

DEFINING THE VISUAL ASPECTS OF “ANTIDOTE ADVERTISING” AND ITS IMPACT
ON PRESSURES OF WOMEN IN AMERICAN ADVERTISING

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late grandmother, Sondra Hughes, whose creative contributions to my life exceed beyond the time we shared on Earth.

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Abstract

Learning from the past is how we understand the complexities or growth of a subject. For women, advertisements play a significant role in our interpretation of the world and ourselves. In this study, I examine specific advertisements targeted towards women by using the theoretical model known as ‘Antidote Advertising’, as defined by Stuart Ewen in 1976. The central thesis of this paper is associated with identifying the visual characteristics of “Antidote Advertising” through a qualitative analysis of various print ads from 1920s to the present, in order to understand the persistent pressures experienced by women in American culture. In this thesis a framework is created by finding patterns in visual characteristics (headline, image, and body copy) of ads. The framework led to sub-categories that were created and then grouped into larger categories with names that defined the overarching themes of the visual characteristics. Being able to identify the visual characteristics of this type of advertising can lead to better practices within design that helps avoid the creation of ads that reflect and imply the exploitation, humiliation and lack of diverse portrayals amongst women, while still being able to sell products.

Key words: Marriage, Youth, Feminine, Beautiful, Graphic Design, Advertising, Women, Advertising, Graphic Design, Images, Headline, Body Copy

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Introduction

“Antidote Advertising” is described as being “designed to repudiate antique beliefs which had no place in the social style of modern industrial life. Often such ads were geared to make people ashamed of their origins and consequently the habits and practices that betrayed them as alien,” (Ewen, 2001, p. 43). Antidote Advertising was especially popular during a time when consumerism and commercialization were on the rise and people were very eager to have the “latest and greatest.” Having access to anything and everything new in the changing landscape of American product consumption was a means by which citizens could acclimate by assimilating even more rapidly. The ads played upon the human desire to be socially accepted, linking the products they were selling to the desire to be a great mom, wife, sister and friend. The purpose of this research is to utilize the theory of Antidote Advertising as a framework for identifying the visual components of advertising directed at women and how these components were leveraged to influence the sale of products through specific appeals to women. In a visual society, advertisements play a significant role in determining how we perceive ourselves and how we feel about the products that we buy. I chose the scope of ads that target women because I am interested in exploring the ways in which women have been portrayed over time and examining the reasoning behind this type of portrayal. There is an abundance of historical archives that focus on this material. I participate in the study through my identification as female. I, therefore, incorporate my own experience viewing such ads.

Historically, the types of ads analyzed in this study targeted women in a multitude of ways, heightening their insecurities in order to sell products. Whether it be about body types, social status, or the ability to keep a stable relationship, the ads heighten the importance of things that women supposedly lack in order to make women feel isolated or self-conscious enough to purchase the advertised products.

My research examines a great number of ads spanning from the 1920s to the present. After the 1960s, ads that reflected traits of Antidote Advertising gradually decrease. I suggest that this does not mean that these types of ads did not exist, but were instead changing in reaction to evolving approaches to creating advertisements. Instead of the usual “in your face” headline and body copy filled with reasons why you will be a better woman with the advertised product, the approach became more subtle.

Currently, one cannot stand in line at the grocery store without seeing a magazine with “hot topics” that relate to keeping a man, slimming your waist or indulging in the newest trend that will help you look twenty years younger. The same trends for women that were sizzling in the 20s are still hot today, but yet again, in a less explicit manner. This thesis paper aims to answer the following questions as it relates to the portrayal of women in ads: As the pressures experienced by women within American culture persists, what can be learned about advertising’s role in exerting these pressures on women by applying Stuart Ewen’s theory of “Antidote Advertising” as a framework to study the visual components of such advertising? How might these findings be presented to an audience?

Although Antidote Advertising will continue to exist in a myriad of ways because of its effectiveness, my research can be useful for companies, ad agencies, and designers who seek to promote items in ways that do not require women to feel emotions of inadequacy, guilt, or other negative affect in order to convince them to purchase products or to perceive the consumption of products as a solution to their problems. According to a 2018 Bloomberg article about women consumers, “Women drive 70-80% of all consumer purchasing, through a combination of their buying power and influence,” (Brennan, 2018, para. 3). Given the overwhelming influence of women in consumer purchasing, companies, agencies, and designers may be well served to consider how their ads portray women. This can be accomplished by utilizing research like this

thesis to understand what Antidote Advertising looks like, what type of ideas it can imply, and how more diverse ads can be if these visual characteristics are avoided.

Assumptions

I argue that Antidote Advertising still exists, but in a less explicit manner. Over time, design trends changed and the design layout veered away from a huge headline, vibrant imagery, and large amounts of body copy to sell a product. Instead, a contemporary campaign might include simple ads that feature only an image and tagline along with a 30 second digital video ad. It is the 30 second digital video ad that now depicts descriptions of women and how the product will fix the problem. While current advertisements may not be as explicit, these cynical tactics are still in use today in more subtle ways.

Review of Literature

From postwar utopias to modern day dream worlds, advertising has been successful in manipulating people into purchasing tangible things to meet their intangible desires, like happiness, acceptance, or love. The ability to sell goods, trade, and persuade consumers by way of organizing text and image is a skill embedded in a capitalist nation.

In *Captains of Consciousness*, Ewen (2001) establishes the connection between advertising and consumer culture:

“If man was the victim of himself, the fruits of mass production were his Savior. Ads constantly hammered away at everything that was his own—his bodily functions, his self-esteem—and offered something of theirs as a socially more effective substitute.” (p. 46)

Essentially, ads were all the more effective if you somehow fit this criterion of an individual struggling with identity issues.

Throughout the book, Ewen (2001) continuously reinforces the connections between advertising and consumer culture through a chronological approach that traces the development of

American attitudes toward consumption. Ewen (2001) defines the “Mass American type” as a byproduct of mass production (p. 42). Ewen (2001) defined the way ads began to “create” new identities for people to fit the American ideal in order make them feel insecure and more likely to assimilate because of these insecurities: “Mass industry requiring a corresponding mass individual, cryptically named him ‘Civilized American’ and implicated his national heritage in the marketplace,” (p. 42).

Similar to Ewen, in *Advertising the Uneasy Persuasion*, Michael Schudson (1984) focuses on the trends in American culture that paved a space for advertising to thrive. Schudson (1984) expounds on ideas of social mobility, selling hope, concentrated advertising, and social membership as parts of the human experience that made Americans vulnerable to the assimilating tactics of advertising. Schudson (1984) describes social mobility as the event when:

Relations weaken with the people who socialized the mobile individual. The norms, rules, attitudes, and behaviors that to the child seemed natural, seem foreign to the adult who has moved away. What was internalized is now seen as external, arbitrary, even alien. The individual is separated from the past. This often is a great but wrenching liberation. One’s roots are left behind and individuals become more and more dependent on people immediately around them to reaffirm their identities... Children learn to pay attention not just to their parents but to their peer group and to the mass media. (p.153)

In essence, as society became more mobile by leaving behind their origins and replacing them with new surroundings, people became vulnerable to change and criticism as they struggled to identify who they truly were. The vulnerability of struggling with one’s identity gives external forces like advertising or mass media greater ability to define a person. Alternatively, when people did not stray away from their native geographical or cultural origins or let mass media’s undue influence determine factors of their individuality, it was harder for a person to lose sight of their identity. The

effects of social mobility can be observed through the lens of gender, specifically women. For example, imagine being from a different country, displaying a different body type, or even having a different hair texture than the women that you see idealized in local/regional/national media and realize how disconnected you could feel from the world around you.

Hope can be defined as a longing, dream or even desire to obtain a specific thing. Schudson (1984) writes:

In the factory we make cosmetics,' Charles Revson of Revlon Inc. said, 'in the store we sell hope.' An advertising executive told me, 'We've convinced the mothers of America that they're not good mothers if they don't serve Minute Maid. (p. 129)

Hope is a single thread in a blanket of ideas that encourage women to consume tangible products to acquire intangible ideals like happiness and love. Schudson (1984) emphasizes this idea by describing the means by which actual companies understand they can manipulate women into buying products by using hope.

An important part of consumerism is gifts: luxury gifts, Christmas gifts, birthday gifts, and so forth. Schudson (1984) argues that gifts are used to connect gift-giving, luxury status and social membership together. As mentioned previously, as companies use hope to encourage women to consume tangible products, there is a similar tactic involving gifts. Schudson (1984) explains:

In a sense, people exploit advertising to make it do their bidding in establishing social ties. The exploitation is mutual; advertisers are well aware that people are as often gift givers as they are direct consumers, and they schedule their advertising accordingly. Because wristwatches are so often given as gifts, watch manufacturers concentrate their advertising in the Christmas season. Seiko, a watch company, spends 60 percent of its annual advertising budget in the last quarter of the year. Health and beauty aid firms spend more than 60 percent of their ad budgets in the Christmas season. (p. 139)

A large amount of the ads that I was able to collect and research, pertain to the health and beauty of women. Another portion relates to ads of luxury goods targeted towards women. Luxury status can also be linked to certain products through advertising. Just as people trust products enough to give them as gifts based on the ads they encounter; they also trust advertising's ability to decipher between what is and is not luxury. Schudson (1984) writes:

For gift giving purposes, the quality of the good may be less important than cultural assumptions, partly shaped by advertising, about the product's status. The gift is a social statement, not contribution to the recipient's wellbeing. Advertising helps rank order the status of goods. (p. 140)

The happiness one feels from giving a child, spouse or friend a gift, became a driving force in the way ads were being constructed with regard to women as gift givers. Understanding how advertisements visually promote items as gifts in order to get women to inadvertently believe their purchases made them better women is an important question examined in my research.

In *Ads, Women and Boxtops*, Duane Jones (1955) discusses various methods used in radio and print advertisements aimed at housewives. The use of "Housewives/wife" as a term used to describe to the specific target market that Jones discusses and also the context in which this book was written. Jones (1955) illustrates housewives as "both the prospect and the customer" (p. 55). Jones portrays housewives as the people that do the most spending within families making them a vital consumer in the marketplace for various products. However, in order to convince her to purchase a product the reason must be "simple and logical, one that is concise and convincing," (Jones, 1955, 54). Jones (1955) credits John E. Kennedy with what he eventually calls "reason why" copy (p. 55). Jones used this approach to come up with taglines that he felt would connect to women and allow them to feel like the purchases they were making were worthwhile. Though the syllogism is comprised of three components, Jones (1955) suggests that it can be "refined to its

essence... compressed into a single line, making it ideal for... headline use” (p. 57). What Jones depicts is basically the creation of catchy headlines and taglines that connect with women consumers further persuading them to purchase more products. “It makes you look as lovely as a magazine covergirl” is a “reason why” copy for Sweetheart Soap that was successful amongst women consumers (Jones, 1955, 57). The “reason why” copy for Sweetheart Soap is just one of the many examples that reinforced the idea that products could help women acquire beauty (Jones, 1955, p. 57).

Advertising cannot be discussed without understanding the historical contexts in which the ad was created. As design trends change, the interpretation of the ad relative to its historical context becomes even more significant. In *From Submarines to Suburbs: Selling a better America*, Cynthia Lee Henthorn (2006) recounts the postwar changes of America as they relate to advertising, detail the changes that influenced the way ads were created. Similar to the idea of Ewen’s (2001) creation of the “Civilized American”, Henthorn (2006) discusses the idea of an overall cleansing of American society during and after war. This cleansing can be seen as an aspiration of America to become a “better America” by ridding itself of anything reminiscent of its past (Henthorn, 2006, p. 198). Henthorn (2006) illustrates this “world of tomorrow” as a means of highlighting the way that America sought to rebrand itself as a:

germ-free, dust-free, stain-free world of a well-plumbed future that upheld a moral authority against the tyrannical regimes of wasteful drudgery, poverty, poor housing, and social decay. The American middle-class standard of living had been positioned as a beacon of order and hygiene. (p. 199)

It is evident in the advertisements collected during the 1940s and 1950s that this underlying goal was operative in the way in which ads were being created and targeted towards women. This cleansing affected the way women were being portrayed in ads. There was a shift to advertisements

that placed a large emphasis on hygiene, beauty perfection, and technological advancements that made life easier.

Throughout each decade, romantic relationships and ideal beauty were a consistent theme in the ads I collected for this research. Henthorn (2006) details a specific postwar ad that features what she describes as “advertising’s fittest female type: the streamline, Aryan blonde” and her metaphorical “Prince Charming” (p. 194). The advertisement for Dow plastics for example was targeted specifically at women. *Figure 1* shows how the ad used the headline, “You have a date with Plastics” to create a metaphorical romantic relationship between the reader and the plastics the company was selling. In the ad, the plastics are being used for lipstick tubes, compact mirrors, perfume bottles and basically everything else women might use on a daily basis. Henthorn’s (2006) example was just one of the numerous ads that used ideal standards of beauty and relationships to get women to buy products.

Henthorn also discussed the omission of African American people from the cleansing of America and representations of ideal beauty. The omission negated African American women from the positive image of the “world of tomorrow.” Businesses were aware that African American purchasing power was growing in postwar America but African American men and women still failed to be represented as a part of the “better America,” (Henthorn, 2006, p. 110). *From Submarines to Suburbs: Selling a better America* also describes how African American women’s depictions were manipulated to fit a more Eurocentric standard of beauty or were not depicted at all. The historical context of this image was likewise reflected in my research and compiling of ads.

Sex, Soap, and Cigarettes: A Cultural History of American Advertising by Julian Sivulka (1998) is a vibrant literary work that also takes a look at advertising from a historical perspective. Sivulka (1998) breaks up the book into fifteen-year time periods and discusses the highs and lows that occurred during this time as it connects to advertising. An important aspect of the time period

of 1960-1975 is what the author called the “creative revolution,” (Sivulka, 1998, p.298). Before undertaking this research project. I understood the changes that had taken place in society that forced ads to change over time. I realized early on that the ideals reflected in ads from the 1930s would contrast greatly from ads created in the 1990s. However, I remained interested in what ads *still* existed that reflected negative portrayals of women despite the gradual changes. In the early 1960s, advertisements began to mirror a shift from gaining attention to focusing on the product. (Sivulka, 2006, p.302) The late 60s resulted in a change where minority groups began to “demand a piece of pie” as it related to being represented more in advertisements (Sivulka, 2006, p.316). Simultaneously, women became more vocal about their portrayals in advertising. Stereotypical roles and antiquated ideals towards women were loudly being rejected until a change began (Sivulka, 2006, p. 325). Women were becoming increasingly more liberated and demanding change in representation.

Eventually, The National Advertising Board created a set of questions for creatives to ask themselves to attempt to “monitor potentially sexist and gender stereotypical content in their ads.” (Sivulka, 2006, p. 326) The checklist includes questions like “Are the woman portrayed in my ad stupid? For example, am I reinforcing the ‘dumb blond’ cliché?” and “Do my ads consistently show women waiting on men? Even in occupational situations, for example, are women nurses or secretaries serving coffee to male bosses or colleagues? And never vice versa?” These questions helped spark a gender revolution in advertisements. (Sivulka, 2006, p. 326). The checklist did not cover every single situation in which a woman could feel stereotyped or a victim of sexist advertising, but it did cover enough ground to create a change. As my researched advanced, I created my own criteria to guide my thesis into completion.

Method

The method of this research is to explore the visual characteristics of what is called

Antidote Advertising. By examining these characteristics of Antidote Advertising, I am able to categorize the ideas of these ads as they relate to gender, specifically the ads that target women. Through qualitative research, I am exploring various advertisements to analyze the visual characteristics as they fit within the criteria and description of Antidote Advertising. The other sources in the bibliography help provide the necessary scope for expansion and creation of the visual characteristic criteria. This resulted in a more expansive, broader model to capture the fullest extent of visual characteristics. This is where I focus on the comparisons, methods and rationale behind the targeting of women, how they were targeted, and why they continue to be targeted by Antidote Advertising. My exploration of the rationale behind this type of advertising and marketing towards women uncovers the ideology behind product sales and the specific tools and strategies that make women feel insecure, alien, or unattractive.

To obtain a better understanding of the visual components of Antidote Advertising in ads that target women, I conducted a qualitative analysis using the ads that I compiled. The first method within my research was to find sources that could help me expound upon the theory of Antidote Advertising. In his book, Ewen provides the definition and some context. As written in the literature review, the sources helped provide visuals to guide me as I compiled ads. The print ads are from magazines published in the United States. The time span of the ads I collected covers the 1920s to the present. My research does not include radio ads, video ads, or social media ads. I used the following ad archives to search and collect ads: Ad Flip, Ad Access, ProQuest and Vintage Ad Browser. Each of these provided a wealth of advertisements that I could sort through during my quest to find the visual components of Antidote Advertising. ProQuest featured an entire archive of Women's publications. This archive featured magazines like *Ladies Home Journal*, *Essence*, and *Good Housekeeping*. The rest of the ad archives displayed archived ads as a collection either in chronological order or at random. Since my thesis focuses on women, it was

critical that each ad I compiled be targeted towards women.

I created a website, *Figures 2-4*, to collect everything digitally so that my research could remain organized. On the website, I created a tab for every decade from 1920 to 2000. As I collected ads, I placed them in the appropriate decade. For organizational and historical purposes, it was crucial that each ad remained in the decade from which it came. Once the ads were organized and I obtained a substantial number of ads that targeted women, I began to move forward with the qualitative analysis. I designated categories (Image, Headline, Body Copy) that I could begin coding. The importance of the image, headline, and body copy categorization is that it is a consistent part of most, if not all, ads. I would be able to use these three categories to find patterns amongst all of the ads collectively. The images of an ad include pictures, illustrations and any type of visual that is a depiction of what is being advertised. All ads do not include images but “many companies use images of their products, or people using their products, to grab consumer interest,” (Brookins, 2017, para. 2). The headline is the bold text placed at the top of the ad or another area of focus to attract the attention of “potential customers” (Brookins, 2017, para 2). The body copy is smaller text within the ad that usually accompanies the headline and images. Depending on what is advertised, many modern-day ads do not have body copy at all. The body copy is used to strengthen ideas created by the headline and images.

“How is this ad constructed” and “What is the headline and body copy suggesting” are the sorts of questions that I asked myself while reading and understanding these ads. Table 1 displays the initial framework that I created as I was refining the visual components of Antidote Advertising. I created this framework by manually going through each advertisement and finding similarities and differences. The similarities and differences led to patterns. I took note of each of the patterns and was able to create 17 total descriptions for the three different parts of the ads that I examined. The framework includes individual descriptions like “The headline implicitly states that

the woman reading the ad does not have what the product can offer or enhance.” The descriptions in the framework are organized by columns. Many of the descriptions state how the visual characteristic is demonstrated as being a part of the image, headline, and body copy. Creating the framework proved to be helpful, as it provided much needed information for me to move forward with coding the ads.

The next step in my process was to create the subcategories that each ad existed in. By identifying the type of ad (health, beauty, luxury, etc.) and using the framework, I was able to categorize the ads even further, which resulted in 14 subcategories. The framework served as the foundation at which I could refer to as I delved deeper into the compositions of the ads. The framework helped me understand which visual components were being used to depict ideas such as adjectives like “charming” and ideas like “standard of beauty”. As my research progressed, I realized an overlap in certain descriptions where the visual depiction could be found in either the imagery, headline or body copy. Unlike the framework whose descriptions are specific to describing either the image, headline or body copy, the subcategories can be attributed to both the image, headline, and/or body copy, unless otherwise specified.

The subcategories and main categories are more refined ideas as they relate to Antidote Advertising that targets women. I used the website to create a page and tab for each of the 14 subcategories. This allowed me to categorize the ads even further while still keeping them organized for future referencing. *Table 2* displays the subcategories and categories. Through a process of sorting and elimination, I created the main categories. This process of sorting was based on similarities of subcategories.

Table 1. Antidote Advertising Visual Component Framework

Image	Headline	Body Copy
Image features a direct representation of the type of woman that is being discussed in the ads copy.	The headline asks a question that implies that the woman reading the ad is lacking something. This could refer to marriage, beauty, money, luxury goods etc.	The body copy describes a scene in which the woman is a participant. The product serves as the solution to the problem being presented.
The image of the actual product is usually small in comparison to the other image(s) used.	The headline implies that the woman reading the ad is lacking something and by using this product she can obtain it.	If the headline asks a question directed at the woman reading the ad, then the body copy will assume the answer is yes or no (whatever answer will make the reader feel like she needs the product) and will continue to describe reasons why this product is an essential.
The product isn't shown at all but is instead described.	The headline suggests that if the woman wants to maintain an important part of her life, she must do something specific. This specific thing can be done by using the product that is being advertised. This important part of her life usually refers to a relationship.	Body copy places pressure on women as the role of wife, girlfriend, mom, sister etc., as a way to get her to buy certain things to maintain the home. Without these products she won't be fulfilling each role she plays.
The image shows a woman with the "ideal" look of beauty, usually a person with fairer skin.	The headline implicitly states that the woman reading the ad does not have what the product can offer or enhance.	Body copy reinforces the headline. Body serves as a way to further describe why the woman should by this product.
<p>The main image of a woman is usually at the top of the page while the image or logo of the product being advertised as that bottom or bottom right corner of the page.</p> <p>The image of a woman can be alone, with other women, in a scene with a man, or in a scene with children.</p>	The headline states that a certain set of women have a <u>wrong</u> view of something. This something could be an illness, process or understanding about the way of life. The copy for the ad continues to state how with this product, a woman can have the <u>right</u> view or a better understanding.	<p>Body copy lists negative attributes of the woman which may be naturally occurring and completely normal. This can range from negative perceptions about body type to implying that in order to keep up with other housewives she needs to upgrade her refrigerator.</p> <p>The body copy then lists positive attributes that the woman can obtain by purchasing.</p>
	The headline states that the product is a new way of doing the same thing that other products do but adds words like "luxury" "new" "popular" or "exclusive" to make the product seem different.	
	The headline states that whatever the woman is suffering from will have a negative effect on something else... so in order to stop this from happening she must buy a product.	

Results

Fourteen subcategories emerged from the analysis, constituting five main categories (see Table 2). Many ads contained images of women with slender figures. This became a category as it can be considered a form of Antidote Advertising that visually suggests and reinforces the idea women should have slim figures. Another category entitled “Purchases = Successful Relationships and Marriages” can also be considered a form of Antidote Advertising because it visually evokes the idea that products can help women have better relationships through the use of image and text. The 14 subcategories range from adjectives like “Feminine” to representations of how “Standard of Beauty.” The four main categories range from “Traditionally Feminine Adjectives” to the “Adverse Effects of Being a Woman.” The following analysis expounds on each of these main categories as why they are respective visual components of Antidote Advertising that target women.

Category A, Traditionally Feminine Adjectives, is comprised of the following properties: “Youthful,” “Lovely,” “Dainty,” “Feminine,” and “Charming,” though the list is not limited to these words. Traditionally feminine adjectives are words based in gender that are typically used to describe women. Although positive in their meaning, when used in a headline or body that suggest the reader does not possess these qualities, this creates an environment for Antidote Advertising to exist. For example, in *Figure 5*, we are able to see this 1930s ad for Evening in Paris perfume by Bourjois. The headline reads “Gifts that Promise loveliness and charm wherever she goes!” The headline is suggesting that since women do not naturally have loveliness and charm, they must obtain it through a perfume. The headline is using traditionally feminine adjectives to describe attributes of women while simultaneously suggesting that “loveliness” and “charm” are not naturally possessed by the viewer.

Table 2. Antidote Advertising Visual Component Categories

	Categories	Subcategories
Category A	“Traditionally Feminine Adjectives”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youthful 2. Lovely 3. Dainty 4. Feminine 5. Charming
Category B	“Products as a Solution”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Beauty is Happiness 7. Purchases = successful relationships/marriages 8. Ways to Obtain
Category C	“Idealized Portrayals of Women”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Standard of Beauty 10. Fairer Skin Women 11. Slim Women (image)
Category D	“Adverse Effects of being a Woman”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Women are without (headline) 13. Way of life is causing negative effects 14. Headline causes women to question themselves

“Products as a Solution” is the second category that is a repeated tactic used in ads. The goal is to get people to *feel* like products are the solution to their problems so that they can purchase more products. “Products as a Solution” includes the subcategories “Beauty is Happiness,” “Purchases Equate to Successful Relationships/Marriages,” and “Ways to Obtain.” These five subcategories are common in Antidote Advertising that targets women. “Beauty is Happiness” is the subcategory that includes ads that reinforce the idea that by obtaining beauty you will become happy. The typical ad usually states how women can obtain this beauty by following a set of steps or by making a specific purchase, thereby making happiness a result of the product and effect of the purchase.

“Purchases Equate to Successful Relationships/Marriages” ads are rooted in the concept that recognizes women’s need to satisfy her children, friends, family and spouse. Gifts can include

anything. The subcategory suggests that by making the right purchases, you can satisfy your children, impress other moms, make your family happy or even make your spouse compliment your abilities a wife, mom, etc. These relationships will grow stronger because the women made the correct purchases. *Figure 6* is a 1970s Hanes ad for pantyhose. The headline simply reads, “Gentlemen prefer Hanes.” The image is composed of a seated slim woman with her legs crossed and position right above the headline. The woman is smiling while looking at a man on her left while simultaneously being admired by a man behind her. Evidently, the visual components of this ad emphasize the notion that a product will create a successful romantic relationship.

“Ways to Obtain” is rooted in the ways certain ads intend to give instruction or detailed information on the actions women should follow to become beautiful, slim, elegant or even obtain a date. The main component of the ad’s instruction will always be the product advertised. The primary area of ads like this is a headline that states how a woman can obtain this beauty, a relationship, etc... by doing a specific task can usually be done with the help of the product. *Figure 7* displays a 1970s ad for Close-up toothpaste, featuring the image of an African American couple. The focal point of the ad is the woman who has strikingly white teeth. The headline states “Close-up gave me whiter teeth, fresh breath and dinner with Hard-to-get Harry.” The body copy of the ad continues to reinforce the ideas of how Close-up has saved the woman’s social life and also got her newfound romance. The problem of the implication is that without the product, the woman’s social life would continue to be stagnant, and furthermore she would not be able to attract men.

“Idealized Portrayals of Women” ads are the main category related to the image used to portray women in ads. The “Idealized Portrayals of Women” are determined by the types of woman that are depicted the most in ads. The subcategories included are “Standard of Beauty”, “Fairer Skin Women”, and “Slim Women”. The standard of beauty can be relative to the individual’s culture. “Standard of Beauty” as a subcategory refers to how women are most

commonly portrayed as representations of entire races or ethnicities. Typically, this woman looks nothing like the majority of women she is supposed to represent. Also, the “standard of beauty” can be portrayed subconsciously. America typically has a Eurocentric standard of beauty. This Eurocentric idea of beauty is reinforced in relation to images of women from different races and ethnicities, especially People of Color (or POC, a term typically used to describe people that are “not white or of European parentage”), who are portrayed with Eurocentric features like narrow noses or more angular facial structures (Oxford, n.d.).

The subcategory “Fairer Skin Women” includes continuous use of imagery depicting women who have skin that is of a light complexion. This can refer to a race or ethnicity and applies to the practice of women with lighter skin tones being used most frequently in advertising than women with darker skin tones. In American culture, many ads still select light skinned women from various ethnicities of people to represent the entire group. This is problematic because representation matters for all shades of people being portrayed in ads as beautiful, successful, smart, etc. The practice is an example of Antidote Advertising because it reflects a lack of diversity in representation and exploits ignorant, antiquated ideals rooted in racism. For example, skin bleaching and brightening creams were a popular type of advertisement in African American magazines. *Figures 8-9* are both representations for all three subcategories of “Standard of Beauty” and “Fairer Skin Women.” Each ad visually represents the idea, using these images of women to subconsciously reinforce the ideas of beauty that isolate women who don’t fit into those categories.

“Slim women” is the last subcategory under the main category of “Idealized Portrayals of Women.” Women come in all shapes and sizes. Using image, headlines or body copy to insinuate that any body type other than a slim one is a visual component of Antidote Advertising. In a 2012 ad campaign for Popchips, Katy Perry’s image is used to advertise the popular brand of snack.

Figure 10 displays one of the ads whose headline reads “Love. Without the handles.” The ad also features a testimonial where Katy Perry states, “I curl pop chips straight to my lips. Good thing they don’t go straight to my hips.” The image of the ad shows Katy Perry with a slim figure dressed in work out gear while holding up two bags of pop chips as weights. Although healthy eating is a positive notion, using text and image that is indicative of body shaming results in Antidote Advertising.

“Adverse Effects of being a Woman” is the final category, which describes the way that ads can reinforce the idea that a woman’s natural habits are wrong. The name originates from patterns of how ads used visuals to make women feel bad for things they had no control over, unless it meant making a purchase. Ads in this category are composed of visual components that describe, suggest and imply that women naturally lack beauty, personality, intellect etc., and the only way to obtain this is by means of a product. “Women are Without, “Way of Life is Causing Negative Effects”, and “Headline Causes Women to Question Themselves” are the various subcategories that fit within this category.

The subcategory “Women are Without” reflects the visual components of Antidote Advertising that imply women are inadequate. The inadequacy can range from hair growth to not having a desirable personality. The implications can be in the form of image, or written as a headline or body copy. Unlike interrogative headlines that ask the woman a question, headlines in this category explicitly state that the woman does not possess what the product can give. Body copy backs up the headline and image that typically consists of a before/after image, image of a woman looking upset, or some form of image that evokes various feelings like insecurity or inadequacy. *Figure 11* displays a 1980s Helena Rubenstein Make-Up Stick ad. The bold header reads “How to get gorgeous,” followed by copy describing how the makeup will make the viewer gorgeous.

“Way of life is Causing Negative Effects” visually reinforces the idea that a woman’s natural habits are not good enough. Natural habits or behavior refer to the way that a woman would usually go about something based on ethnic or cultural reasons. “Headline Causes Women to Question Themselves” as a subcategory is a visual component of Antidote Advertising that uses the headline to ask a particular question. By reading the question and responding “no” or “yes”, women are immediately interested in how this product can fill the void she believes she lacks. *Figure 12* displays a 1940s ad for Dorothy Gray Salon. The ad’s headline asks “Does Your Husband Look Younger than You do?” The ad then proceeds to explain how the advertised cream can help the woman look younger. The ad includes an image of a woman with a distressed facial expression pondering at a distant image of her and her husband. Another image featured with “Happy results” shows the once distressed woman with a smile accompanied by her husband.

Discussion

My research is similar to the literature I used in the sense that it reflects actual examples of advertising. My research differs in that I am calling these types of ads “Antidote Advertising” as coined by Ewen (2001). Through this research, I am interested in tactics, history, patterns and anything else that help me understand how to identify and visually represent this type of Advertising that Ewen (2001) discussed in his book. The tactics, history and patterns added meaning to what would otherwise seem like ads designed in similar ways by different companies. This research is similar to other research that seeks to understand why ads portray and imply certain ideals about women in order to sell products. This research differs because of its limited scope (women) and attempt to identify the visual characteristics of a theory by using that limited scope.

The categories that I created depict the ideals from the time periods specific to when they were designed. As I reflect on my research process, I am able to see many similarities and

differences between my results and the ideas discussed in the literature review. Ewen (2001) described ideas about assimilation, consumer culture, capitalism, and the “Mass American type,” (pg. 42). Similarly, Henthorn (2006) depicted the cleansing of America after the war which relates to many of the ideas that Ewen discussed. In my results, the categories visually defined the pressures and portrayals of women in ads. “Traditionally Feminine adjectives,” “Products as a Solution” and “Idealized Portrayals of Women” as categories, define the way each of these ads are composed to reflect the notions that women need to look/be a certain way or buy specific things to feel included, worthy, or loved, etc. Jones (1955) describes a specific method for creating catchy headlines that will entice women into purchasing more products. The headline was a common visual component that usually reinforced one or more of the ideas listed within my categories like “Purchases = Successful Relationships/Marriages.”. Schudson (1984) depicts social mobility and gift giving as parts of the human experience that are vulnerable to the huge claims made by ads. Selling hope is another ideal depicted by Schudson that reinforced ideas examined in my research. Each category portrays how ads are capable of targeting women with imagery, headline or body copy that establishes the idea that they are not good enough, gifts (purchases) can strengthen social bonds and consuming tangible things will help them gain their intangible desires. Sivulka (1998) discusses the “creative revolution” and the process of women taking back the narrative reflected in ads by putting certain measures in place to prevent stereotypical and sexist ads. Based on the ads I was able to collect and research, there was a noticeable shift in the way ads depicted women after the 1960s. Antidote Advertising could still be identified within the visual characteristics but it was not as blatant as before. The literary sources I used helped give rationale to the patterns that I found amongst the ads that I collected while also establishing other themes that I could look for as I analyzed the ads.

The difference between my research and their findings is that I was looking specifically at

ads that targeted women. Many of the literary sources made references to the reasoning behind the creation of ads over a period time as it relates to men and women. Some discussed women more specifically than others but overall, the writing related to both men and women. My research consists of a single target (women) and a process of visually defining a theory in order to understand the ads aimed at the single target.

As my research progressed, I was able to relate the readings to my thesis by shifting the general lens to a specific lens that focused on women. I became more interested in tactics used in advertisements that specifically targeted women. Identifying the visual components of Antidote Advertising through the lens of ads that target women, gave me the opportunity to uniquely analyze ads. To experience an ad is one thing, but to understand the reasons why or how it is created is another. This type of research is important to understand how such simple designs can have a huge impact. This research also provides a unique way of analyzing ads by using a written theory and expounding upon it visually. Graphic design as a visual field can benefit from research that not only uses a written description but uses categories and examples for better identification. Defining the visual characteristics of Antidote Advertising gives designers a more discernable way to decide if what they are creating can be deemed as Antidote Advertising or not.

Ads that are able to promote products without using tactics that exploit, humiliate or fail to portray diverse representations are the ads that will push the future of advertising to a higher standard. For future research, I intend to focus on contemporary ads that target women, including social media and video ads. I would like to extend this work and look at what is happening currently in the world of ads. There has definitely been a change over time in the portrayal of women in advertisements but there is still room for improvement. As technology increases and people are more immersed in ads on a daily basis, it critical that ads are created with more integrity.

Limitations

The research for this study is limited by the various types of advertisements that I could not analyze. I chose to focus only on print advertisements because each ad is composed of elements that are easily comparable: (headline, image, body copy). However, radio ads, video ads, and/or other types of ads were referenced.

As mentioned in the justification, there is a drop in the number of ads collected after the 1960s. The drop refers to the amount of ads I was able to acquire that reflected traits of Antidote Advertising after the 1960s. This does not mean that I was not able to find any ads in later decades to explore, as there is a substantial amount to work with and study. However, the time-line for this thesis still makes an important contribution to the historical study of portrayals of women and advertising.

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Illustrations

You have a date with **PLASTICS**

It's a big and important date that America has with plastics. From Main Street to metropolis, Americans are familiar with durable plastic utensils in the kitchen, sparkling plastic jewel boxes in the boudoir. They know that plastics are warm and brilliant and give a welcome friendly touch to daily living. Yet better things in plastics are on the way. More and more these colorful and useful materials will contribute lasting satisfaction to America's life of the future—through new uses for plastics in automobiles and airplanes, tools and appliances, even in furniture-making and home-building. For better plastics, like Styron—developed through Dow's continuing research—are strong and enduring, as well as bright and beautiful. Styron and other plastics produced by Dow promise new luxury, new comfort, new scope—to everyday life and to "dress-up" occasions. They'll be within reach of everybody's pocketbook, too. And that's Dow's aim in striving for better plastics and hundreds of other useful products of chemistry.

THE DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY, MIDLAND, MICHIGAN
New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Houston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle

STYRON
PLASTICS DIVISION

DOW
CHEMICALS
INDISPENSABLE TO INDUSTRY

Figure 1. Dow Plastics ad (1940) Copyright Dow Chemical Historical Collection. All rights reserved.

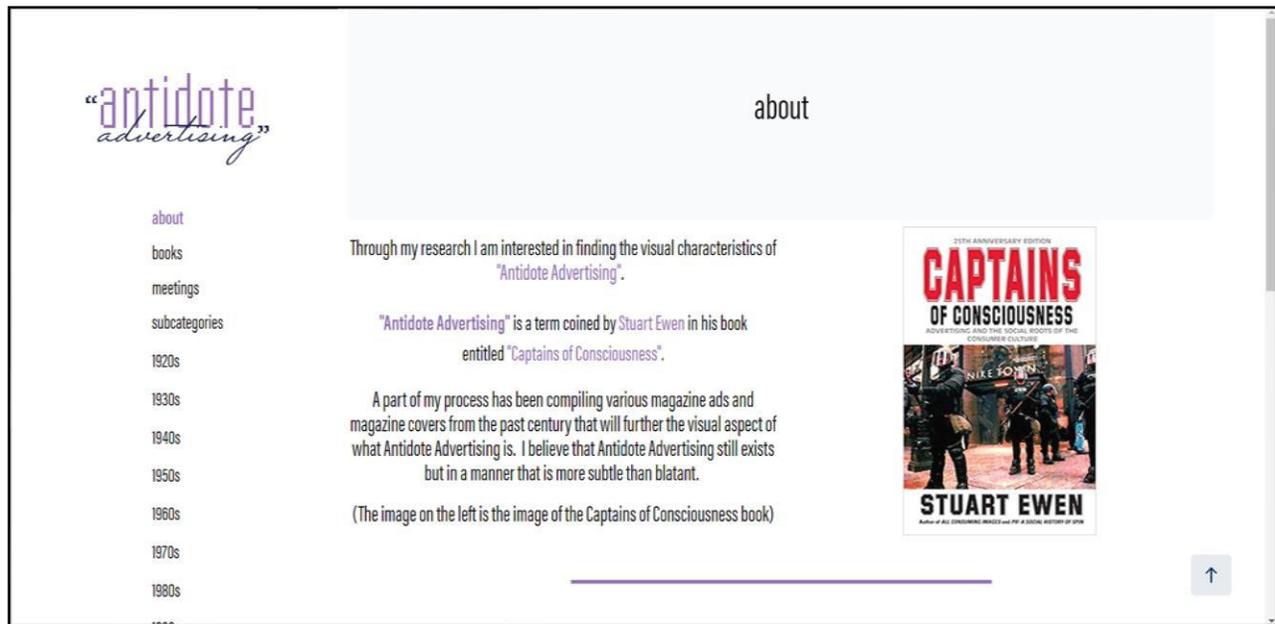


Figure 2. Antidote Advertising Website. About Page. 2020 Daria Davis. All Rights Reserved.



Figure 3. Antidote Advertising Website. 1970s ads. 2020 Daria Davis. All Rights Reserved.

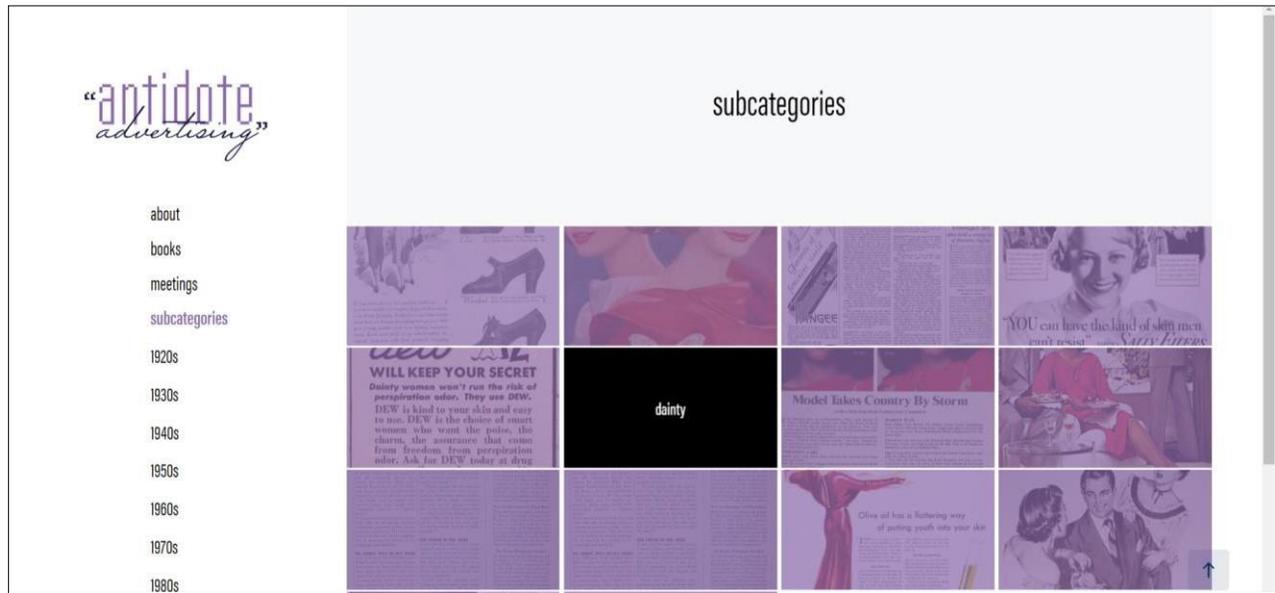


Figure 4. Antidote Advertising Website. Subcategories. 2020 Daria Davis. All Rights Reserved.

Gifts that Promise loveliness and charm wherever she goes !

Evening in Paris Perfume in silktasselled purse flacon, Face Powder, Rouge and Talcum Powder in smart glass shaker . **\$2.95**

A luxurious gift! Evening in Paris Perfume, Face Powder, Talcum Powder, Lipstick and Single Loose Powder Vanity **\$5.00**

Evening in Paris Perfume with its own atomizer, Eau de Cologne, Face Powder, Lipstick, Talcum, Rouge, Sachet . . . **\$7.75**

Evening in Paris Perfume and Face Powder, that is famous because it "stays on, stays clear, stays smooth" **\$2.25**

Purse flacon of Evening in Paris Perfume and a bottle of sparkling, delicately fragrant Evening in Paris Eau de Cologne . **95¢**

Smart Daubette to carry in purse, after a design by a famous Paris jeweler. With extra-size Evening in Paris Perfume . . . **\$1.75**

Evening in Paris Perfume with atomizer top, Eau de Cologne, Talcum and handsome Single Loose Powder Vanity **\$4.00**

"The Fragrance of Romance," in gift star package . **\$1.10**

Perfume, Toilet Water, Face Powder, Talcum, Lipstick, Double Vanity, Sachet **\$10.00**

Triple Loose Powder Vanity **\$5.00**. Other vanities are \$1.25, \$2.00, \$3.50.

Evening in Paris Perfume, in a gay, sparkling package depicting scenes of Paris . . . **\$2.00**

Evening in Paris **CREATED BY BOURJOIS**

Refuse substitutes; insist on Advertised Brands!

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Figure 5. 1930, Evening in Paris, Bourjois, Copyright © 2019 ProQuest, LLC. All rights reserved.

Hanes Understatement
Ultra Sheer
pantyhose & panties in one

Hanes
ultra sheer pantyhose

Gentlemen prefer Hanes

The ultimate in leg luxury. Hanes® Ultra Sheer pantyhose or Hanes Understatement®—pantyhose and panties in one. Both are sensuously smooth, luxuriously sheer, unmistakably Hanes

Available in a variety of colors and sizes at finer department and apparel stores.

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Figure 6. 1970, Hanes Ad, Copyright © 2019 ProQuest, LLC. All rights reserved.



Close-up
gave me whiter teeth, fresh breath
..and dinner with hard-to-get Harry.

Until I found Close-up®, my social life left a lot to be desired. Close-up has real mouthwash in it that freshens your breath. And two whiteners to make your teeth as white as they can be.

Soon after I switched to Close-up I managed to be at the same party as old hard-to-get. Well, one thing led to another and I sure don't call Harry hard-to-get anymore.

Whiter teeth, fresh breath and Harry. Not bad for a toothpaste.



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Figure 7. 1970s, Close-up Toothpaste Ad, Copyright © 2019 ProQuest, LLC. All rights reserved.

Revlon Hairdress with Balsam. For hair so luxurious, so lustrous, you want to touch it.

Makeup by Polished Ambers/Dress by Bill Blass/Jewelry by Bulgari



Hair so manageable, you can style it with ease.
Hair so delicately fragrant, it's like a fresh clean breeze around your head.
Hair that shimmers and shines but never looks greasy.
Hair that behaves.
And now, even the driest, most brittle hair can look instantly conditioned, thanks to Revlon Realistic Scalp Conditioner and Hairdress. It has it all. Available in two formulas: for Regular and for Extra Dry Hair.
Try it today!

REVLON
Realistic Scalp Conditioner
& Hairdress with Balsam



**AVAILABLE IN 10-OZ.
ECONOMY SIZE**

Now get more
and pay less per ounce
for your favorite hairdress.

(Also available in 2.65 oz. size)

©1979 Revlon, Inc.

Hair shampooed with Revlon's Realistic Professional Formula Milk Plus e® Conditioning Shampoo

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Figure 8. 1980 Revlon Hairdress Ad, Copyright © 2019 ProQuest, LLC. All rights reserved.

©2005 P&G

NEVER AGAIN WILL DRY WINTER SKIN COME BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR HOT ROOM MATE.

olay quench body lotion

Winter is heating up. Break the cycle of dry skin it usually brings with Quench. Its long-lasting Olay moisture helps stop dryness before it starts. Guaranteed. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. Receipt required. Offer expires 6/30/06. Call 1-877-246-2217 for more details.

OLAY
love the skin you're in™

Copyright © 2015 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

Figure 9. Olay Ad, Copyright © 2019 ProQuest, LLC. All rights reserved.

love. without the handles.

"I curl popchips straight to my lips. good thing they don't go straight to my hips."

Katy Perry

A full-page advertisement for Popchips featuring Katy Perry. She is sitting on a purple exercise ball, wearing a purple headband, a light blue polka-dot sports bra, and black leggings. She is holding two bags of Popchips, one in each hand, raised to shoulder height. The bags are dark brown with the Popchips logo and 'barbecue potato' flavor. The background is a solid red color. At the bottom left, the text 'think popped! never fried. never baked.' is written in white.

think popped!
never fried. never baked.

Figure 10. 2012 Popchips Ad featuring Katy Perry. 2012 Copyright Popchips All rights reserved.

How to get gorgeous

Minute Make-Up Stick is how to get gorgeous. It's the ingenious new make-up from Helena Rubinstein. The first light-as-a-liquid make-up whipped into a stick. An outrageously clever, fluffy little stick. It isn't greasy or heavy or caky. It slips over your cheeks and forehead and chin lightly and gracefully. Then suddenly incredible things happen. All those uneven colorings are gone. And the shadows. And little flaws. Your skin is warm. And radiant. And terribly alive all the time. Minute Make-Up Stick. It's a whole new face in a little swivel case. It's how to get gorgeous, gorgeous.

New Minute Make-Up Stick™



It makes you gorgeous in a minute.

Helena Rubinstein

Vintage Ad Service
Security Mark

Figure 11. 1960s Minute Make-Up Stick Ad. Copyright Vintage Ad Service. All rights reserved.



Does Your Husband Look Younger than You do?

You may side-step the tragedy that overtakes so many wives . . .

Glance about among your friends. How many of the wives look older than their years . . . and tragically older than their husbands?

Unfair though it may be, the tiny lines, the trace of wrinkles, the loss of skin tone and color, matter very little in the measure of a man's attractiveness . . . but they can make a heart-breaking difference in a woman's.

Yet thousands of women over thirty have learned to stop living by the calendar. They have found a way to deny the years . . . to combine the poise of maturity with a fresher, radiantly confident younger look. Their secret lies in the daily use of a famous cream—

Dorothy Gray Cellogen Cream. And it can help you side-step the tragedy of the middle years.



A natural way to look younger after 30

Noted specialists have proved that estrogenic hormones applied to the skin can help women look younger. And the hormones in Cellogen

Cream are natural substances, working in the most natural way in the world to counteract the effects of the gradual loss of your own beautifying hormones. They literally get under your skin . . . work from beneath to "plump up" dismayed lines and wrinkles, give skin a softer, fresher, *truly younger* look.



Happy results reported by women everywhere. Thousands have written gratefully to Dorothy Gray, reporting actual results of Cellogen Cream. Here is a typical comment: "After using one jar of Cellogen Cream, my skin appeared much softer and smoother, the lines were less noticeable . . . my complexion appeared much more youthful and supple."



CELOGEN CREAM. Every ounce contains 10,000 International Units of natural estrogenic hormones. Smooth Cellogen Cream into your face faithfully every night, leaving on overnight when possible. Very soon you'll see results reflected in your own mirror . . . and in your husband's look of renewed interest.
\$3.50 and \$5.00 plus tax.

CELOGEN LOTION . . . companion to Cellogen Cream, with the same active hormone ingredient. Smooth over neck, hands, elbows; use as a powder base for effective 24-hour treatment.
\$5.00 plus tax.

HORMONE HAND CREAM. A silky vanishing cream containing both hormones and emollients . . . ideal for telltale hands. Use daily.
\$2.00 plus tax.



DOROTHY GRAY SALON

445 Park Avenue, New York 22, New York

Visit the Dorothy Gray Salon and let our salon experts demonstrate the famous Dorothy Gray beauty methods. Or call Plaza 5-6110 for an appointment.

Figure 12. 1940s Dorothy Gray Salon Ad. Copyright News Dog Media & Vintage Ad Browser. All rights reserved.