "work"

⁵ This was later jokingly renamed by a male historian as "The Long Friday."

and women at “home.” America’s own feminist movements had started the process of giving June Cleaver the opportunity to once again hang up her apron and enter the work world at large. The American women’s revolution, which is what the women’s movements of the 1960s and 1970s are often referred to, was historically rather unique.

As Rosen states of the women’s revolution:

“Activists didn’t hurl tear gas at police, burn down buildings, or fight in the street. Nor did they overthrow the government or achieve economic dominance or political hegemony. But they did subvert authority and transform society in dramatic and irrevocable ways; so much so that young women who come of age in the twenty-first century, would not even recognize the America that existed before the feminist revolution came about” (2006, p.4).

As American women spoke out against the inequality afforded them by a traditional patriarchal power structure, they not only garnered new rights and abilities, but changed the consumerist landscape. In 1974 the Senate passed the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) in an effort to help end discrimination against women in lending policies. Lenders could no longer require a husband’s signature for a wife to take out a loan, joint accounts were now recorded under both spouses’ names, and women did not have to produce a certificate of divorce to prove that they could be lent money independently. This was important as it meant that women did not need the legal signature of a male to move forward financially. Additionally, women had progressively moved back into the workforce, nearly doubling the numbers of wives working outside

the home from 1960 to 1970, and the marketing landscape began to look a lot different (Howard, 2010).

Marketers, and the corporations they were tied to, saw a chance to expand their consumer audience as women became more financially independent. More than ever, women had jobs that allowed them to buy cars of their own, granted them access to purchase their own necessities, and freed them to spend money on leisure pursuits outside of the home, instead of depending on their husbands' budgets. However, the same marketers were still committed to the persistent women-home and men-work separation that they had been reinforcing for over two decades. After all, a woman at home was a much more captive audience to advertisers than the woman at the office. This meant that the advertising concessions that these companies made in showing women as more independent were often limited by gender stereotypes and social scripts, and they were hesitant to show women outside the context of the men who "should" be accompanying them. Even when women bought products independent of men, it was often framed in a way that showed her supporting her home or family, again showing the woman's nurturing side through her consumerism, or displayed the woman as being made more attractive or beautiful by the product further objectifying her for the pleasure of the men around her. Women, even women shown buying cars, working in businesses or going on vacations were still often shown in comparison to more powerful men or the products themselves were framed in a much more stereotypically "feminine" way so as to not compete with the men purchasing similar products (Howard, 2010).

For instance, the way marketers found to make car advertisements featuring women buying and owning cars acceptable, without a husband or boyfriend present, was

by turning the car pink and featuring it as a fancy “accessory.” A blatant example of this type of advertisement is presented in Figure 3. In addition to their pink cars, in the late 1950s and early 1960s Ford released a line of bags, called Motor Mates, to specifically match certain Ford model cars. Originally, this was a plan to get wives to influence their husbands to buy the car that had a matching bag, but as women themselves began to buy cars it became yet another ploy to try and get women themselves to buy Fords. By making the car an extension of a woman’s beauty and style as opposed as a symbol of her independence, women were still kept “in their place” while also allowing car manufacturers to profit off of women’s financial independence to buy vehicles (Copeland, 2013).

Figure 3: Wear a Mustang to match your lipstick, 1967



1967; Courtesy of *Slate*

Another way that marketers found to both tap into the new economically independent women market without offending the patriarchal power structures was by

offering women products more suited to their “feminine” features. This form of benevolent sexism condescendingly implied that while partaking in certain “manly” pursuits was now open to women, the overall confidence in women’s abilities to complete these tasks was missing. Marketers then proposed to swoop in and “solve” the problem by making these pursuits easier for women to handle. Again, the car industry is an excellent example of this phenomenon as they not only marketed cars as “accessories” but they began to sell smaller cars directly to women as easier to handle and more suited to their “fragile” natures. This is apparent in the advertisement shown in Figure 4, in which a woman, obviously fraught with nerves over the prospect of having to figure out how to use a gas pedal, clutch *and* a brake, stares out, terrified, at the audience. Luckily the MiniAutomatic is there to be her “simple driving” savior. Even cars not marketed directly to women tried to create more “women friendly” features that played upon an assumed incompetence of women as operators of vehicles. Studebaker cars in 1964 had an insert in the driver’s manual specifically for women titled, “Going Steady with Studie,” implying that not only women could not understand the same manual as a man, but the only way a woman could conceivably be interested in her car is if it were equated to the same type of relationship she had with man. The insert’s instructions for how a woman should deal with a flat tire included no instructions on how to actually change a tire, but instead read, “Put on some fresh lipstick, fluff up your hairdo ... look helpless and feminine” (Copeland, 2010, p. 2). That’s right, you can use your feminine wiles and sexiness to get what you need done! Women’s power?⁶

⁶ Heaven forbid the woman actually change her own tire!

Figure 4: The Mini Automatic. For simple driving, 1970



1970; Courtesy of *Slate*

Even advertisements from this period that claimed to show women as “independent,” were little more than lip-service in an attempt to get women to buy products. Advertisements for products like Virginia Slim Cigarettes with their slogans, “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby,” (Figure 5, on the following page) gave a nod to women’s progress, while simultaneously suppressing it by advertising themselves as a cigarette meant specifically for women, pointing out that men’s cigarettes were too big for women’s dainty fingers to handle. Even the woman in the ad could be seen wearing the traditional June Cleaver era housewife dress (Anglely, 2015).

Figure 5: You've come a long way, baby, 1967



1967; Courtesy of CNN

Even feminist shows of resistance to the status quo were parodied and mocked in advertisements. These ads took signs of resistance and often reduced the women's show of strength as nothing more than a result of bad life choices or as something that should not be taken seriously, even showing these reduced women as sexually desirable by men (Angle, 2015). Furthermore, a direct appropriation of the "sexual revolution" was used to make it seem like advertisers were committed to helping women liberate themselves, but by talking about how that liberation would never happen unless women bought their product, a point that was brought up by McRobbie (2009). "You can be free, women, but only if you're a modern woman who uses Brand X." An example of this can be seen in Figure 6, which shows a woman simultaneously being leered at by a man while she says, "I never thought of burning my bra until I discovered Smirnoff," basically saying, "I

didn't decide to be a feminist until booze told me I should be one." Sexual liberation and freedom can be yours, too, women, if only you invest in some cheap vodka!

Figure 6: Anything's possible, 1970

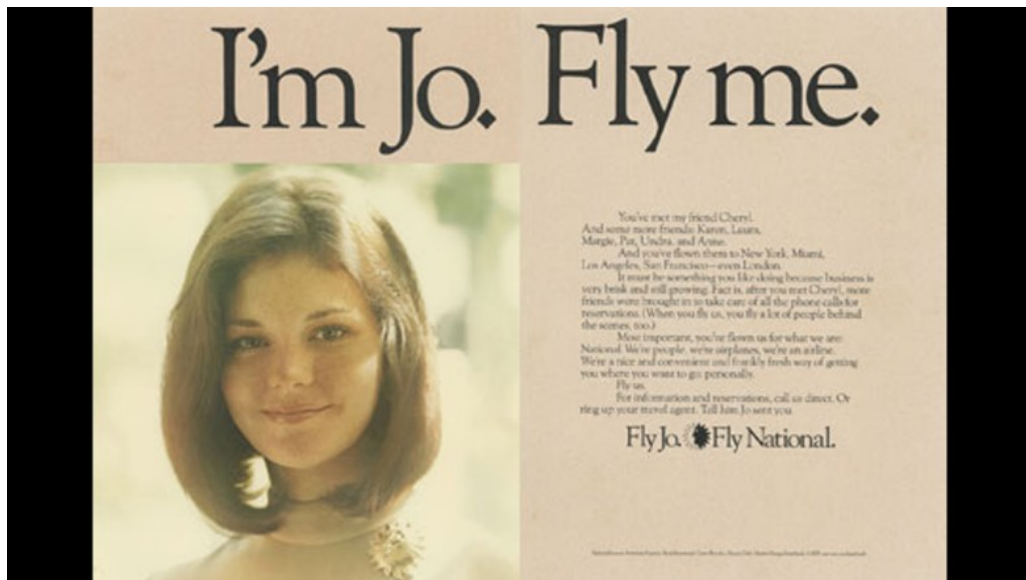


1970; Courtesy of *The Daily Mail*

Even with an expansion of women working in a variety of jobs, advertisements persisted in either reinforcing their femininity or reducing them to something for men to sexually desire or even use. By showing women as work-place incompetent, sexually desirable objects in the office or limited in their use of items to the “women’s versions” the efforts of feminists of the time, trying to liberate women from the bondage of the metaphorical kitchen, were slowed (Angley, 2015). A grand example of this would be Figure 7, which was a 1971 ad for National Airlines. The advertisement features an attractive, smiling woman, dressed as a stewardess with the caption, “I’m Jo. Fly me.” Either National Airlines is featuring the first ever line of Mary Poppins-esque women

who have harnessed the power of flight and can take passengers, or there is a sexually imbued double entendre here that turns the woman into the product. Since there is currently no “Jo Airlines,” it appears that National Airlines created their sexual implication for profit at Jo’s expense, because having her rear pinched while on the job wasn’t enough.

Figure 7: I’m Jo. Fly me. 1971



1971; Courtesy of CNN.com

Women’s feminist movements made great strides for women’s rights during this period. Sadly, advertisers and corporations seemed less willing to help June Cleaver in her bid for independence. Instead marketers opted to diminish her efforts by sexualizing her, turning her into a product or making her appear utterly incompetent, all the while handing her an apron as they shoved her back into Ward Cleaver’s arms.

4. JUNE CLEAVER SPEAKS HER MIND TO THE GLASS CEILING

Of course, feminists of the time did not let these advertisements go public without some protest. Gloria Steinem, co-founder of *Ms. Magazine*, began a column called *No Comment*, which began in the early 1970s and is still in print today. *No Comment* featured particularly problematic and sexist ads to draw attention to the ways in which women were being objectified or shown as incompetent (Anglely, 2015). It was also during this decade that Jean Kilbourne released the first of her *Killing Us Softly* documentaries, which gathered data throughout the 1970s and was released in 1979. These documentaries explored the ways in which violence against women and the subjugation of women was being reinforced through advertising. The documentary, which in 2010 released its fourth iteration, showed how women were, and are, stripped of power and subjugated to men through marketing. Despite these protests, however, as shown by Kilbourne's work through the *Killing Us Softly* documentary project, marketers continued to show a value difference between men and women. Men were still the powerful breadwinners, while women were allowed into the male sphere only on a special "pink" level that was also oftentimes more expensive (Kilbourne & Jhalley, 2010).

After this point in the 1970s there was an academic feminist explosion of interest into the areas of objectification, gender power differentials and sexualization of women in advertising. Over the past 40 years there have been a plethora of studies performed to show the ways in which marketing chips away at women's power (Anglely, 2015). Research, particularly content analysis, critical analysis and semiotics, on women's place in society as sexual objects has created its own field of feminist studies that range from

women's portrayals as sexualized mood enhancers to their ties to products to increase the product's "sex appeal." Famously, Erving Goffman in his book *Gender Advertisements* (1979) looked at how advertisements painted a "Commercial Realism" (p. 22), or a world that blended fantasy and reality by often creating unattainable perfection but mimicking just enough of real life to make that dream state seem obtainable. In this "Commercial Realism" Goffman, via critically analyzing advertisements, pointed out the ways in which advertising made it so that women were to reach for an ultimately unattainable life of perfection in the way that they conducted their home, relationships and appearances while remaining completely subordinate to the men in their lives.

Similarly, Stankiewicz and Rosselli (2008) examined 1,988 advertisements from well-circulated magazines using critical content analysis. They found that around half of the sampled advertisements focused on women as sex objects, and women were framed as victims of male violence or unwanted sexual advances in 10 percent of those advertisements analyzed. Furthermore, they found that while a majority of the advertisements promoting negative stereotypes and harmful images of women were primarily in men and women's fashion ads, including those in teenage trend magazines, there were detrimental advertisements in nearly all types of magazines they analyzed. Overall, studies in this area reveal how women are often reduced by being marketed as sexual objects, paired with whatever item is being sold. A kind of "free girl with the purchase of a beer" ideal that takes women away from being independent human beings and replaces their human identities as add-ons to products. A further side effect of this kind of objectification is that objects are not afforded the same respect as humans. When women are reduced in advertisements to the state of a "thing" as opposed to a person, it

makes violence, abuse (Figure 8) and other reprehensible actions against them more permissible (Kilbourne & Jhalley, 2010, Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008).

Figure 8: Dolce & Gabbana, 2007



2007; Courtesy of *Metro*

How power and dominance is displayed in the media is also a part of these forms of media analysis. These studies focus on the questions like, “Who has the power? Who is subordinated? How unequal are the people represented in the images?” A study performed by Lee and Hwang (2002) found that, despite great strides forward in feminist movements, women still were shown with a much lower level of significance, both in their levels of dominance and their social standing in movie ads. Using content analysis of 176 film advertisements, their work found that between 1963 and 1993 there was very little change in how women’s power was shown in the ads. The power differentials showed things like men’s words being obeyed by women, women being shown in lesser job positions (i.e. men being CEOs and women being their assistants), women apologizing to men for non-slights and a variety of other factors. What this study, and other studies like it, show is the ways in which women’s power is subverted via popular imagery and how these power differentials create unrealistic schema in the populace at

large. Women are not just pretty objects to look at, but the women themselves are responsible for maintaining this impossible standard of beauty, and that maintenance comes at the price of buying the correct products. For instance, if one looks at Figure 8 and Figure 9, these ads clearly show a woman being subjugated by men. What advertisements like this demonstrate is a version of power, a decidedly masculine power, that is reproduced over and over again, framing men as dominant figures and women their pretty objects as the societal norm.

Figure 9: The Cosmopolitan, 2011



2011; Courtesy of Ms. Magazine

Still further studies have simply shown a lack of representation of women in media at all. In 1985 cartoonist Alison Bechdel, author of the long running lesbian comic series *Dykes to Watch Out For*, created a strip called “The Rule” (Figure 10). Originally printed in an obscure newspaper in the 1980s, it has been featured in many of Bechdel’s

books since. In the comic she created a sort of test for women's representation in film.

The test had three very basic rules:

1. The film must have two women in it.
2. The women must talk to each other.
3. The conversation has to be about something other than a man (Bechdel, 2007).

Figure 10: The Rule



2007; Courtesy of *Dykes to Watch Out For*

Bechdel's comic spawned an entire string of tests, using either her test or close adaptations of it, of women's portrayals in the media. In 2014, for instance, Hicky examined 1,615 mainstream American movies spanning from the 1950s until the present

analyzing them using the original Bechdel test. His findings, published in the film trade journal *FiveThirtyEight* found that only about half of the films analyzed passed the test. The Bechdel test has also been effectively adapted and applied to analysis of movie advertisements and how abundant male dominated commercials versus those featuring predominantly women existed and how much publicity they received (Garcia, Weber, & Garimella, 2013). Examinations of media messages via tools like the Bechdel Test are valuable in that they show just how often women are absent, even from stories where they should be included. The fact that many films focus exclusively around males, including the conversations women have with each other in those films, with very few doing the reverse and showcasing women with such exclusivity, shows to what level we are still in a patriarchal system. It also further speaks to the culturally accepted idea that women are not as important and are less interesting than men. Not only are there so few women shown independently as characters in movies, but even when they are their narratives are often driven by their male counterparts in such a way that their own storylines, motivations or importance are subordinated to the men in their worlds.

There are also studies centered around gender stereotypes that feminist media critics have performed that contribute to our understanding of where women stand in popular culture. For instance, one study conducted by Eisend, Plagueman and Sollwedel (2014) looked at humorous stereotypes (i.e. drunk goofy dudes and airheaded bimbos) and how these persistent stereotypes affected the efficacy of ads. This study, however, steered away from any professional stereotypes, instead aiming for those around specific gendered accepted schema such as the idea that boys wear blue and girls wear pink. Many of these examinations of stereotypes and tropes have gained a certain amount of

popular notice. Social commentator and documentarian Anita Sarkeesian's *Feminist Frequency* series, which has been watched on sites such as Youtube by millions, provides detailed exploration of tropes such as "Women in Fridges" (female characters killed only as plot devices to forward male protagonist's plotlines) and "The Damsels in Distress" (Sarkeesian & McIntosh, 2009). These studies show how generalizing both men and women is detrimental and limiting as they promote that only certain genders or sexes can perform certain actions.

However, it should be noted that the bulk of feminist research on women in advertising has ignored women as domestic figures and has not explored the modern implications of women being portrayed as simple spouses and mothers, awaiting their husbands' return from work. Many of the studies mentioned previously have briefly dipped their toes in the waters of domestication, but most only mention women as "mothers" and "spousal" figures in passing. For example, there was one study performed by Neuhaus (2013) that looked at the idea of "Funny Fathers," or dads being shown as humorous whenever they attempted to take care of the children. What Neuhaus found was that in a majority of diaper advertisements, spanning from 1970 to 2012, fathers were mostly shown as secondary parents, rarely getting "hands on" with their own infants or toddlers. Instead mom was the one constantly changing the diapers while dad stood back, often with an expression of terror or confusion. The times when fathers were shown to actually get involved with the child, it was to humorous effect as the fathers' incompetent abilities at taking care of their own children became the punch line. The results revealed that women were not only being shown in a domestic role in these diaper commercials, but that dads were not supposed to be involved or try to take care of their own children,

as that violated some sort of social norm that could be openly mocked. This undermines the legitimacy as “men as fathers” dialogue while maintaining the cultural norm that women are the natural and assumed childcare providers. This study, however, did not really touch on the woman as a domestic caretaker as a whole, instead mostly focusing on the depictions of fathers as the butt of the joke.

Then, of course, one must consider how even parental caregiving is portrayed within advertising as it focuses on mothers. There are a plethora of studies on motherhood itself and how the media influences what is seen as productive or healthy maternal parenting. For instance, Wall (2001) looked at the public discourse around breastfeeding and how it shaped women’s behavior towards their infants and the level of choice they have in the practice due to social pressures. However, what these studies do not examine is whether these public discourses are there trying to convince women that they have to be in that domestic role to begin with instead of being the breadwinners in the family. Furthermore, childless women are often ignored as a marketable group. In 2014 a Census Bureau study found that 47.6 percent American women between the ages of 15 to 44 years old did not have children. Yet, marketers still persistently market towards women assuming that they are or will be mothers (Tugend, 2016). This is even despite the fact that single women have been shown to buy twice as many beauty products, spend 35 percent more on groceries (due to eating higher priced and higher quality foods) and spend 60 percent more time abroad (Strauss, 2016). Yet, marketers tend to ignore this group because as author and advertising researcher states, “Advertisers don’t know how to pitch to her” (Tugend, 2016, p. 1). Advertisers are so entrenched in their “women as mothers” ideal, that it is difficult for them to present women without

children in tow. However, the effects of this lack of representation of childless women in the media has gone mostly unexplored in modern research showing an ideological and cultural void around the identity of the childless, working woman. What research in this area that has been produced has also not included the domestication aspect. Therefore, a true look at the “domestic, homemaker, and significant other bound woman” is an area that is currently lacking in the research at large. June Cleaver knows she’s being sexualized, objectified, excluded and depicted in subordinate positions, but to what extent is she being domesticated?

5. THE JUNE CLEAVER TEST

As previously argued a weak spot in feminist research concerning women in advertising, is the perpetuation of domestication of women tropes and stereotypes. As such, it is the goal of this research to address the questions of whether we have moved past the age of seeing the June Cleaver mentality appear in media and are women more than domestic caregivers, spouses and significant others, there to please their male counterparts and make sure the children are tended to? In light of this and in response to how advertising impacts social roles and the level to which women's equality can be impacted by those images and ideas, two primary research questions have been developed:

RQ1: Does American televised advertising primarily show women engaged in domestic tasks, caring for children or in a spousal role, or does advertising show women as competent members of the workforce?

This first question simply addresses whether women are consistently shown in a June Cleaver-esque light today. However, when it comes to tropes or stereotypes, it is always prudent to look at norms from a historical perspective. Therefore, there is the second research question, which aims to explore this topic longitudinally over time.

RQ2: Have U.S. televised commercials significantly adapted over time to show more women in the workforce or has it stayed consistent in its portrayals of women as primarily domestic figures?

5.1 The June Cleaver Test Parameters

To address these questions The June Cleaver test for media was developed. Based loosely on the basic framing of the Bechdel Test for women in movies (Bechdel, 2007),

The June Cleaver test follows a few simple principles to test whether advertisements have broken away from this problematic “woman in the kitchen with the kids” stereotype. Similar to The Bechdel Test, The June Cleaver Test uses a set of cascading rules, each rule leading into the qualifications for the next one. Additionally, The June Cleaver Test lays out clear guidelines for what “passes” and what “fails.” Unlike its Feminist media critique predecessor, however, The June Cleaver Test does not rely as much on conversation between characters as it does the subject matter of the viewed artifact itself. For example, under the June Cleaver Test guidelines, a woman does not have to talk about having a job. She could also be shown in a uniform or sitting at a desk. Visual representations of holding an occupation, or lack thereof, count where in the Bechdel Test only conversation could bring an artifact through to the completion of the test. While conversation can play a role in the “passing” or “failing” of a piece of media, it is not the only indicator of those things. It also varies from the Bechdel Test in composition in the fact that after the first qualifying rule of the test, the June Cleaver Test presents the following two rules as ways to create an “either/or” option for passing or failing while the Bechdel Test relied less on this triangular form of reasoning. With these similarities and differences in mind, the framework of the test is below.

The June Cleaver Test:

1. The commercial must contain at least one adult female performing some action or speaking in the commercial (not just part of the background crowd or as the unseen narrator) to be included in this study.
2. The woman (or women) must be shown to have a role *other than* or *in addition* to parental caregiver, spouse, significant other or a domestic household caretaker to pass

the test. (For instance, a woman who talks about both being a mother and a soldier would pass.)

3. If the woman in the commercial is only shown in her role as a parental caregiver, spouse, girlfriend or domestic household caretaker, then the commercial fails the test. For example, a woman who talks about how bleach cleans her house's floors or is shown receiving jewelry from a significant other and nothing else would fail the test.

The first rule of this critical content analysis based test was specifically included to discount any irrelevant artifacts from this study, much like the first rule of the Bechdel Test (Bechdel, 2007). After all, if no women are in the ad or performing a discernable action then there is nothing to count one way or the other. The second rule speaks to what would pass the June Cleaver Test, namely if the woman is shown carrying out non-domestic activities then the advertisement passes. The third rule, however, explains that if a woman were only shown in a domestic capacity, with no mention or allusion to a life outside the home, her relational attachment to a partner or caregiving, then it would fail. A quick note; in future tables showing results for The June Cleaver, the "Pass" column refers to those that meet the second rule requirement and pass The June Cleaver Test, whereas the "Fail" column refers to those that meet the third rule criteria and thereby fail.

5.2 The Sample

For the purposes of this study, to see if American society has progressed in this area, the Test was applied to 1,250 advertisements spanning from 1970 to those appearing in the 2010s. 250 advertisements were analyzed from each of the five decades spanning that time. The advertisements were garnered spanning the entirety of the decade, aside from the 2010s, since as this was performed in 2015 and 2016 the decade

had yet to conclude and a lack of a functional time machine disallowed the researcher being able to view the entire decade. Advertisements spanning from the 1970s through the 2000s were gathered using Youtube and RetroJunk, an online nostalgia database that categorizes a variety of artifacts from past decades including advertisements. Retrojunk was chosen as a database because it carried a wide variety of advertisements that had been nationally syndicated assuring a better sample. In addition the quality of the recordings, by and large, tended to be better than those viewed in other retro or nostalgia-based databases, which helped to ensure less confusion in analysis. Youtube was also used because it offered premade hour-long collections of commercials from the time period that were diverse in subject, but also provided commercials that were also nationally syndicated and popular, ensuring that they were commercials that were widely viewed by audiences of the time. The split between the use of RetroJunk and Youtube provided two unique perspectives on the advertisements provided. RetroJunk's selection gave a wide span of years of advertisements from a variety of categories. Youtube submissions tended to be advertisements all from a single day, offering the commercial breaks from a specific date in history. This allowed for both a broad selection of advertisements, but allowed some amount of understanding as to what appeared on TV together on certain days, providing some context for the viewing. The majority of the commercials garnered came from RetroJunk, at approximately a two-to-one rate from Youtube, which mainly had to do with the availability of these collections on Youtube and their usable visual qualities. More high quality commercials were available on RetroJunk, so that is where the majority of the sample was selected.

Advertisements were chosen in order that they appeared in either RetroJunk or on Youtube, which automatically randomized what was viewed, until 250 eligible commercials for the decade were met, none were skipped unless they were a reposting of the same advertisement already analyzed for the study. Over 600 commercials were viewed that did not qualify for the study due to their lack of having a woman featured in them. This means that roughly 1,850 commercials were actually viewed for the study, but only 1,250 (or approximately 68 percent) could be used in the study due to it not meeting the first requirement of the June Cleaver test by including at least one woman, further demonstrating the fact that women are underrepresented in media in general. There were also several commercials that lacked having a human in them at all. There were also 26 advertisements (mostly from the 1970s and 1980s) that were discounted because the recording quality was so poor that one could not hear or see what was going on. There was one that was so poor quality that one could literally not determine if it was humans or some form of animal in the advertisement.

Advertisements from the present decade were collected over the span of over a year between 2015 and 2016, using television and online mediums to reflect the viewing patterns of the current decade's audiences. The benefit of viewing advertisements in this decade was there was a little more control over seeing the advertisements in context. A purposive sampling of American video advertisements was constructed by choosing specific time slots and mediums to find the advertisements that were most likely being viewed by the largest audiences in the 2010s decade sample. The advertisements were then randomly sampled inside those time periods with an effort made to collect advertisements in proportion to the amount of time one might be exposed to the

advertising time slot (see details on time slot selection below). This meant that if a time slot had more airtime than another, commercials were sampled at a higher rate in respect to the larger amount of exposure time. A total of 250 advertisements were collected and analyzed using the June Cleaver Test in this manner.

The Nielson Television Ratings, which has been collecting information about popular media since the 1930s, states that the majority of viewership on weekdays is between 8 and 11 pm (2011). It is from this time period from which 78 advertisements were sampled. The weekend primetime viewership time period is 7 until 11 pm and draws roughly the same amount of viewership (Halbrooks, 2015). As such 57 advertisements were sampled for this study as well. Special television events, such as sporting events, finales or pilots of television shows and major news events (such as political debates), were also included for a sampling time period due to their high viewership. For instance, Sunday football, according to the Nielson Television Ratings pulls in around 19 million viewers a week, which would make high viewership events such as this one, an important time period to pay attention to. 57 advertisements were surveyed to cover special television events. Other special events, like political debates, were also watched to collect the higher viewership commercials.

The final place that advertisements were pulled from was online. As stated previously, over 211 million people are reached by online advertisements in just a 3-month period (Gleeson, 2012). Therefore, it would be remiss to not include a sample of these advertisements as well. These advertisements were pulled from sites most commonly viewed by the public such as Facebook, Youtube and a few popular blogs (blogs that routinely receive over 100,000 views a week). To lower the amount of

targeted advertisements, which are advertisements that a computer program chooses for you based on your internet activity, not only were targeted advertisements on Facebook and Youtube turned off, but computers were used that did not belong to the researcher to garner parts of the 2010s sample. This resulted in 58 online advertisements that were included in the overall sample.

5.3 The Categories

To provide a deeper analysis of the advertisements viewed for this content analysis, the commercials were broken up into pertinent emergent categories (Table 1). As the data was collected several prominent themes materialized early on in the advertisements and the categories were built from the resulting collection of commercials in specific categories. These categories were then presented to 3 other persons outside the study to see if they also noted the categories as commonly occurring and if the advertisements included in those categories fit well. The 3 other participants stated that they felt the categories were logical and the advertisement products fit inside the categories well. This resulted in 11 distinct categories (Table 1) in which all the analyzed decades were further placed. All 11 categories appeared, in varying degrees of popularity, in every decade analyzed. The categories, their definitions and examples are listed on the following page.

Table 1: Commercial Categories

Category Name	Category Definition	Commercial Example
Household Goods	Household Goods included non-nutritive substances that are common in the household; for example tools, cleaning products, laundry detergent, etc.	A Downy laundry detergent commercial was applicable.
Food	Food included nutritive substances, either in a restaurant or a home setting, including alcoholic beverages.	A commercial for Peter Piper Pizza with a family eating around a table at the restaurant fit inside this category.
Car Commercials	Car Commercials are those that specifically advertise a vehicle.	A commercial for a Dodge truck heroically climbing a mountain qualified in this category.
Insurance	Insurance commercials covered all forms of insurance (vehicle, life, home, etc.).	A commercial for Progressive, featuring insurance representative Flo talking about insurance to her family, is an example of a commercial added to this category.
Pharmaceutical	Pharmaceutical commercials were those containing a medication, medical treatment or doctor prescribed drug.	The drug Humira, featuring people talking about their arthritis, was included in this study under this category.
Entertainment/Technology	Anything related to leisure activities involving technology or just new technology in general (i.e. Kindle Fire, computers, cell phones, internet providers) could be included in this category.	An advertisement for Cox Internet and an upset small business owner fit into this category for the purposes of this study.
Sports	Sports advertisements either included the mention of famous sports teams or included a focus on physical activity.	An advertisement included from this category would be the NFL commercial where a mother buys her child a Greenbay Packers onesie.

Grocery/Department Stores	This category refers to large chain shopping centers that provide a variety of products, including large furnishing stores.	An advertisement where a mom talks about all the craft supplies she got from Walmart for her daughter's dance recital was included under this definition.
Clothing	This category was specifically about selling wearable items. This was set apart from Household Goods, which have a practical application purpose, whereas clothing commercials tend to focus on the personal aesthetic.	An advertisement for Ross was included when it featured women walking down the street modeling the newest Fall fashions available at the store.
Hygiene/Personal Care Items	This would refer to items that one would use in daily grooming (hair care products, toothpaste, etc.).	A toothpaste advertisement where a woman talks about how white her teeth became after she switched toothpaste brands was included in this category.
Other	This is the category where the other advertisements whose topics had too few recordings to be included as their own category were grouped. Any advertisement category that had less than 5 advertisements that could be grouped together were put in the Other category. It should be noted that there was not a single advertisement grouping of more than 3 that was noted that was included in this category.	There was only one recorded advertisement dealing with family travel vacations in the 2010 sample, Disneyland, so that was grouped in the Other category.

5.4 Methods of Data Analysis

The June Cleaver Test was developed as a tool to perform qualitative content analysis, both to provide the quantitative numbers of the pass/fails of the test, but to examine trends in context. All of the artifacts were first analyzed on the level of whether they simply passed the June Cleaver Test by showing a woman as having an occupation

outside of domestic, spousal and/or caregiving roles. Then they were coded for a category, and the present decade ones were also stratified by source location and time. All advertisements were given a brief description to help insure that the same advertisement was not coded twice on accident. The commercials were only coded for single product category. If there was a question about a possible crossover, the category was decided by a discussion between the researcher and an outside participant, following the process Lee and Hwang used in their movie advertising study (2002). However, the question of possible category crossover was brought up fewer than 10 times, and decisions about where the advertisement belonged were easily resolved with minimal discussion. For the most part the advertisements remained pretty easy to categorize based on product type.

Inter-rater reliability was checked, again, mirroring the methods used by Lee and Hwang (2002), by providing 3 outside viewers with random commercials from the overall samples and the June Cleaver Test parameters. The only part that was not randomized about the commercials that were viewed by these viewers was that the researcher made sure several from every decade were viewed. The 3 outside viewers watched a total of 29 commercials spanning the 5 decades and 100 percent agreement with the pass and fail rate on each commercial was achieved through all stages of the June Cleaver Test.

On top of watching commercials to see if they passed the test, notes were taken on the commercials viewed by the researcher. These notes were later analyzed both on a decade-by-decade and across all 5 decades comparison, using critical content analysis, to note trends, tropes or other relevant phenomena that appeared. This is a similar method to

Goffman's (1979) *Gender Advertisements* and has been used to analyze advertising frequently since, such as the 2007 study performed by Roberts and Pettigrew that examined the links between childhood obesity and food advertising. The commercials discussed in the analysis were either ones that seemed to be extremely memorable (based on the comments left by other users on the database entry) or had an interesting facet that seemed particularly relevant to the decade in question. The observations and trends of specific advertisements, taken while watching the advertisements, were then synthesized along with the June Cleaver Test results to provide further context and depth to the results found. The following chapters will be examining the commercials via the decades sampled and, within those chapters, how the different categories fared under The June Cleaver Test.

A quick note to the reader: The following chapters contain the analysis of The June Cleaver Test results broken down by category. These categories were discussed in each chapter in the order that most made comparative sense for the way the data for that decade created results. The full pass and fail rates across decades is featured both in the final chapter and Appendix A under Table 2 for quick reference if necessary. If a reminder is needed on what each category definitionally included, please refer to Table 1. Furthermore and for absolute clarification, the discussion of "failure rate" in the following chapters refers to advertisements that failed The June Cleaver Test overall by not showing women outside of a domestic context.

6. THE 1970S, JUNE CLEAVER GETS GROOVY

“Any woman who chooses to behave like a full human being should be warned that the armies of the status quo will treat her as something of a dirty joke.

- Gloria Steinem, 1971

In 1971, feminist Gloria Steinem did what, for the time, was completely unthinkable: She started a magazine publication solely focused on women, produced and written by women and completely managed by women. The first previews of *Ms. Magazine* went live in the December 20 issue of *New York Magazine* to both wide critical acclaim and everything from mockery to rage from male-managed publications. Despite what the critics had to say, *Ms.* forged into new topic areas outside of the traditional themes of cooking, housekeeping, and child-rearing that nearly all publications aimed towards women, which were also mostly written and managed by men, at the time covered (Pogrebin, 2011).

This revolutionary new publication did not appear in a vacuum, however. Women in organizations such as NOW and New York Radical Women had been trying to change the advertising and publishing landscape for years (Pogrebin, 2011). On March 18, 1970 a group of over 100 women forced their way into the offices of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and staged a sit-in, protesting the fact that this “women’s magazine” had an all-male editorial staff. Their demands were not met and feminists of the time decided that if they couldn’t change the existing publishing markets, they would just have to create their own. It was with this resolve that *Ms. Magazine*, created by feminist leaders like Gloria Steinem, Brenda Feigen, Jane O’Reilly, Susan Braudy and others, came into being (Pogrebin, 2011).

As it was noted earlier, this time has been connected to a change in marketing to attempt to capitalize on the image of new independent women without giving them too many liberties. It was in this atmosphere, with women still facing a lot of gendered oppression but showing a strong amount of resistance, that the first group of 250 TV commercials that were analyzed were originally produced (Table 3):

Table 3: 1970s June Cleaver Test Commercial Results

Category	Total Number	Pass	Fail	Percentage That Fail
Household Goods	32	6	26	81.3%
Grocery/Department Stores	8	6	2	25%
Food	88	33	55	62.5%
Sports	2	2	0	0%
Insurance	4	0	4	100%
Pharmaceuticals	14	4	10	71.4%
Other	19	10	9	47.4%
Car Commercials	14	5	9	64.3%
Clothing	11	8	3	27.3%
Entertainment/Technology	18	9	9	50%
Hygiene/Personal Care	40	22	18	45%
Totals	250	105	145	58%

With what was going on at the time, historically, it is no great surprise that 145 commercials or 58 percent overall (Table 3) failed the June Cleaver Test. However, how they passed or failed, as the qualitative analysis reveals, is equally as important as whether or not they did so.

6.1 Insurance

Insurance had both the highest failure rate, at 100 percent failing the June Cleaver Test (Table 3), and one of the lowest sample sizes with 4 commercials for this category collected. Nearly 20 Insurance commercials were viewed, however, a vast majority of

them not only didn't include women, they failed to include humans on screen at all. The first part of the June Cleaver Test requires that a woman be present, so these commercials did not qualify to be included in the data set. Most insurance commercials for the time were just words about the insurance policy and the company logo stationary on the screen (or sometimes attempting to stay stationary thanks to fuzzy TV tracking quality) while a male voice talked about the benefits of signing up with XYZ Insurance Company. It is important to note that the voiceover narrator was always a male, specifically an older more authoritative sounding male. When humans were shown, it was just men, usually a representative of the insurance company talking about the offered policies. All of these commercials had the attention grabbing qualities of reading an actual insurance contract after consuming a sleeping pill; Insurance companies had yet to discover the Geico gecko or Progressive's Flo.

The 4 recorded commercials included in the data set where women were actually featured but failed the test showed men as strong protectors of the home, the women included in the "needs to be protected" category. All of the commercials framed the women as wives, playing with kids (All State Life Insurance - 1978), or simply sat there smiling and nodding quietly supporting their spouse (State Farm Insurance - 1979) as their husbands talked about signing up for insurance and how much safer they felt their families were with the insurance they had chosen. Women were never shown signing forms or having any real input on what insurance choices the husband was making. Instead the women in these commercials were just passive recipients of their husbands' benevolent action taken on the wives' behalves. Also the fact that so few women were seen, or heard, in these commercials was telling in-of-itself as it framed the realm of

insurance as a “male” realm. Men were supposed to be making the important decisions around insurance, while women were simply there to benefit from whatever choice the husband made. This lessening of women’s efficacy at making important decisions for their own households further delegitimizes the woman’s ability to not only self-determine, but places her in that same subordinate, lower level of operating skills, that the housewife is automatically perceived as possessing (Davies & Fink, 2014). Dworkin (1975) defines the idea of paternalism as, “...the interference with a person’s liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good happiness, needs, interests or values of the person...” (p. 175). Taking away these women’s agency and handing over the decisions to their husbands for their own good and protection fits directly into paternalistic thinking. Women can’t make insurance decisions for themselves, so their male spousal saviors must do it for them. This is a detrimental way of thinking for advertising when one considers that men aren’t the only insurable party in a household, women could also be insured, but that is a market that the 1970s advertisers clearly did not even consider as a viable outlet. In the same way that childless single women today are being missed as an invisible and underestimated market (Tugend, 2016), the 1970s insurance companies missed an entire pool of potential consumers while patting women on the head and saying, “Don’t worry your pretty head about it, honey. The men have this under control.”

6.2 Sports

There was one category, the smallest recorded category at only 2 commercials included, that passed 100 percent of the time: Sports (Table 3). However, before one gets too excited about this “victory for women” there are some things that must be taken into

account. The first is the sample size. Again, 18 sports category commercials were viewed, however, women were only shown in 2 of them total. Unlike the Insurance commercials this cannot be explained away by a lack of humans featured with voiceovers being the only contribution by humans. In every sports commercial viewed there were humans interacting on screen, there were just only 2 in which women were included. Believe it or not there were, in fact, women athletes in the 1970s, however, one would never be able to tell by televised advertisements of the time.

Of course, at this juncture the, “But the two that included women passed. Doesn’t that mean they were free from their domestic burden?” is running through sports apologetics’ minds. However, the way that they passed was still greatly lacking in progressive notions. The first one that passed the female inclusion part of the test was Inside the NFL, which aired in 1978. Amongst the men crashing into each other as the 1970s musical equivalent of *Eye of the Tiger* played, women could be seen standing on the sidelines in itty-bitty cheerleading uniforms. In fact, the only close-up we got of the professionally employed cheerleaders in this advertisement was of 3 of the cheerleaders’ skirted rear ends as they gyrated, cheerleading the heroic men on the field. So the score, for those just turning in is, Women Being Sexually Objectified: 1, Women’s Progress Featured in a Sports Ad: 0.

The other sports ad was slightly, but only very slightly, better. Airing in 1979, the commercial was for a nationally televised sporting event called the “Battle of the Sexes.” The announcer excitedly announced that this would pit brawn against beauty in such tough sporting events as bowling. No really, most of the advertisement showed women and men competing on a bowling lane; men bowled with confidence while women in cute

low-cut sweaters kind of half-heartedly flung bowling balls in the general direction of the pins. Skiing was also featured, but for the most part, the “sports” that women were competing against men in were less sports and more “leisure activities.” There wasn’t even a mention of men and women competing in tennis, which has been traditionally a more acceptable sport in which women could compete, probably because the big burly men refused to play such a “feminine sport.” The problems with this commercial are many. Not only were women not deemed worthy to compete in real sports (aside from skiing, which is another that often toes the line between sport and leisure activity), but women weren’t even afforded their own status as athletes, instead being painted as the pretty things that also happen to be bowling in the same lane as the “real athletes,” as shown by the female competitors lackluster performance. Furthermore, the commercial focused on several male competitors and their names, establishing them as “pro-bowler” or with other such monikers. Not a single woman received the same spotlight treatment; they were more staged props than actual people. The men were seen as the “standard” or “expected” athletes, while the women’s presence was tolerated for this jocular moment in which the men would briefly open the door of competition and sport to the women. This was a real competition in the same sense that Sweet ‘N Low is real sugar, it may have all the earmarks of a competition, but it is a cheap substitute with no real weight or impact. So, while the commercials passed The June Cleaver Test, by not showing women directly as domestic divas or as directly attached to a spouse or boyfriend, they were still shown in a far less than progressive light. Women could appear in sports commercials, but only as incompetent eye candy.

6.3 Hygiene/Personal Care

In the same “how, not how many” vein, the Clothing and Hygiene/Personal Care Categories had less than fifty percent failure rates, but again, even their higher percentage passing rates proved problematic on other levels (Table 3). Addressing Hygiene/Personal Care, which had a failure rate of The June Cleaver Test of 45 percent, did show women in professions. The variety of these professions, however, left much to be desired. Women were models (Ultra Max Shampoo, Covergirl, Johnson’s Baby Oil, etc.), actresses (Rose Milk Lotion, etc.), ballerinas (Miss Brech Hairspray), a lone female golfer (Colgate) and one woman putting on makeup before she left for her non-specified “work” (Revlon). The advertisements in this category that passed the test mostly showed the women in the context of beauty. The vast majority of those ads that passed showed models and actresses talking about how the product being sold could possibly make the woman watching more like the pretty faces on the screen. These ads blatantly peddled beauty standards and encouraged women to buy products to fit into a very specific “sexy” mold, which further reinforced traditional beauty standards for women. For instance, the ad for Johnson’s Baby Oil featured a model very seductively talking about her personal use of baby oil as she slathered it on her long legs and made deep “come hither” eye contact with the screen. And yes, that advertisement really was as disturbing as one might imagine. The message inherent in ads such as this one was not only to women that to be that “sexy” you should use the baby oil until you’re softer than a baby’s behind, but to men that the women in their lives should be using this product to be as seductive as possible. After all, only the smoothest, hard to physically hold on to due to being slippery-smooth, women should be considered sexy. The most progressive ad out of this category was for Soft N’ Dry that showed a woman as the valedictorian of her college

class giving a speech and being kept from sweating by her deodorant. Aside from that, the ads that passed in Hygiene/Personal Care mostly fell into either the “seductive” (Johnson’s Baby Oil) category or the “stereotypical women’s jobs” (actresses, ballerinas, etc.) arena. The images that were shown were a very stereotypical form of femininity; women were soft, pretty, seductive creatures who was there to please the opposite sex.

The 18 that failed must also be examined. For the most part these commercials showed women in two lights. The first was as the concerned wife or girlfriend trying to care for another adult, usually a man. For instance a 1979 Listerine commercial showed a bride on her wedding day panicking over her own father’s bad breath, eventually saving the day with Listerine mouthwash. Because on a bride’s wedding day her number one priority is another adult’s hygiene habits, apparently. In 1978 Schick Razors aired an ad where a girlfriend teases her boyfriend until he buys a better razor. Then in 1970 there was also the Ultra-Brite Toothpaste where woman excitedly talks about how she roped in her current husband by using this specific brand of toothpaste, which literally ran the slogan of, “The sex appeal toothpaste,” as if the toothpaste itself were somehow “sexy.” The other way that women were shown in commercials that failed in this category was directly as mothers. Mothers held babies (Luvs, 1970) and bandaged up kids’ scraped knees (Band-Aid, 1970). There was not a single instance in this category where a woman was shown receiving aid from her spouse in caring for the child, that “honor” fell entirely on her shoulders. What these examples show is that, although the Hygiene/Personal Care, category technically had fewer failures than passes, it still did not show women in a particularly flattering or empowering way. Instead it relied nearly entirely on reproducing

traditional roles, women's beauty standards and women's "nurturing nature" to hock their products.

6.4 Clothing

Clothing had an even lower failure rate, with only 27.3 percent of the 11 clothing commercials analyzed failing The June Cleaver Test (Table 3). Here, again, however, we run into much the same quandary as was found in the Hygiene/Personal Care categories. A vast majority of the Clothing ads featured women as models. Though, compared to the Hygiene/Personal category just discussed, the models in the Clothing ads were often even more overtly sexualized and objectified than those in the Hygiene/Personal Care ads. For instance the 1977 Seamless Support Bra commercial featured a smiling woman talking about her bra and being wolf-whistled and cat-called by a variety of men for the entire 30 second commercial. The message in this ad was blatantly, "Buy this bra, so men will desire your body." The advertisement was another excellent example of how marketers appropriated the sexual revolution of the 1970s, as demonstrated by the Smirnoff advertisement (Figure 6) earlier in this work. As McRobbie (2009) alluded to, showing women as "sexually free" but with a double standard of being sexually objectified by men defeated the purpose of the feminist attempts at sexual liberation of the time. The message of these types of advertisements is, of course, "Sweetheart, you can buy this bra because it will make you more physically free, which is only good if it also makes men lust after you." The 1976 Robinson's Clothing commercial similarly showed a model in lingerie half-heartedly attempting to punch a hanging weight bag, as evidenced by her curled-wrist hits, her lack of sweat and the fact that her hands flopped uselessly to her side after every contact. It is hard to imagine professional fighter Ronda Rousey working

out in lacey underthings that might cause a considerable amount of chaffing and underwire poking. The woman in the advertisement was not being portrayed as “tough” or “capable,” she was portrayed as a silly caricature of a boxer in pretty panties. The only two commercials in this category that did not show women as models were a Pro Keds (1978) commercial featuring a woman tennis player and Super Sheer Pantyhose (1979) where a woman saleswoman talked about the benefits of the product while smiling and Vanna White *Wheel of Fortune* gesturing. The saleswoman gleefully talked about the benefits of Super Sheer Pantyhose with all the intense joy and excitement of a little kid being told that they get to go to Disneyland.

Probably the most offensive pass of The June Cleaver Test in the Clothing category for this time period came from Socialites’ Shoes (1970). The ad features a woman who identifies herself as a bored, working, model looking for the “perfect” pair of shoes. In her hunt she tries on shoes after shoes, making the shoe salesman nearly faint at the number of boxes she is pulling off the shelves. Finally, she settles on Socialites’ as the perfect pair, the shoe salesman also commenting that whatever man was paying for them wouldn’t be breaking the bank in purchasing the woman her chosen stilettos. Not only was the model portrayed in this ad as vain, rather useless and a bother to a working man (even though helping people find shoes is pretty much the entirety of his job description), but it was also implied by the salesman’s statement that a man would be buying her shoes for her. The insinuation here was that she was a lady of leisure or tiresome, demanding wife or girlfriend, one who relies on the men in her life to financially provide for her every whim. Heaven forbid she have monetary means to buy her vain, vapidly desired pair of shoes herself?

Those that failed the test by showing women solely as domestic caregivers or spouses, again showed women as concerned mothers buying clothes for husbands and children. One particularly fascinating failure was Robert Hall Clothing (1970), which depicted a mother helping her teenage daughter shop for clothing. The entire commercial focused around both mother and daughter being absolutely fanatically happy about buying clothes, showing off their purchased clothing piece by piece, while the poor beleaguered husband and father complained about how much this was costing him with every pair of jeans or blouse he was shown. The punch-line of course being that Robert Hall's products were cheaper than most, and the father still complained that this low-price revelation meant that his wife and daughter would only go out and buy more to make up for the money they didn't spend. The father/husband sat glumly in his chair, complaining that the proceeds of his hard work were going to buy clothing while his wife and daughter flitted about with their shopping bags in absolute consumer glee. If we judged the reasons why women buy clothing according to 1970s commercials it is either to be sexually attractive to men or because women have an insatiable, natural need to spend their husbands' hard-earned money. The implied tradeoff in these commercials was that women used clothing to make themselves sexually desirable enough so that the men in their life would buy them even more clothes to make these women sexually desirable in some kind of endless cycle of sex appeal and money. Heaven forbid women buy clothing because it makes them feel good or because walking around nude is illegal in most places? No, clothing purchases are either to please or financially panic a man.

6.5 Other

The two categories that came closest to being equal in passes and fails were the Other category at 47.4 percent and Entertainment/Technology which had an even 50 percent failure rate. The Other category, as explained previously, contained advertisements that did not fit well into any of the other categories, but did not have enough in their same genre to warrant their own separated category. In the 1970s this included advertisements for companies such as Pan-Am Airlines, USPS Stamp Collecting, Hertz Car Rental and Geauga Lakes Amusement Park.⁷ With such a wide variation in topics covered, the Other category ran the gambit from rather progressive to downright insulting to women. One of the most progressive advertisements from the 1970s sample was in this category. Pan-Am Airlines in 1979 ran an ad as a woman working as a stewardess. From a woman's standpoint, this isn't particularly progressive since "stewardess" is yet again one of those jobs that has long been deemed an "appropriate" job for women to have. The one major difference was that this stewardess was an African American woman. This was the only advertisement out of the 250 sample from the 1970s where an African American woman was seen having employment. Though, before cheering for progress, it should be noted that this was an advertisement essentially for travel, so the fact that the stewardess was any other race than white may have been a play by the advertisers to cash in on the stewardess' "exotic" appearance. African Americans were rarely featured in ads to begin with, the majority of those appearing being celebrities (i.e. The Jackson Five for Alpha Bits Cereal, not included in data sample due to no adult women being shown, meaning it failed the first

⁷ The theme park closed approximately 15 years ago.

requirement of The June Cleaver Test). There was also a commercial for Phillips Petroleum in 1979 that showed a woman working in a lab coat helping to develop better fuel. This was the first and only advertisement from this decade that showed a woman working in a science related profession.

On the other end of the spectrum there were commercials like the 1976 Comerica Bank ad in which an extremely pregnant woman was left to mind the energetic children, despite her extended belly making it appear she desperately needed to sit down, while her husband dealt with the family's financial matters. Of course she had to look after the children, this was the reproduced represented naturalized gender order after all. There was also a 1976 Boeing ad that showed a wife waiting impatiently for her husband, upset and jealous that her husband was working and not spending time with her, to come home, playing off the humor of the "jealous, unreasonable, over-demanding wife" stereotype. The Other category nicely summed up much of what was seen in the 1970s commercials analyzed. There were brief moments of progressive expression that were quickly smothered by a woman putting on a pretty dress and trying to please a man or scurrying after a gaggle of children.

6.6 Entertainment/Technology

Entertainment/Technology fared slightly better than the Other category, with exactly half of the 18 commercials logged failing the occupational requirement of the June Cleaver Test, but again faced the problem of either being relatively progressive or being absolutely detrimental to women (Table 3). While a few did pass by meeting the second criteria of the June Cleaver Test with women having legitimate careers, such as the 1971 Polaroid ad featuring a woman as a photographer and the 1979 CNP ad which

had a woman working in an office as a phone technician, by and large the professional women included in these ads were objects of desire for men in the commercials. For instance, in a 1979 Canon ad a man asks his buddy if he'd like to try out their new camera to catch him doing some action shots. Instead, his buddy pans over to an attractive woman tennis pro and snaps pictures of her instead. In a Kodak Ektralite camera ad the *exact* same thing happens, except with female competitive swimmers. It didn't matter that these women were obviously professionals in their sports and the camera was capturing their "active" and "exciting" performances, they were still reduced to being objects of desire and sexual scrutiny by men who happened to be around. Congratulations ladies, your professional athleticism has landed you a creep with a camera.

Those that failed The June Cleaver test overall did so in frighteningly similar ways to the other categories. A 1978 ad for the Radio Shack Stereo Receiver and a 1979 ad for the Sony Triniton TV both featured women hosting dinner parties at which they compared their superior electronics with those inferior products owned by competing visiting housewives. In these ads pitting the women against each other in a battle of envy, once again played off the "women as jealous" and "women as wrapped up in materialism" stereotypes, while limiting their ability to talk about the machines to very simplistic terms. A woman in these ads would say, "The picture is crisper!" before a man would walk over and provide a technical explanation as to why. In 3 separate Kodak commercials (1976, 1977 and 1978), women holding babies or caring for children were the subjects of a man using the camera. In fact, there were six commercials in this category featuring a camera and the only one where the woman was actually using the

item was the 1971 Polaroid ad in which a professional woman photographer was taking wildlife pictures. “Action shots,” family moments, and general photography were reserved for men who *obviously* knew how to work the machine better than their female counterparts. Men’s technical know-how was often featured in these commercials.

Women simply stood by and smiled as extra add-on benefit of the technology, your pretty (object) wife will look great with our camera! Furthermore, men were always cast in an active and “action-oriented” light, while women tended to be in passive and supporting roles, supporting a male dominated discourse through creating social norms (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The first video game commercial documented in this study was for the 1972 Magnavox Odyssey, which aside from being possibly one of the creepiest commercials ever shot, with horrific, tinny music and darkly lit rooms included, prominently displayed a father and son playing the game, while mom sat by and watched. It appears that though certain technologies brought June Cleaver out of the kitchen, she still was restricted from using them.

6.7 Grocery/Department Store

There was one final category that had a relatively low failure rate, considering the fact that a stereotypical customer is your typical housewife: Grocery/Department Stores. Much like the insurance ads, there was a relatively low sample size as most of the ads viewed in this category did not include actual human beings, making it impossible to include these commercials due to the first qualifying rule of The June Cleaver Test. A vast majority of the ads showed products with excited male voices talking about their, “Low, low prices!” As such, only 8 were coded for the 1970s. While 6 of those did pass,

it is important to analyze why. In a majority of these ads women were still shown doing stereotypically domestic things, such as grocery shopping or assisting their children pick out toys. However, what granted these commercials a pass due to the second criteria of The June Cleaver Test was the fact that they also often showed, briefly, a woman working as a shelf stocker or checkout clerk. These roles, however, were always ones of support and never were the women the main focus or character of the commercials. They were simply moving props in the background of the most recent sale on pork, while men took the central role both in the narrative talking about sales and specials and on screen by being front and center while the housewives and sometimes included female store clerks performed their transactions behind him. The implication here, again, is that women were allowed to work in certain circumstances, however, only if they were willing to be in the background to the males around them, a blip of recognition on the wall of male-dominated demonstration of “hard work.”

Advertisements, such as the 1979 Waldbaum’s ad, featured women pleasantly grocery shopping for a majority of the ad, only to be rung up at the counter by a smiling woman. It is important to note that if there were a manager or specialized worker (i.e. a butcher) shown, these were always male. The only specialized female worker that was featured in these ads was for Korvettes (1970), where a woman talked about the great deals offered on clothes, which as was established previously in this chapter, was a permitted realm for women to dwell in as clothing was a road to making women more attractive to the male gaze. So while 75 percent of the commercials included passed, they did so by a tissue-paper-thin margin. Women were represented in the workforce, but not in the important roles, the jobs that necessitated special training, or managerial duties.

“Important” work was still reserved for men, while women were allowed to help other women do their shopping at the most basic level.

6.8 Car Commercials

Car Commercials was truly a progressive-regressive mixed bag in the 1970s. With a failure rate of 64.3 percent of The June Cleaver Test by not showing women with occupations, they could hardly be called progressive towards women (Table 3). In a vast majority of the commercials women were seen in the passenger seat next to their husbands, wedding rings included, often touching up make-up in a mirror or smiling sublimely as the husband took their new car for a drive. When women did drive, it was often in the context of taking the kids somewhere like soccer practice (Chevrolet Impala, 1979) or to deliver something to their working husbands (Volvo, 1974). Women were mostly seen in these commercials as accessories to the car, passengers who helped draw attention to and add appeal to the vehicle that advertisers were hoping men would buy. According to these commercials men should buy cars to reinforce their masculinity and place them in the metaphorical driver’s seat directing their wives’ and children’s lives. If women drove in these ads it was not so they could go do something for themselves, it was only in service to their kids or their husbands. After all, why else would a woman want to drive if it wasn’t for her children or husband’s benefit?

While most of the Car Commercials were eye-roll worthy, featuring a June Cleaver-esque woman fussing with her hair blowing in the wind, there were a few stark and startling exceptions. A 1976 Motocraft Ford commercial actually featured a woman talking about the parts in her own car, not her husband’s car, and she wasn’t asking a male mechanic, she was actually talking about the things she liked in the engine in her

own car. However, the most striking, and possibly the most progressive ad from the 1970s sample surprisingly came from GM in 1979, which featured a travelling woman mechanic. The advertisement centered around a woman employed by GM, who travelled across the country giving classes to other mechanics on GM specific motors. “Not a lot of women are mechanics...” she begins before launching into why she loves her job. The ad even shows male mechanics listening to her as she explains car parts to them. These commercials were so striking against the others because they showed women not only as individuals who found use in their vehicles for their own use, but were invested, competent and knowledgeable about these vehicles. These two commercials were an island of progressive notions in a sea of sigh-worthy regressive stereotypes and detrimental displays of femininity.

6.9 Pharmaceuticals

Pharmaceuticals, with its failure rate of 71.4 percent, was distressing not only because 10 of the 14 commercials failed The June Cleaver Test, but also because of the ways in which they failed (Table 3). Women were shown as being great at taking care of kids, often times talking about just what the children needed. Moms used Anbesol (1970) for teething babies, Lanacane Medicated Cream (1970) for kids’ itchy rashes and administering Flintstone’s Vitamins (1979) to help their progenies bones grow strong. The majority of commercials in Pharmaceuticals showed men directly as parents, with husbands coming home from work at the end of the day to find their sick child feeling much better thanks to mom’s medicine. It is worthy to note, however, the fathers were never actually shown caregiving when it came to their children, they simply were the male biological contributor. After all, that was mom’s natural job.

However, when it came to women treating their own symptoms, the same logic did not apply. Women, who apparently would have no problem treating their child's cold, had no idea what to do with their own colds. For instance, a 1978 Nyquil ad showed a wife lamenting that she had not taken her husband's advice and had taken generic brand cold medicine instead of Nyquil in a kind of "told you so" moment. In the 1970 One-A-Day vitamin ads, husbands were shown reminding forgetful wives to take their vitamins. Apparently June Cleaver would never forget to give Wally his Flintstone's vitamin, but remembering to take her own was just too much for her feeble memory to handle.

6.10 Food

Food, which was the largest sampled category across all 5 decades, had a failure rate of 62.5 percent with 55 of 88 commercials failing The June Cleaver Test by not showing a woman in a role outside of the home (Table 3). Women twirled around kitchens making their working husbands' soup (Campbell's Soup, 1978), made Jell-O (1979) for her husband's houseguests, and debated what breakfast cereal had the most vitamins for her family (Total Cereal, 1979). Women were literally shown in the kitchen making their husbands a sandwich (Tuna Twist Sandwich Mix, 1979). Even advertisements for food that did not have a woman in them still mentioned a wife or mother. In Del Monte Corn ad, which was not coded due to a woman not being present, a little kid eats corn as the kid nods in agreement to the voiceover saying, "Mom always knows the best kind of corn to get."⁸

Even commercials featuring women who were respectable in their own right, still showed them cooking a meal for a man. Betty White starred in an Uncle Ben's Converted

⁸ This is particularly disturbing considering the voiceover for the commercial was performed by Bill Cosby.

Rice commercial in 1970, and even though she was a prominent actress at the time, spent her entire time on screen talking about how much her husband would enjoy what she was cooking. Betty White, who had a career of her own, is an excellent example of the second shift described by Walzer (1996). She not only had to maintain her career, but make sure her spouse was taken care of on top of it all. The women cooking in these ads also never showed any pleasure in the food for their own right, they only seemed concerned with whether their children, spouses, boyfriends, or in the case of the 1970 Lancer's Wine commercial, the man she has never met and just shows up randomly, hungry, at her door, will like what she's cooking. Not once in an ad that showed a woman cooking did she ever express how much she enjoyed the food she was about to make, instead it was always framed in how someone else would enjoy the food. June Cleaver could bake all the cookies she wants, she had just better not dare enjoy them.

There was a grand total of one advertisement viewed where a man actually cooked. The ad was not coded as it did not contain a woman, but Uncle Ben's Converted Rice featured a commercial where Ed McMahan cooks himself some rice. He stirs the rice, talking about how easy it is to make and delicious he finds it before he declares, "Serve your man an Uncle Ben's meal." Even though a man was shown cooking, the ease of the cooking was stressed, after all, cooking is women's work and not something a man should or could be competent at doing. Furthermore, the commercial did not show the man cooking for his wife or family, he was cooking for himself, for his own enjoyment. Men only apparently cook when their wives are mysteriously missing. Where was Mrs. McMahan? Did she get hit by a bus leaving poor Ed to stir instant rice, the easiest dish he could find? This point was further driven home by the slogan, "Serve your man an Uncle

Ben's meal," which just reinforced the idea that women really should be the ones doing this work and if his wife hadn't been absent, then she would be the one stirring the pot. At this point even June Cleaver must mutter, "Ugh."

Of course, there were 33 commercials that passed that must be discussed (Table 3). However, the ways that these ads passed ranged from insulting to downright bizarre. Women, again, were shown as sex objects, models seductively paired with products such as Pepsi Lite (1970), a woman as a sexy bartender in a Miller Beer commercial (1976), a set of tight-dress wearing twin models selling Dos Equis, also sometimes seen as XX, (1970) and a scantily-dressed, bored socialite and model adding "excitement" to her life through Schlitz Lite (1979). There were also a range of fast food commercials that passed, simply because they showed women serving food. Women worked the front counter and the drive through in ads for places like Kentucky Fried Chicken (1970), Burger King (1979), Pizza Hut (1970). Of course, just as noted in the Grocery/Department Store ads, women were never shown in managerial positions. Those spots were always reserved for their male counterparts. It is also important to note that the women working in these ads were a great deal better looking and younger than their male coworkers, who ranged from balding and big-bellied to being seconds away from being the Crypt Keeper. While it was evident that it did not matter what the men looked like in these ads, the women were always young, fresh and appealing.

If women didn't want to work as a drive-thru employee the Food category offered them other excitingly limiting jobs like, model (Velamints, 1979), a cooking class teacher (Log Cabin Buttered Syrup, 1977) and a magician's assistant (Almond Joy/Mounds, 1977). None of these commercials showed women outside of what would be seen as

stereotypically acceptable jobs for women. All of these jobs fit in the “jobs that we guess women can have” category as they either relied on them being pretty (model or scantily clad magician’s assistant) or doing work that was inherently domestic in nature without being in the home (teaching cooking). The most progressive ad the Food category had to offer was that of a woman working in an office wolfing down Nabisco Snacks (1978) as she looked over data sheets, obviously too busy to cook for herself. Of course, as other commercials indicated, evidently there wasn’t a man alive who might cook *her* something for a change. Other than that, the jobs women had in food commercials boiled down to the same stereotypical positions seen in most other genres, models and the occasional background, low-level employee. There were some odd exceptions that passed. For instance, there was a 7-Up commercial from 1970 that depicts a woman taking a delicate sip of the soda and being magically taken on a transcendental journey that would have made the musical *Godspell* jealous. It was utterly unclear what the ad was marketing until the very end when viewers discover she had not just taken a swig of LSD, but instead was holding a 7-Up bottle. Apparently all you need to follow Alice down the rabbit hole is the right brand of carbonated beverage.

It is also important to note that nearly 30 beer ads were viewed and only 3 contained women at all. The 3 that contained women paired the beer with the women as sex objects, such as the previously discussed Dos Equis commercial featuring a pair of sexy twins offering viewers the beer, and by extension, themselves. By and large advertisements for Miller showed men, manly, macho men, doing masculine men things. Men came in after a day firefighting, or barge piloting or oil pipe maintenance to enjoy a cold beer. The way that these ads framed beer in general was in a way that denoted that

they were a drink for men, by men, and if a woman happened to be there, she was just extra, either to serve the beer or be lusted after while men, real men with chest hair thick enough to deflect bullets, consumed it. Overall, when it came to Food ads, with rare exception, women were either in the kitchen cooking or were objectified to the level of the food they were holding. Women were there for consumption and desire, not there to be human beings.

6.11 Household Goods

The final category for the 1970s was Household Goods. With 26 of the 32 commercials not passing The June Cleaver for a dazzling 81.3 percent failure rate, it was apparent that June Cleaver wasn't just responsible for the kitchen in the 1970s, she was responsible for nearly every other aspect of the home as well. There was an interesting, rather contradictory, set of messages being peddled to women in the 1970s Household Goods ads; Women were simultaneously the domestic divas, experts of the home, or absolute failures, with nothing in between.

Whereas women were rarely shown as experts in the working world, a variety of commercials showed women as cleaning and homecare specialists. For instance, in a Tide Laundry Detergent commercial from 1970, women were asked what detergent they liked and why. No men were interviewed, just women, and the women all agreed that Tide worked the best and explained, in detail, that it got out even the toughest stains. In a Spic and Span (1970) commercial a man working at a diner gets advice from a woman customer about what to use to get his floors clean enough that his boss won't be angry at him anymore. In a 1978 Singer Sewing Machine commercial, two sons ask for the

saleswoman's advice on what the best possible sewing machine would be to buy their mom.

By stark contrast, women were also shown as failures at home, being shamed for making faulty homecare choices. A 1978 Whisk commercial showed a woman embarrassed that she can't get the dirty ring around her husband's shirt collar out. Disembodied voices actually chanted, "Ring around the collar at her," like the ghosts of Ebenezer Scrooge coming to taunt him for his moral failings. Eventually the woman is saved by another disembodied male voice informing her that if she just used Whisk Detergent, the ring around the collar would vanish! Huzzah! The woman is saved from utter embarrassment and a life spent sobbing piteously into a giant glass of wine over her failings as a wife! Another example of "wife shaming," that simultaneously managed to show that women were also the home experts, is the 1970 Jet Dry dishwasher soap commercial. A woman is sitting at a dinner table when she is embarrassed when a guest publicly announces that her glass has, gasp, water spots on it! The husband looks at his wife disparagingly, having shamed him with her inability to keep the glasses looking like they had never been touched by liquid before. The embarrassed woman is immediately saved by one of her fellow female guests who suggests she uses Jet Dry! The female guest is then supported in her "dish crispness expertise" by a male narrator who agrees that Jet Dry would save the hostess from future embarrassment. Her marriage and the dinner party are saved! The Household Goods ads tended to prey on women either framing their products in an "all good housewives and mothers know" or by downright shaming the women for not being absolutely June Cleaver perfect. It is noteworthy to remember that at the time, most ads were being written and produced by men, even the

ones produced for women (Pogrebin, 2011). For their parts, husbands were either shown as incompetent when it came to household tasks, or were ashamed of their wives' incompetence, even if it were unlikely that they would be able to do the task at hand themselves.

Probably the most confusing commercials were for Dupont Titanium Dioxide and Methanol that were released in 1979. These products were not something one could just go and buy off of a shelf, but instead were chemical ingredients in other items, which was the main focus of the commercials. However, they were advertised as "household goods," most likely in a strange attempt to create a positive public relations push, though the overarching purpose was vague. The audience for these ads was a bit unclear as it is unlikely that someone watching TV on their couch would suddenly get a hankering to go combining chemicals, unless they had a penchant for chemistry or a drug addiction. The commercial for Dupont Methanol featured a family walking through a house that construction workers were building as the dad explains to his son what building products contained methanol. Mom followed around smiling, nodding and showing just as much surprise as the kid in a super enthusiastic way that no one, who isn't a chemical engineer, should ever show over chemical compounds. The commercial for Dupont Titanium Dioxide was even odder. It featured a woman in her wedding dress being told by an unseen male voice what things around her contained Titanium Dioxide. The woman not only pays attention, but enthusiastically asks about everything from her own wedding dresses to doilies. The ad even featured the line, "You can't have a wedding without a beautiful bride!" which is a statement Neil Patrick Harris and his husband would respectfully disagree with.

In both of the Dupont ads the women were shown as being rather feeble minded, just enthusiastically nodding and agreeing with whatever the male in their vicinity was saying. In the case of the bride, she completely abandoned any thought of her wedding to smiling and pointing at random items and saying, “Wait, is that chemical you’re talking about in that!?” much like a small child points at the machine in the sky and excitedly shouts, “Airplane!” The entire display created an air of infantilization around the woman, who was a grown adult and probably self-determining enough to say to the unseen male voice, “Who are you!? Why are you in my dressing room!? Why are you interrupting my wedding day to talk to me about chemicals!?” These depictions reduced women to an almost childlike state, making them seem like they were just one more thing the men in their lives needed to look after in a very paternalistic fashion (Dworkin, 1975). After all, you never know when a woman will stick a butter knife in the light socket if left to her own devices.

There were a few advertisements in the Household Goods that passed The June Cleaver Test by meeting criteria 2, the emphasis being on a *few* (Table 3). Even those commercials that passed did so by an extremely slim margin. For instance, a Salvo commercial features a woman talking about working, but also needing to make sure that she takes care of her man, again another example of the second shift that women are expected to take on if they have both a career and a family (Walzer, 1996). Salvo of course is her time saving secret that allows her to do both. In two separate Singer Sewing Machine commercials (1970 and 1977) women were shown as saleswomen for the machines, but mostly because she knew best how to use the machines. After all, what did men know about sewing? The Household Goods commercials really drove home how

much the separation between the work world and home world, as mentioned before, existed. Women in perfect pantsuits and floral dresses danced around their homes vacuuming and dusting, their husbands coming home to a freshly cleaned house and adorable wife. June Cleaver couldn't have done a better job herself.

6.12 Decade Summation

Of course, there are some overarching trends that were noted across all genres that must be discussed. The 1970s advertising structure was mostly one of wholesome, optimistic messages compared to later decades, utilizing bright colors and bouncy background beats. Advertisers, apparently absolutely determined to make their commercials stand out, turned their ads into entire musicals. Not jingles, though, some jingles did make appearances, the entire ads were musical numbers that may have been Tony Award worthy for the time. Hanes Underwear, Dr. Pepper, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King, Serta Mattresses, Noxzema (razor cream) and a slue of others, featured men and women cheerfully gyrating to “hip” music as they sang about the best qualities about products like Burger King burgers. What is interesting about this particular trend is even the women, performing musical numbers as they danced around singing about the better qualities of these products, were cast in very stereotypical, and often domestic roles. For instance, there was a 1977 commercial for Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup in which a mother sings for approximately 45 seconds about feeding her kids soup. No matter the level of creativity, however, women were still reduced either to sex objects in the forms of desirable models or actresses or in their domestic duties at home achieving that same “women at home, men at work” separation that Davies and Fink (2014) discussed. Women were allowed into the male “work sphere” but only under

certain conditions and in certain occupations, otherwise, their place was, as shown in a majority of the commercials, to be at home, caring for their husbands and kids and making the house spotless. When women were “allowed” out of the house to work, they were often shown to have to work the “second shift” (Walzer, 1996) of coming home and caring for the home and family, with no support or assistance from their male partners.

One interesting feature was there was a lack of gendered coloring in most of the 1970s commercials. Men and women wore the same shades of colors in clothing ads, though in vastly different styles of course. Even children’s toys lacked the typical pinks and yellows for girls and blues and reds for boys that we see today. For example, Remco’s Baby Laughs A Lot, which will give viewers nightmares necessitating therapy, was marketed towards little girls (and possibly horror film producers), wore a little red dress. The toy and the girls playing with it did not feature even a splash of pink. This was not something noticed until the 1980s.⁹

The 1970s ads, overall, showed a blatant disregard for women as contributing members of society. Women were shown a majority of the time as domestic caregivers, doting wives, and loving mothers. When they were shown outside the home, with rare exception, they were either shown as subordinate workers or as sexual objects. After all, with all these uppity new Feminists of the Ms. Generation, women needed to be reminded exactly where their place was, and that was firmly behind the men, taking care of their progeny and cooking them meals. It is truly no wonder that Gloria Steinem’s *Ms. Magazine*’s “No Comment” column had so much material to work with. June Cleaver

⁹ This will be discussed in the next chapter covering the 1980s sample.

may have won a few political accommodations in the 1970s, but she was far from escaping the kitchen, living room and dining room that had become her social prison.

7. THE 1980S, JUNE CLEAVER GETS A RAD MAKEOVER

When the working day is done,

Oh girls, they want to have fun...

-Cyndi Lauper, 1983

Amongst Cyndi Lauper's plea to let women express themselves, Madonna's sex positive lyrics and Joan Jett's strong-girl, rebel songs, things seemed to be looking up for women in the 1980s. However, those in what was then being dubbed the second-wave of feminism knew that the fight for equality was far from over. The battles of the 1960s and 1970s that had won women so many rights, were being picked up and carried on into the 1980s with gusto. In 1982 U.S. feminists urged the Equal Rights Amendment to The Constitution, which would not allow any discrimination based on sex, to be seen before Congress. To this day, that same ERA has been brought up in every session of Congress since without being successfully ratified. Women in the 1980s were not defeated, however, and despite the increase of social equality, were not willing to stop until equality had been achieved (Fudge, 2005).

It was in this atmosphere of feminists still pressing for change that corporations were trying new things too. McDonald's attempted its first (and thankfully last) pizza, Stevie Wonder was inexplicably the representative for Kodak cameras and Pop Tarts had yet to consider adding frosting to their new cardboard pastries. Through the 250 commercials analyzed from this decade, however, the 1980s Commercials, as shown in Table 4, fared slightly better than their 1970s counterparts when it came to The June Cleaver Test and the rate at which women were shown in roles outside of the home. The 1980s saw nearly a 3 percent decrease in the overall failure rate from the 1970s sample,

which while not earth shattering, was progress all the same. However, as noted in the previous chapter, as one digs into the data itself and the categories, the importance is not so much in how many passed or failed, but in why or how they did so.

Table 4: The 1980s June Cleaver Test Commercial Results

Category	Total Number	Pass	Fail	Percentage That Fail
Household Goods	31	4	27	87.1%
Grocery/Department Stores	7	2	5	71.4%
Food	101	40	61	60.3%
Sports	3	3	0	0%
Insurance	2	0	2	100%
Pharmaceuticals	17	11	6	35.3%
Other	13	7	6	46.2%
Car Commercials	8	2	6	75%
Clothing	12	9	3	25%
Entertainment/Technology	25	15	10	40%
Hygiene/Personal Care	31	19	12	38.7%
Totals	250	112	138	55.2%

Before leaping into the data, it is important to address two facets that made collecting data in this decade challenging. The first was that many commercials in this decade (upwards of 40) featured no humans on screen, instead opting to have multiple people hold a conversation while picture of products were being shown, these were not counted as part of the data set as it was impossible to determine what place the people speaking held in the social order and failed the first rule of The June Cleaver Test by not showing a woman. The second aspect was that due to hairstyles and fashion in the 1980s, and the fact that High Definition Digital Recording had not been invented, in a handful of commercials it was impossible to tell the gender of people on screen. There were several ads that featured people with big hair and bad picture quality that could easily have been

a male or a female. Given this ambiguity these were excluded from the sample as it could not be determined if they passed the first rule of The June Cleaver Test.

7.1 Sports

As in the 1970s, the 1980s the Sports and Insurance categories had both the lowest sample sizes and the highest and lowest pass rates. The quandary, just as in the 1970s sample, with gathering Sports commercials is that very few women were featured in the over 20 Sports ads viewed. Men were once again seen hitting baseballs out of the park or practicing the fine art of pugilism with nary a woman in sight. The 3 that were included by passing the first rule of The June Cleaver Test by including a woman had more to do with a new trend in the world of sports: Personal fitness. With Olivia Newton John's hit song *Physical*, Richard Simmons' VHS tape workouts encouraging people to "Sweat to the Oldies" and *The Jane Fonda Workout* tape became the number one selling video of the 1980s, people everywhere were feeling the burn. This newly burgeoning market fad led advertisers to broaden their scope from the traditional male audience of athletics to women who could dance their excess weight away. The exercise craze became so influential that it even inspired many of the leg warmers and leotard clothing fashion choices for women of the decade, another shrewd marketing move by fitness marketers, making not only their workouts the trend, but the clothing one did these workouts in as well (Luciani, 2012).

It is no surprise then that ads for Precor (1980) workout machines and chain gyms like Las Vegas Fitness Clubs (1989) and Call it Class Fitness (1989) made appearances in the data sample. In all 3 of these commercials women were shown as fitness instructors, in leotards tight enough to cause concern to doctors specializing in vascular conditions,

talking about the benefits of their chosen gym or workout machine. It should also be noted that *none* of the women were shown lifting weights, while their male counterparts did en masse. Instead they were shown energetically bouncing around or doing cardio. These women were shown outside the home having jobs, but again in a very limited capacity. Reminiscent of the 1979 Battle of the Sexes commercial, the women shown were not truly competitive. They were shown to be competent at workouts that were designed to be “fun” or “leisurely,” that also happened to make them more attractive to the opposite sex. These women were not shown as competent or even legitimate athletes, just pretty, leotard clad, byproducts of the fitness craze. It should also be noted that women athletes were, again, left completely out of competitive sports commercials. Women were allowed to do physical activities to protect their beauty and become slimmer, but athletic competition was beyond their ability. Aside from Jazzercise, it appears June Cleaver didn’t get much of a chance to work out.

7.2 Insurance

The same conundrums that faced collecting commercials in the Insurance category in the 1970s plagued the 1980s sample as well. Insurance commercials of the decade had again seemingly not considered the power of using actual people in their commercials, instead opting for words on a screen with a voiceover encouraging people to “call now and see what XYZ Insurance Company can do for you!” There were over 10 of these voiceover ads, all of which were voiced by a male. There were a few others that could also not be coded, despite including actual humans, because they included no females whatsoever which meant they failed the first requirement of The June Cleaver Test. Instead, they opted for concerned looking white men, earnestly talking into the

screen about how a certain insurance plan would help their families or businesses. Again, these ads, both the voiceover and the lone narrator standing in front of important looking bookshelves, featured men as the insurance experts. Insurance, after all, was a man's decision.

The two commercials that did meet the first requirement of being considered for The June Cleaver Test by including a woman failed the test overall by not showing women as having a non-domestic role. Both Nationwide Insurance (1980) and Allstate Insurance (1980) featured women taking care of children as their husbands made all the decisions around how to best insure the family. Neither of these commercials demonstrated in any way that the woman was consulted or asked for an opinion, it was simply assumed that the man was making the right choice for his family, again fitting the very definition of paternalistic behavior (Dworkin, 1975). The fact that women were not even shown being involved in the decision at all showed that while women were competent at making appropriate day-to-day childcare choices, they couldn't make choices that would affect her or the family unit as a whole. Viewers can only hope for the wives and kids' sake that the husband did actually make the right choice, since they were the only ones who had the opportunity to make one.

7.3 Clothing

Both Hygiene/Personal Care and Clothing saw decreases in their already relatively low June Cleaver Test failure rates by showing women in occupations under condition 2 of the test. Clothing went from failing 27.3 percent of the time to failing 25 percent of the time and Hygiene/Personal Care dropped from 40 percent in the 1970s sample to 38.7 percent in the 1980s (Appendix A, Table 2). Both categories had similar

sample sizes across the two decades, which helps support that this was a slight improvement.

But was it really an improvement? Examining the Clothing category first, while only two commercials in this category failed, those that passed still were less than progressive. Mostly women were cast again as models, trying to persuade women that if they wore the clothes that they had draped across their bodies, they could look just as sexy as the Chic Jeans (1980) models showing how well the jeans showed off their rears ends or how pretty the T.J. Maxx (1989) models looked in their new clothes as they strutted around flashing wide, white smiles at that camera. The only exceptions to this seemed to spawn from the previously mentioned fitness craze of the 1980s. The only professions clothing commercials showed women in aside from being models were Junebugs Shoes 1980, where a woman was seen as a horseback rider, Calvin Klein Active Wear (1980), where a woman was a professional swimmer and Fruit of the Loom Active Wear (1989), where a woman was shown as an aerobic fitness instructor. Again, while these ads technically passed The June Cleaver Test, their lack of being able to show women outside of specific gendered jobs and sports, or not simply reducing them to sex objects, failed to qualify them as particularly progressive in regards to women.

The 2 ads that failed also deserve some mention. In 1980 Candies aired an ad that showed a woman buying clothing simply to please her man, making sure her outfit pleased him by strutting and twirling in front of him. Similarly in a Hanes Pantyhose ad from 1980, a woman is shown being swept off her feet by her significant other as the voiceover says, “Gentlemen prefer Hanes...” implying that the vital concern women should have in buying clothes is whether or not “gentlemen” will prefer them or not.

Again, a woman's enjoyment and comfort in her own clothing or appearance was overlooked, just as men were being instructed in what they should find "attractive." Advertisements create images and ideas that socialize and discipline those who view them to believe that women need to look a certain way (Ozmete, 2009).

7.4 Hygiene/Personal Care

The Hygiene/Personal Care category did have a slightly better show of at least attempting to display women as independent human beings (Table 3). While brands like Yves St. Laurent (1980), Cover Girl (1980), Norrell Perfume (1980) and Pantene (1989) all cast women as the stereotypical models, there were a few commercials that did a decent job of making a woman independent of the home without immediately objectifying her. For instance a Maybelline Makeup commercial from 1980 showed a group of girlfriends going on a fun-looking road trip. Carefree Tampons (1980) similarly showed a group of women running around playing on a beach while *Girls Just Want to Have Fun* played in the background. Even more importantly, there were also a variety of ads where women talked about how using a product actually benefitted them, as opposed to talking about how the product was good for their family or to attract a man. In 1988 Crest aired a commercial where a woman talked about how she prevented her own cavities by using Crest. Similarly, a Listermint commercial (1980) showed a woman talking about why she, personally, preferred Listermint to other brands. Finally, women were allowed to enjoy products on their own, not just because they benefitted their significant others or children!

Also, a rather progressive ad was found in this category. Final Net in 1980 featured a woman in their commercial who owned her own bakery and used their product

so she could go from the bakery to business meetings without missing a step. Not only was this a female business owner, but she had male employees that made appearances in the ad, a sight that was unheard of in the 1970s sample. For its progressivity in the bakery ad, however, there were some detrimental ads as well. For instance, women's independence was sometimes used as a heavy-handed gimmick to sell female products, as noted in the previously mentioned work of McRobbie (2009). She Deodorant featured a woman talking about how the product made her more independent. Like Wonder Woman's invisible jet and Lasso of Truth, apparently this deodorant freed her to be whatever she wanted to be. The lack of personal agency displayed in these types of commercials, where women are "liberated" by the product, are detrimental in that they show that women, under their own power cannot be independent, someone or something must help them reach that level of self-care. The implied message in ads such as this is that no matter what, women cannot free themselves nor can they have personal agency without help. Women will always rely either on men, or products designed and pedaled by men, to free themselves and be able to function in the real world. Only through the power of underarm chemicals, ladies, can you be truly free!

Also, Lady Speed Stick in 1980 featured a ballet dancer (which meant it passed The June Cleaver Test via condition 2), but ran the slogan, "Protects you like a man, treats you like a woman." This "women are incapable of protecting or taking care of themselves," was reflected in ads for items like Ban Roll-On, which failed the test, where a husband goes out and buys his misguided wife a deodorant that actually works, because her judgment on underarm spreadable potpourri is obviously just plain wrong. In Scope's Hint of Mint Mouthwash 1986 advertisement, a husband comes back from a trip and

provides his wife with a mouthwash that she is likely not to find to be too strong for her, because women are too weak and delicate for *real* mint mouthwash.¹⁰ Paternalism reared its ugly head and roared its message of, “You can’t take care of yourself, so let me do it for you!” (Dworkin, 1975). Despite the fact that these women were perfectly capable of going to a store and buying their own personal care products, these brands deemed women too fragile and empty-headed to choose their own products without the help of a man.

The number of ads that showed babies in the Hygiene/Personal Care category also increased since the 1970s sample. Oddly, of the over 10 ads featuring baby products that were viewed, only 3 of them showed adults. Most of them showed babies left to their own devices while a voiceover talked about how useful the products were. There were a lot of unattended children in the 1980s apparently. It is interesting to note that these voiceovers were nearly always female, a woman being considered the expert on the subject of babies and allowing viewers to fill in the gap about who was naturally supposed to be taking care of the little diaper clad humans. The narration in nearly all other types of commercials remained voiced by a man, the assumed experts in most other subjects. The 3 ads that did show parents in the picture were Luvs (1987), Luvs Baby Pants (1987) and Baby Magic Baby Oil (1980), which all showed mothers taking care of infants, not a father in sight. While, overall, this selection of commercials in this category did better than those in its corresponding 1970s sample, the continued blatant gender stereotyping did somewhat detract from any “progress” made.

¹⁰ At this juncture, it is appropriate to imagine a woman melting like the Wicked Witch of the West because of her exposure to harsh mint mouthwash.

7.5 Other

The Other category shifted very little from the 1970s June Cleaver Test failure rate of 47.4 percent to the 1980s failure rate of 46.1 percent (Table 3). This is particularly interesting considering that the sample sizes were relatively close between the decades, showing truly how little progress was made here. Phillips Petroleum (1980) again managed to show a professional woman as a nurse in an emergency room. The rest of the commercials that passed The June Cleaver Test in this category from this decade showed women mostly as entertainers (Disneyland, 1980 & Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays and Tours, 1980) and hotel maids (Holiday Inn, 1986), hardly a jump into the realm of breaking gender stereotypes. However, U.S. West Directory in 1988 did feature a woman as a journalist. Probably the most progressive ad to come out of this category came from a 1980 Visa commercial. Visa that year was an Olympic sponsor and, unlike the other 3 Olympic sponsor ads viewed, this one actually featured professional women athletes, and not just those competing in swimming. Women track athletes, gymnasts and a variety of other sports were shown with women in actual athletic uniforms, not skimpy sexualized outfits. Bravo Visa. Of course, this can partially be explained by the fact that the Olympics tended to have a wider audience. Entire families, which would include women, often viewed the events. It is also worthy to note that women have historically been documented as watching the Olympics over most other sporting events (Elliot, 2008). So it is possible that the inclusion of women athletes was simply to get higher viewership from women who were perceived to not often watch sports, a point Elliot made in retrospect of the 2004 and 2008 Olympics and the advertisements displayed along with those massive sporting events (2008).

Those that failed in this category did so with the domesticated panache of their 1970s predecessors. Women got engaged to men bent down on one knee in droves in a 1980 Gordon's Jewelers commercial, a frustrated mom cleaned up her son's messy lemonade stand in a 1985 Nevada State Bank commercial and a worried wife waited by the phone for her husband to call her on his business trip in a 1988 Delta Airlines commercial. In one ad in particular 1984 United Airlines commercial a little girl's doll's arm breaks and the mother is absolutely beside herself. Instead of looking at the doll herself and attempting to fix it, the mother frets dramatically and looks around until a friendly man in a pilot's uniform comes up and snaps the doll's arm back on for her, saving the day, a definite nod to the paternalistic idea that women cannot take care of themselves and the hegemonic notion that only men can fix the problems women face in life (Dworkin, 1975). It's good that something more serious hadn't happened, had the little girl's shoe gotten lost the mother may have needed therapy and a Xanax to save her after the male airline employee had found it for her.

7.6 Entertainment/Technology

Entertainment/Technology's failure rate by not meeting requirement 2 of The June Cleaver Test dropped rather substantially from the 1970s sample from 50 percent to 40 percent. While the jobs women held in some of these commercials were the typical receptionists (Xerox, 1986) and teachers (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1989), there were also a variety of other occupational roles that women enjoyed. Women worked in an

office as a general employee, not a secretary (Hewlett Packard, 1980), film developers in a photo-shop (Kodak, 1980) and even as computer technicians (ITT for Autos, 1988).¹¹

While these new job positions for women were refreshing, a new trend appeared in this sample of ads that was not present sample-wide in the 1970s advertisements: sexy occupational women. In the 1970s, sex appeal was mostly left to the models and the actresses. Suddenly in the 1980s seductive women were appearing in varying occupational roles, their jobs coming second to their ability to ensnare men. These ads were obviously aimed at both pointing out the required beauty standards for women, while at the same time attempting to capture the straight male eye, and thereby the male wallet. In a 1988 U.S. Spring commercial a “technician” wearing gobs of make-up talks about why one should use their electric grid system, despite that most of the work environments a female electrical technician would work in, such as outdoors in summer, would melt her make-up right off. Not surprisingly the advertisement for Trump: the Board Game (1989) (yet another failed Trump venture) features a sexy female reporter in a tight skirt and bright red lipstick trying to seduce the latest financial news out of a Trump lookalike. It seems appropriate at this point to sigh heavily.

The “sexy occupational woman” is concerning on several levels. First, it implies that these women got their jobs, and keep their jobs, based on their sexual wiles. After all, a woman could never be a journalist without using her long, luscious legs to get information. This portrayal of professional women and objectification also makes them seem less effective than their male counterparts; their only marketable skill is being a

¹¹ Although, it should be noted that the woman film developer in the Kodak ad may have been in more danger than the others as it was Bill Cosby, who was allegedly busy drugging women’s drinks in limos during this decade, who was there getting his film developed.

young, attractive, heterosexual female. If a male electrical technician arrived at someone's house wearing nothing but short-shorts and a heart shaved into his chest hair, one might be a little reluctant to let him in to rewire one's house. In the same way, a woman wearing a tight jumpsuit and virtually the entire Mary Kay line of makeup while beckoning you towards the electric company she works for does not portray her as a successful technician, but as a ridiculous sexual object of that company. Finally, this objectification of women in occupations is offensive to women in those occupations. It is no better than the "sexy Halloween" costumes that range from "sexy firefighter" to "sexy PhD" (pictured below as Figure 11 to reduce the time it would take to Google it to prove it exists). Women, believe it or not, can work as firefighters and earn their PhD's without looking like they model on the side for the Victoria Secret bra commercials. As incredible as it may sound, women of all body types manage to do competent work at their jobs, make breakthroughs in their fields and earn an education, and it has nothing to do with their hairstyles or ability to apply concealer. Images like these demean the hard work that real working women put into their jobs by reducing them to sexist objects for consumption; a product, not a person.

Figure 11: Sexy PhD Costume



2016; Courtesy of Amazon.com

(Really, with the hat and other adornments, I'd guess she's a "Sexy Baccalaureate" at most.)

7.7 Car Commercials

Car Commercials saw an increase of nearly 12 percent, going from a 64.3 percent failure rate in The June Cleaver Test in the 1970s to 75 percent in the 1980s (Table 4). In the 1980s there was a particular family focus on car ads, which meant that women were often seen in the passenger seat of the car as the male's girlfriend or wife. Of course, it was a little difficult to tell "sports cars" from normal "family cars" due to the blocky design of vehicles during the time period. The Nissan Centra (1980), Oldsmobile (1989), Toyota Carolla (1988), Ford (1987), Mercury (1986) and the Toyota 4-Runner (1986) all featured women as passengers in their male significant others' cars. Even the commercials that passed the second qualifier of the June Cleaver Test never actually featured a woman driving a car. Again, men were active participants while women were passive arm candy or pictured as secondary in the family hierarchy. One might ask, "Well, men do drive cars, so why shouldn't they shown driving?" It's not so much that

men are being shown in the driver's seat in these commercials, it's the fact that women are not being shown driving the cars. Women drive cars as well, but when that isn't displayed the overall representation of men being the drivers sends some specific messages about both competence and who holds the power in the relationship. It also upholds the societal perception that men are just naturally better drivers. Of course Ken is in the driver's seat, Barbie barely passed her driver's test.

The "sexy occupational woman" also crept into the sample via one of the ads. In a 1988 *Top Gun* themed ad for the Toyota Celica, a woman manages to land a fighter jet, only to emerge from the cockpit in full military regalia, remove her helmet and fluff her hair as a man drives up to pick her up in his new car. The woman, abandoning her jet, seductively slides into the seat next to him as they speed away. There's a court martial waiting to happen. According to the United States Air Force (2016), there are currently, as of December 31, 2016 60,908 women serving in that branch of the military and 699 of them are pilots, another 290 are navigators and 222 are air battle managers. Despite the 26,896 women who held a pilot's license in 1980 (Goyer, 2017), it appears that not even a woman flying a jet in a commercial could be portrayed as a skilled pilot, instead she had to be reduced to the passive sex object there to enhance the man's stature as a sex symbol.

7.8 Grocery/Department Stores

Grocery/Department Stores saw an incredible leap in failures of The June Cleaver Test by not meeting condition 2 of The June Cleaver Test between the 1970s (Table 3) and the 1980s (Table 4). Expanding from a 25 percent failure rate to 71.4 percent in the space of a decade is quite impressive, especially considering there was only a difference

in quantity of one in the number of commercials collected for the category. Again, this sample was relatively small not because of the number of commercials on the subject watched, but because most of the ads for this time simply featured products being shown with a voiceover describing the newest deals or products without actually having a human being displayed on the screen. Apparently hiring bad actors or shoving long-suffering employees in front of a camera was deemed too labor intensive and costly.

This sample uncovered a treasure trove of June Cleaver-esque gender stereotypes. In a 1980 True Value ad, the husband shopped for tools while the wife watched the kids. In a 1980 Sears ad housewives stormed the store over a kitchenware sale like Vikings in floral print dresses and wedding rings. A 1987 S&H Stamps (a couponing program for specific grocery stores) showed women being compared by what kind of grocery shoppers they were, like domestic prizefighters, vying for the best deals over each other, the woman who found the best deals was admired like the barcode-consumerist champion. In none of these ads was a man seen purchasing food. Hammers, nails and a cooler, yes, but never something edible. Women were always seen as the domestic experts, men were all about the construction, camping or backyard management parts of the family. Again, men were active, taking charge, while women did the less popular tasks of making things for the now hungry active man to snack on. The women's work was to reward the man for his work. No wonder men have to get married, according to these commercials they would starve without wives to shop and cook for them! The only two ads that passed showed a smiling and perky saleswoman (Walker Furniture, 1986) and the crankiest woman store attendant one has ever seen this side of a DMV who, through sneers and sighs, showed about as much enthusiasm for her job as a constipated

buffalo (Sax Foods, 1987). This is a disheartening decrease in women being shown with occupations from the ads in the 1970s that at least showed women working, when they showed women, in a majority of the stores featured in this category.

7.9 Pharmaceuticals

One category that saw a dramatic decrease in failures of The June Cleaver Test by failing to show a woman with an occupation was the Pharmaceuticals category. In the 1970s the failure rate was 71.4 percent, dropping to 35.5 percent in the 1980s (Table 4). This was particularly interesting since there was a difference in sample size of only 3 from the previous decade. There were 6 that failed The June Cleaver by failing to show women in an occupational role, which featured moms doling out medication to sick kids (PediaCare, 1989) and hardworking husbands (Anacin, 1989), while Robitussin 1980 still ran the slogan “Moms know best.” Despite these commercials, this was one of the most progressive sample categories yet.

The 11 commercials in the Pharmaceuticals category that passed The June Cleaver Test, by passing the second condition, did not just barely do so by flashing a woman briefly on the screen with a job or making her into some kind of objectified person, instead they treated women like actual human beings. In a 1980 One-Day Vitamins ad a woman opens her own restaurant. The important connotation in this ad was that while she admitted the One-Day Vitamins helped her stay healthy and on track, there was never the claim that the One-Day Vitamins were the only way she could handle the restaurant. Her agency and abilities were not based on the product; she simply was taking care of her health while running her own business. In a 1988 Hall’s Cough Drops commercial a businesswoman with a cold uses Hall’s to continue working through her

busy day. Again, her competence was not based entirely on the Hall's lozenges; she was simply using it to supplement her already successful self. Furthermore, while there was a male voiceover for this ad, the man never instructed her to take the Hall's to solve her cold and therefore her job, the male voice only talked about the positive property of Hall's, emphasizing that it was just a supplement to whoever was taking the product's already existent power. The women in these ads who had jobs were never shown as overly objectified sex objects, the "sexy occupational woman" was missing. Instead, women were professional tennis players (Primatene, 1980), florists (Nuprin, 1988), saleswomen (Excedrin, 1985) and general office workingwomen with headaches (A.R.M. Allergy Medication, 1980) who were simply using products to get themselves through a temporary moment of ill health. The women were shown as competent at their jobs and willing to work through whatever ailed them to get the job done, no outside help necessary.

One of the most important commercials viewed in this category was not included in the data because it did not feature a woman, and for a very good reason. In 1988 Children's Tylenol released a commercial featuring a dad taking his little four or five year old daughter skating. In the ad, the little girl develops a fever and the dad takes her home, tucks her into bed, and gives her Children's Tylenol. Mom never made an appearance in the 45 second commercial, just a father taking care of his mildly sick child before taking her out skating again. The reason that commercials like this Children's Tylenol commercial are so important is that men can be just as competent parents as mothers (Neuhaus, 2013). However, when only women are depicted in the role, it simultaneously limits women by stating that those duties should be the focus of their

lives, and it tells men that they will never be as decent of parents as women. This wedge is what keeps the work-home dichotomy (Davies & Fink, 2014) as a pervasive schematic structure among the general public. By showing fathers as competent parents, who can care for their children as well as the mother, it helps to break down that separation of work and home and allows Ward Cleaver to cook the family dinner while June Cleaver gets caught up at the office. Commercials like this one give value to both parents, while allowing women not to be the sole caregivers and permitting men to be competent ones.

7.10 Household Goods

It is unfortunate that the Household Goods and Foods categories did not see as much success as the Pharmaceuticals category did with Household Goods showing an increase in failures, while Foods showed only a very slight decrease in failures.

Household Goods is a rich environment for June Cleavers to be splashed on the screen by advertising executives. When most of the Household Goods ads feature items used in home cleaning and caretaking, it is simple for advertisers to simply plop a woman in their commercials out of convenience. This is perhaps why it is unsurprising that from the 1970s the failure rate went from 81.3 percent (Table 3) to 87.1 percent (Table 4), a 6.3 percent increase. Again, the sample size was very close between the two decades (for the comparison see Appendix A: Table 2), with only two more commercials being grouped into this category in the 1970s than in the 1980s. Of the 31 commercials viewed only 4 passed, and there was not a single commercial viewed during this decade that was disqualified from this category for not containing a woman.

Again, advertisers seemed to find ways to both lift women up as the “home experts” while simultaneously shaming them for not being good enough domestic divas.

In a 1988 Cascade commercial, a woman embarrassed about food grime left over on her dishes is shamed no more when she discovers the power of Cascade dish soap. She is saved from having to crawl in her cave of sadness, for now all of her dishes are spotlessly clean! In a 1985 Gain commercial, another housewife is dismayed to find that, though she washed the laundry, her husband's shirts smell less than fresh. When he complains about it, instead of suggesting that maybe he could do his own laundry if he didn't like the way it was being done, the woman hangs her head in a fashion that suggests there will be sad poetry written about this incident later. Again, the wife is saved when a male voiceover magically appears and tells her about Gain. Her laundry becomes fresh and clean smelling and she is allowed to remove the imaginary dunce cap that has been placed on top of her head. It is incredible to this researcher how many women have been saved by magical, male, disembodied voices over the years. Again, the pattern of paternalization (Dworkin, 1975) of a woman being saved from herself by an outside male force makes itself known.

On the other end of the spectrum women were seen as experts of the home, instead of having to be corrected by disembodied male expert advice. These commercials vacillated between bland stereotypes and absolute unrealistic absurdity. Women vacuumed the house while waiting for their husbands to walk through the front door (Ruud Air-Conditioning, 1980), washed dishes after also cooking dinner (Joy Dishwashing Soap, 1986), made wise grocery shopping decisions (Zip-Loc, 1980) and did laundry (All Cleaner, 1989) as a chorus of kids voices sang, "Mom gets 'em [stains] out with A-L-L." The "woman as home expert" trope was also used to convince other women to trust products. There was a whole line of commercials where housewives were

interviewed about what product they preferred. For instance, in a 1987 Woolite commercial a woman talked about what detergent she trusted. In a 1988 Fresh Start Laundry ad, a woman called out and publicly criticized Tide for doing a terrible job on her family's laundry. In a 1980 Green Litter commercial women talked about ways to keep cat litter smells down. These "woman to woman" types of commercials were produced with the idea in mind that women would obviously be buying these products to use, and therefore needed to receive product validation from someone who understood. All of the "mom as expert" commercials essentially let men off the hook for any and all household responsibilities, after all, isn't that all women's work? This "women as home experts" ideal gives women a false sense of power. On one hand women are finally experts, which is empowering right? However, if women are only allowed the realm of the home to let their expertise shine, then being an expert in the one area they are allowed is less of an empowerment and more a conciliatory way to make the place she is trapped seem slightly less oppressive and awful. Sure, you're in jail, but you are the absolute expert on how to fold prison uniforms, don't you feel so empowered!?

Even slogans for products¹² leant themselves towards women being the domestic caretakers. In a 1987 Jerky Treats (dog treats) commercial a woman goes grocery shopping, being the last one of the day to leave the house, and the family pet immediately sinks into a pit of ennui. The woman of course remembers to buy her sad pet Jerky Treats and the commercial ends with a slogan, "Sometimes being mothered is better than being macho." The implications here are that males need to be macho, that is their natural state of being. If a male isn't swaggering around with as much machismo as possible, then he

¹² Such as the one previously mentioned from All Cleaner

might as well turn in his imaginary “man card.” The one exception, according to this ad, to constantly wandering around with one’s chest pushed out, is if a woman is pampering said male. At that point, the subservient woman is coddling the male, which means he can relax and let his macho guard down for just a moment to let the maternal figure continue to serve him. Furthermore, it is the woman who remembers to buy the dog treats, which is another example of the mental work involved with the second shift that Walzer (1996) discusses. The woman has to apply extra mental energy to remembering everything that the house needs and keep a mental list of what is running low or needs replacing.

At this point in the data sample the commercials became downright peculiar. One might assume that in trying to catch the public’s eye and stand out from other advertisers’ messages, going a little off script might help, but several of these commercials ended up with rather baffling results. For example, a 1989 Tide commercial showed a woman doing laundry with an energy and joy that could only be duplicated by one mixing their mood enhancers with cocaine. In a 1987 Mr. Clean ad, a family goes on vacation, only to find their vacation home has been left empty for a little too long and is filthy. Mom immediately rolls up her sleeves, puts a smile on her face and cleans the entire vacation home... while on vacation... with no help from her family whatsoever. In a 1987 Lysol commercial, a wife is transformed into some sort of cleaning French mime as she energetically cleans the house. Not only did these commercials show women cleaning, it showed them enjoying it with all the enthusiasm of a little kid experiencing Disneyland for the first time. These women, regardless of whether they were on vacation or not, smiled like beauty queens as they scrubbed indescribable gunk from bathtubs and folded their husband’s boxers. These women seemed to have a central life purpose around

cleaning and serving their families. Leisure activities were reserved for her hard-working husband and growing children. Her only joy on this earth was seeing that they enjoyed themselves, which from a male dominated advertising sphere is a woman's "natural" place. These commercials not only showed women as being naturally in domestic roles, but implied that the women reached personal fulfillment by completing these tasks. After all, women are only happy if they are cooking, cleaning or sewing decorative throw pillows from cloth they weaved themselves. See, women enjoy being oppressed by strict gender roles!

The 4 commercials in this category that passed The June Cleaver Test did so mostly out of the path of least resistance. In 2 separate dog commercials (added to the Household Goods category because dog food is not meant for human consumption and therefore not Food), women were shown having jobs directly related to animals, which makes sense if one thinks of animal training and maintenance as another form of "caregiving." In a 1980 Purina commercial a woman worked at an animal shelter and in a 1989 Kal Kan commercial a female dog trainer talks about why she buys the product. In a 1989 Hefty Cinch Sacks commercial, women are shown in a group of volunteers picking up litter. There was no actual focus on the women, they just happened to be part of the volunteer group. Finally, a woman was shown displaying cleaning solutions as a saleswoman for, and this was an actual chain store, The Waterbed Store (1988), a store that sold only waterbeds and the supplies to keep them from turning into giant mold balloons. The women having jobs in these commercials was mostly incidental to the product itself, though, it was nice that the advertisers featured a woman dog trainer, even if it is just an extension of the "women are teachers" trope. Overall, the Household Goods

category was largely socially regressive from the other categories that began to show some progressive notions in their depictions of women.

7.11 Food

Food was, again, the biggest category sampled by far. Americans, and therefore the advertisers, march on their stomachs. With 101 Food commercials showing up in the 1980s sample, the failure rate slightly decreased from 62.5 percent (Table 3) to 60.3 percent (Table 4). Before anyone cheers too loudly, it should be noted that this meant that 61 commercials failed in the 1980s, compared to the 55 that failed in the 1970s (Appendix A: Table 2), a slightly larger sample size just put the math slightly in the 1980s favor compared to the 1970s.

By and large the Food category commercials that passed The June Cleaver Test did so by having a woman work the front counter for a fast food chain or waitress at an eatery. McDonald's (1980) Taco Bell (1980), Burger King (1980, 1986, 1988, 1989) and Hardee's (1980), just to name a few, all showed uniformed women working in their establishments. Again, managerial roles were given to men, women simply worked as part of the general crew.

Among the fast food commercials, however, a new trend popped up in the 1980s. Whereas women in the 1970s commercials were either shown as mothers taking their children to the fast food establishment or were working the counter, 1980s commercials began to move away from showing their workers and showing models with their food instead. For instance, a 1988 Dairy Queen commercial showed a very attractive woman modeling next to and consuming the food. The implication that the woman was somehow linked to the food, like free model with order of a large soda, was blatant. Two

commercials that were not coded, due to their lack of women, were for Pizza Hut (1988 & 1989) where a Barry White-esque voice talks about the “seductive,” a word actually used in the commercials, Cheese Lovers’ Pizza. The entire commercial was backed by slow jazz and a deep voice saying things like, “Oh yeah...” While it is certain that many Americans love cheese, the level to which they adore their dairy byproduct is probably not worthy of romance. Food products, overall, became more sexualized, and with them the women consuming them did as well. Of course, fast food restaurants were not the only offenders of linking sex to food. In a rather disturbing Mounds (1980) commercial a woman seductively talked about the candy bar backed by what can only be described as the soundtrack to a 1970s pornographic film while chocolate slowly drizzled over the candy bar. This pairing of sex with food, particularly when women are the object of sexual desire, is disturbing. Food is an object, an object humans consume. By placing women, and their sexuality, in the same category as food creates a link between that same consumable and disposable nature of food and the intrinsic value of women. Both food and women are perceived as consumable. Furthermore, if people view romance in the same light as food, then those relationships can be viewed just as self-serving and temporary as a Mounds candy bar.

There were some other jobs women held in the food ads aside from fast food underling and waitress, but a majority of them fell into the realm of “acceptable jobs for women” yet again. Women were cranky schoolteachers (McDonald’s 1988), ballerinas (Dentyne, 1988), seamstresses (Campbell’s Condensed Soup, 1988), singers (Stouffer’s Pizza, 1980) and aerobic instructors (Budweiser, 1980). Women, again, were allowed out in the work force, but only if they were willing to accept “feminine” jobs. Even when

women had jobs that broke out of the norm, commercials often made sure to point out that their role as a mother or wife came first. A 1988 Jif Peanut Butter ad features a mother joining some other mothers watching their kids' sporting event. The slightly late mom immediately plops down and launches into how she had to leave work early, and even talks about how it upset her boss, because she couldn't miss a single minute of her child's little league game. In reality, "Choosy moms choose Jif," might need to be reworded to, "Choosy moms with prioritizing issues choose unemployment." That same year Kraft Cheese featured a tired mother coming home from her job and immediately caring for her child's every need, no dad in sight, as the slogan rings out, "You give one-hundred percent, because that is what mothers are for." And what percentage is the father expected to contribute? Messages like these disempower working women, making their jobs come second to their domestic roles and framing them in ways that tell the viewer, "Yes, they're employed, but it's not *that* important." This lack of respect for women's careers falls in line with Walzer's (1996) second shift, yet again. If women are going to work, they are still expected to take on all the duties at home. It doesn't matter that both the husband and wife had full eight-hour shifts at the office; the woman is the one that needs to be at little Timmy's little league game, her boss' expectations of her hours be damned, with her snack-saving Jif in tow.

Another trend that appeared among the ads that passed were a series of chocolate obsessed women. Not only were women seductively talking about chocolate like in the previously mentioned Mounds ad, but women went absolutely crazy for it. In a 1987 Hershey's Kisses commercial a woman runs around in circles after sentient chocolates that consistently outrun her. In a 1988 Hershey's chocolate bar commercial a mild-

mannered businesswoman turns, literally, into a fang and claw adorned monster that goes on the hunt for the candy. Only after she bites into the chocolate is the monster calmed. So, women are beings that can be driven mad by the simple craving for chocolate? Makes sense? After all, if women aren't being equated to a sexual object by a Mounds candy bar, then they will be mentally powerless against the power of Hershey's chocolate bar. Of the passing commercials, very few could have been labeled particularly progressive, despite their use of Elvira as a spokeswoman (Coors Light, 1980). On occasion one commercial would feature something like a roller-derby girl (Twix, 1980). By and large, however, the marketers depended on tired stereotypes.

The 61 commercials in the Food category that failed did so for fairly predictable reasons. Women prepped food for their husbands' Super Bowl party (Doritos, 1988), set up a perfect looking picnic for the family while in a bright dress and heels (Kool-Aid, 1988), tried to convince the public that they could make "healthy" meals for their families using Crisco (1987) (dieticians might argue that point), and literally made their husbands a sandwich (Prairie Farms, 1988). The women in these ads also tended to be, what could be considered by male-driven media as the prototype "perfect wife:" white, attractive, wearing a bright dress and surrounded by a gaggle of children. Even commercials for food that had ethnic origins portrayed white women. Both Old El Paso Salsa (1989) and Rosarita Tortillas (1984) featured women who were whiter than sour cream cooking "authentic" Mexican dishes. Why be authentic when we can culturally appropriate? Heaven forbid an actual Mexican woman cook Mexican food on screen!

Any commercial for a food that was "slimming" or part of a weight loss program featured solely women partaking. For example, a 1988 Weight Watchers Meals

commercial featured women floating away from their husbands and boyfriends, apparently due to either weight loss or a sudden issue with earth's gravity, the commercial never clarifies. Slim Fast (1987) featured a woman saying, "My husband didn't think I could lose the weight." This wife, with a *super* supportive husband, went on to talk about how her husband loves how she looks now. If we ever needed to look for a cause behind women's widespread body image issues, we need look no farther than the floating women and those whose husbands only love them after losing a few pounds. After all, if women are being equated, sexually to food, like Mounds, then why not tell them they can be sexier by eating certain foods as well. What is also telling about these advertisements is not one woman claimed she was losing weight so that she could be more healthy for herself. Instead the message was consistently, "My husband finds me sexier now!" According to these ads, the only reason a woman should lose weight or become fit is to be more pleasing for men. A woman's intrinsic value under male hegemony as a person is linked to either her beauty or her capacity for servitude, after all.

Again, in this sample, it was a rarity to see women enjoy the fruits (or soups, salads, roasts, sandwiches, etc.) of their labor. Instead they cooked the food, gave it to their husbands or children and watched with apparent glee as they enjoyed the benefits of her work, like some kind of British aristocrat's private kitchen staff in a scene from *Downton Abbey*. Even when moms took their families out for food in these commercials, they were rarely shown eating. For example, in a 1980s McDonald's commercial a mother takes her little son to enjoy the food and the Playplace. Though you see the child munching on fries, mom is simply shown watching her child. At the very least, mom should have gotten a turn on the slide. Women are not shown in these commercials to be

self-determining, there is no hint that they ever want to do something or accomplish a task because it will benefit them. Instead, they act with no thought to their own wellbeing. Not even Mother Teresa would have lasted long if she never made food for herself.

The quandary that presents itself with women being shown only eating seductively or rarely, if at all, is that it sends a very clear message to women about their relation to food. Women, you must either be attractive while eating, or eating only things that make you slimmer and more attractive, or what's the point? Women don't need food to live; they need it to stay sexy! Women should be allowed to eat, and not just to capture the attention of the men in their lives, but so that they remain healthy and don't die. We live in a nation where, according to the Eating Disorders Coalition (2016), one person dies every 62 minutes due to health complications caused by an eating disorder. While we cannot entirely blame the images in the media for these deaths, we can attribute the socialization of the messages these commercials send out concerning food to marketers (Halliwell & Dittmar, 2005). Equating women's value to food has very real consequences. Overall, the selections of the Food sample that passed The June Cleaver Test brought up nearly as many disturbing trends as the failures did.

7.12 Decade Summation

Of course, there are some overall trends about the 1980s sample that crossed categorical boundaries. The first one is closely related to Food, but appeared outside the category as well. While women cooked in a vast majority of Food commercials (and really any other commercial that mentioned food), there was one notable exception: grilling. In a phenomenon I like to call "Women Cook, Men Grill" it appears that the only

time it was acceptable for men to prepare food for their families is when it involved the raw power of flame and the weight of red meat. Women baked cookies (Nestle Tollhouse Cookies, 1980), tossed salads (Hidden Valley Ranch, 1989) and made the morning's coffee (Folger's, 1988). Men on the other hand tamed the wild beasts on the grill while proclaiming their expertise. In a 1989 Kingston Charcoal advertisement a husband flips steaks while his wife sets the table. When Burger King released its BBQ Burger in 1987, men were shown both rustling the cattle and cooking the meat over hot flames. In an Eagle BBQ commercial that was not coded, due to its lack of women present, 3 men, all wearing wedding rings, debate the best way to cook their chosen form of red meat, heart attack fuel.

Men's inability to "cook" was even a running joke in 1980s commercials. For instance, a 1989 commercial that was not coded due to a lack of women, showed a father, whose wife was gone visiting a relative, faced with his hungry brood of kids. When the children realize that they have been left to dad's culinary mercy for breakfast one of them actually says, "We're gonna starve." Really? Dad can't even pour a bowl of cereal? Of course, the day is saved when dad piles all the kids in the car and drives them to the nearest Burger King for something that passes for scrambled eggs and pancakes that may have been bar coasters the night before. The quandary with this Women Cook, Men Grill dichotomy is multidimensional. First, it is a way to firmly keep women in the kitchen, and labels it as a "Man-Free" zone. This is limiting for women who don't want to spend their days slaving over food preparation and limits men who actually enjoy the pursuit of using a decent electric mixer. Furthermore, the imagery of grilling is paired with the outdoors, a much more free, chaotic and rugged environment. The implication of the

Women Cook, Men Grill, is that men are the only ones tough enough to properly control the dangerous primal fire. Women must be banished to the safe, controlled environment of their kitchens, where their fire is turned on and off by a little knob. After all, they might hurt themselves without the simplicity provided by a burner.

An entire group of commercials that was not included in the data set also showed an interesting gendered trend. In what will be called the “Implied Woman Commercials” these ads never actually showed women, just their hands. Not only were the female relations of the Addams Family’s Thing in quite a few commercials voiced by women, but they were almost always doing something domestically related. Manicured women’s hands changed diapers (Huggies, 1987), applied medication (Andbesol, 1987), cooked (Perdue Oven Stuffer Roaster, 1987), used mixing bowls (A&P, 1985), gently put sandwiches in bags (Glad Bags, 1985) and took dishes out of new microwaves (J. G. Boyd Appliances, 1984) just to name a few. In these ads women weren’t even given the chance to be recognized as human beings, instead they were just disembodied carriers of products, whose implied uses were for that of females alone. This implies that advertisers knew who would automatically be associated with these domestic tasks, women! They didn’t need to show women performing these tasks, because it was so obvious that women would be the ones carrying these tasks out.

There was also a trend noticed that was not necessarily tracked in the data for one major reason: it had to do with children’s toys, which often featured few adults. In the 1970s most children’s toys ads watched by the researcher were gendered by the “girls play with dolls and boys play with race cars” mentality, but the commercials remained rather color neutral. It was as if a magic color stereotype wand was waved in the year

1980 as suddenly all toys meant for girls were pink. Not only were they pink, they were PINK! A spill at the Pepto-Bismol factory could not have explained away the color change. Everything from girls' kitchen sets, to their Legos, to Barbie's dresses became some hue of pink, purple or yellow.

The purpose of the girls' toys also came with very specific gender roles. In 1980 little girls no longer just played with My Little Ponies, instead the little girls were referred to as "My Little Pony Mommies." In 1989 the Dressing Pretty (play clothes) commercial gave little girls 3 choices of outfits to dress up and imagine themselves in the roles of: Fashion model, bride or ballerina. No little girl firefighters or policewomen in sight. Even when Barbie was given the chance to be a rock star she did not come with an instrument. Only a Ken (with the lead singer of the band Europe's hairstyle) and his male buddies could play musical instruments, while Barbie was the singer. And in 1980 Barbie's friends Tracy and Todd got married, providing little girls everywhere with an accurate idea of what paying for a wedding was like as everything came separately. These toys showed little girls exactly what roles were appropriate for them to engage in, socializing them, as commercials can, towards how they should act as adults (Ozmete, 2009).

In direct opposition to the girls' land of cotton candy and passive roles, the boys' toys were aggressive, with black and sharp blues, reds and greens on their toys. Toys meant for boys were all about adventure. In 1980 the Thunder-Punch He-Man toy was released. In case the name *He-Man* wasn't masculine enough, apparently the title "Thunder Punch" was necessary. The commercial featured little boys using He-Man's wind up punch attack on everything from villains from the show to stacked soda cans,

though it is unclear what offense the soda cans committed against He-Man. Throughout the entire commercial there was thunder, lightning and randomly chosen power chords from an electric guitar. Nothing was passive in this ad. Even Hotwheels cars went from being something “nifty” kids traded and picked favorite cars in the 1970s with to being an explosive macho show. In a 1989 Hotwheels commercial two boys competitively run their cars down a track as an announcer literally shouts that the cars are, “Built for speed, speed and more speed!” The entire ad features the sounds of squealing tires, roaring engines and bright flashes of light. The message that toy commercials like this sends to children is that boys need to be aggressive, exciting and macho, while girls need to be frilly, passive and fall directly in line with their gender roles.

The 1980s showed us that not only was June Cleaver responsible for the home, her children and her husband’s happiness, she was responsible for these things despite whatever else she might have going on in her life. Women were not to work to fulfill their own desires or help themselves, instead their labors were to be spent for the enjoyment of others. The only reason a woman should do anything that might benefit herself, such as purchase make-up, work out, wear clothing or eat food was to be made more attractive for their male partners. While the 1980s proved to fail The June Cleaver Test less than the previous decade, it is clear that June Cleaver had stepped up on one rung of the ladder towards equality, only to find herself still some thirty or forty rungs below that of Ward.

8. THE 1990S, JUNE CLEAVER IS TOTALLY DOWN WITH PROGRESS

“BECAUSE I believe with my wholeheartmindbody that girls constitute a revolutionary soul force that can, and will change the world for real.”

- Riot Grrrl Manifesto, Kathleen Hanna, 1991

The 1990s saw a massive shift in the world of feminist politics. The women of the feminist movement became much more focused on the inclusion and equality of all women, not just middle class white women. The movement, for the first time in a major way, began to include those of other races, socio-economic statuses, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Transgender individuals. The demands of this movement went beyond the economic and social demand for equality, but for women to be seen as whole beings that could be mothers, career women or whatever they wished. Groups like Riot Grrrl projected bold and publicly loud statements that women could be whatever they chose to be, not just what society wanted them to be (Walker, 1992).

In 1992 Rebecca Walker, daughter of *The Color Purple* author Alice Walker, published an article called *Becoming the Third Wave* creating the term Third Wave Feminism and moniker that the 1990s feminists would go by for many years after (Walker, 1992). It was also during this time that independent feminine heroes began appearing with more regularity in TV programming and in movies. Women heroines like Buffy and Willow from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Xena from *Xena: Warrior Princess*, Sarah Conner from *Terminator 2*, and Ripley in *Alien* all showed women as heroes in their own rights, not afraid to get their hands dirty with the blood of their enemies and rarely needing to be saved, like a damsel in distress (Detora, 2009). Of course, it should be noted that with these images of strength, these women also still had to fit into societal

expectations surrounding beauty. It seems that no progress can be made without another aspect creating a mixed message.

It was in the midst of this bold and more inclusive Third Wave of feminism that this sample of commercials from the 1990s (See Table 5) was gathered, and overall, it appears that this new movement had some cultural impact.

Table 5: 1990s June Cleaver Test Commercial Results

Category	Total Number	Pass	Fail	Percentage That Fail
Household Goods	19	4	15	78.9%
Grocery/Department Stores	9	3	6	66.7%
Food	90	39	51	56.7%
Sports	4	4	0	0%
Insurance	3	2	1	33.3%
Pharmaceuticals	17	9	8	47.1%
Other	17	9	8	47.1%
Car Commercials	8	5	3	37.5%
Clothing	10	8	2	20%
Entertainment/Technology	40	18	22	55%
Hygiene/Personal Care	33	21	12	36.4%
Totals	250	122	128	51.2%

The composite failure rate of The June Cleaver Test by not meeting criteria 2 in the 1990s was a full 4 percent lower than that of the 1980s and nearly 7 percent lower than the failure rate in the 1970s (Appendix A, Table 2). While over half of the commercials still failed The June Cleaver Test, the commercials overall became more inclusive and less problematic for women. However, there were still some glaring problems in advertising during this time of improvement that will be addressed as the categories are examined individually.

There was an issue at the beginning in collecting data for this set; namely over 20 commercials were viewed before a woman even made an appearance so that the commercial could be coded as per requirement 1 of The June Cleaver Test. One of the major reasons for this was the number of commercials aimed at children, and therefore only starred children, exploded in number during the 1990s. These commercials brought along with them their own interesting facets and problematic elements that will be addressed later in this chapter. Overall, this sample was the decade that had the most commercials that could not be coded due the lack of inclusion of a woman.

8.1 Insurance

The realm of Insurance commercials improved massively from the previous decade, even with a similar sample size (Table 5). As with previous decades, the sample size was low due to a lack of actual people starring in insurance commercials. Though insurance companies like Geico used a bit more humor to gather attention, they still rarely showed actual humans on the screen. Of the 3 Insurance category ads counted in the study, only one failed The June Cleaver Test. Both No-Fault Life Insurance (1998) and Prudential Insurance (1998) passed by showing women as insurance agents, with Garden State Life Insurance (1998) failing after only showing a wife patting her husband on the back as he fretted over which life insurance company to choose. While it was refreshing to see women acting as insurance agents, there was still one element missing; viewers had yet to see a woman making up her own mind about what kind of insurance *she* wanted to have. Women could sell insurance, but did they have the personal agency to buy their own yet? Having women as insurance saleswomen and agents, and not

background prop employees or super dolled-up agents, but competent, professional agents, was a step in the right direction, though.

8.2 Sports

Sports commercials also had a similar sample size to their 1980s predecessors and the exact same zero percent failure rate (Table 5). What is different between the two decades however, was the ways in which they passed. In the 1980s Sports commercials mostly objectified women, even though they passed the second qualifier of The June Cleaver Test by showing women with occupations. Granted, one of the passing ads in the 1990s, specifically the Sports Illustrated commercial from 1992, objectified women by showing them as swimsuit models wading out of the ocean and loudly announcing that the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue would be included with all subscriptions! That's right, your subscription includes a non-sport-related issue where women take pin-up poses in tiny bikinis! They can't all be winners. The other 3, however, showed women in a much more progressive light. A Univision Futbol promotional commercial (1997) showed a woman player actually talking about the upcoming game. That's right, a female professional athlete talking about something other than their outfit! The comments the woman was making were also important as she talked about how she and her teammates planned to win. This is a massive improvement in perception because she wasn't just seen as a serious athlete, but she was talking about strategy, personal drive and her commitment to the game. She wasn't there to be a pretty-face representative, she was there to compete! A 1995 Sports Club Fitness and Training commercial showed a woman assisting a man with his workout, putting her in the position of the "expert" in a predominately male-dominated field. In 1990 a new quasi-sport called Battle Ball was

advertised as the newest greatest sport. While it obviously never became the widespread sport sensation its inventors had hoped, the advertisements for it showed an equal number of men and women playing against each other. Sports Illustrated aside, women were shown as competent athletes, trainers and participants of sports, instead of simply cheering the men on from the sidelines. Women were not simply the sex objects attached to athletes or the women who also happened to play in a sport; they were actually experts and a competitive force.

8.3 Clothing

Sadly, this level of progressive change did not really extend into the Clothing category. While only 20 percent of the 1990s sample failed the second criteria of The June Cleaver Test, as opposed to the 25 percent that failed in the 1980s, both those that passed and those that failed did so for troubling reasons. The two that failed in the Clothing category did so for very sadly stereotypical reasons. In 1990 DeBeers Jewelry showed an absolute gaggle of girlfriends getting married, wives getting anniversary gifts and brides at weddings without a single man being gifted a thing. Poor guys. Again, the promise of a woman was attached to the purchase, an implied, “Buy her this ring and she’ll be yours forever!” In a 1993 Rider’s Jeans ad, a woman helps her husband get dressed in jeans. Apparently, putting one leg in and then the other was a challenge for this particular gentleman, but it served nicely to put the woman in a very submissive position throughout the commercial. The woman doesn’t even seem disturbed or annoyed that she is helping a grown man perform a task that he probably learned to do when he was a toddler. Instead her actions are cast in a “normal” or “natural” behavior for a woman light.

However, the Clothing ads that passed could not claim to be much more progressive than the ones that failed. Mostly commercials showed models parading in front of men trying to capture their attention with their acid wash jean clad bodies (Sears, 1998, Target, 1998, Hanes Her Way, 1990, etc.) Those that didn't have women parading in front of men cast them as a saleswoman talking about the hottest fashion trends (The Turner Store, 1990) or seamstresses mending men's athletic gear (Jock Shop, 1991). Women were allowed to have jobs, but only if it involved being attractive to the opposite sex or was a position that was an extension of her home duties. Probably the most bizarre use of a stereotype came from a 1990 Footlocker (shoes) commercial that were specifically showing shoes meant for basketball and tennis on the screen, but then followed that up with images of a woman gymnast, a sport in which one does not wear shoes. Apparently it was easier to show a gymnast than go looking for a professional woman tennis or basketball player? After all, a gymnast is physically pleasing and not threatening, unlike say, a professional woman basketball player?

8.4 Hygiene/Personal Care

The Hygiene/Personal Care category saw only a slight decrease in the failure rate from 38.7 percent in the 1980s (Table 4) to 36.4 percent in the 1990s sample (Table 5) by showing more women as employed. The 12 commercials that failed The June Cleaver Test did so mostly because they showed women as dependent girlfriends and wives or as doting mothers. Wives nagged their husbands about morning breath (Scope, 1993), girlfriends refusing to kiss their boyfriends until they improved dental hygiene habits (Scope, 1997) and becoming much more "caress-able" by their husbands after using a specific brand of soap (Caress Soap, 1990). The issue with the Caress Soap commercial is

that again, the woman was not using the soap to better her own health, but instead to make her more attractive, or “caress-able,” for the men in her life. In both Scope commercials, women had to treat men in their lives, like in the 1993 Rider’s Jeans ad, like they were incompetent children, reminding them to brush their teeth. The ads where the woman has to “help out her man” with the most basic of tasks is problematic for two reasons. The first is that it, once again, means that the woman is taking on the burden, or the second shift (Walzer, 1996), of having to keep track of and care the adult males in her life on top of all her other responsibilities. The second is that it is demeaning to men, who according to advertisers can’t remember to brush their teeth or how to operate pants without a “mother figure” in their lives.

When women weren’t being concerned about their significant others, they were instead fretting about their children. Mothers applied sunscreen to squirmy little ones (Water Babies Sunscreen, 1991), ended up wiping their baby’s mess (Baby Fresh Wipes, 1995) and instructed kids how to wash their hands properly (Safeguard Soap, 1993). It is worth noting that there was not a single ad in this category that showed parenting activities where a man participated. Mothers were the only child caregivers in every one of these commercials, nary a man with a diaper in sight, which is unfortunate considering the evidence that co-parenting leads to healthier and more well-adjusted children (Cabrera, et al., 2012; Kolak & Volling, 2013). Again, these commercials also reinforced that women could be experts, if that expertise included babies or looking pretty for their desired man in that same “we’re giving women power, but only inside their women’s box” style of fake empowerment.

Those that passed, however, did so with a bit more variety in roles for women than they had in the past. Sure, there were still plenty of ads showing women as models (Cover Girl, 1993), singers (Finesse Conditioner, 1993) and gymnasts (Pert Plus for Perms, 1993), but women were shown in a plethora of occupations that had previously been missing. Women were firefighters (Oral-B Toothbrushes, 1998), pharmacy technicians (Lenscrafters, 1998), artists (Acuvue, 1991) and truck drivers (Maybelline, 1993). For commercials peddling beauty products and general hygiene, this new diversity in women's occupations was rather heartening. The fact that women were shown as competent firefighters and truck drivers, traditionally seen as "male" professions, was a definite step in the right direction. Furthermore, there was less of a trend of women using these products for the sole purpose of being ogled by a man. In the Oral-B Toothbrushes commercial, the female firefighter doesn't brush her teeth so that her male coworkers might be dazzled by her smile, but to protect her own dental health. Commercials, like the one for Oral-B, showed women as using these products to improve their health and do something nice for themselves, not because someone else expected them to in an effort to look "pretty."

There was one disturbing trend that made an appearance in the 1990s Hygiene/Personal Care category. In several ads the idea of women "upgrading" themselves was brought up. It wasn't just that they needed to be more beautiful or sexually desirable, it was that they, as they currently existed, were not enough in general. For instance, in a 1990 Clairol Nice 'N Easy (hair dye) commercial a woman is shown sad and neglected as she frets about her hair color until she uses the magic product and her hair is magically made better. The slogan the commercial ended with was, "You, only

better.” This “upgrading through consumerism” idea is an old gimmick used to convince people that to keep up with the non-existent “competition” they must use a certain product. However, when it is directly applied to women, particularly surrounding a woman’s beauty, in such a way that it turns her outward appearance into the most important thing, a thing that will never be perfect requiring constant “upgrades,” it becomes particularly problematic. It creates an unattainable ideal that pressures women into being insecure with their commercially “imperfect” selves. It also further objectifies women as the idea of “upgrading” is one normally linked to technology. In a *Weird Science*, invent your own girlfriend, kind of way, it turns women into being on the same level as technology. Something not quite right about this model? Upgrade her! Old model? Trade her in for a new one! Despite this disturbing trend, however, the widening diversity of positions for women showed a definite progressive improvement in this category compared to the 1980s and 1970s samples.

8.5 Other

The Other category saw a very slight increase, less than one percent, in The June Cleaver Test failure rate, by not meeting requirement 2, from the 1980s failure rate of 46.2 percent to the 1990s of 47.1 percent. This category really backed up the old adage, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” For such a wide range of commercial focuses and topics, the results were overall regressive. Those that failed mostly showed women taking care of their husbands and children in ways that would have made 1950s sitcom writers pleased as punch. Women urged their husbands to open up new credit cards so she had more access to money to spend (The First Visa Platinum Card, 1998), women served their husbands and kids breakfast as the men looked over

paperwork for medical discounts (Globe Savers Plus Card, 1998) and wives helped both their husbands and kids wrap Christmas gifts (United States Postal Service, 1995). Helping small children wrap gifts is understandable, since leaving them to their own devices often results in a ball of tape and wrapping paper that defies the laws of physics, but apparently grown men need the same assistance, just as they apparently need help putting on their pants. Ivana (then) Trump also made an appearance in a 1995 Comfort Inn commercial, talking about Donald Trump, how much money he spent on her, and her uncertainty about his dedication to the marriage.¹³ Again, women were shown in a paternalistic light (Dworkin, 1975), with men making the important decisions about money and who got how much, leaving the women to beg from the breadwinners for more cash.

However, the failures in the category did not receive nearly as much eye-rolling as some of the ones that passed The June Cleaver Test by meeting the second criteria and showing her as employed. For instance, in 1990 the Ladies Only Dream Dates Chat Line featured a swarm of pretty women talking seductively on the phone to lonely customers. While the ad proclaimed it was for people to meet “friends” and never mentioned “phone sex” was included, it was heavily implied by women wearing sexy lingerie and full makeup, lounging on red velvet sofas and saying that they wanted to talk to “men only.” While “phone sex” call service operator was a new occupation offered to women in the commercials sampled thus far, it was a far cry from what one could call progressive. Of course, if a woman didn’t want to seduce creepy men over the phone for 58 cents a minute, they could also be maids (Ramada Inn, 1994), a flower peddler (Delta Airlines,

¹³ It is almost as if she had a magic crystal that told her Donald may cheat one day.

1992) or a flight stewardess (US Air, 1991). There were a few that passed the test that showed women in a more progressive light, but these were by far the minority of the Other category commercials recorded. Women were occasionally shown as something not stereotypical, such as a police officer (Kindervision, 1995). However, it should be noted that the woman police officer was talking about protecting one's children. Had the topic been, "the war on drugs" it probably would have been a male officer, a point that was verified by the several "war on drugs" ads that were not coded because only male officers were present. The woman police officer, being female, could be the "expert" on children because, after all, that is a woman's business. The "war on drugs?" No, honey, we'll leave that for the men with the exact same credentials you have.

There were two women in this sample who co-owned businesses. One owned a convenience store with her husband (Pacific Bell Smart Pages, 1994) and another woman was a partial owner in a snorkel company (United States Postal Service, 1990). However, in both of these cases the women's actual contribution to the company and commercial was overshadowed by that of the males who also held stock in these companies, both of whom stated that their husbands made all the important business decisions, because of course they did. The Other category, by its very nature, is always a very mixed bag. However, when it came to the 1990s, the mix seemed strongly in favor of stereotyping and restricting women.

8.6 Entertainment/Technology

The 1990s saw an incredible and rapid expansion in the area of technology. Home computers were more widely available, the internet was becoming both more widely used and more useful and the dot-com bubble of the late 1990s all lead to both start-up

companies (like Intel which began in 1993) and existing companies (like IBM) to rush to cash in on this burgeoning market (Gerber, 2013). This sudden rapid development of new technologies goes to explain why the Entertainment/Technology category in the 1990s sample included 40 commercials (Table 5), a large leap in sample size from the 1980s 25 commercials (Table 4) included in this category. Unfortunately, not only did the sample size increase, but the failure rate did as well, going from 40 percent in the 1980s to 55 percent in the 1990s.

Sadly, of those that passed The June Cleaver Test in this category by showing women with a job, the moniker “progressive” could be attached to very few. Women, in stereotypical ‘women’s acceptable occupations’ fashion, were teachers (Kodak Star 35 Camera, 1990), musicians (Prodigy, 1995), sexy models with beepers clipped to their bikinis (J.J. Beepers, 1994), secretaries (Microsoft 3.1, 1992) and extremely stressed out teachers (Atari Jaguar, 1992). Those that did break the mold did so in some rather strange ways. For example, a commercial for 1996 MegaMouth featured a female rapper, however, even though the majority of 1990s rappers were not white, the company thought it appropriate have a middle-aged white lady, who had all the rhythm and style of an out of balance washing machine, rap in their commercial in an odd display of depressing cultural appropriation.

The rare occupations that broke out of the norm seemed more accidental than anything else. For instance, BellSouth in 1990 was an Olympic sponsor, and as such they happened to have a couple of women athletes in their commercial. As stated with previous decades’ Olympics related commercials, the sporting event itself tends to have a higher female viewership than other sporting events, so this was just savvy marketing on

BellSouth's part to cash in on the wider audience (Elliot, 2008). Those commercials that did show women working also had a tendency to make sure that viewers knew that the women were also mothers. However, very rarely was a woman seen doing something domestic only to have her say, "After a day at work at the stock exchange..." Instead women were shot on camera in their offices with notes from their kids being found in their briefcase (Nickelodian Magazine, 1997). These women were getting literal notes reminding them of the second shift (Walzer, 1996) they would be facing when they got home after a day at the office. This absolute insistence on showing that a woman was foremost a mother, is distressing because it means that June Cleaver can never be free from attachment to the home and be seen as a professional in her own right.

The 22 commercials that failed (Table 5) in this category did so in spectacular fashion, ranging from the hilarious to the downright disturbing. Women were seen as moms talking in high pitch voices, wearing floral floor length dresses, that looked like they had come straight out of *Regressive Women Monthly*, to talk about how they had worried about their kids playing too many video games *until* they found *Bible Adventures* for the Nintendo Entertainment System (1990). These moms didn't seem to care that the game involved Noah killing a unicorn and was about as Biblically accurate as Ben Carson's views on the pyramids, but gosh darn it, their kids were learning important Biblical values.¹⁴ The 1990s also saw more toy commercials where parents were shown in the commercials. Actually, to be accurate, the 1990s saw more toy commercials where moms were involved, and their involvement was straight out of a Pepto-Bismol pink drenched copy of *The Stepford Wives*. For example the 1995 doll Baby Tumbles, which

¹⁴ Apparently Biblical values lead to the decimation of the unicorn species.

was a doll that you literally dropped on its head on purpose, featured a mom standing in the doorway cheering her daughter on as the little girl probably gave that poor baby brain damage. In the 1996 Kitchen Little ad, two little girls play with a toy kitchen while one of the girls' mom bakes in the actual kitchen right behind them. The toy's slogan was, "Just like mom, only little!" Even when women weren't the child's parents in a toy commercial the involvement was to enforce strict gender roles. In 1995 Bride Surprise, a three-foot doll that had a dress little girls could wear, was released. The commercial for that doll featured an adult bride throwing a bouquet of flowers to one of the little girls while saying, "You're next!" The girl in the commercial was, at the most, five or six years of age, which would make her a tad too young to marry, but apparently young enough to instruct that marriage was something she would someday have to do. All of these ads were intended to prime girls for their "biological directive" of being mothers, keeping house, and marrying someone, and those socializing messages can have a very real impact (Ozmete, 2009).

In the toy commercials, both those that were coded, and those not included due to not passing the first criteria of The June Cleaver Test by including an adult woman, were followed the 1980s color gendering trend. Girls toys were always pink, frilly and usually had something to do about either fashion or domestic duties. For instance, girls got toys like Pretty Love Lashes (1998) and Dance and Twirl Barbie (1998) to play with. Boys commercials were bold, used dark colors and usually involved fighting, racing and adventure. Boys got to go on adventures with Spider-Man via the Spider-Man Spider Force (1993) action figures, that had real punching action! These toys were marketed directly to children, a vast majority not even including an adult on screen. However, it

was not only the toys that were being marketed in these commercials, but acceptable gender roles. These commercials did not just provide a product, they helped provide instruction on how little boys and little girls should act (Ozmete, 2009).

An entire set of commercials that failed The June Cleaver Test was a series Duracell released from 1995 to 1997 centered around their fictional family the Puttermans. The family was comprised of the dad, mother, complete with floral dress and June Cleaver hairstyle, a teenage daughter and adolescent son. The family experienced adventures like fishing, golfing, staying at a cabin and going through a drive thru. In these commercials the unnamed mom, in the same order, made snacks while dad fished, sat on the golf cart gossiping while her husband golfed, started sprucing up the cabin and helped organize the kids at the drive thru while dad drove and ordered. The Puttermans even had a BBQ, where mom fussed over the table and potato salad while dad used the actual grill; another fine example of “Women Cook, Men Grill” idea that was noted in the 1980s sample. Every one of Duracell Putterman commercials failed The June Cleaver Test, with Mrs. Putterman playing the quintessential 1950s middle class housewife in every single one. It seems that despite the growing advancements in technology that the 1990s brought, it forgot to bring those same advancements in their portrayals of women.

8.7 Pharmaceuticals

The Pharmaceuticals category was another that, despite having the exact same sample size as the 1980s commercials (Appendix A: Table 2), saw an increase in The June Cleaver Test failure rate by not meeting criteria 2, going from 35.3 percent (Table 4) to 47.1 percent (Table 5). While the failure rate was still below half, barely, this over 10 percent increase in failures from the previous decade was not a good indicator for

progressivity. The commercials that passed mostly did so in a rather vague way. Women oftentimes were shown in nondescript office settings, getting headaches or coughing and needing relief (Hall's Cough Drops, 1990, Anacin, 1990 & Aspirin Free Excedrin, 1991). Very rarely were women seen as medical professionals, though there was one nurse (Robitussin, 1992) and one other working in a pharmacy (Super Juice Caplets, 1998), but were never doctors. Doctors, after all, are men.

The ads that failed were of typical domestic fair. Moms took care of sick or sad children (Pedialyte, 1993, Children's Nyquil & 1991, Tylenol, 1991). Wives either helped and supported their husbands (Gas-X, 1998 & Erectile Dysfunction, 1991) or pestered and annoyed them (Tylenol, 1998). These women were white, young and always with the perfect caring expression on their face, a fact that any mother having taken care of a sick child knows is impossible after one's child or husband just vomited on the bathroom floor. These commercials displayed the women in them as the "natural caregivers," without giving a second's pause to the idea that a man can dole out medication (as shown in the 1988 Children's Tylenol ad that featured a father treating his sick daughter) just as easily as his wife could. So to be clear, men can be doctors, women cannot. Women, however, are responsible for doling out medications to their families, because men can't perform that task as it falls under "women's work." Does anyone else see a contradiction here? This was an unimpressive sample from a decade that overall did better than its decade predecessor.

8.8 Car Commercials

Car Commercials, on the other hand, did better not only in the overall passing percentage of The June Cleaver Test by showing a woman with an occupation (Appendix

A: Table 2), but in their representations of women. Dropping the failure rate from 75 percent in the 1980s (Table 4), to 37.5 percent in the 1990s was particularly impressive considering both decades had 8 sampled Car Commercials (Table 5). The commercials that passed also tended to do so in actually progressive ways. The 1993 Pontiac Grand Am was talked about by two women working in an office, each of them bringing up points about the engine quality, the exhaust system and other mechanical features. This was an intelligent conversation about a vehicle as opposed to one of them saying, “It’s a pretty color!” and the other one saying, “I like shiny things!” which was a great advance over the wide-eyed, empty expressions from previous decades. In a 1991 Oldsmobile commercial a woman was actually featured as a car saleswoman. That’s right, a woman can sell cars too! Of course, there were the ads that also passed that showed women as sexy models being paired with their cars (Cadillac Seville, 1992 & Chevrolet Cavalier, 1993), pairing their sexuality in a consumerist way with the car, but at least women were gaining traction on the road towards being seen as car competent.

The commercials that failed mostly did so by showing men driving their wives and kids around. For instance, a Ford Escort commercial (1997), shows a man driving his girlfriend, then she becomes his wife, and then there’s magically twins in the backseat of the car. In a 1992 Isuzu Trooper ad we finally got to see a wife drive her husband, but the second he gets in the car he starts complaining about how she drives. Again, because women aren’t as good at driving as men, right? Get it? Haha? As stated previously, the problem is not that men are seen driving cars, men do drive cars. What is problematic is that when women are in the cars with the men are often the only ones seen driving. By placing the man in the driver’s seat, or by criticizing the woman when she takes the

wheel, the woman's agency is diminished as her male counterpart is placed in the position of making the decisions. Ah well, at least there was some progress made for women in the world of cars.

8.9 Grocery/Department Stores

Grocery/Department Stores saw a slight decrease (Appendix A: Table 2), dropping from 71.4 percent in the 1980s (Table 4) to 66.7 percent in the 1990s (Table 5), even with a similar sample size. Of the 4 that passed The June Cleaver Test, 3 of them passed simply by having a woman store clerk (Wal-Mart, 1993, Franklins, 1996 & Foodland, 1993). However, a small multi-state chain of grocery stores called Moo & Oink Grocery featured a woman butcher in 1991. This was the first time that a woman was seen in a specialized store position instead of being just part of the general help, and one that is often viewed as fairly "manly" at that! Having a woman working behind the butcher counter meant that she had specialized training and was seen as a valuable member of that store's team.

A new trend in the Grocery/Department Stores category appeared in the 1990s however. Women were seen as the foils, almost villains, to their husbands and children's shenanigans. In a 1991 K-Mart commercial a husband and wife argue about who should pick up the film, only for the woman to eventually come up with the solution of just getting it while they are at K-Mart. In a Sears (1997) ad, a woman pesters her husband, who is reading the morning paper and trying to ignore her, until he goes to Sears to get another air conditioner. A 1995 commercial for the department store The Boulevard, showed a tired mom chasing after her playing kids to get them to get ready for school. Moms and wives just have to spoil everyone's plans for a good time, don't they? This is a

problematic view of women because it shows them as the “fun killers” to their spouses and kids and the proverbial “ball and chain” to their long suffering husbands, while reinforcing that they are the domestic experts and in their “natural” place in the home. Women weren’t just expected to be in the home, making sure that her husband and kids were well cared for, but they were resented for it! After all, women are no fun, just black holes of joviality with the ability to scrub a toilet clean.

8.10 Household Goods

Household Goods, despite dropping to a smaller sample size (Appendix A: Table 2), also managed to decrease the percentage of failures. In the 1990s, 78.9 percent failed The June Cleaver Test (Table 5), which was better than the 1980s 87.1 percent failure rate (Table 4). The 1990s only had a sample size of 19, whereas the same category had 31 entries in the 1980s. This means that while the decrease in failures looks dramatic, it should be noted that only 3 commercials from the 1990s sample actually passed.

The commercials that passed all did so for rather different reasons. Littermaid (1998) passed because it showed a woman coming home from work to her apartment, not a sign of husband or kids in sight, talking about how the product kept her house free of cat odors. MMM Carpets (1994) showed a saleswoman talking about carpet installation. Finally, a Tru Value Paint commercial (1998) showed a woman, with the most terrifying bowl cut ever seen, actually working in the paint store! None of these women showed signs of being family women first, working women second, and in 2 cases they were seen as experts in areas where men usually were perceived to reign!

That is exactly where the progressive excitement in this category ended, however. Women happily laundered their children’s messy clothes (Surf Detergent, 1990), cleaned

up after their kids destroyed the house (Hoover Steam Vac, 1991) and tried in vain to close plastic bags before being introduced to the Farberseal system (1993). At least in the 1990s men chipped in a little. In a 1998 Downy commercial a husband helps his wife, kind of, by folding clothes, though in reality he mostly stands there sniffing the clean laundry with the intensity of a rebellious teenager huffing paint. In a 1994 Cascade Dishwashing Soap commercial a husband is shown attempting, and failing miserably, to wash the dishes. The ad ends with the woman exasperatingly finishing his failed work while saying, "...at least he's helping." This showing of men as "domestic dud dads" is problematic on a couple of levels. The first, is that the women usually ended up having to clean up or do a majority of the work after their housework failure husbands had given up, which meant women were still doing the lion's share of the work, even after their husband "helped." The second issue with this is that the men's incompetence threw the domestic duties squarely back in the women's court with the women being "home experts" once again. This continued the message of the "men work, women do housework" (Davies & Fink, 2014) dichotomy with a thinly veiled attempt at showing both men and women sharing duties in the house.

There were also ads in this sample that tried to make housework seem more exciting and fun to the women doing it. For example, in a Dirt Devil Broom Vac commercial (1992) women were encouraged to "spruce up" their lives before comparing the vacuum cleaner to a fresh tube of lipstick. That's right, you can vacuum and be sexy, don't you ladies feel so freed!? Commercials such as this one not only placed the woman as "naturally" belonging in the home, but added the double implication that her other main purpose, aside from keeping the house clean, was looking good for the men in her

lives. Commercials like this one implied that the best qualities in a woman were that she be subservient and pretty. Overall, the Household Goods category was the same old, same old, just with a fresh smattering of paint on it.

8.11 Food

The Food category with its 90 sampled commercials saw a slight decrease in failures of the second criteria of The June Cleaver Test from the 1980s (Table 4), going from 60.3 percent in the previous decade to 56.7 percent (Table 5), which while getting a little closer to the midline (Appendix A: Table 2), was still distressingly high. Those that passed varied from women having progressive jobs to women having depressing single lifestyles. Women who passed in this category were once again normally working in restaurants behind the counter, again lacking managerial positions (Little Caesar's Pizza, 1998, McDonald's, 1992, Olive Garden, 1993, etc.). When they weren't working in the food industry, the jobs women held were actually rather varied. Women were bartenders (Bass Ale, 1990), women too busy to make lunch at the office (Lunchables, 1993), jury members and court stenographers (Diet Coke, 1991) among others. To date, the 1990s Food commercials actually had the most variation in jobs held by women of any other category, with only minimal inclusion of the "sexy occupational woman" or women seducing you into buying Food. Bravo 1990s, bravo.

The 1990s also showed, for the first time, women consistently making food for themselves. This meant that apparently for the first time in history, women were making food not just to watch others eat it, but so that they, themselves, could eat! A 1990 Coffeemate commercial featured a woman making and enjoying her own breakfast. A 1997 Domino's commercial showed a woman ordering pizza for herself! And what is

possibly simultaneously a sign of progress and the saddest commercial viewed in this study, a woman nuked Cheez Whiz for One (1991) in the microwave for her own, depressing, enjoyment. Women were not longer trapped between “making food for others to enjoy” and “eating food to be attractive,” instead they were consuming the calories that kept their systems functioning!

When it came to the commercials that failed, however, the same regressive patterns emerged, bringing some new ones in just for fun. Women were still seen baking cookies with the kids (Pillsbury’s Best Chocolate Chip Cookies, 1990), taking their kids to McDonald’s for Happy Meals (1999) and keeping the kids calm and behaved while eating at a restaurant (Pistol Pete’s Pizza, 1992). These mothers were always smiling, always perfectly dressed and looked like they had just come back from a relaxing vacation, instead of telling little Jimmy for the ninety-fourth time not put pasta in his sister’s hair. These were the commercials that had become all too familiar at this point, the same song, different chorus. However, the 1990s did add a couple new spins to their June Cleaver stereotypes. Whereas most Food ads showed mom as an expert cook, there were quite a few commercials in the 1990s that could be classified in quite the opposite direction. In these ads mothers would make delicious meals for their husbands and kids and would be thanked by at least one family member saying in absolute shock, “You made this!?” This is particularly insulting considering the food ads that featured this phenomenon. For instance, one was for Campbell’s Cheddar Cheese Soup (1998), in which a mother successfully navigates making, wait for it, cheese quesadillas, much to the astonishment of her sons. Since this is a dish that can be easily replicated by cheese, a tortilla and a microwave, the boys’ shock is a bit undeserved. Going right along with that

trend was another in which frazzled mothers, too crazed to cook food, resorted to popping a magical dish in the microwave. In a Kellogg's Breakfast Mates commercial from 1998, a mother hurries to get her kids ready to get out the door, only to realize, gasp, that she has not fed them breakfast. Indescribably bland looking microwavable pastries to the rescue! Mom is saved by the beeping sounds of a microwave. Keep in mind, the women in these commercials did not appear to work outside the home, they were stay at home moms. With both the "You made this!?" and the "frazzled mom" commercials, women went from at least being competent in the home, to being competent exactly nowhere. These ads, like the women shaming "ring around the collar" chant of the Whisk (1978) commercials, attempt to shame women for not quite measuring up to the "perfect mom" ideal, having to be saved by the, most often, male narrator and males behind the marketing campaign (Pogrebin, 2011). In these marketers' eyes June Cleaver has syrup on her dress and has managed to stick the pages of her cookbook together with it too.

Women also seemed to hallucinate talking food a lot in the 1990s. It's possible that being trapped in a kitchen for too long might induce one to turn to a carton of milk like the stranded man on *Castaway* turned to a volleyball, but the trend was a bit unsettling. One woman even had a 45 second debate with a butter substitute in her kitchen (Parkey, 1998). Another interesting 1990s addition to the Food category was that in any commercial showing someone paying at a restaurant, it was always the male, most often a father, paying the bill. It didn't matter if the family was having a sit down dinner at Olive Garden (1993) or making a quick stop at Dairy Queen (1992), dad was always the one to pull out his wallet and cover the bill. Now, of course, there are times when men will pay for someone else's food, and showing that isn't a problem. When it

becomes a problem is when that is all anyone ever sees leading them to believe that men are the only ones financially solvent enough to afford Dairy Queen. The implication of “men always pay the bill” is that women cannot provide for themselves or their families on the same equal footing. What the failures in this category do is reinforce the “tale as old as time” patterns that continue to put women, not just in their place, but in a very specific set of places that revolve around the home (Davies & Fink, 2014).

8.12 Decade Summation

While the sample from the 1990s was progressive in ways that had not been seen in previous decades, the fight for women’s respect in the workplace was obviously far from over. The separation of “work” and “home” was becoming a bit more blurred, with more women shown trying to do both. However, the messages that often came with this new form of independence were that women were overwhelmed in the work world, yearning to return to their kids and their kitchens. Even if the commercial didn’t have that connotation to it, it still often showed the woman working the second shift (Walzer, 1996) of coming home from a day at the office and immediately having to care for her children and her husband. Depictions overall of women being independent and on their own were more common than in previous decades and were appreciated but rare. However, these occasional displays of autonomous womanhood still did not address the overarching problem that women faced. Remember, if something is an exception to the rule, it means that the rule still exists. In this case, that rule was still putting up a “No Girls Allowed” sign over parts of society, with arrows pointing to where June Cleaver was allowed to roam.

9. THE 2000S, JUNE CLEAVER GETS BURNED

“I see my body as an instrument, rather than an ornament.”

-Alanis Morissette, 2000

The fire and flare that the Third Wave brought to the 1990s feminist movement seemed to fizzle a little by the early 2000s while facing an impressive conservative backlash. *Bitch Magazine*, a long-running Feminist periodical, stated in an article attempting to celebrate the 2000-2009 feminist breakthroughs, “As it turns out, there were a lot more not-so-feminist moments this decade than feminist ones” (Wallace, 2009, p. 1). One of the promises that the 1990s movement had made to women was that they could live whatever life they chose. Women could be mothers, working women *or* both if they so desired. This new egalitarian way of life, however, was not met with the correct political and societal changes to make it perfectly feasible. Women who both wanted to work and parent soon found themselves torn between two worlds, their home life, where children needed caring for, and the work life, with its rigid structures and lack of family-friendly policies (Coontz, 2013).

With the lack of affordable daycare, low maternity leave times and companies unwilling to give time off simply for parents to take care of their children, American families found it hard in the early 2000s to actualize the work-home balance. Add in a new wave of “motherhood is the epitome of womanhood” propaganda and a resurgence of anti-choice bills and laws, and by 2004 there were fewer married mothers of children under the age of 3 in the workforce than in 1993 (Coontz, 2013). Feminists were still speaking out on everything from body issues to the global treatment of women, but progress in the area of releasing women from domestication and caregiving had slowed

considerably, weighed down by a system that wasn't ready, or willing, to make such a rapid change. This may go to help explain, though not excuse, the results from the 2000s sample (Table 6):

Table 6: 2000s June Cleaver Test Commercial Results

Category	Total Number	Pass	Fail	Percentage That Fail
Household Goods	19	3	16	84.2%
Grocery/Department Stores	13	6	7	53.8%
Food	82	40	42	51.2%
Sports	3	3	0	0%
Insurance	6	3	3	50%
Pharmaceuticals	18	6	12	66.7%
Other	21	15	6	28.6%
Car Commercials	11	2	9	81.8%
Clothing	16	10	6	37.5%
Entertainment/Technology	31	16	15	48.4%
Hygiene/Personal Care	30	15	15	50%
Totals	250	119	131	52.4%

While the overall increase in The June Cleaver Test Failure rate from the 1990s from 51.2 percent (Table 5) to the 52.4 percent of the 2000s (Table 6) may seem small, the results were still discouraging. In the 1990s only 4 categories had a 50 percent or higher failure rate of The June Cleaver Test by not showing women with roles outside the home, in the 2000s that number jumped to 6 out of 11 total categories failing over half of the sample. Of course, we must now examine this downward trend in more detail.

9.1 Sports

Starting out with some positive results, the Sports category did not fail a single commercial. However, before party streamers and confetti can be thrown, it is important to examine why they passed The June Cleaver Test. The first one, a commercial for Fox

Sports New York (2001) was actually fairly progressive, showing a woman as a die-hard hockey fan, yelling and screaming at the ice with a group of male hockey fans. Even though, this was rather blatant tokenism, it was still nice to see a woman enjoying sports other than the Olympics. From there, the category becomes a tad more grim.

In 2005 the Ab Lounge, a rather useless, and oxymoronic named, piece of fitness equipment, was released. The ad featured shirtless, glistening men, showing off mostly their biceps, which was strange due to this being a product for one's abs. The only woman who made an appearance was a model, in a small sportsbra and short shorts, the screen focusing in on her tight abs... and also her butt and breasts. While it may be argued that the men in this ad are being objectified as well, it should be noted that the ways their bodies were displayed was vastly different. Men stood tall, flexing massive arms and abs in powerful looking stances, the focus of the camera on their gleaming muscles. The one woman, on the other hand was often seen bending over, with a camera pointed at her slightly more exposed breasts or with her lying back on the ground in a much more submissive position. It's harder to objectify someone coming from a position of strength and power, than someone who is coming from a place of submission. As McRobbie (2009) pointed out, the display of women's power, even when those women look like they are smuggling pythons underneath their skin, is diminished when it is appropriated to sexually objectify her.

The final commercial that passed was for Fox Sports in 2009 and featured a woman masseuse. Hooray for a woman with a job! However, the elation from that victory quickly faded when the entire ad focused around the masseuse not wanting to turn on the TV for her male client to watch Fox Sports. The commercial actually doesn't show or

mention the TV until the very end, the entire previous argument sounding like the man is asking for sex from the masseuse. Not only is this problematic on a very basic rape culture level, but it also paints the woman as an uncooperative stick in the mud, another woman out to spoil a man's fun. Both the implied objectification of the masseuse commercial and the blatant objectification of the women in the Ab Lounge commercials did not show the women as competent professionals, just there to provide an implied sexual service to the men in the commercials.

9.2 Insurance

Insurance, still one of the smaller categories in the 2000s (Table 6), saw an increase in failures of the second criteria of The June Cleaver Test from the 1990s (Table 5). The insurance commercials in the 1990s failed 33.3 percent of the time, while those in the 2000s failed 50 percent. Still, since the sample sizes were so small for both decades, it is important to understand the context in which they both passed and failed. In the 1990s women were shown as insurance agents in multiple ads, in the 2000s, there wasn't a female insurance agent in sight. Instead the ads that passed showed women as runners (Geico, 2003), back-up dancers for MC Hammer (Nationwide, 2005) and, get ready for it, a crazy single cat lady surrounded by 20 to 30 cats (Geico, 2005). These ads passed, not as much because they showed women having jobs (aside from the sexually objectified backup dancers) but because of the obvious lack of ties to domesticity, particularly the crazy cat lady. The crazy cat lady ad in particular cast a particularly grim picture of womanhood. What happens when a woman doesn't have a man? She turns into a lady who might need to be investigated for cat hoarding. This male insurance agent visiting her regarded her like he might need to put on gloves before shaking hands with this

“unwanted woman.” The running women were probably the most respectful depiction of women seen in this category. At least they weren’t gyrating behind MC Hammer or warning a visiting insurance agent about “Mr. Muffins.”

The commercials in this category that failed did so in eye-roll worthy fashion. Women were either seen as annoyed wives (Geico, 2005) or doting mothers (State Farm Insurance, 2003, Mega Health Insurance, 2007). In the Mega Health Insurance commercial the father of a family talks about how he works hard for his money, and thinks investing in health insurance is a wise investment, while the beaming wife talks about how she was excited to hear of her husband’s choice (apparently after it was made without consulting her) because it would protect their kids. Had the roles been switched, and the woman had been talking about wanting to invest money wisely, while her husband held the kids and beamed, the sentiment would have sounded harsh and uncaring, because it is. Wanting health insurance because it’s a wise investment with the safety of your family coming in as an afterthought is callous. However, society has taught us that men make “tough business decisions” while women make sure that Timmy has all his clothes on for school, so the husband’s words feel less unfeeling and more “smart.” Men make objective decisions based in logic; women make emotional decisions and “follow their hearts,” just as Disney princesses have told her to do. Overall, without a single woman actually representing the insurance companies, it appeared this category backslid considerably.

9.3 Clothing

Clothing also saw an increase in June Cleaver Test failures from the previous decade, going from 20 percent in the 1990s (Table 5) to the 37.5 percent failure rate in

the 2000s (Table 6). However, it wasn't just the increased rate of failures that was disheartening, it was ads themselves. While the job variety in the 1990s in the Clothing category was anything but broad, the advertisements at least had women holding a few other positions aside from modeling. This came to a screeching halt in the 2000s. Of the 10 commercials that passed, all but 1 of the advertisements showed women as sexy models, nothing more. Companies, from Old Navy (2005) to Talbot's (2005), showed women walking out the latest trends in runway style. The only ad that did not feature a woman as a model was Macy's (2005), in which a woman worked as a sales representative in the women's clothing department. Again, women were not shown as buying clothing for their own enjoyment. They were seen strutting their stuff, the camera focusing on how well jeans fit their waste and butts and how shirts worked to frame the women's breasts. Clothing, for women, was an investment in their sexual objectification capital, a purchase that increased how likely a member of the opposite sex was to notice them, not something to buy to make themselves comfortable or for utility functions.

The commercials that failed in this category also managed to do so in ways that made one wonder what decade they had been produced. Perky, perfectly dressed women received gifts from their husbands (J.C. Penny, 2007), took the kids clothes shopping (Old Navy's Bermuda Shorts Sale, 2005), and did laundry for the clothes they had just bought (Cotton, 2005). Well-clad, sparkling smiled, domestic divas were the order of the day in these ads. In this category we also got to see an example of the "domestic dud dad" in a Burlington Coat Factory (2003), where a dad, while his wife and kids are out shopping, tries to clean and fix-up the house, only to ruin all the hard work his wife had already done in the process. Of course, she comes home from shopping, lets out a wistful

sigh, and immediately starts righting the wrongs he has created. The dad is basically an adult child whom the wife has just accepted she is going to have to take care of while doubling her own workload. Commercials such as this one go to help reaffirm the previously discussed study performed by Neuhaus (2013) of the “Funny Fathers” phenomena in media in which the research pointed out that men are often shown as incompetent parents, leaving the job entirely to the women to complete, despite the fact that fathers can be and should be just as competent at parenting as mothers.

9.4 Hygiene/Personal Care

The Hygiene/Personal Care category ran into its own kerfuffles. Despite having very similar sample sizes, The June Cleaver Test failure rate went up from 36.4 percent in the 1990s (Table 5) to, 46.7 percent in the 2000s (Table 6) by not meeting criteria 2 and showing women as having an occupation. As with the previous category, the majority of the Hygiene/Personal Care commercials that passed in the 2000s were due to featuring a sexy model (Garnier Fructise, 2005, Pantene Always Smooth, 2007, Jergen’s Natural Glow, 2005, etc.), again implying that women who purchase these items will immediately become more attractive, not that buying this products would improve their quality of life. There was a busy businesswoman worried about how her teeth looked in a 2005 Brush-Ups commercial and another woman concerned about going to a meeting at work with damp underarms in a 2005 Arrid Deodorant commercial, but aside from those, the commercials that passed showed women giving seductive looks as they tossed their hair over their shoulders or put lotion on long, shapely, bare legs. The most creative advertisers managed to get was having a model communing, inexplicably, with dolphins (Skintimate, 2000).

The commercials that failed The June Cleaver Test according to the third criteria did so for many of the same, lazy advertising, reasons that they had in previous decades. Moms smiled as they gave babies baths (Johnson's Buddies, 2005; Johnson's Head to Toe, 2005; Pampers, 2005), watched their toddlers at the park (Huggies, 2005) and worried about how many germs their little ones were exposed to (Dial Complete Soap, 2005). There was an interesting ad that blended both the vanity of the models and the domesticity of motherhood in a rather strange way, however. In 2005, Palmer's Cocoa Butter released a commercial in which a pregnant woman, worried about stretch marks, recommends rubbing her belly with the gelatinous substance every day to get rid of those unsightly marks brought on by carrying the equivalent of a county-fair-worthy watermelon in one's body. This was the first time in the commercials sampled where it seemed that the mothers were actually concerned about their appearance and how "sexy" they were. Most of the time, women who were mothers were seen as already perfect, with flawless makeup and adorable clothes already on. In this ad, however, they not only showed how "perfect mothers" were supposed to look, but instructed them on how they could keep themselves perfect, even after pregnancy. It was an odd turn, sexualizing mothers, and creating beauty standards so that even women who have given birth to babies had to be shamed into being physically flawless for the men in their lives.

9.5 Other

The Other category was one of the few categories that had a decreased June Cleaver Test failure rate from the previous decade (Appendix A: Table 2). The 1990s had a failure rate of 47.1 percent (Table 5) while the 2000s only had a 28.6 percent failure rate (Table 6). The 6 that failed mostly did so by showing women tending to the kids

(Disneyland, 2003), women jealously comparing kitchens (Fischer Homes Retirement Community, 2003) or nagging their husbands (Citi Premier Card, 2005). The Fischer Homes Retirement Community commercial was particularly distressing because it took the implied domestic competition of the housewife shaming ads, such as the Whisk (1978) and turned it into an open and blatant dialogue. Women weren't just being corrected by an unseen narrator about their domestic failures, they were correcting each other in person about what the successful domestic woman should look like and how her home should look. Those that passed, again, mostly did so by showing women in fairly stereotypical jobs. Women were receptionists (Howard Johnson's, 2000), nurses, but never doctors (University Hospitals Health System, 2005), and in an ad that was fairly reminiscent of the one from the 1990s, telephone sex operators (Love Links, 2005).

However, there were a few commercials that showed competent employed women in jobs that had not been noticed in previous samples. For instance, both the Washington Mutual (2005) and Charter One Bank (2005) showed women as bankers. There was also a woman loan representative (Advance America, 2005), real estate agent (ReMax, 2005) and museum tour guide (TIAA CREF Financial, 2005). These commercials all showed women as competent professionals, many of them even being able to handle money and decisions around money. Their occupations were never the butt of a joke, nor were they the ditzy office help, each woman looked and acted professionally. These representations of women are important because as Ozmete's (2009) research showed, the images that we see in the media are often assimilated into society. The more representations in the media that we have of women being competent

professionals, the more women will be perceived in the real world as being potentially competent as well.

9.6 Car Commercials

Car Commercials on the other hand were quite a different story than the progressive ads shown in the Other category. From the 1990s to the 2000s, The June Cleaver failure rate rose dramatically from 37.5 percent (Table 5) to 81.8 percent (Table 6) due to women not being shown in roles outside the home. Only two car commercials during the decade passed. Both the 2005 Prius and the Pontiac GT showed women on their way to work. In the Pontiac GT, the woman actually drove herself to work! This was the first time in the data collected where a woman drove herself somewhere that did not involve dropping off or picking up the kids or husband or was going to the grocery store. It took until 2005 for a woman to have somewhere independent of the hubby and kids to go, apparently.

There were 9 ads in the Car Commercials category that failed The June Cleaver Test. In the 2000s, car companies apparently wanted to take their advertising viewers and their families on an adventure, showing all the great places people could go if they could afford the rising gas prices. In these adventure scenarios, dad inevitably ended up driving, while mom did things like watched the kids by the lake (BMW 3 Series, 2005), helped the kids get ready for camping (Dodge, 2005) and set out the food for a picnic (Chrysler/Jeep, 2005). These Norman Rockwell-esque snapshots of Americana invariably showed the perfect little family; dad, mom and 2 to 3 kids, smiling as they are off in their new car to explore the amber waves of grain and purple mountain majesty that America had to offer. What these ads did not offer was a single chance for mom to drive, be on her

own, or be shown enjoying herself, instead she was in constant servitude to her domestic roles. Reminiscent of the 1978 Mr. Clean commercial where the mom cleans the vacation home while everyone else enjoys themselves, these ads placed the women in the same place, working while everyone else played and enjoying the work too. When mom was shown behind the wheel of the car, dad was never present and the mother was taxiing her children around. For instance, in a 2005 Saturn ad a mother is driving her toddler-aged daughter around commenting on this how this is the car that she and her husband decided on because it had a high safety test rating. At least the husband let his wife have some input on the car buying choice, right? Still it is extremely detrimental when the only time a wife is allowed to be the driver of a car in mass produced media such as this is when the husband is not around making her, by default, the driver. Now, there are women out there who truly do not enjoy driving, the author of this piece among them, but there are also a lot of competent women drivers who enjoy driving, but constantly find themselves at odds with men who, thanks to advertisements like these, show men as the default settings driver. An article by Green (2013) explored the “men always drive” concept in detail. Despite the fact that women have been repeatedly proven to be on par in driving ability with men and are often equal financial owners in the vehicle, men are far more often to be seen driving, not only in the media but out in the real world as well. This is even true in families where the woman is the primary breadwinner, the men still drive. The author points out that driving has become attached to masculinity so much so that, to some extent, the very act of a woman driving with her male companion in the car can be considered “emasculating.” The one exception the author noted to this is when women and men go out together and the woman is the designated driver so that her male

significant other can drink. Not to belabor the point, but we have socialized the idea of men being drivers to the point where it has become intrinsically linked with their masculinity and the only time that a woman driver is not being seen as “emasculating” is if she tampers her own enjoyment of an evening in favor of letting her male significant other have all the fun. In an endless loop the media reinforces the “men drive” idea, while society accepts it, further reinforcing the media’s idea that that is who they should be showing driving, even though males driving is in no, way, shape or form a “natural state” or “biological imperative.” Instead women are relegated to the passenger seat to protect the societally and media reinforced male ego.

9.7 Grocery/Department Stores

Surprisingly, considering the overall picture provided by the numbers (Appendix A: Table 2), the Grocery/Department Store failure rate of The June Cleaver Test dropped from 66.7 percent in the 1990s (Table 5) to 53.8 percent in the 2000s (Table 6). Of the ads that met the second requirement of The June Cleaver Test women were either models (Kauffman’s, 2005 & Target, 2005) or worked in the store, (Walmart, 2003, Walmart, 2007, etc.). There wasn’t a single commercial that showed a woman with a job outside of working in the store they were advertising, meaning that you never saw a delivery truck driver (which were seen) or a harried businesswoman running in to grab something. However, there was one progressive upswing that came out of this bunch, and surprisingly it came from a 2004 Walmart commercial.

This is surprising because Walmart has had a patchy history with discrimination against their women employees, as shown by the 2012 lawsuit in which 1,975 women from 48 states across the country sued for pay discrimination and the lack of upward

mobility they noted in comparison to their male coworkers (Hines, 2012). But before the tidal wave of lawsuits hit Walmart like a tsunami of justice, the company released a commercial in which one of their managers talked about why they enjoyed working at Walmart. This is important because the manager interviewed was a woman. Jeeves, pull the cord and let the ticker tape and balloons rain down! Out of more than a thousand commercials viewed at this juncture, this was the first one in which a woman was identified as being in a managerial position. Of course, the fact that this was the first one, in the year 2004, 34 years after the first advertisement for this study was documented is part of the problem. When women are not shown in managerial positions repeatedly to mass audiences, whether they hold them out in the real world or not, it normalizes the idea that women should hold lower positions. It sounds strange to say that depicting a woman as a Walmart manager was a blow against the glass ceiling, but if there are no depictions of women in leadership positions, it takes a lot more effort to convince the society one lives in that she belongs there (Cohen & Huffman, 2007).

Of course there were still 7 commercials that failed, and mostly for the same reasons, which even to the reader at this point must be getting a bit tired of witnessing.¹⁵ Women were shown shopping for their families at Ralph's Supermarket (2005), Walmart (2005), Levin Furniture (2005), etc. In the sample of failed commercials there was another excellent example of a "domestic dud dad." In a 2002 Circuit City commercial a wife watches in vain as her husband attempts to pack for the family vacation. He stuffs and crams things with the wild abandon of a child given espresso, until, uh-oh, he's

¹⁵ The reader should just be glad that she or he did not have to sit and watch all the commercials him or herself.

broken the family camcorder. Of course, the wife knows just what to do to solve his absent-minded accident; she gets a new one, along with several other vacation necessities from Circuit City. The day is saved and the wife packs the rest of the bags for their family vacation so that she doesn't have to shell out another few hundred bucks to replace yet another camcorder.

Again, the “domestic dud dad” is not empowering for women *or* men. It shows men as dolts, who can't even handle the simplest task without handholding. This depiction reduces grown, adult, men to the level of the toddler who flings flour over the kitchen while mom stands by giggling at the adorable mess he's made. For women, this means that the onus of all household responsibilities falls on her shoulders. June Cleaver can't give up domestic duties because Ward will burn the entire house down if left to his own inept devices. It's a bad deal all the way around, as Neuhaus (2013) demonstrated for both men and women.

9.8 Entertainment/Technology

The Entertainment/Technology also saw a bit of a drop in the number of ads that failed from the previous decade. In the 1990s 55 percent failed to meet the second criteria of The June Cleaver Test (Table 5), while that number had dropped to 48.4 percent in the 2000s (Table 6). Of all the categories sampled in this decade, this one showed women in the widest variety of positions, and not all of them were the stereotypical jobs women might have either. Of course, you still had the schoolteachers (Leap Pad, 2005), nurses (Gameboy Advance, 2001), saleswomen (T-Mobile, 2005) and a cleaning lady (Verizon, 2005), because stereotypes wouldn't be stereotypes if they didn't persist. However, there were a lot of jobs that had not been seen in previous samples. Women were dog walkers

(AT&T/Cingular Merger, 2005), lifeguards (Swimming Champion Barbie, 2000), tech support technicians (Dell, 2003) and a movie director (Kodak V550, 2005).

While all these new occupational roles women were shown as being competent in were a good step, there was one more step that was so close to being progressive before it took a nosedive right back into objectification. In 2001 another rendition of the popular video game Mario Kart was released. The commercial featured the various animated characters racing along a track that was based in the real world. At one point the racers hit a hard corner and zoom past a woman tow truck driver. Before we can get too excited about seeing a mechanically inclined woman, however, it should be noted that she had long bleach-blonde hair that flowed across her shoulders, strategically places dirt smudges and tight overalls that somehow managed to accentuate both her rear end and her breasts. In this Mario Kart ad we have yet another “sexy occupational woman.” While, she technically had a job as a tow truck driver, her efficacy at the job was questionable, not only because of her manicured nails, but the fact that it was likely that her overalls would have cut off circulation if she had to bend over to attach a tow hook to a car. Again, by sexually objectifying a woman by making her the “sexy” version of whatever profession she’s supposed to have demeans her ability to do her job. If one’s car broke down and the male tow truck driver who showed up was wearing tight overalls, a myriad of make-up and enough bronzer to almost turn him into a statue, one might question his ability to do his job effectively.

Those that failed The June Cleaver Test by meeting the third requirement of only showing women in a domestic role in this category ranged from typical to creepy. On the typical end, moms held their daughter’s hands crossing the street (Yoshi’s Island, 2002),

received a phone from their husband, who conveniently forgot to mention he got a two-phones-for-one deal, for Mother's Day (Verizon, 2003) and mom's cooking dinner while watching TV (Comcast On-Demand, 2005). On the other end of the spectrum, however, were ads like the string of ads produced by Sony's Walkman. In these ads a Sony Walkman, which has been transformed into a humanoid male creature, deals with women in a variety of situations. In all of them these, extremely attractive, women were inexplicably drawn to the short male creation. In a 2000 Walkman commercial, for instance, a woman, who identifies herself as the Walkman's girlfriend, urges him to get ready to go. In the background is a messy bed with various clothes strewn about, the implication being a night of fun that would be extremely awkward to do with one's CD player. In all of these ads the women were basically objectified themselves by having a relationship, and thereby linking themselves, to this object, a product. The woman was putting herself on the same emotional and consumable level as a CD player. The commercials, of which there were several, were both bizarre and dehumanizing.

9.9 Pharmaceuticals

Pharmaceuticals saw a pretty significant rise in failures of The June Cleaver Test by not showing women as having a role outside the home from the previous decade. In the 1990s the failure rate had been 47.1 percent (Table 5) in the 2000s it had steeply risen to 66.7 percent (Table 6). The 6 commercials that passed did not set any new progressive records. We got to see a sassy waitress in a 2000 Gas-X commercial. In a 2005 Cancer Association of America ad displayed a woman receptionist at a doctor's office, where you also got to see over 10 doctors depicted, not a single one of whom were women. Then, in 2005 Motrin gave a demonstration of what a headache felt like by having a

female “construction worker” sledgehammer through a wall. “Construction worker” is in quotes because the woman pounding through the drywall was not wearing a hard hat, since that would have messed up her flowing hair, and was in a tank-top so tight it looked like it might be cutting off circulation to her arms. The “sexy occupation” strikes again. Women, again, held either very stereotypical jobs only allowed to women as they did not threaten the male jobs, or were sexually objectified.

Again in this decade viewers witnessed moms galore treating little kids’ injuries (Neosporin, 2000), giving their kids vitamins (Flintstone’s Vitamins, 2005) and treating sick little ones (Nasonex, 2005). Women shown solely as wives also made a strong appearance by giving their husbands medications (Tylenol PM, 2005), talking about how Cialis fixed their husbands’ ED (2004) and even greeting their husbands at the door as they came home from work in true June Cleaver style (Airborne, 2005). This decade again also failed at showing a single man taking care of either his sick children or wife. In advertisements that were not coded due to not meeting criteria 1 of The June Cleaver Test by not including a woman, hardworking men took medications so that they could continue to work through illness or get better so they could return to work. Men took medication to benefit themselves, where women administered medication to help others. Unlike the 1988 Hall’s cough drop ads, even in the ads that passed The June Cleaver Test, women were not shown benefitting from medication so they could power through their days. After all, women didn’t have to power through anything, because they weren’t working, they were at home, right?

9.10 Household Goods

Household Goods, which not surprisingly consistently had one of the highest June Cleaver Test failure rates by singularly showing women in domestic roles across the decades (Appendix A: Table 2), also had an increase in the failure rate from the 1990s (Table 5) to the 2000s (Table 6). Despite having the same category sample size of 19 in both decades, the 2000s failed 84.2 percent, which is up from the 1990s failure rate of 78.2 percent.

The 3 ads that passed did so by having women as a representative/spokeswoman for toilet paper (Quilted Northern, 2005), a woman as a “bagging coach” instructing people how to properly stash food in bags (GLAD, 2003) and as a restaurant owner talking about the best way to keep her floors clean (Bissel Vacuum, 2005). The bagging coach one was a tad ridiculous and difficult to code, as there is no such real occupation as a “bagging coach,” but the connotation of the advertisement was that this was, indeed, her paying job. One of the people she was coaching even commenting that she was the best around, like there were others. This is why this one was coded to pass, because, as fictitious as the job was, it was at least framed as a job. However, in all 3 of these examples the fact that a woman has a job is a bit beside the point. The fact is, is that all 3 of these women had jobs that once again cast them in the light of “domestic expert.” The restaurant owner wasn’t shown being business savvy, she was showing that she expertly knew which vacuum would keep a floor the cleanest. Had the restaurant owner been a big burly man talking about which vacuum he thought was best, people would probably question why he was focusing so much attention on that aspect of his business. Where was the attention to the quality of ingredients, the chefs he hired or that the wait staff was

well trained? But a woman restaurant owner, of course she would talk about a vacuum, she's a woman isn't she? Then, of course, there was the toilet paper spokeswoman. Who better to recommend toilet paper than a woman who will stand there talking about how soft and durable it is? Again, though this woman had a job, she was still framed as a domestic expert. The made up "bagging coach" was yet another example of "expert domesticity." After all, don't get mad, get GLAD, and then possibly thunk your head against the wall in frustration a few times. Again, this stereotype of women being the only domestic divas greatly harms the image of men having any efficacy in the home and firmly plants the woman as the one who *should* be doing such things, even at her actual job!

If those were the best depictions of occupational women that this category could muster, it is not hard to imagine how the rest of the sample ended up. Women did mass amounts of laundry (ALL Detergent, 2005), debated whether they should use a mop or a new Swiffer as if she were debating deep philosophical quandaries (2007) and vacuumed the house while her husband and kids all got in a nap (Hoover Vacuum, 2005). The lack of family involvement in these chores was rather discouraging. While kids played and husbands sat in recliners, wives washed windows (Windex, 2005) and wandered around freshening the air with Oust (2005), smiling as if these activities were the highlights of their domestic lives. This sample also rendered yet another example of a "domestic dud dad." In a 2005 Glade Plug-Ins ad a husband can't figure out, despite his best sleuthing skills, how his wife manages to keep the house smelling nice. The commercial ends with the woman showing him how to use a Glade Plug-In. This is an insult to men everywhere (Neuhaus, 2013), much like the directions on a chainsaw that reads, "Do not attempt to

stop chain with hand.” The husband was literally too dumb to take something out of a box and plug it into a wall and had to be shown by his wife how to accomplish this mysterious task. It’s a miracle he remembered to put his underwear on before his pants. Of course as the Rider’s Jeans (1993) commercial showed, his smiling helpful wife could have helped him with that too. Overall, this sample had all the progressive notions of a Victorian era corset.

9.11 Food

Food was one of the few categories in the 2000s sample to see a slight decrease in The June Cleaver Test failure rate by showing women in a profession, dropping to 51.2 percent from the 1990s 56.7 percent. However, there was a steep increase among the commercials that passed by using women as sexual pairings with food products. In a Bicardi Rum (2005) commercial two models get soaked in rum and then proceed to suggestively dance with every man in a five-mile radius. Advertisers in the 2000s took the “sex sells” adage to heart as models, wearing what could possibly be described as “clothing,” also slowly and seductively ate sandwiches (7-11, 2006), were followed by a group of desperate looking men on a beach while drinking Diet Pepsi (2000), and danced in strip clubs (Coor’s Lite, 2005) among others. The hope of the advertisers is that advertisements such as these will make viewers lust after the product as much as they lust over the models in the advertisements, but frame it in a “look, women are powerful because people desire them” way. However, desire does not equal empowerment as McRobbie (2009) discussed. What this does is it creates a “consumable person,” and object that can be bought or sold just like the items she is paired with. Just like the

sandwich being slowly eaten, the woman throwing seductive looks at the camera is reduced to the level of the object she is consuming.

The vast majority of the commercials that passed The June Cleave Test in this category for the 2000s showed women either working the front counter/drive thru (McDonald's, 2001, Burger King, 2000, Subway, 2005, Arby's, 2002, etc.) or working as waitresses (Applebee's, 2002, Denny's, 2005, Steak 'N Shake, 2005, etc.) as they had in past decades. Again in this decade there wasn't a single woman shown in a managerial position at any of these eateries. By contrast, if there was a manager shown, such as in the 2002 Applebee's commercial, the manager was always male. Another point of interest, particularly in fast food restaurants, was that when one of these places passed the test it was always because a woman worked at the establishment in question. Never was a woman seen coming in to a restaurant with some other occupation. If she was in the establishment and not working there, then she had her kids in tow, because no woman could have a job, conceivably outside the food service industry in these ads. By contrast, men were often shown coming in to order food from a variety of occupations. For instance, in McDonald's ads lone men coming in to order burgers could be fishermen (2000), basketball players (2001) or construction workers (2000), but you would never see a professional woman ordering at the counter, just taking orders behind the counter.

The other prospective jobs for women in this category weren't particularly liberating. In two separate commercials, one for Cheeto's (2000) and another for Wendy's (2005) showed women as the "charming assistant" (i.e. Vanna White) to a male game show host. Women were seen in office settings, but mostly busily, and often grumpily, scarfing food down (Wendy's, 2005, International Delight Coffee Creamer,

2005 & McDonald's, 2003). Oftentimes these women were portrayed as people you would not want to be or be around, because obviously a working woman is an unhappy woman. There was one advertisement that showed a woman in a meeting, but the only ones speaking in said meeting were male (Lime Coca Cola, 2005). By and large, however, the jobs women had were either directly tied to the food industry in an entry-level capacity, were heavily sexualized, were provided stereotypical jobs for women to have or showed the women miserable at work. None of these options provides women viewers with a progressive view of what being a woman in the workforce could potentially look like.

Of course, this leaves the commercials that failed, and failed en masse they did. Aside from the typical moms giving snacks to their children (Goldfish, 2005), grocery shopping with kids in tow (Life Cereal, 2005) and making sure that their babies got their proper nutrition (Carnation Follow-Up, 2000), women also had a serious attitude adjustment. In a majority of ads, women were still shown dancing about, happily cooking for their husbands and families. However, in growing numbers, women were shown in Food commercials as grumpy, whiny or nagging. Women pestered their husbands to not ramble (Domino's Pizza, 2005), harassed their husbands to eat more salad (Jack in the Box, 2005) and refused to leave the bathroom after a bad hair dye job until their husbands bribe them with a quasi-expensive dinner (Outback Steakhouse, 2003). In a 2000 McDonald's commercial a man is shown being dropped off by his wife for a day of fishing. She is obviously not happy that he is going fishing as she grumpily drives off. The man angrily walks over to the dock and sets up for fishing, placing his McDonald's breakfast sandwich on the dock next to him. The water bubbles and suddenly there is a

loud “crunch” as some kind of water monster takes a chomp out of the dock where the sandwich sat. The man gets a conniving smirk on his face and the next scene you see is the wife sitting on the dock as the husband hands her a McDonald’s breakfast sandwich, the water bubbling ominously as she sits there obliviously eating. See, it’s funny because his nagging, awful, terrible wife who was, admittedly, willing to drive him fishing in the first place, gets eaten by a monster. Isn’t it funny? Oh, it’s ruined once the joke is explained? Huh, funny how that works.

The problem with showing women as nagging, whiny or unpleasant creatures, is that it lends a negative connotation to women having any emotion other than perky or happy. As human beings, women are allowed to be upset, frustrated and annoyed, even women who are married. By showing women having these emotions as being problems, even problems worthy of a silly lake monster death, it gives the viewers the idea that women should not be allowed to have these emotions, because if they do, then there is something wrong with them. Not with whatever situation they may be in, not because their husband insists on going fishing when the wife may have been doing everything for him that week and just wants a break herself, no, the problem is in the woman herself. This further promotes the June Cleaver stereotype of women constantly being in a state of happiness, whatever their lot, or laundry pile, looks like. Furthermore, it creates a covert sense that we should condone violence against women. She was being grumpy with the poor man who only wanted to fish? He should be able to punish her for her bad attitude, should he not? Actually, the answer to that, in case it wasn’t clear, is no. Women have emotions, and those emotions should not be demonized or punished just because they might be inconvenient for the men in their lives.

There was one commercial that showed a father cooking. Of course, it was for Campbell's Soup (2000), which meant he just put something on the stove. Regardless of the ease of his culinary masterpiece, the family as a whole is astounded that he managed the task without burning the house to the ground. "Domestic dud dad" strikes again. Overall, for such a modern decade, the Food commercials sampled provided in these ads was far from what one could call positive.

9.12 Decade Summation

Of course, across multiple categories, the dad was allowed to be competent with the grill. In a perfect rehash of "Mom Cooks, Dad Grills," Johnsonville Bratwursts (2000), Lowe's (2005) and K-Mart (2005) all showed men expertly grilling meat in sunny backdoor scenes, while the wife put the rest of their outdoor meal together. It should be noted that not once in 5 decades of commercials, did a woman ever operate a grill herself, firmly rooting this activity in the male realm and making it the one domestic activity that men could consistently competently complete.

Also the toy commercials encouraging girls towards marriage and motherhood did not diminish either. There were several, very pink, commercials that were not coded due to a lack of adult female involvement. For instance, in 2000 bedtime Krissy was released in which little girls could use Barbies new "rocking action" to rock baby Krissy to sleep. Then in 2001, Stroll and Play Barbie was released, with a stroller that Barbie could take multiple babies to places like the park or clothing shopping with. Not once was there an ad for little boys that had to do with any domestic activities. The closest the boys ads came to "practical home skills" was when a toy car came with a little toolset to "fix"

parts of the engine or body. The reinforcing of strict gender roles through advertising (Ozmete, 2009), strikes again.

Overall, not only did the rate of commercials that passed in the 2000s decrease from the previous decade (Appendix A: Table 2), but more and more commercials showed women in a negative light. Even when they were employed, with extremely rare exception, they were either shown as incompetent, grumpy, in entry-level positions or heavily sexualized and objectified, sometimes all at the same time. It is as if advertisers in the 2000s saw June Cleaver starting to leave her kitchen in the 1990s and gave her an ultimatum, “Either you get back in that kitchen, or we’ll fit you into the tightest dress you can imagine and make you dance for your wage.” June Cleaver started to climb that ladder, only to be pushed back several rungs by lazy stereotypes and heavy-handed labeling once again.

10. THE 2010S, JUNE CLEAVER IS SO NOT ON FLEEK

“We cannot all succeed if half of us are held back.”

-Malala Yousafzai, 2013

So where does feminism in the world sit today? It is undoubtedly true that women have come a long way from where we were 50 years ago. Modern women have benefitted no end from the struggles and cultural battles won by their predecessors. Musicians and artists have made powerful pro-feminist statements, such as when Beyoncé marched on stage in 2014 with a giant lit sign that read “FEMINIST” blazing behind her (Bennett, 2014). Women feminist activists are receiving notoriety for their work, an excellent example being women’s educational activist Malala Yousafzai who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 (Topping, 2014). And women are speaking out against global injustices against women are receiving more notice worldwide, like when in 2014 actress Emma Watson addressed the United Nations calling for more global unification behind fighting women’s oppression (Robinson, 2014).

However, even these modern champions of women’s rights and power know that the fight for equality is not nearly completed. As longtime women’s advocate Gloria Steinem said in a 2010 interview, “We now have legal tools and ways of organizing we didn’t have before. If it took a century to get legal identity as human beings for women of all races and men of color in the abolitionist suffragist era, and now we’re striving for legal equality, I would say we are 30 or 40 years into a century (Zhao, 2010, p. 1).” The work is not yet finished, and in many ways, as a society we may have backslid. Unfortunately, the 2010s data under the scrutiny of The June Cleaver Test has not

reflected the progress that the feminists in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s had hoped for

(Table 7):

Table 7: Early 2010s June Cleaver Test Commercial Results (2015-2016)

Category	Total Number	Pass	Fail	Percentage That Fail
Household Goods	24	4	20	83.3%
Grocery/Department Stores	18	4	14	77.8%
Food	44	19	25	56.8%
Sports	7	3	4	57.1%
Insurance	21	9	12	57.1%
Pharmaceuticals	31	14	17	54.8%
Other	31	14	17	54.8%
Car Commercials	20	9	11	55%
Clothing	9	5	4	44.4%
Entertainment/Technology	27	17	10	37%
Hygiene/Personal Care	18	13	5	27.8%
Totals	250	111	139	55.6%

A quick reminder to the reader before further discussion of this decade proceeds; the collection of the 2010 data was slightly different than the data collected in previous decades. Since the data was collected from the current era, the commercials were garnered by watching TV and internet commercials as they came on in certain relevant time slots. This means that the commercials were gathered in 2015 and the first half of 2016 so that The June Cleaver Test pass and failure rates could be also charted through viewing mediums and times, a luxury that could not be afforded previous generations without the aid of a flux capacitor and a specially modified DeLorean. As such, this chapter will cover both the categories and the time slots in how they relate to the findings.

Overall, the 2010s commercials failed The June Cleaver Test by not showing women outside of a domestic role 55.6 percent of the time (Table 7), this is up 3.6 percent from the 2000s failure rate of 52 percent (Table 6), and 2.4 percent lower than the failure rate in the 1970s of 58 percent (Table 3). It should also be noted that 8 out of 11 categories had a failure rate above 50 percent. By comparison in the 1970s only 7 categories failed at 50 percent or above and in the 1990s only 4 categories passed that mark (Appendix A: Table 2). The raw data does not bode well for the modern age. The results of how and why commercials in the 2010s failed, however, were widely variant.

10.1 Sports

The Sports category, the largest sample collected for the category thus far, showed a 57.14 percent failure rate of The June Cleaver Test by only showing women in a domestic light (Table 7). However, there were some improvements in the ways women were portrayed across the category, pass or fail. Commercials that passed included women actively participating in sports activities, such as FitBit (2015) where a woman was seen as a serious runner, not just a scantily clad woman running and Cabela's (2015) which showed a woman hunting. Both of these ads represented women as being serious about their athletic endeavors and did not try to objectify them. Another important trend that actually crossed over between those that passed and those that failed was that women were being noticed as invested sports fans, and not just of the Olympics. In a NFL Rivalry commercial (2015), a woman judge and Browns fan is seen trash talking a hot dog peddler and Raiders fan.¹⁶ In 3 of the ads that failed, every woman was shown as a mother, but a mother who was also a serious sports fan. For instance in a NFL Sunday

¹⁶ This is particularly impressive considering the Browns' terrible football record.

Football commercial (2015), a woman is shown holding her baby, both of whom are decked out in her favorite team's gear, while mocking her husband, who is decked out in another team's gear, as his team loses. While these women were undeniably domestic, these commercials gave them a bit more progressive purchase by allowing them to not only exist in, but be recognized as serious fans of football, which has traditionally been a man's realm. At the same time, however, looking at this from an advertiser's perspective, it is also clear that the NFL saw a way to spread its merchandising through the entire family by marketing things like Greenbay Packers onesies to moms, so I would suggest withholding that high five or fist bump for the merchandisers who simply realized they had a new way to make money.

The only commercial out of this category that felt like it had traces of a *Leave it to Beaver* episode was another NFL commercial (2015) that showed a wife nagging her husband because he was watching sports and she wanted him to help her with housework. How dare she demand he be an equal partner in the relationship? The expectation this commercial provided was that the woman should be happily doing the housework and leave her poor husband alone so he can watch men in spandex and helmets crash into each other. Overall, though, the Sports commercials, even the ones that failed, showed a surprising trend of being slightly more respectful towards women.

10.2 Insurance

Insurance commercials showed a surge of activity, with the highest sample of them provided thus far at 21 included (Table 7). Insurance companies, in a much more competitive market, have decidedly moved away from the old standard of flashing information on a screen while an old-sounding man talks about the policies. Instead

insurance companies, for the past couple of decades, moved into a time of humor and catch phrases to garner viewers' attention. In the 2010s particularly, insurance commercials also became a lot more people focused.

The commercials that failed The June Cleaver Test by embracing criteria 3 and showing women in domestic forms did so in the same stereotypical fashion shown in the previous 4 decades. Women were shown grocery shopping for their families (Nationwide, 2015), as mothers of creepy looking, python-owning, sons (State Farm, 2015) or jealous ex-girlfriends attacking the bride at a wedding (Geico, 2016). However, there was one commercial that, although it failed The June Cleaver Test by showing a woman as only a wife taking care of kids, did something unique. In the commercial a mother looks out the window to make sure her kids are playing safely in the back yard, and as she does so she talks about why she chose Esurance (2015) as the insurance to protect her, her husband, and their kids. Wait a minute and let that sink in. A woman made the choice about the insurance her family was going to use. It took 5 decades, but finally, a woman made the choice about what insurance to buy! Sadly, the other 11 commercials in the category that failed only showed women as secondary, women who were happy to smile and nod while their husbands made all the insurance decisions. The vast majority of the commercials in this category showed women paternalistically (Dworkin, 1975) being taken care of by their husbands who obviously knew best. Yet, at least seeing one woman making the decision was a sign of progress.

Of the commercials that passed The June Cleaver Test in the Insurance category by showing a woman in a role outside the home, the variance was again wide between progressive displays of occupational womanhood and examples that made one want to

stop watching TV altogether. On the stereotypical side, women were shown as nurses (American Family Insurance, 2015), beauty queens (Esurance, 2015) and reality show contestants (Progressive, 2015). However, there were ads that showed women in occupations like TSA Agents (Progressive, 2015) and as bored employees at work being serenaded by Europe's song *The Final Countdown* (Geico, 2015).¹⁷ Overall, some progress was made, but the exceptions still did not outweigh the rule.

10.3 Clothing

Clothing saw an increase in the failure rate from the previous decade, with clothing only failing The June Cleaver Test 37.5 percent of the time in the 2000s (Table 6) to clothing failing 44.4 percent of the time in the 2010s (Table 7). Unfortunately for the clothing category, there was no new progressive saving grace on either the failing or passing side as there had been in the Sports and Insurance categories. The commercials that failed mostly showed women helping family members buy clothing (Burlington Coat Factory, 2015, Kohl's, 2015, etc.) and when they passed it was mostly due to women being shown as clothing models (Ross, 2015, Macy's, 2015, etc.). The only commercial that did not show one of those two options was for The Good Feet Store (2015) in which a woman talked about her chronic foot pain and how the orthopedic shoes helped her. This was the only commercial in the entire sample from this time period that showed a woman buying clothing for her own enjoyment, or in this case, comfort and health. In the other commercials from this sample the advertisements invited women to "upgrade their look" by buying clothing. By extension, women buying clothing for their families were also encouraged to help their families out by making them the most "trendy" or "cute" family

¹⁷ Oh how far Europe has fallen.

out there. It was an odd turn that not only the women had to look good, but now it was the woman's task as well to make sure that her kids and husband were well-dressed. After all, if little Timmy is wearing *last* season's t-shirt instead of *this* season's t-shirt, then you are a disgrace as a mother. Keeping the family up with fashion trends is apparently another responsibility June Cleaver gets to add to her second shift (Walzer, 1996). It wasn't exactly groundbreaking material.

10.4 Other

The Other category saw not only a large leap in the rate of failures in the June Cleaver Test by not meeting the second criteria, but also saw an increase in the sample size. In the 2000s there were 21 commercials in the Other category that failed 28.6 percent of the time (Table 6), in the 2010s there were 31 commercials that failed 54.84 percent of the time (Table 7). The commercials in the Other category for 2010s were by far the most diverse in subject matter with everything from ads from the Navy (2015) to Devry (Online) University (2015).

Unlike the Sports category previously mentioned in this chapter, the ads that failed in the Other category did so without any nod of respect towards the women in them. Women were shown as a housewife worried about home security until a male technician comes and installs her new ADT system (2015), moms taking their kids through Seaworld (2015) and mothers going out to their mailboxes surrounded by a gaggle of children (U.S. Postal Service, 2015). Women were seen as bright pillars of motherhood and wifehood without a single nod to their personalities or thoughts as an individual, perfectly happy to be taken care of by the men in their lives, whether they be husbands or security system technicians. The ADT security commercial particularly stuck

out for one main reason: It is an excellent example of the “damsel in distress” notion that women are a weaker sex that must be kindly protected by men. The commercial features a woman, terrified by the prospect of someone breaking into her house at night complete with a night scene, ominous shadows included, calling upon a security specialist who swoops in and installs what the commercial labels as, “Peace of mind.” The idea of installing a security system is far from being odd, but it was unnecessarily framed with the lone, scared woman. Take for instance, the opposite: What if a man heard a scary noise outside his window? What would we culturally expect of him? If we go with the stereotypes, then we would expect him to grab a baseball bat or a gun and save himself. The idea of watching a woman security system technician comforting the terrified man as she made sure the window alarm worked just doesn’t have the same “savior” vibe because we expect men to be tough and women to be in need of saving. Of course, the advertisement has to feature the defenseless woman, even though, in reality, security systems protect men and women equally. ADT, installing security systems and paternalized representations of women to bring you “Peace of mind.”

Those that passed, on the other hand, did show women in a variety of professions. Disneyland (2015) showed women as costumed villains, while not exactly flattering it was at least a job. XQ (2015) showed women as astronauts, much more progressive. Golberg and Osborne Law Offices (2015) had one of their many branches represented by a female lawyer! Also, in the 2010s favor, there wasn’t a single commercial for a phone-sex hotline. Then again, with the proliferation of internet porn the whole “call a sexy

lady” bit might be about as obsolete as floppy discs and 8-track tapes.¹⁸ However, there was a commercial for Match.com (2015) showing attractive women wanting to meet single men, but at least they were fully clothed! Yay progress?

10.5 Hygiene/Personal Care

Hygiene/Personal Care was one of the few categories to see a decline in the failure rate of The June Cleaver test, by not meeting criteria 2, from the previous decade going from 46.7 percent in the 2000s (Table 6) to 27.78 percent today (Table 7). But hold off on calling out the marching band, because it’s about to rain on that parade. Starting with the handful that failed, commercials for products like Luvs (multiple Luvs commercials coded), Crest, Huggies (2015), etc. showed women en masse taking care of babies. The only commercial where a mother wasn’t shown smiling as she changed a poopy diaper or tried to convince her kids to actually brush their teeth was one of the Luvs commercials. The commercial starts out with a mom and her first child, the mom being super careful as she only allows someone else to hold her baby after they have sanitized their entire person. The next scene shows the same mother with 2 kids now who, apparently having learned that not everything would kill her child, without a second thought hands the baby off to a dirt covered mechanic as she frantically digs in her purse for a pen. This was probably the most realistic depiction of a mother with kids that had been coded yet. Mom wasn’t perky, happy or enjoying her duties with the optimism of Tinkerbell on crack like the moms in the other diaper ads, she was just trying to get through her busy day with kids in tow. This is important because showing moms living the motherhood experience and not just “performing” an idealized model of motherhood,

¹⁸ For any pre-Millennials reading this, Google will help that line make sense to you.

as Goffman (1959) would have posited, allows for more societal freedom for women. This gives representational permission for moms to be both competent and not perfect, an aspect which was wholly missing in previous noted commercials. The mom was not shamed for being harried or cautious with her kids, she was getting the car repaired with kids in tow, which takes a bit of logistical juggling. As for the rest of these advertisements, while it was comforting to see children being taken care of again by human beings instead of left to their own devices, it was less heartening that all of those human beings were perfectly dressed and smiling mothers, without a stray mascara line to denote that her little one had just spent all night intermittently screaming.

The ads that passed, however, weren't exactly what one would call progressive either. Models paraded their luscious locks for brands like Tresemme and Pantene, talked about their pores for Garnier Clean Plus and slathered lotion on long, shapely legs for Cetaphil (2015). The most progressive a commercial from this category got was for GUM (2015), which featured a woman dentist. "Finally, a woman medical professional who is not a nurse!" one might cheer, until one realizes that she is talking about the health of children's teeth, which of course, with children involved, puts it in the realm of "womanhood," much like the policewoman in the 1995 Kindervision commercial. The implication is women can step into the male realm, when the male realm somehow collides with a topic we assume is naturally in the women's realm, such as children. Sure June, you can be anything you want, so long as you can figure out a way to tie it back in to your domestic duties. So while there was a drop in failures, there wasn't really a rise in progressivity either.

10.6 Car Commercials

Car Commercials was another of the few areas that saw a decrease in the failure rate of The June Cleaver Test from the 2000s (Table 6) to the 2010s (Table 7). In fact, the failure rate dropped rather significantly from 81.8 percent to 55 percent in the space of a decade (Appendix A: Table 2). There were quite a few more car saleswomen shown in this decade than in previous ones. Companies like Toyota, Kia, AutoNation and Chevy (2015) all showed women selling and representing cars, and most of them were dressed comparably to their male counterparts, not sexualized. Then again, there were also car commercials like the 2015 BMW commercial that compared its vehicle to a model, who then drove it sitting in an inexplicably uncomfortable, yet sexy, pose as she did so. It is tempting to try and give the commercial points for having a woman drive, but considering her whole job was to be linked as a sex object with the car, it just can't quite be justified. Women were also compared to cars in other ways, however. A Lexus commercial from the same year showed a woman running a race and winning. The ad flashes between her run and a speeding Lexus, the attempt to show both the power and beauty of both. Had the advertisement stuck to the "powerful" angle, instead of also making the beauty comparison, this commercial would have been a progressive slam dunk. However, the way the woman is shot on camera not only shows her as a strong runner, but focuses in on her tight abs, her round butt and bouncing breasts in a way that also focuses on her as an object of sexual desire. If we were to syntagmatically swap the woman out for a running man, we can see how this would be problematic. If we were shown an image of a man, with perfect eyeliner, running a race, but the camera traces his body as he runs, stopping on his butt and comparing his sleek beautiful design to that of a

car, we would be confused. This is because while “power” can easily be associated with men, the idea of them also being beautiful objects of desire is not as easy a leap.

Handsome, maybe, but beautiful, not as much. In this way, having the woman seen as a symbol of beauty in this commercial, takes away a bit from the power that she has from being a professional runner.

Those that did not pass The June Cleaver Test did so for, what are now, very familiar stereotypical reasons. Mazda, Nissan, Hyundai Genesis and the Buick Convertible (2015), among others, all showed women sitting happily in the passenger seat, usually with kids in the back, as the husband/father drove. In the Buick Convertible commercial a new bride even tosses her bouquet as she climbs into the car headed off on a life of marital bliss. It appears that when *Leave it to Beaver* went off the air, the show’s writers may have found jobs writing commercials.

10.7 Entertainment/Technology

Entertainment/Technology also saw a bit of a decrease in The June Cleaver failure rate between decades, going from 48.4 percent failing in the 2000s (Table 6) to 37 percent in the 2010s (Table 7). Before chants of “U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!” erupt, there are a few things that should be put into context. A majority of the technology companies, like Cox (2015) and Spotify (2015), that showed women as employed, did not show them employed by the company themselves, oftentimes these were just generic women at generic office jobs. There were of course some exceptions where women did actually work for the technology based company advertised (Dish Network & AT&T, 2015), but those were few and far between. This is disappointing, because the message sent by an overwhelming number of male representatives in these technology based commercials is,

“We think men would do a better job than women working in these positions.” Even when women had jobs, it wasn’t always a flattering portrayal. For instance in a Cox Home Internet commercial (2015), a woman is upset with her realtor because her new house doesn’t have as fast of an internet connection as the old house did. She states that she needs the high speed internet for her doll house furniture business and since she can’t get it, she wants to return the entire house she just bought, like a sweater in the wrong size or a dysfunctional toaster oven, only much, much bigger. The realtor then explains that all she has to do is dump her terrible [insert competitor’s name] internet for Cox High Speed Internet, and all her problems will be solved. The woman in this ad is portrayed as being beyond dumb. Not only does she run a “business” that her husband accidentally, paternalistically calls a “hobby,” but she decides she wants to return an *entire* house because her internet has slowed down. This commercial makes no sense and it casts the woman as both whiny and irrational. Hooray, she is a private business owner, but unfortunately she isn’t one that anyone, including her spouse, will take seriously.

The Entertainment/Technology commercials that failed the June Cleaver Test showed mostly inept women trying to get technology to function correctly. In another Cox commercial (2015) a mother unsuccessfully tries to use her TV remote to talk to her kids. When women could use technology correctly in this sample of ads, they did so while doing domestic duties. In a Vonage Phone (2015) ad you see a woman cleaning her house while talking to her daughter on the phone, Audible (2015) displays a woman folding heaps of laundry while listening to an audiobook and in a Close5 commercial (2015) you see a mom sell a blender on her cell phone while waiting to pick up the kids from school. June can operate the technology needed to do the dishes or dry clothes, but a

TV remote, which is not inherently part of her domestic duties is outside of her natural mental capacity. Overall, it was not an impressive sample.

10.8 Grocery/Department Stores

Grocery/Department Stores saw a drop in the passing rate of The June Cleaver Test (Appendix A: Table 2). In the 2000s the failure rate, by not meeting criteria 2, was 53.8 percent (Table 6), by 2015 and 2016 that number had gone up to 77.8 percent (Table 7). Of the 4 commercials that passed, most did so by the slimmest of margins. For instance, one commercial for Wal-Mart (2015) showed a mom for the vast majority of the commercial desperately trying to find something to finish her little girl's dance costume. It is only in a 3 second blip that one can see a female Wal-Mart employee helping her find what she needs. Yes, the 3 seconds was timed. The only commercial in this category that passed without showing a female employee for about 1 percent of the screen time was for Copenhagen (2015), where a woman sexily modeled a couch. The women were not, overall, vital to the narrative of the commercial. Sure, these women had jobs, but their brief screen time made them more background props than actual actors in the scenario. If one's child was cast as "tree number 3" in their school play, one wouldn't think of them as being the hero, the villain or even the hero's snappy sidekick, one would know that their child had been cast as a background piece. The same thing happens to the women in commercials where they hold jobs representationally that are not actually important to the commercial, they become Tree Number 3.

The 14 commercials that failed in this category did so in classic June Cleaver fashion. Women were shown bringing husbands water as the husbands put together IKEA Furniture (2015), wives cooking nutritious meals from the ingredients they bought at

Fry's Grocery (2015) and shopping for groceries with kids in tow at Albertson's (2015). Again, in *Stepford Wives* style, all of these women seemed blissfully happy as they wandered through the grocery store, even the ones with toddlers, which if anyone reading this has gone grocery shopping with a toddler, knows that it is rarely a pleasant, joyful experience. There were far fewer store employees that were women, no women managers and far too many perky-happy moms for this sample to be considered anything but a regression from the previous two decades.

10.9 Household Goods

Household Goods saw very little change from the 2000s to the 2010s (Appendix A: Table 2). There was a 0.9 percent decrease from the 2000s (Table 6), which is nothing to write home about, especially considering that the sample size from the 2010s was higher (Table 7). The failure rate of 83.3 percent was anything but heartening. Of those that passed, Downy (2015) was the most progressive, showing a woman as a lab-coat bedecked scientist testing different laundry detergents and their effectiveness levels. Again, however, this was a woman allowed into the male realm of "science" because her science had to do with laundry. Other than that, women in commercials that passed were mostly saleswomen or representatives for products like the online household goods retailer HH Gregg (2015).

Those that failed still showed women, many of whom in fashionable clothing and makeup scrubbing sinks (Scotch-Brite Pads, 2015), doing laundry (Tide, 2015) or driving their sons to football practice (Febreze, 2015). There was one commercial in which a woman showed a little disdain for the work she was doing. In a 2015 Clorox commercial an exasperated mom finds out that her very young son and his friend have been holding a

“peeing for distance” competition in the restroom. The grossed out mom pulls out the bleach to deal with that problem. However, the only other times mothers or wives showed distress was when their air conditioners or plumbing (Parker & Sons Inc., 2015) were on the fritz, again waiting upon a man to come and save her from her terrible plight. The women were all smiles and bathroom scrubbers again when everything was fixed and she could clean her toilet without fear of explosion.

10.10 Pharmaceuticals

The Pharmaceuticals category saw a slight decrease in the number of failures of The June Cleaver Test with 54.8 percent failing by not showing a woman in an occupation (Criteria 2) in the 2010s (Table 7) versus the 66.7 percent failure rate of the 2000s (Table 6). Of those that passed, a majority mostly just showed women as patients. However, in a 2015 Epiduo commercial finally showed a woman as a doctor. The woman was not a pediatrician or gynecologist either, she was a dermatologist! Progress, in one commercial anyway, was made! Again, while it is true that there are many male and female doctors out in the world, the fact that we primarily show men in the doctor role, while relegating women to receptionist or nursing roles gives the perception that if women are doctors, it is rare. In 1970 there were 25,000 licensed physicians in the United States, by 2004 that number had increased to 235,000 women who practiced with a medical license, a number that has increased steadily by around 11 percent every year since then and is projected to increase by the same amount annually for many years into the future (Young, Chaudhry, Pei, Halbesleben, Polk & Dugan, 2015). Therefore, only showing the rare female doctor, outside of pediatric care, is not truly representational of reality. It wasn't in the 1970s and it is even less so today. By continuing to show men as

the doctors or specialists, while women are by and large are in supportive roles in the medical field, we continue to socialize the world with the message that men are doctors and women are not. Particularly for children watching these commercials, it is sending them messages about what role they might have in the medical field based solely on their gender (Ozmete, 2009) and priming them to emulate the roles they see played out in front of them (Lupukhova, 2015). It is a victory showing a woman as a doctor, but only a small one. There need to be more women doctors represented, not just a token few, or it is harder to make the case that women belong in these roles, even if they are already successfully filling them (Cohen & Huffman, 2007).

There was a disturbing trend noticed among the commercials that failed The June Cleaver Test. Not only were women shown as mothers and grandmothers taking care of children and husbands, but it seemed that their entire reason for wanting to get better or have their symptoms relieved was so that they could go on serving their children and spouses. For instance, in an Eliquis (2015) commercial a grandmother is disappointed that she is unable to have as much energy to keep up with her grandchild. Enter Eliquis, a drug that she starts taking and suddenly she can play with her granddaughter all day! Another commercial for Enbrel shows a woman who is sad that she can't take care of her daughter like she used to. Luckily for her, however, Enbrel swoops in to the rescue and now the woman has all the energy in the world to cook food for her family. In none of these commercials did women express a desire to get better for the improvement in the quality of life for themselves, instead it was all about the activities they could do for others. Apparently, mom not only can't cook food for herself to enjoy or go on a vacation

and actually take a break, now her driving reason behind taking medication must be so that she can continue to take care of others, her own health or happiness is irrelevant.

10.11 Food

The Food category, despite still being the largest category for the 2010s (Table 7), had the smallest sample of comparative categories through the decades with only 44 commercials coded. Still the Food category saw an increase from the previous decade with 51.2 percent failing The June Cleaver Test in the 2000s (Table 6) and 56.8 percent failing in the 2010s. As in previous decades (Appendix A: Table 2), the commercials that passed swung between being progressive and being nearly medieval in their views of women. Sadly, for every McDonald's (2015) commercial showing a busy woman working in an office, there were an equal number showing women as scantily clad waitresses (Hooters, 2015) or as "sexy" volleyball players (Carl's Junior, 2015). There was even a BelVita (2015) commercial in which a woman does the "walk of shame" after a one night stand (as evidenced by her mussed hair and missing clothing items) all the way back to her apartment only to find herself refreshed after having a bite of one of BelVita's breakfast bars.¹⁹ This ad can't even claim "sexual empowerment" as a woman taking control of her own sex life as she is quickly diminished by both the people staring at her as she stumbles back to her apartment and needing Belvita, a food product, to save her from her previous night's decision. The issue here is that again, women are being sexualized, so even though they passed The June Cleaver Test, they failed the "basic decency and respect of women" test.

¹⁹ Of course, this is false advertising since BelVita bars themselves taste like stale wheat and fruit that has been dried in a college student's microwave, and therefore would refresh no one.

Even the love affairs with food noted previously appeared in the modern sample. The Mounds (1980) commercial style came back, this time in the guise of “healthy food.” In a commercial for Naturelife Granola (2015) bars a woman in a flowing dress runs into the middle of a field only to lie on her back and sensually eat the granola bar, slowly biting into it with a seductive look on her face. It would be interesting to see someone out in the public actually do this. For instance, if the author of this work were to run into the next class she teaches in a flowing dress and seductively start eating a granola bar, which would undoubtedly leave crumbs down the front of said flowing dress, she would likely find herself being thoroughly questioned for sexual harassment of students and asked whether she forgot to take her medication or perhaps took too much. No one eats like that in real life, but people accept women slowly and seductively eating burgers (Carl’s Junior, 2015) or whatever else they are advertising on TV without a second thought. However, as this is, again, linking women to a consumable object, this ridiculous trope probably warrants at least a second thought, if not a third, fourth and fifth. Women are not consumable, throwaway items. Women are people that do not come free with a side of fries. These representations of women, however, being intrinsically linked to food or other products, demeans the women featured and opens the door for society to justify unequal treatment or outright mistreatment of women. After all, if a woman is just an object, then why should she get equal pay or be protected from mistreatment (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008)?

Those that failed The June Cleaver Test showed women mostly in identical situations as those in the previous decades. Moms danced around the kitchen with their kids (Special K, 2015), baked pigs in a blanket for hungry little ones (Pillsbury, 2015)

and showed women buying yogurt for their family based off of the recommendation from famous football quarterbacks (Oikos Yogurt, 2015). It truly is incredible that the more things change, the more they stay the same. There were quite a few commercials that had you simply changed some costuming and color designs could have been broadcast during any of the five decades studied. It is also worthy of note that in this sample of commercials there was not a single one where dad helped out in the kitchen. In fact, the only commercial in this sample that showed a male partner pitching in at all around the house was a Doritos commercial (2015) in which a wife has to trick her husband into doing housework. That's right, he couldn't do it to be an equal member of the relationship, he had to be tricked into being useful. Again, placing the burden of housework and caregiving squarely on the woman's shoulders not only perpetuates the second shift (Walzer, 1996), but it gives men a reason to not participate in the home. The Doritos commercial was particularly striking because rewarding chores being done is something we do for children. "Clean your room Suzy and you'll get ice cream," is no different than a woman looking at her grown, adult husband and saying, "Clean the garage and I'll get you Doritos." There is no reciprocation here, the woman is not getting rewarded for making sure the house chores get done, she is just doing her part of the housework. The husband, however, is not held to the same expectation that as an adult who lives in the same home, he should also be helping out as a matter of course. Instead, the wife has to not only ask for his help, but bribe him to do it. This is demeaning to the woman who is doing the lion's share of the work without reward, and demeaning the husband who has to be treated like a child to take part in upkeep of the place he also resides.

10.12 Time Slot Breakdown

As previously mentioned, this decade was also broken down by the time slot and medium (Table 8) in which they appeared.

Table 8: 2010s Commercials Broken Down by Airing Time Slot and Medium

Time Slot	Total Number	Pass	Fail	Percentage That Fail
Weekday Prime Time	78	31	47	60.3%
Weekend Prime Time	57	25	32	56.1%
Special Event	57	27	30	52.6%
Online	58	28	30	51.7%
Totals	250	111	139	55.6%

Weekday Prime Time had the highest sample number due to it being the TV time that had the most hours (being spread out over five days of the week) and therefore had more viewership opportunities. Online, which some might argue has more airtime out of any of them, received fewer commercials coded for one main reason. That reason is that while yes, online advertising is everywhere, the video advertisements are often something that can be exited out of or skipped entirely. Very rarely are viewers forced to watch an entire commercial to get to their content, even Youtube has an option to skip most advertisements after watching only five seconds. However, if one is watching the commercial on live television, aside from TiVo or other DVR device use, then one has to at least leave the commercials running. There is no skip option when one is watching live TV. However, the sample sizes were kept relatively close together to see if this was an issue across all time slots, sadly, it was.

Online also had the lowest failure rate due probably to its younger viewer demographics. Fewer younger people want to watch commercials about bleach or an auto

parts shop. Instead the ads were geared more towards new technology related products and interesting food ideas that might catch a younger generation's eyes. However, this still did not keep the Online category from dropping below 50 percent in failures of The June Cleaver Test. The point of most importance that should be noted from this data is that all time slots and mediums had similar failure rates. There wasn't even a full 10 percent difference from the highest failure rate to the lowest failure rate. Not a single medium or time slot managed to drop below 50 percent by showing women as having an occupation over half the time. This means that the problem of portraying women in domestic lights only, not even digging into how many times women are objectified or made to look like idiots, was problematic no matter where or when the commercials were viewed.

10.13 Decade Summation

Overall, in the 2010s there was a positive trend that was noticed. There were a few ads that showed just fathers taking care of children that were not coded, because, for once in a positive way, they did not include women. A 2015 Cox commercial for instance, shows a dad desperately trying different activities to get his baby to fall asleep, implying that his wife is in bed sleeping while he is doing so, as he cautiously looks around to see if the baby has woken anyone else up. In a 2015 Star Wars/Campbell's Soup commercial a pair of gay fathers are shown feeding their baby soup while trying to sound like Darth Vader and Chewbacca, in what has to be one of the most adorable commercials seen to date. The great thing about these commercials is that they showed not only males parenting, but doing so competently. These were not "domestic dud dads,"

they were competent caregivers who were doing their parts to take care of their children.
Bravo.

Before we cheer for progress, however, it is important to remember these “good dad” commercials were few and far between, with the vast majority of commercials still showing women primarily as domestic caregivers. If 30 thousand cars were sold with a faulty engine that might explode without warning, people would label that a severe problem. Even if the car company were able to fix the problem in 6 of the cars, while that would technically be progress, no one would be applauding them too grandly because there were still 29,994 cars out there that might combust violently. In the same way, four or five commercials that show competent fathers is a start, there’s a long way to go before one could really label it true progress.

What is primarily distressing about this sample is that comparatively (Appendix A, Table 2) it looks like the failure rates of The June Cleaver Test are almost back to where they started in the 1970s, a point that will receive more reflection in the next chapter. For all people wishing to claim that we live in a new “era of equality,” it appears that we still have a ways to go, and some of that ways is retreading the progressive ground we lost in the last couple decades. It seems that even in modern times, June Cleaver just can’t win.

11. JUNE CLEAVER TIME TRAVELS

“We are complete with or without a mate, with or without a child. We get to decide for ourselves what is beautiful when it comes to our bodies.”

-Jennifer Aniston, 2016

The data from 1,250 coded and analyzed commercials via The June Cleaver Test paints a rather grim picture for modern women (Appendix A: Table 2). Actually, it paints the same grim, but familiar pictures that we saw back in the 1940s and 1950s, but with fewer pinstriped skirts and washable handkerchiefs (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Schlitz, 1952



1952; Courtesy of *The Daily Mail*

11.1 Overall Data Across Time

Of the 1,250 commercials coded, 680 across 5 decades failed The June Cleaver Test by failing to show a woman in a role outside of the home, leading to a cumulative failure rate of 54.4 percent (Appendix A: Table 2). With a total pass rate of 45.6 percent, the overall results could not have advanced past kindergarten with that grade percentage.

Sadly, the trends over time display that same level of juvenile thought in regards to women's places in the world.

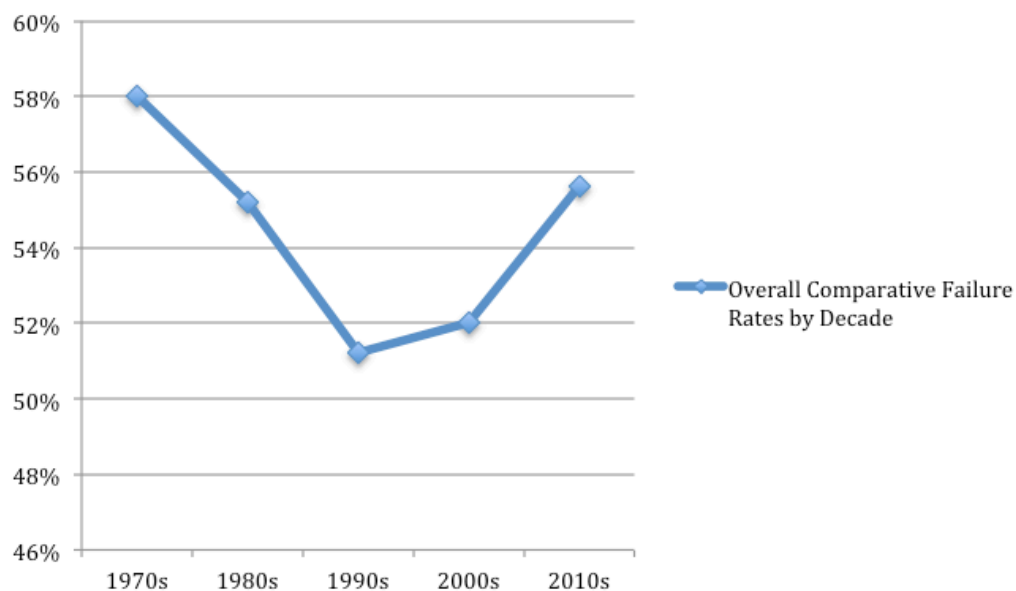
Addressing directly the two research questions (Section 1.2):

RQ1: Does American televised advertising primarily show women engaged in domestic tasks, caring for children or in a spousal role, or does advertising show women as competent members of the workforce?

RQ2: Have U.S. televised commercials significantly adapted over time to show more women in the workforce or has it stayed consistent in its portrayals of women as primarily domestic figures?

With an overall failure of The June Cleaver Test percentage of 54.4 (Appendix A: Table 2) the answer to the first question is yes, we still primarily show women engaged in domestic tasks or caregiving roles. The answer to that second question, then, is no, we have not seen a significant change in showing women in the workforce.

Figure 13: Overall Failure Rates From 1970s-2010s



The data shows that, overall, we were improving in our portrayals of women outside the home until the 1990s. In the 2000s that same upward trend of showing women in a variety of roles suddenly declined, bringing the failure rate of The June Cleaver Test up in response. That same backsliding trend continued into the decade we are today. It is worthy of note that not only have we shown an increase in the failure rate leading up to modern times, but there is only a 2.4 percent difference between the outcome of the 2010s and the 1970s, and we are only part way through our current decade! The domestication of women has nearly come full circle, with a bump in progressivity in the middle during the 1990s, the backlash to Feminism representations in the 2000s and a final swing of the pendulum back to 1970s views of women's place in the home.

It is also disheartening when one takes into account that the difference in failure rates from our most progressive decade sample, the 1990s, to the least progressive, the 1970s, was only 6.8 percent. Probably the most staggering fact is that if the graph in Figure 13 were displayed with a full 0 to 100 percent range, the line tracking decades would hardly have seemed to change. The range was specifically created from 46 percent to 60 percent so that the change in the decades would be obvious to the naked eye without the use of a magnifying glass and a straight edge. Not once in 1,250 commercials spread across nearly 5 decades did we reach a point where commercials managed to pass The June Cleaver Test over 50 percent of the time. This means that in every decade examined, the statistical majority of commercials showed women primarily in domestic roles, with nary a thought to what they might be outside their June Cleaver positions.

The other conundrum is that even when commercials did pass, as noted in previous chapters, the depictions of women were rarely respectful. Women were

pigeonholed into jobs that were only deemed “acceptable” for women to have (i.e. teachers, nurses, secretaries, maids etc.), shown as incompetent human beings or objectified and sexualized in ridiculous ways. To compound what these results reveal, very few commercials were noted with men participating in the home life,²⁰ and while a specific count was not kept on how many commercials showed men in domestic or childrearing results, the number of commercials showing women in those roles far outnumbered the number of commercials where men participated. And just as Neuhaus (2013) found in his study of “funny fathers,” men who were shown in domestic roles or attempting to participate often were shown as incompetent idiots.

Of course, a 54.4 percent failure rate may not sound like a significant number, after all, that is relatively close to half, isn't it? However, there is a lot of impact that even 50 percent can have, particularly when it is a sample as large as this one. If it were discovered that half of all boxes of cereal produced contained at least one dead rat, one would have to conclude that there is a significant problem in the cereal industry, one that must be resolved or the cereal business will be severely impacted. Detrimental depictions of women in 54.4 percent of commercials is the dead rat in the cereal box, and its impacts can be much more subversive and insidious than finding an extra surprise in one's box of Fruity Pebbles. If one extends that analogy further, one must also take into account that even those commercials that passed, didn't do so for great reasons. There may not be a rat in the box, but if Fruity Pebbles came with scorch marks and were covered in a layer of ash, it is unlikely people would keep adding them as a part of a balanced breakfast. In this

²⁰ If such a commercial were noted while data collection was being performed, it was talked about in the text of this work.

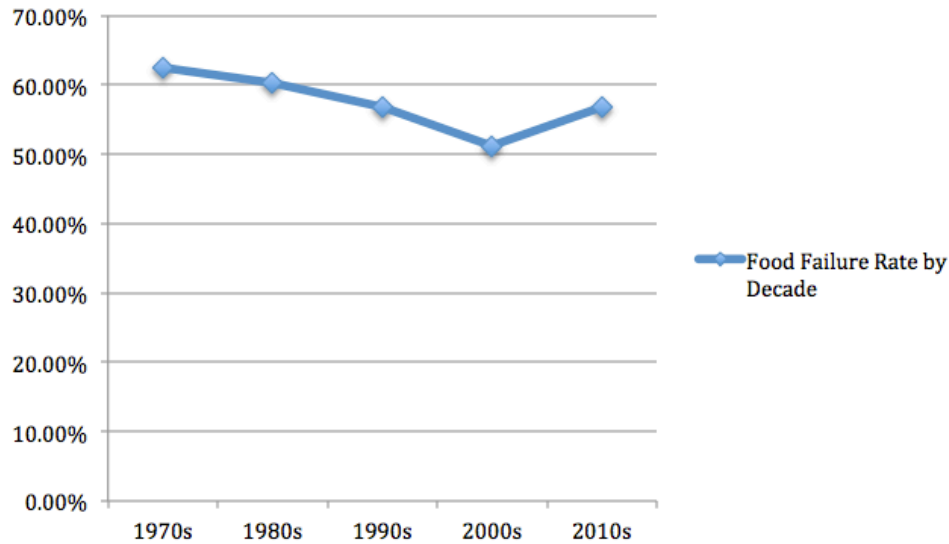
case, however, instead of finding something distasteful in one's cereal, the impacts are a bit less physically, or perhaps palatably, noticeable. Again, as Ozmete (2009), Goffman (1959), Lupukhova (2015) among others showed was that we are socialized by what we watch. If we constantly are receiving a barrage of messages that unify around a certain idea of who should be in what role, then eventually that can become the expected role for those depicted. As Berger and Luckmann (1966) explained, once things have become socialized, it is easy to turn those into societal imperatives and norms, the, "we've always done things this way," social narration that has no biological or logical reason for being outside of it simply being the norm. A failure rate of The June Cleaver Test of 54.4 percent across 5 decades and 1,250 commercials (not including several hundred that failed to show women represented at all), means that showing women in a purely domestic set of roles is the norm, the accepted, the "we've always done things this way."

However, as the decades were broken down into their categories and compared, there were some little glimmers of hope for a more progressive advertising world.

However, to explore these phenomena, it is important to examine which ones showed those hopeful results and those that didn't. The categories across decades (Figures 14 – 23) have been synthesized into graph format, as it is hard with pure numbers to get the full scope of how this facet of our culture has changed throughout the years.

11.2 Food

Figure 14: Food Category Failure Rates 1970s-2010s



The Food category, which had the highest sample rate of any of the categories in all five decades, and why it is being talked about first here, paints a slightly different picture than the overall data, but only slightly. With 460 total food commercials and 234 of them failing The June Cleaver Test, the resulting failure rate across all 5 decades of 50.9 percent is not particularly surprising. What is slightly different is that there was a progressive reduction in the failure rate in this category all the way through the 2000s. The 2000s held the lowest failure rate at 51.2 percent until, strangely, the failure rate shot up to 56.8 percent in the 2010s. Granted, there was a slightly smaller sample size in the 2010s than the 2000s, but even so, the dramatic rise in the failure rate is one that simple differences in sample size cannot fully account for.

The Food category itself was fraught with some of the most pernicious and persistent trends and tropes out of nearly every other category. As they were previously discussed, the “Mom Cooks, Dad Grills,” “Sexy Occupation,” “Domestic Dud Dad,”

“You Made This!?” and “Frazzled Moms,” all made frequent appearances throughout the decades. Commercials in this category were often based on a reliance on the “it appears to be working so far so keep using it” justification of imagery, which denotes a lack of creativity and effort on the part of the companies’ marketing divisions. A quick reminder, marketing company executives and producers are aware of the impacts that their commercials have, and are willing to admit that they will stick with a trope that may be problematic, as long as that trope isn’t hurting their bottom line (Zayer & Coleman, 2015). Much like one can tell the plot to nearly any Michael Bay film ever created in the first 5 minutes, these commercials are so predictable that one of the collaborators performing reliability checks actually was able to say, word for word, a line from a commercial before the little kid in the commercial said it. This was a commercial that the person had never seen before in their life (and in fact had been released before they were born), and the line was in no way related to the slogan or the brand jingle in any way, the writing was just *that* predictable.

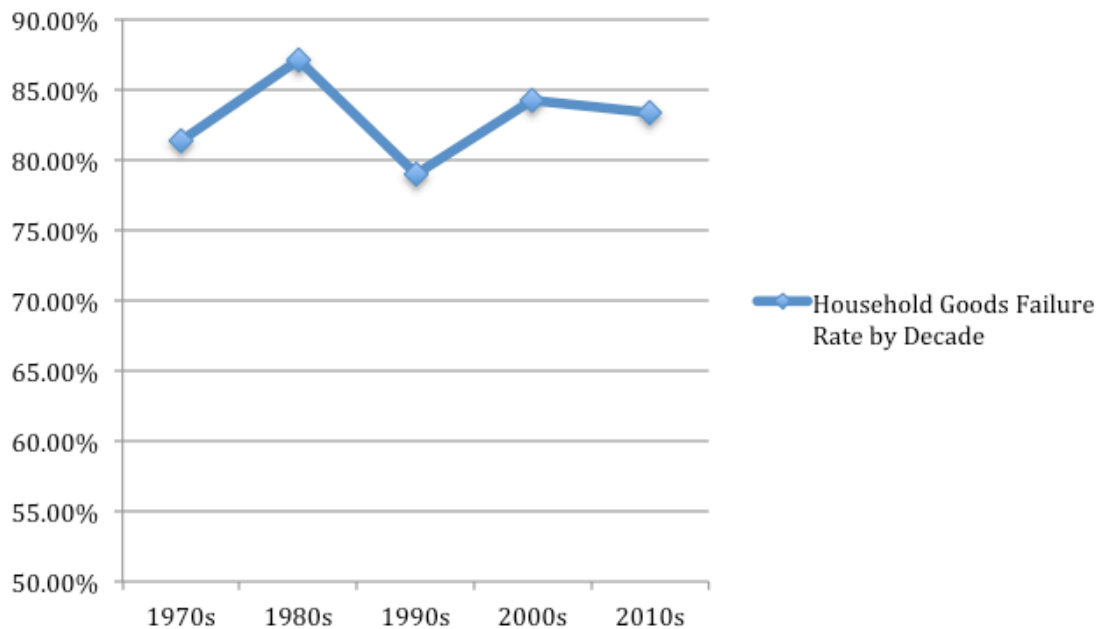
Of course, this could be part and parcel of the commercial system as Fisherkeller (2000) pointed out in her article. After all, familiarity tends to have a soothing affect and makes one assimilate products into one’s consciousness. However, as Fisherkeller points out, after a time, these same advertising patterns can become tired and old, their effect and even their memorability eventually fades. Much like sit-coms, the same gimmicks can only be used so many times before people find their reason to pay attention vanishing as new things are written. Coming up with something new, however, is time and resource consuming for companies, which means that they are reluctant to change and do away with the familiar. Instead, what they often do is modernize it, slap a fresh coat of paint on

it and hope that no one notices. Furthermore, marketers rely on their audiences being comfortable with their “tried and true” messages and perceive them as “safe.” Marketers also hope to cash in on nostalgia (Muehling, 2014), after all, Ronald McDonald has helped sell billions of hamburgers despite being a nightmare inducing clown. He still exists because of that same marketing nostalgia. Of course, this is how we end up with the tropes that we see today being so persistent. Coming up with something entirely new is risky and time consuming, and as Zayer and Coleman’s (2015) study of advertising executives found, advertising agencies are rarely concerned about the ethical societal impact of what they are showing, as long as it works, they will run with it. The Food category, overall, became a significant demonstration of this lack of desire to change basic ideologies or themes (or as this author likes to refer it “laziness”) in advertising as generation after generation of June Cleavers stood in their kitchens with little ones gathered around, a smile plastered on all of their faces.

11.3 Household Goods

Of course, Household Goods (Figure 15) was another category in which advertisers showed very little effort to step out of their box of tropes and stereotypes:

Figure 15: Household Goods Failure Rates 1970-2010



While the Household Goods category did not have as many sampled commercials as the Food category, it did hold a rather significant number of those commercials sampled. There were 125 commercials total for this category included across the decades. Of those 125, 104 failed The June Cleaver Test or 83.2 percent. The lowest failure rate was the 78.9 percent held in the 1990s. There was a slight decrease in between the 2000s and where we are today from 84.2 percent to 83.3 percent, but as that decrease is less than a full percentage point less it might be wise to withhold wild cheers for progress. Overall across the sample time period, there was very little change between the decades, any progress made was slight and quickly buried by the following decade or stagnating altogether.

In this category not only were women shown endlessly, joyfully cleaning up the messes of others, they were often also implied being the ones to clean. Earlier there was a discussion of how certain commercials were not coded because they did not show a full woman, just a woman's hand. When it came to household goods commercials, the researcher never witnessed a single time when a man's hand was shown cleaning. In fact, there were fewer than 5 commercials seen by the researcher that actually showed men cleaning, period. When men were involved in the household goods department it often had to do with gardening or painting the house, still fairly "manly" tasks. Not once in five decades and 125 commercials was a man seen by the researcher smiling as he vacuumed up the mess his wife had just tracked across the carpet.

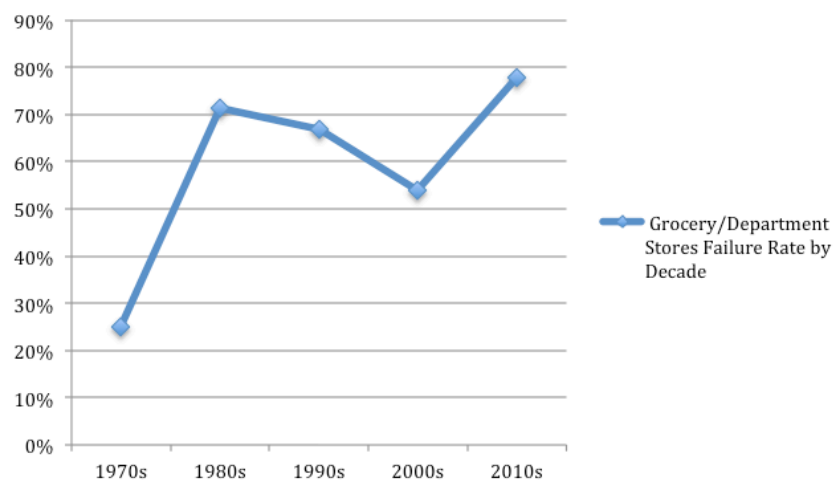
Again, it isn't automatically detrimental if a woman wants to stay at home with the kids or be a stay at home wife. The issue is that when women predominately are shown in these roles, and only women, it creates an expectation these tasks are an essential part of "womanhood" (Ozmete, 2009), which is simply not true. Furthermore, when men are shown not participating, or participating and being utterly inept, it further puts the burden on women in society to be caregivers and domestic servants, whether they want that role or not. Basically, this sample showed moms and wives going from smiling and cleaning out toilet bowls in floral dresses, to smiling and cleaning out toilet bowls in jeans and a t-shirt, while their husbands and kids created the messes they dealt with. It doesn't matter what else the woman has going on in her life, this is her number one priority, meaning that she has to work doubly hard to maintain any life outside of the home (Walzer, 1996). We know that men can be effective parents and when they actively participate in the home life and domestic activities their families benefit (Cabrera, et al.,

2012; Kolak & Volling, 2013). However, if we create a social norm that creates antagonism around men being competent domestic partners and parents, we not only shove all the weight of the success of the home onto the women, but we discredit the contributions men can make as a whole (Neuhaus, 2013). After all, why should men help rear children, cook or clean if the “Domestic Dud Dad” tells them they will never be good at it and if the only one who can find the real way to wash clothes is a woman who knows the mystical secrets of Tide? These singular portrayals that place men and women in different capability silos is titanicly unfair to women, but it is also unfair and discrediting to men. Furthermore, it just perpetuates the idea that somehow there is a different “work” and “home” (Davies & Fink, 2014). Work and home belong in the same sphere, work and home belong under the “life” category, and as such should not be divided by strict gender roles.

11.4 Grocery/Department Stores

Grocery/Department Stores (Figure 16) was a bit of a mixed bag when it came to The June Cleaver Test:

Figure 16: Grocery/Department Stores Failure Rates 1970-2010



This in part had to do with sample sizes that were relatively small during the 1970s and 1980s due to the fact that most stores did not show people in their advertisements during this time, instead opting to just flash pictures of the goods on the screen as a male voice talked excitedly about them. There were 55 commercials total in this category. There were 34 that failed leading to an overall failure rate of 61.8 percent in this category. This is particularly odd considering that the 1970s failure rate was only 25 percent. One would expect the 1970s, which had often higher failure rates (Appendix A: Table 2) to have at least a relatively close failure rate with the modern age, particularly since the sample size was smaller providing less leeway for failures.

The quandary with this category is two-fold. First, is the fact that while 21 commercials passed, most did so by showing women employees extremely briefly, flashing them on screen as opposed to actually having them interact with customers. So while the commercials technically passed, they did so only by the slimmest of margins. On top of that, women were rarely shown in managerial or specialist positions. There wasn't even a female manager shown until the 2004 Walmart commercial! While this one manager was exciting, it wasn't necessarily a beacon of progress. It is important to remember that one exception to a rule does not magically make the rule vanish. It takes more than one or two examples of women in leadership or specialist positions for progress to truly have been made.

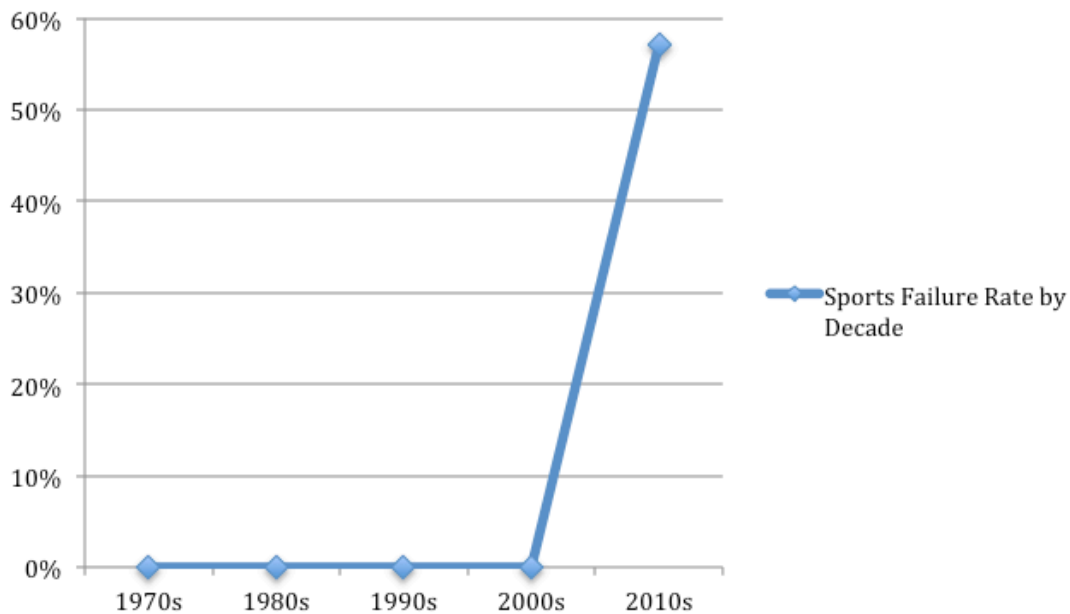
Second was the change of how the commercials shifted their focus. Of course, the 2000s were the peak of progressive notions in this category, if they can be called that, with 53.8 percent failing the June Cleaver Test. The next decade saw a massive shift in how women were being depicted in Grocery/Department Store commercials. Namely, it

showed who was shopping more than who was being bought from. In this shift, women shopping with kids, with husbands or on their own for the kids and husband, became a new focal point. Even when women were showed working at stores, like Walmart, they were often on screen briefly, and shot from behind so you could see the happy housewife smiling as she bought her groceries. This category took June Cleaver out of the kitchen, but her only real options once she left were to work entry-level positions or to fill the kitchen she was about to return to with gadgets or food, sometimes both.

11.5 Sports

Overall, Sports (Figure 17) was a category that looked progressive, but as one dug deeper did not much make improvement as one might think.

Figure 17: Sports Failure Rates 1970-2010



The sample size for Sports was quite small, which actually was the first sign that something in this category was less than positive towards women. There were plenty of Sports commercials viewed, however, so few included women that only 19 across 5

decades were coded. This is particularly disheartening considering that *every* Sports commercial viewed showed humans. Of those 19 that included, only 5.3 percent failed The June Cleaver via the third test criteria. Again, it might be wise to hold onto the confetti that one might be tempted to throw at such a low failure rate.

As stated multiple times throughout this work, how commercials pass is often as important as why others fail. A majority of these Sports ads that passed did not do so by showing respected women athletes competing in their chosen sports. Instead, the Sports ads features women in skimpy cheerleader outfits, models on workout equipment with the cameras focused on their rear ends or as models for the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit edition. So while they technically passed The June Cleaver Test, they often did so by creating sexually objectified images of women instead of showing them as competent athletes. As stated before, sexually reducing women to the level of objects, something that is on par or equitable to the product they are being advertised with, gives society permission to treat them like objects. This opens the door for abuses, whether it be economically, by paying them less, in levels of respect, by not giving them their professional due, or even physically, through violence or body shaming (Kilbourne & Jhalley, 2010, Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). Furthermore, there are a plethora of competent women athletes, enough to replace every model parading around in a bikini in sports advertisements and beyond. Marketers in this category do not need to rely on the June Cleaver stereotype to hock their wares, they have the “sex sells” trope ready and waiting. Trading out one form of harmful stereotype for another does not improve one’s message nor make one more progressive by default.

Figure 17 is the most drastic looking graph due to the fact that all of the failures in this category happened during one time period, the current one. While there were a couple commercials in this decade that managed to show professional, hardworking, female athletes, there was also an uptick of famous football players being shown standing next to their moms and wives of sports fans making an appearance. And while some women were shown as sports fans, the overall feeling of this change in the 2010s was, “We’ll start showing women athletes, but only if we can show an equal number of annoyed wives and moms of players...” This advertising trend switcheroo was less freeing than advertisers would lead viewers to believe. After all, in no commercial viewed for this study was the reverse true, there were no commercials with annoying husbands blocking their wives from watching the end of a football game or a dad standing proudly next to his athlete daughter, like Tim Tebow’s mother inexplicably stood beaming with pride next to her son, leaving those implied roles, again, solely on the shoulders of female viewers. However, as stated before, women watch sports too (Elliot, 2008). But we still live in a society that states that the realm of sport is a distinctly male one. This leaves women in peripheral roles, either cheering on the brave warriors of the field, or being the one who gave birth to a great athlete or being the one token female fan at a hockey game such as the one in the Fox Sports New York (2001) commercial. By not representing female fans, we create more room for female athletes to be diminished as well. After all, who would we expect to watch women’s sports? Women? They don’t watch sports, so why would we watch women’s sports. Marketers, erroneously, believe that they have only the men to thank for sports’ success, when really, they would be far better off paying more attention to the women too.

11.6 Insurance

Insurance (Figure 18) was another category with relatively dismal results.

Figure 18: Insurance Failure Rates 1970-2010



As with the Grocery/Department Stores the main quandary with collecting commercials in this category was that for a couple of decades, insurance commercials just flashed information on the screen while an always male voice talked about the product. There is probably a study waiting to happen on male-only voiceovers in insurance commercials, but for now it was mostly a glitch in being able to get a larger sample of Insurance commercials. In total there were 36 Insurance commercials with 22 failing, leading to a 61.1 percent failure rate across the decades sampled.

While someone looking at the graph above might feel the urge to cheer, after all, the failure rate of The June Cleaver Test in the 2010s was better than both those in the 1970s and 1980s, the negative Nancy that is reality has to step in and calm that excitement. Combined the 1970s and 1980s had a total of 6 commercials in this category

between them. The 2010s had 21, 12 of which that failed, which means that the 2010s failed more commercials than the 1970s and 1980s combined, in fact it failed double the combined amount of commercials coded from those two decades. Does anyone still feel like cheering? Again in this category not only were women woefully underrepresented across the decades which resulted in a low sample size, but their success at being portrayed professionally peaked in the 1990s with a rather progressively low 33.3 percent failure rate of The June Cleaver Test to steadily rising through the 2000s and continuing up to our current day failure rate of 57.1 percent. It is also worth noting that it took 5 decades for the first woman to be shown in this study making an insurance decision for herself. This lack of self-agency throughout these ads was telling as it further placed the “hard decisions” and the “protector” role squarely in the hands of men. Women, apparently too weak and defenseless to sign official documents needed that masculine presence to make the tough choices. This discredits the millions of “tough” women who sign legally binding documents, from checks to wills on a daily basis and is an excellent example of the institutionalized paternalism (Dworkin, 1975). Women’s agency and power in these commercials was removed on their own behalf, after all, if June Cleaver is left to protect herself she would surely perish as the result of her bad decisions. As Lewis (1972) so eloquently wrote:

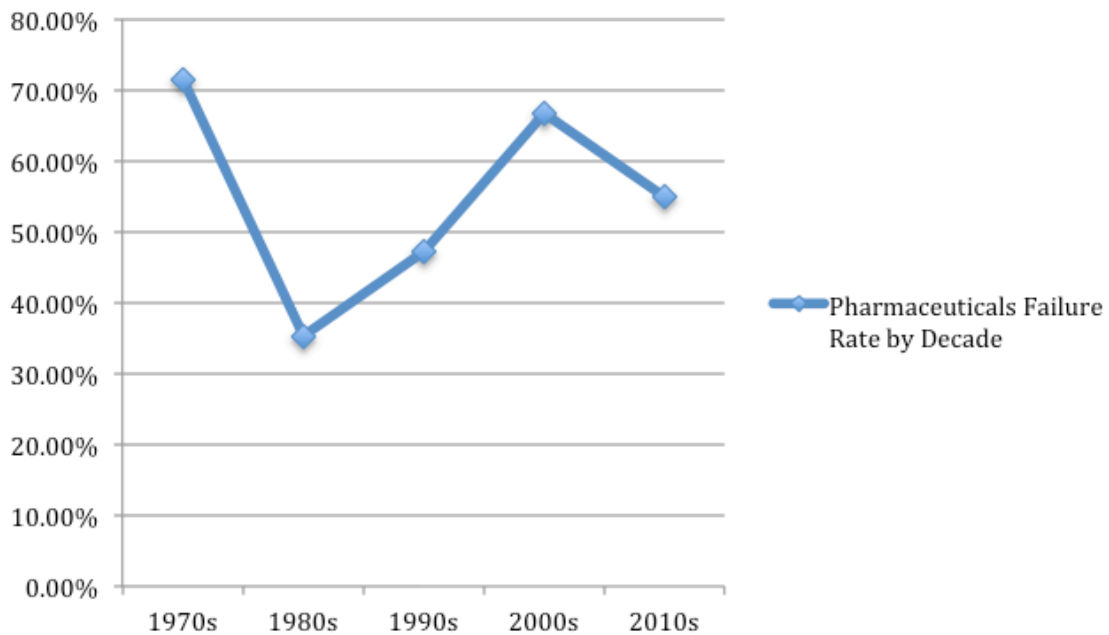
“Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience” (p. 217).

Removing agency and the ability for a woman to act on her own behalf because she might make the wrong decision, and assuming that because she is a woman that she will make the wrong decision, not only is demeaning to women's intelligence, but devalues their abilities to function outside of their prescribed roles. The hegemonic message of "men make all the important decisions for the safety of their families" is assuaged and validated by messages, like those sent in insurance commercials, because they are limiting women for their own good. This depiction puts a damper on the status quo, and the status quo, with women still making 81.8 cents to every dollar a man makes (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016), doesn't need any further dampers. We can't state that we value women in this society until we also can prove that we value women's agency and rights to choose for themselves, and in some cases their families, what is best. It appears that through 5 decades even Progressive's Flo couldn't help rescue June Cleaver.

11.7 Pharmaceuticals

The Pharmaceuticals category (Figure 19) was one of those glimmering lights of hope mentioned previously, though, that glimmer might be a rather dim one.

Figure 19: Pharmaceuticals Failure Rates 1970-1980



Pharmaceuticals had a decent sample size of 97 across the 5-year time span analyzed. In total, 53 failed leading to an overall failure rate of 54.6 percent of The June Cleaver Test. In a slight twist of previous categories, the 1980s actually had the lowest failure rate at 35.5 percent. However, what was seen was the steady trend back toward less progressive depictions of women through the 1990s and up to the 2000s failure rate of 66.7 percent. And it is at this juncture that another twist happens, in the 2010s the failure rate dropped over 10 percent to 54.8 percent. Part of this could possibly be explained by the 2010s having the largest sample size thus far of 31, but not entirely. In the 2010s there were a few women doctors and pharmacists shown, but a lot of the

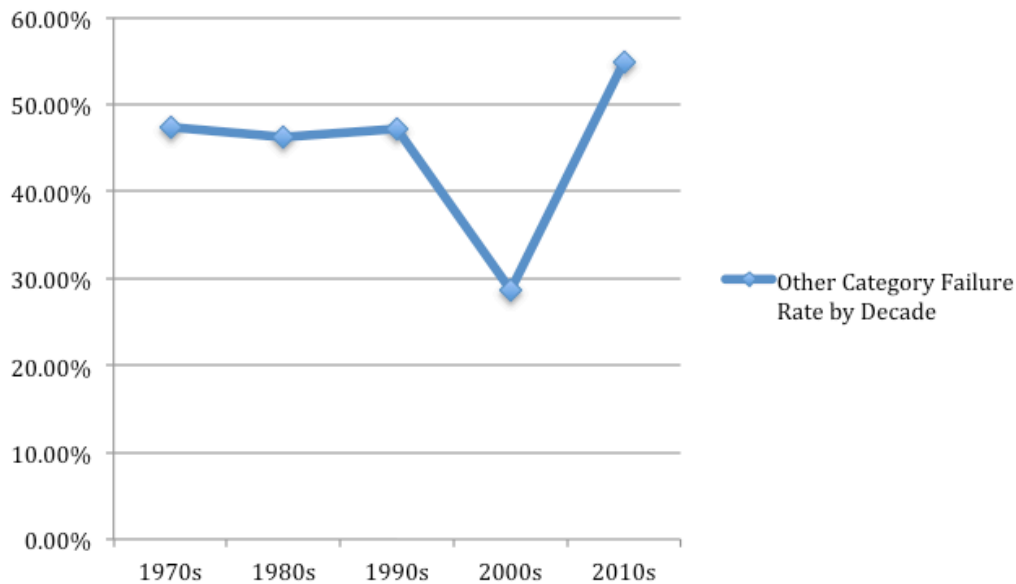
women that passed the test were female patients concerned about their own health. There was a definite trend of women being shown not as caregivers of sick husbands and children (though, those still existed), but taking charge of their own medical conditions and making decisions for their own well-being. That is a glimmer of progress.

Of course, there are still some problematic areas that need to be addressed in this category. Probably the most disheartening part of collecting this category's data, was the rarity with which women doctors, in any capacity were shown, and when they were shown, they were often doctors that still reflected a "women's area of specialization" like pediatrician or gynecologist. What this does is crack open the medical door to women to get a foot in the door without actually letting them all the way in. The message it sends, "You can be a doctor if it has something to do with lady bits or little kids, which you're all mothers of anyways, right? Otherwise, have fun being a nurse or receptionist!" Still, even the smallest ray of hope in this pit of increasing failure rates is something to be appreciated.

11.8 Other

The Other category (Figure 20) was one that, since the commercials were so disparate in content, it was almost expected that they would follow the overall trend.

Figure 20: Other Failure Rates 1970-2010



The Other category had a decent sample size as well, considering it covered everything from theme park commercials to the Navy, with a total of 101 commercials coded. Of those, 46 failed The June Cleaver Test leading a failure rate that was below 50 percent: 45.5 percent. Not only did this category have a failure rate below 50 percent, but it also showed women competently handling their jobs in several commercials spanning from the Phillips laboratory technician in the 1970s to the saluting female Naval officer in the 2010s.

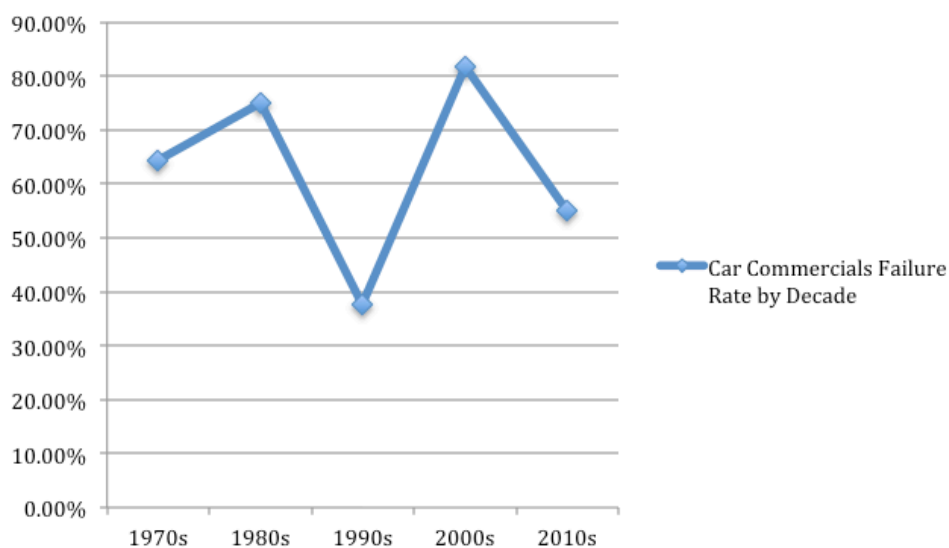
In fact, in a fashion, the Other category did follow the overall trend through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, basically only changing in small percentage points. However, the 2000s and the 2010s steered away from the general trend by first dropping the failure

rate down in the 2000s to 28.6 percent before skyrocketing up to 54.8 percent in the 2010s. This dramatic shift may relate to the trend that was noted earlier in this work; either the commercials were extremely respectful of women's roles in the workforce, or they were the utter opposite and painted women as fragile, feeble-minded, dolts whose greatest aspirations in life were to marry, raise children and pet something fuzzy. There was very little grey area in the Other commercials. Regardless of the possible reason, though, the Other category spiking in the modern decade as it did does not bode well for women overall. Since the Other category is kind of a smorgasbord of topics, it is not a positive indicator when such a massive regression happens in such a short span. While, overall the Other category was a slightly less dismal set of data, it does hold a pretty fair warning about the regressive nature of our times in American advertising.

11.9 Car Commercials

Car Commercials (Figure 21) is another category that shows some hope for the portrayals of women in the future.

Figure 21: Car Commercials Failure Rates 1970-2010



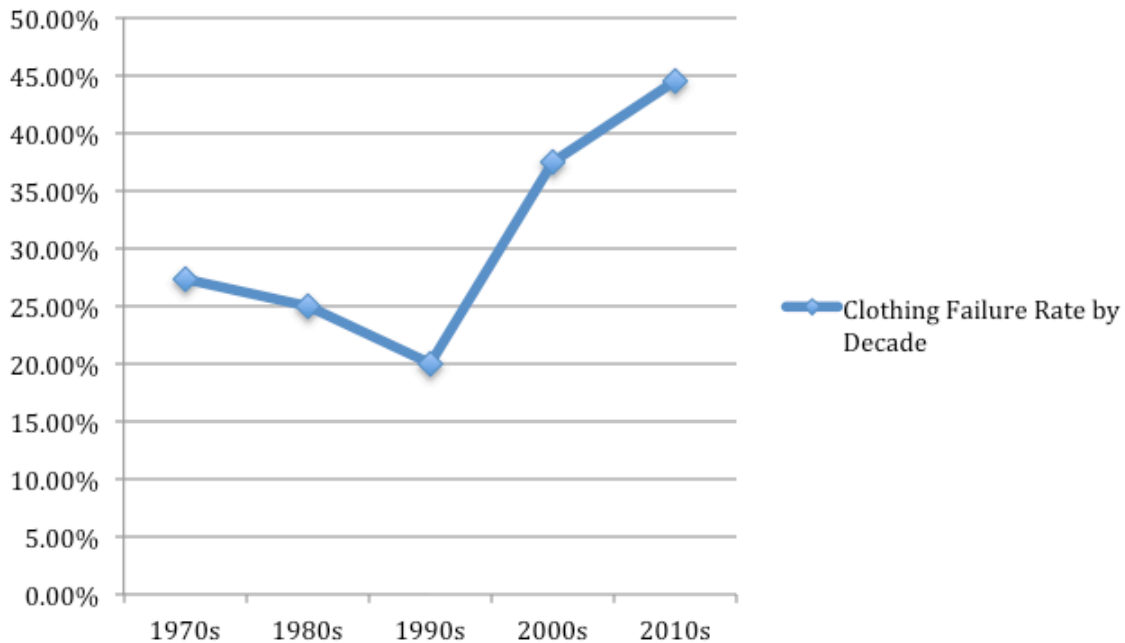
Car Commercials had a total of 61 commercials sampled, with 38 failing The June Cleaver Test resulting in an overall failure rate of 62.3 percent. Again, the 1990s won out with the lowest failure rate of 37.5 percent, before it spiked back up in the 2000s to 81.8 percent. However, in this category, the 2010s did not follow the upward trend as it had done in multiple other categories (Appendix A: Table 2), instead it dropped to 55 percent.

This drop towards the end was due to two causes; one decidedly positive and one less so. On the positive end, women were being shown as independent consumers of cars and car saleswomen with much more frequency than in the past. That's right, women were buying and selling cars! What was also encouraging about this portrayal is unlike the Mustang ads of the 1960s (Figure 3), which told women to buy cars as a fashion accessory to accentuate their beauty, women were instead buying cars for (gasp) transportation. This was definitely an improvement. On the more negative end of things, women were often posed as models, creating a sexual connection between the viewers, the models and the car in a weird lust triangle. While these models sometimes drove the cars, it is much less progressive when a woman is driving a car with the direct intention of raising the "sex appeal" of the vehicle she is driving. It should also be noted, with one previously mentioned exception of the criticized wife, that when a man was involved with a car, he drove. Women could drive themselves and little kids around, but if a husband, boyfriend or male adult of any relation appeared in the vehicle, he was the automatic driver. Again, men do drive cars. However, when men are the only ones being shown driving cars, even when a perfectly capable woman is present, it sends a message that men are just plain better at it (Green, 2013). Until we get to the point where June Cleaver can start driving Ward around, we will still have a problem.

11.10 Clothing

Clothing (Figure 22) was a category that looked quasi-positive in the data, but once the data was dug into it looked much more grim.

Figure 22: Clothing Failure Rates 1970-2010



Overall, 76 commercials were collected for the clothing category, with 18 failing The June Cleaver Test's second criteria for a total failure rate of 23.7 percent. While this failure rate is rather low (Appendix A: Table 2), there are 2 specific features that should be mentioned in regards to the low rate. The first is that a majority of clothing ads passed by featuring women as clothing models. Even commercials that showed women in business attire did not show them as businesswomen in business settings, instead just having the women parade around in front of solid color backgrounds flashing the camera their sexiest looks. In other words, the majority of the commercials in this category that passed did so by objectifying them. While it is true that men also model clothes in some

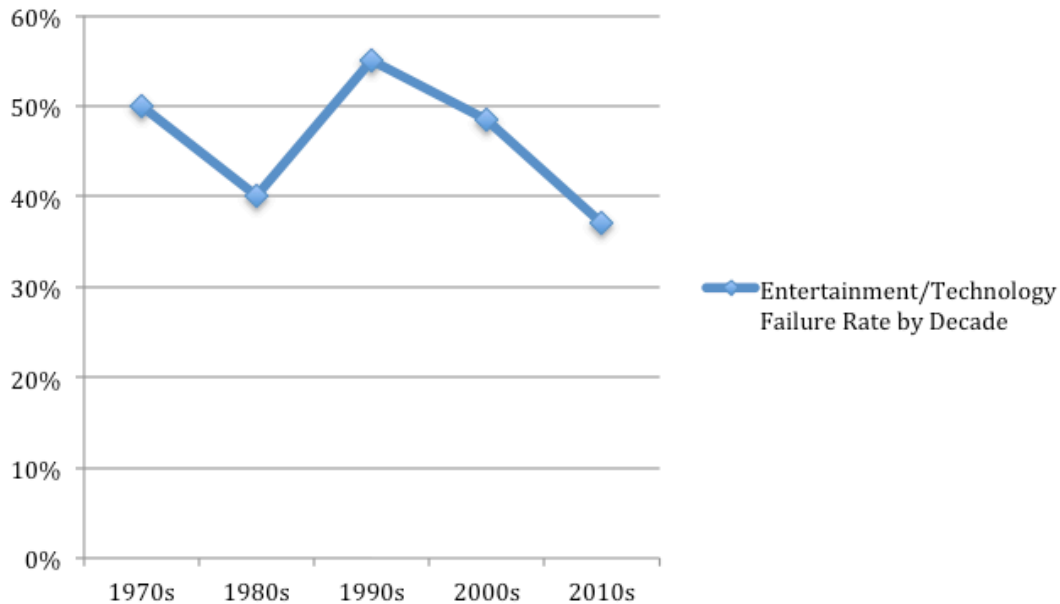
commercials, if one watches commercials that are targeted at men in particular instead of just showing off a bunch of different clothing styles meant for men, women and children all at once, men are shown in action using the clothing. One can watch men build fences in a Wrangler Jeans commercial or shoot hoops in a Nike shoes commercial. The second the clothing is placed on a woman by and large, however, it appears to become just a facet of her appearance, its practical application stripped away in favor of making her “sexy.” This again paints men as beings of “action” and “capability,” while it maintains that women are there for the male gaze and to be “pretty.” It doesn’t matter whether she’s picking out a suit for the board meeting next week or a ball gown, as long as the woman’s clothing is pleasing and makes her attractive to those around her.

The second reason that the low failure rates should not be a reason for loud cheering is that it follows the detrimental trend that several other categories faced. There was a dramatic drop in the failure rate in the 1990s to only 20 percent failing, then in the 2000s it went up by 17.5 percent to reach a total of 37.5 percent. Then there was another spike in the 2010s to 44.4 percent. In less than two decades the failure rate had over doubled, increasing by 24.4 percent between the 1990s and now. Even if that failure rate is still below 50 percent, such a rapid upward spike in failures does not bode well for the future.

11.11 Entertainment/Technology

Fortunately, it seems that the products of the future may bring at least a few progressive notions with them as the data surrounding the Entertainment/Technology category (Figure 23) suggests.

Figure 23: Entertainment/Technology Failure Rates 1970-2010



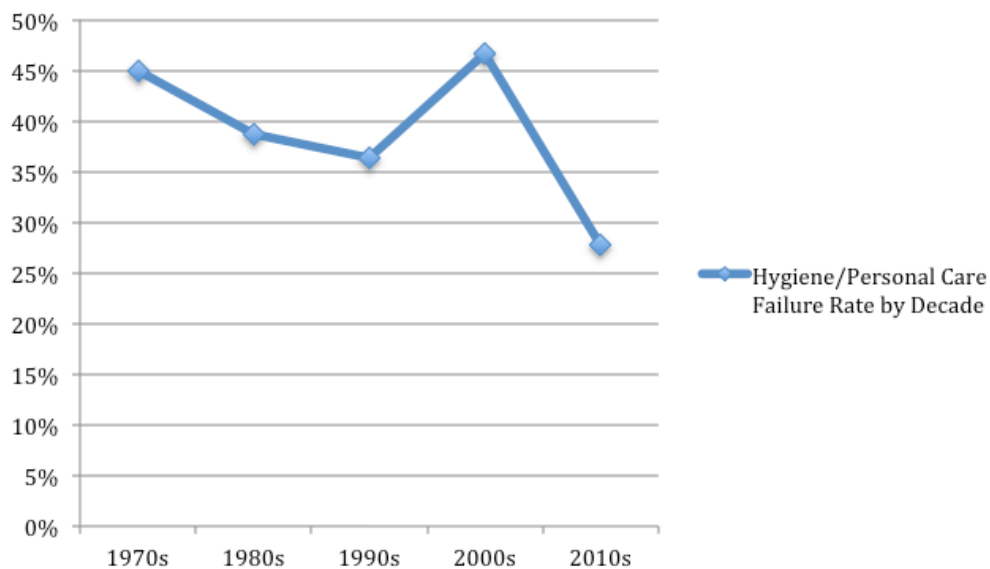
The Entertainment/Technology category, while not having the lowest failure rate overall (Appendix A: Table 2), did show an impressive amount of progress, almost being the exact opposite of the trends shown in other categories. This category garnered a healthy sample size of 141. Of that 141, 66 failed The June Cleaver Test, which means this category had a decent failure rate of 46.8 percent. Unlike Clothing, which also had a lower than 50 percent failure rate, however, when women passed by meeting the second criteria in these commercials they often held jobs that were not centered around their bodies. Women had jobs in a variety of technical fields and offices and were taken seriously, for the most part, in those jobs. It should be noted that the 66 that failed did so mostly by not allowing women to participate in technology at all. For instance, there were several video game commercials that specifically showed a father and son playing video games while the mother watched on smiling. This is not wonderful, but the other things that were noted in this category shows that it is at least making improvement.

In most categories the lowest failure rates occurred in the 1980s or 1990s, but in the Entertainment/Technology category, quite the opposite happens. The peak in the failure rate actually occurred in the 1990s with a 55 percent failure rate. This then steadily declined to 48.4 percent in the 2000s right down to 37 percent in the 2010s. This steady decline shows progress in this area, and a sign that in at least one area women are being shown as competent professionals a majority of the time. Women were technicians and lab coat clad researchers. It is important for women and young girls to see these depictions of confident, productive, capable women in these fields. It delivers a message to female viewers that, “If I can do this job, so could you.” If anyone would like to throw that wadded up ticker tape they’ve been holding for nearly 200 pages, now would be the time to throw it.

11.12 Hygiene/Personal Care

At this point you might want to sweep up some of that ticker tape as we dive into the Hygiene/Personal Care category (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Hygiene/Personal Care Failure Rates 1970-2010



Hygiene/Personal Care had a sample size of 152 combined over all 5 decades. The failure rate was 40.1 percent with a total of 61 failing The June Cleaver Test. This made it the fifth and final category to, on average across decades, fail below the 50 percent mark (Appendix A Table 2). The decrease in the failure rate from 45 percent in the 1970s to the 27.8 failure rate of the 2010s was dramatic. Sadly, Hygiene/Personal Care fell into the same pitfall that all the others, save Entertainment/Technology, did. The main reason that commercials in this category passed was by showing sexy models rubbing lotion on their long legs, pulling their fingers through shimmery hair or slowly and sensually rubbing in facial crèmes. Again, either trying to get women to buy your products by making them try to measure up to models (Lupukhova, 2015) or to get people to buy your product based off of turning women into objects or making them seem on par with the products is detrimental (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). There were very few, if any, women empowering commercials in the 152 sampled. The 61 that failed The June Cleaver Test also showed women as smiling mothers or helpful wives. Women were not allowed to have other emotions, they were either happy, perky and helpful or they were cast as villains. It doesn't matter that this is the thirteenth time today you've changed your baby's diaper, you better be smiling through the whole process every time! By and large, women were not using these products for themselves or to satiate their own pleasure, but to please or help another person. Women did not use soap to make themselves feel more clean, but to be more pleasing for their male significant others to hold, such as in the 1990 Caress Soap commercial, or didn't use lotion to relieve dry skin, but, like the 2005 Palmer's Coco Butter ad, to make unsightly after-birth stretch marks vanish. The selling point for these commercials was not, "Look what our product can do

you for you,” it was, “Look what our product can do for those around you!” This kind of messaging diminishes women’s value; after all, if everything women do or purchase must benefit the others in their life, then that places her in an automatically more servile place in the social hierarchy. Women’s needs and own health are valuable and products that advertise to them need to advertise to their needs, not the needs of others in their lives.

It is a bit surprising that marketers have not caught on that sometimes women purchase items for their own enjoyment and have not tapped into that stream of advertising. How would reframing a lotion commercial to show a woman saying, “I work outside all day and this lotion keeps my feet from cracking,” instead of, “My husband likes how smooth my skin is,” affect their sales? How would a woman testifying to the fact that she started using a new conditioner because it made her hair easier to comb out, as opposed to it made it easier for her boyfriend to run his fingers through her hair, affect the way that women saw that brand of conditioner? Unfortunately, until advertisers are encouraged to make the products they sell about the woman using them, we won’t actually know. Until then, women, your use of hygiene and personal care products is what is keeping your relationship together (along with your ability to produce babies and cook, of course) and making sure that every man in the area can ogle you. After all, isn’t that why God put woman on this green earth!?

11.13 Limitations

As with any study, there are limitations. One such limitation is that there was no recorded comparative data showing how many men were involved in domestic tasks, nor was there an official record of commercials kept that showed when just men were seen on screen doing domestic tasks sans wives or girlfriends. However, even though there was

no official record kept, notes were made by the researcher as commercials were being watched and the handful of such commercials that were seen were described in this text for such a comparative purpose. There were very few viewed that had such content that were not noted and included in this analysis. In the future, though, a Ward Cleaver Test, if you will, could be developed to compare with the results of The June Cleaver Test.

A further limitation has to deal with the ways in which the researcher had access to the content. As stated in the chapter covering the 1980s there were some commercials that had to be discounted from the data due to poor quality, an inability to tell gender or whether the figure on the screen was human or not. Furthermore, the researcher, having only lived in 4 out of the 5 decades, was limited in identifying which commercials from the 1970s would have been the most viewed and if they received a wider audience. However, if there was a question regarding this, the researcher would try to limit that issue by asking someone who was alive and watching television in that decade to see if it was a good fit for the study. Also, the comments left on the advertisements by other database users helped clear up this confusion as many left comments such as, “I remember this commercial was on all the time!”

Another limitation of this study has to do with the 2010s and how the data was broken down by time slot. Oftentimes a commercial appeared during multiple timeslots, but was only counted the first time it was viewed. For instance a State Farm Insurance (2015) commercial where a wife thinks she has caught her husband having a phone conversation with a mistress, only to find it’s an insurance agent, played in all 4 time slot categories. However, as it was first viewed during the Weekday Prime Time, it was coded in that category. While this did not affect the overall data, it is possible that it may

have slightly skewed the breakdown of the time slot category percentages. However, the relatively similar failure rates across time slots would suggest that if there were a skewing in the data, it would be very slight. Any point of data that was in dispute by the researcher were analyzed by an outside source and discussed, so that corruption or misinterpretations of the data would be eliminated or limited.

11.14 Concluding Discussion

The overall results of The June Cleaver Test show that the questions inspired by Coltrane (1997) and Meyerowitz's (1990) studies of women in media are relevant. The information pulled from their research inspired the driving questions behind this research; do these persistent stereotypes of women's role in the home being that of the quiet, homemaker, content to raise children and pursue domestic pursuits still exist in the media that we see today? Have we truly liberated June Cleaver, or is she just scrubbing the same kitchen counters sporting a more modern hairstyle and a new dress?

Sadly, it appears that that the answers to these questions are, in order, yes and no. Yes, women in a majority of American television commercials are still fitting that June Cleaver stereotype, and no, we have not found a way to liberate the televised June Cleavers from their kitchens. Again, of course, despite the previous 200 pages, some might ask, "But why is this test important? Don't women have a choice in what they choose to do with their lives, particularly in this day an age?" In some ways, yes, women have a choice. However, as the research by Ozmete (2009), Goffman (1959), Lupukhova (2015), Valkenburg and Cantor (2001) and many others show, what we are shown en masse and the representation of roles shown to us, tends to be what we embrace and assimilate into our lives. It isn't as much, "Do women have a choice?" but, "How many

choices are women provided with?” If provided with a test that has all multiple-choice answers, is one likely to ignore the test answer options in front of them and write something else in? No! If the choices presented to someone is limited, then that person’s choice and agency to choose are limited as well. The way to truly give women empowerment and self-agency is to adequately provide them with the full scope choices. It is with the results of The June Cleaver Test in mind that the words of renowned author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie help explain why this is an issue that needs attention, not just from the modern Feminist movement, but by the world in general:

“We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller. We say to girls, you can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful, but not too successful. Otherwise, you would threaten the man. Because I am female, I am expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important. Now marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support but why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage and we don’t teach boys the same? We raise girls to see each other as competitors not for jobs or accomplishments, which I think can be a good thing, but for the attention of men. We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings in the way that boys are” (2014, p. 35).

When the majority of advertisements show women in roles of domestication, and a majority of those that don’t show them as targets of sexual objectification, we have a real problem with women’s representations in the media. Studies, like Ozmete’s (2009), show us that these commercials do not just go out into a vacuum, consumers see them, absorb and assimilate the messages about who and what they should be into their own identities of what it means to be a “woman.” Womanhood itself should not be defined by a rigid set of societal norms and expectations. However, as Berger and Luckmann (1966) would point out, we have reached a point where these roles have been adopted into the, “This is just the way we do things,” normalcy. Part of how we can change that normalcy

is by changing the way that we depict women in the media. We need fewer June Cleavers in advertising in the kitchen and more women being shown as astronauts, truck drivers and even tired graduate students.

In the same way, these commercials that focus on the domestication of women can also be limiting to men. By showing men as “domestic dud dads,” who are incapable of parenting or doing things around the house, we insult their intelligence and limit the options for men who want to be “real men” in the world. If a father wants to be a stay at home dad, or loves to make crepes while dressed in an apron, or enjoys knitting, then he should not be limited by society’s expectation for him to hold traditional “male” roles. Men should be allowed into women’s realms without social recrimination just as women need to be allowed into the traditionally male realms as well.

Even the way that the commercials have women act emotionally in the commercials is detrimental. The fact that women are not only expected to bear all the responsibility for “tidying up” and cleaning up after their kids and husband, but that they are required to with a smile on their face is problematic. Women should be allowed to express emotions other than, “Sadness when the AC isn’t working and I need a man to come fix it,” and, “Overjoyed that I get to scrub the toilet again!” Women, as human beings along with men, should be allowed to be angry that their kids wrote on the walls, their husband tracked mud on the clean carpet or frustrated that their husband can’t even load the dishwasher correctly without guidance. When we limit the focus of what women are allowed to emote in the media we end up with the common micro-aggressions against their emotions that women face every day. Lines like, “You should smile more,” or, “Oh, you’re upset. Is it that time of the month?” boil women’s emotions down to either being

something they should experience on the behalf of others' perceptions or to being about them simply being an "irrational" woman (Nussbaum & Glover, 1996). Discrediting women's emotions by portraying a select few that are "permissible" means that women who do not conform to that very strict set of emotional boxes often are painted as a "bitch" or "crazy," when the males in their lives display these exact emotions all the time with no consequence to the perception of their personalities. This is a point that Nussbaum and Glover (1996) discuss, not only in light of the ways that it traps women in society, limiting what they can socially express, but in their ability to economically advance. After all, we accept men's forwardness and assertiveness as strength, when we view women doing the exact same thing as being "unladylike" or "bossy." How else is a woman supposed to advance, particularly in certain fields, when she is being told that she is not assertive enough, but when she is assertive that she is being a "bitch?" Women should be able to express their emotions freely, outside of gender expectations, not just as a matter of their being humans with emotions, but to put them on an even emotional playing field with the men around them.

The separation between "work" and "home" needs to be erased. Both are a part of every person's life regardless of gender, and as such should be a shared venture between the sexes, not two separate spheres divided up as "men's" and "women's" work especially given the fact that gender is such a broadly definable construct (Davies & Fink, 2014). For this to happen the constant stream of mediated messages that a woman's place is in the kitchen, with the kids or being there to support her husband needs to at least be tempered with more displays of women, even mostly domestic women, to have lives, interests and competency outside the home. Women need to be stop being

portrayed as simply there to coddle, support and take care of others, they need to be shown making decisions for their own health, competently competing out in the world and buying things for their own enjoyment, for that unnecessary and obstructing wall between “home” and “work” to be torn down. Commercials need to stop showing women as incompetent at jobs and the “sexy occupation” trend needs to end. For women to be afforded respect in the workplace, to finally receive the same wage that men in similar positions hold, women need to be shown as valuable occupationally and not expected to carry the entire burden of the second shift of their home life on their own (Walzer, 1996). This is necessary for women; whether they be married, have children with a partner, single mothers or just treading a single path, to be taken seriously out in the work force. Every time a woman is shown as simply “mom,” with no interests outside her maternal tasks, it reinforces the idea that this truly is the calling of all women. It creates the idea that it is “unnatural” for women to leave the home and work, and as such it places much more intrinsic value on their domestic servitude while also removing its power by claiming that men are the ones facing the “tough jobs” and “hard decisions.” A majority of women, from all types of marital and familial composition backgrounds in this country have at least one job and contribute to providing for their families or are the primary provider for their families (United States Department of Labor, 2016). That work should be just as valued and recognized by their male counterparts. That will not happen until the servile, two-dimensional, eager to please June Cleaver depictions of women are no longer *the predominant message* being shown to the American public. After all, that predominant message, with more women working than ever, is no longer true. If the marketing media wants to be modern and truly relevant it needs to catch up with

women's current occupational and employment numbers instead of treading over the same stereotypes and holding them up on a pedestal even though these tropes are no longer an accurate representation of women in America.

We are what we consume, and in this case we are what advertisers tell us to consume. The outright laziness of advertising companies to just stick with the same old, same old, is showing. As the research shows (Zayer and Coleman, 2015), the CEOs and producers behind these commercials know what kind of an impact their ads can have on the perception of gender roles, they just feel they need to care until it begins to affect their bottom line. In a decade that prides itself on rapid technological advancement, affording new rights to the LGBTQIA community and pats itself on the back for improved quality of life, the trend of regression, of going back to almost where we were in the 1970s in *The June Cleaver Test* says otherwise. The rise in portrayals of the domestication of women is an issue that modern feminist scholars need to examine because the persistent mass production of these gender role messages will not go away if we simply ignore them. As the regressive data in *The June Cleaver Test* shows, it may in fact get worse if not addressed and if marketers are not urged in some way, either monetarily or through public discourse, to drop the no longer relevant image of a woman in heels, holding a child and cooking her husbands' breakfast. Until then, June Cleaver is still stuck in her kitchen, ignored in the boardroom and making less money than men for equal work.

"The public heroines of one generation are the private heroines of the next."

-Alice Rossi, 1988

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APPENDIX A
COMPARISONS ACROSS DECADES

Table 2: Comparisons Across Decades

Decade	Passed	Failed	% That Failed Overall	Household Goods % Failed	Grocery/ Department Stores % Failed	Food % Failed	Sports % Failed	Insurance % Failed	Pharm. % Failed	Other % Failed	Car % Failed	Clothing % Failed	Ent./Tech. % Failed	Hygiene % Failed
1970s	105	145	58%	81.3%	25%	62.5%	0%	100%	71.4%	47.4%	64.3%	27.3%	50%	45%
1980s	112	138	55.2%	87.1%	71.4%	60.3%	0%	100%	35.3%	46.2%	75%	25%	40%	38.7%
1990s	122	128	51.2%	78.9%	66.7%	56.7%	0%	33.3%	47.1%	47.1%	37.5%	20%	55%	36.4%
2000s	119	131	52.4%	84.2%	53.8%	51.2%	0%	50%	66.7%	28.6%	81.8%	37.5%	48.4%	50%
2010s	111	139	55.6%	83.3%	77.8%	56.8%	57.1%	57.1%	54.8%	54.8%	55%	44.4%	37%	55.6%
Totals	569	681	54.5%											