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**“SHE WAS BUILT TO BE SILENT”: THE GENDERING OF MACHINERY IN
CANADIAN MAGAZINES DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

by

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Abstract

The study of how masculinity and femininity were expressed outside of male and female sexed bodies can be an effective approach to understanding the gendered ideologies of the past. To this end, this thesis explores the gendered and sometimes sexualized relationship between machines and their male and female users in the media during the Second World War, a time when women became involved in occupations and activities that were previously limited to men. This thesis is grounded in the relevant historiographical debates in Canada's gender, social and media history, but applies postmodern cultural theories to the relevant primary material as it appeared in *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* magazines; specifically advertisements, fiction and non-fiction.

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Chapter 1: Gender, Sexuality and the Second World War

The title of this thesis, “she was built to be silent” is taken from a fiction story appearing in *Maclean's* magazine from 1940.¹ The ‘she’ being referred to here is not a human woman, but a ship. In the escalated machine culture created by the Second World War machines increasingly were referred to in human terms in Canadian magazines, perhaps in an attempt to reassure readers concerned about the progress of the world conflict with familiar discourse about the powerful equipment that must be used to win the war. The focus of this study is the ways in which this media discourse suggested gendered and sometimes sexualized relationships between machines and their male and female users, depending on the type of material used in the magazines studied here.

This thesis is informed by the work done by scholars who have attempted to make sense of the debate over women’s wartime emancipation, those who have studied the image of ‘Rosie the Riveter,’ the larger question regarding the role of media in the gendered lives of individuals and the many other topics discussed in the following pages. My intention is to take these discussions into account while opening up a new area of analysis. My approach to cultural representations of gender and sexuality are inspired by gender theorists such as Judith Butler and Joan Scott, while also grounded in the work of social and media historians. The content analysis of media sources in this work is influenced by the semiological theories of Roland Barthes, as presented in chapter two.

¹ Weston Martyr, “Super Sub-Hunters,” *Maclean's*, May 1, 1940, 7.

The first, and more historiographical, purpose to this thesis, is to show that the examination of masculinity and femininity outside of male and female sexed bodies can tell the researcher much about the gender ideologies of the time. The second objective is to examine to what extent the relationship between machines (boats, airplanes, automobiles, tanks, etc.) and their users was sexualized in Canadian print media, specifically advertisements, fiction and non-fiction in *Chatelaine* and *Maclean's* magazines during the war. In this thesis the term machines is used to refer to large pieces of mechanized equipment that human bodies were able to interact with by moving them or getting inside them. . These machines include boats, airplanes, automobiles and tanks, usually manipulated by men, not those relegated to the domestic or feminized clerical world such as egg-beaters or typewriters.

This relationship was not seen as problematic as long as males were the primary users and the non-human actors were personified as female. Since, during the Second World War, women also became regular users of these machines the dynamic had to change. Either the relationship between machine and user had to be desexualized, or the gendered performance of one of the participants would need to be altered so that compulsory heterosexuality² could be maintained.

The term 'compulsory heterosexuality' is generally credited to Adrienne Rich. In her article "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," she discusses the history of the continuing dominance of heterosexuality and the parallel discounting of lesbian existence. Rich argues that the institution of heterosexuality disempowers

² See Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Journal of Women and Society* 5 (Summer 1980): 631-60.

women and she attempts to provide solutions for change. Her intention was to bridge the gap between lesbians and heterosexual feminists, making it difficult for feminists to operate from a point of unexamined heteronormativity. This article inspired, and continues to inspire, much debate in lesbian and feminist communities. Rich's distressing interpretation of heterosexual relationships as necessarily violent and dominating and of women as victims did not sit well with many of her readers who took offence to the assumption that it would be impossible for any woman to consciously choose heterosexuality.

In this thesis I am borrowing the term 'compulsory heterosexuality' from Rich but am approaching the debate sparked by Rich's essay³ in a different manner. Rather, I am arguing that, in the media sources examined here, the appearance of naturalized heterosexuality had to be maintained at all times thereby making it seem compulsory or ahistorical. Thus, the terms 'compulsory' and 'naturalized' will both be used to describe the understanding of heterosexuality expressed in the sources observed in this thesis.⁴

Because of the escalated machine culture created during the Second World War, cultural producers were able to eroticize heterosexuality without specifically speaking out against homosexuality as it is understood today. Neutralizing a machine in an ad would circumvent any fears that a female operator would become masculine,

³ See the special issue "Women's History in the New Millennium: Adrienne Rich's 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence: A Retrospective,'" in *Journal of Women's History* 15, 3 (2003).

⁴ Another term I might have employed is Judith Butler's 'heterosexual matrix' which she uses throughout her text to explain the grid of cultural understandings by which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized. To a certain degree, Butler has drawn on Rich's definition of compulsory heterosexuality to define the heterosexual matrix. However, I felt it best to remain with the less complex term compulsory heterosexuality as it works best with my argument. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

which might have lead her to desire a feminine partner and eventually become, as Krafft-Ebing described it, a mannish-lesbian.⁵ It is important to note here that the term *lesbian* was not understood during the Second World War with the same diversity of expression as it is today. The definition of a lesbian described by Krafft-Ebing in 1889; “the masculine soul, heaving in the female bosom,”⁶ was still believed by many. It was not that the term *lesbian* was unheard of or unused, but that it was more often used to describe masculine women.

In fact, in the era prior to the Second World War, Laura Doan argues that as a result the publication of her book, *Radclyffe Hall* was presented by the media to the public as “the visual emblem of female sexual inversion.”⁷ Referring to newspaper coverage of Hall’s image, Doan writes that “through the process of ruthless cropping, the new frame initiated the cultural processes that would affix Hall’s image to that of lesbianism—she would never again recover her reputation as primarily a well-known novelist of middlebrow fiction.”⁸ In the end, the photograph “showed a monstrous-looking figure with short hair and a bow tie.”⁹

Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis explain that during the 1930s to the 1960s, “butch-femme roles predominated in the public lesbian community.”¹⁰ Yet, they also maintain that “the core group that built the lesbian bar community of the

⁵ [See] Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “Discourses of Sexuality and Subjectivity: The New Woman, 1870-1936,” in *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, edited by Martin Duberman et al., (New York: Meridian, 1989), pp.264-280. And, Esther Newton, “The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman,” in *Ibid.*, 281-293.

⁶ Smith-Rosenberg, p. 270.

⁷ Doan, 187.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: A History of Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993); 151.

1940s were the severely masculine yet gentle butches who were willing to be identified as different, as ‘homos.’”¹¹ Thus, to those not familiar with lesbian bar culture during the period, it was visibly masculine women that were mostly associated with lesbian life because it was “primarily the butch image that indicated difference.”¹²

The relationship between using machinery and the appearance of masculinity in women has a history that predates the Second World War. In his book *The Car and British Society*, Sean O’Connell shows how Radclyffe Hall’s controversial novel *The Well of Loneliness* linked the use of machinery with masculinity in women and lesbian-identification even in the 1920s. O’Connell explains that,

Hall’s novel centres on the lesbian Stephen Gordon. Stephen experiences unhappiness throughout the novel because of her sexuality and society’s negative attitude towards it. She is most contented during the war when her ability to drive enables her to work with an all-female ambulance unit. The novel implies that the majority of these women share Stephen’s sexual orientation.¹³

He concludes that this example shows how it was “somehow natural for men to drive, but questionable, even unsettling for some, to see a woman at the wheel.”¹⁴

The relationship between masculine-gender expressions and lesbian identities in women and machine use illustrated in *The Well of Loneliness* was widely known in Canada by the Second World War. The novel “guaranteed [its] place in literary history”¹⁵ when the British reviewer James Douglas wrote that he “would rather give a

¹¹ Ibid., 153.

¹² Ibid., 179.

¹³ Sean O’Connell, *The Car and British society: Class, gender and motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 211.

¹⁴ Ibid., 212.

¹⁵ Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 1.

healthy boy or healthy girl a phial of prussic acid than this novel. Poison kills the body, but moral poison kills the soul.”¹⁶ The subsequent campaign to have the book banned worked to give it more publicity.

The idea that using machinery could *cause* lesbianism in women might not have seemed as odd to men and women living during the Second World War as it would today. The reason for this discrepancy is that same-sex relations desire between women was seen as a *catching* perversion. By maintaining that he would rather give healthy children poison than expose them to Hall’s novel, James Douglas was implying that introducing children to such concepts could potentially ‘make’ one gay. As Laura Doan explains, “Douglas’s editorial, which associates female homosexuality with synonyms of disease (‘contamination,’ ‘degeneracy,’ ‘pestilence,’ ‘plague,’ ‘contagion,’ ‘putrification,’ ‘leprosy,’) is cited again and again to illustrate not how a single newspaper spearheaded a tendentious campaign against one particular novel but rather how English society in the decade after the First World War had come to regard the female ‘sexual invert’ as heinously unnatural, sinful, and disgusting.”¹⁷ Even without overt suspicions of lesbianism, most observers were nervous about women’s place in the automobile. Anemona Hartocolis, in her article, “‘She Drives Like a Man,’” explains that as women became regular drivers, they were seen as frail in the passenger seat, but as amazons in the driver’s seat.¹⁸

In the sources examined here, when there is only one user and one machine being presented, either the female user of such machinery, or the machine itself, was

¹⁶ Quoted in Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁸ Anemona Hartocolis, “‘She Drives Like a Man’” *Life* [on-line] 19, 2 (1996), 2. Accessed through EBSCO Host.

masculinized in the content of these magazines. In other words, the assumption that gender causes desire (understood to be necessarily heterosexual), is reversed so that the need to maintain the appearance of a heterosexual relationship actually imposes a gendered and sexualized identity on the machines in question. In order to maintain the myth, to borrow the term from Barthes,¹⁹ of naturalized heterosexuality, either the female users of these machines, or the machines themselves, had go through a process of gender-shifting in their media representations, or become neutral so as not to suggest a sexual relation at all. Some of the fiction stories examined here present a different problem. There are a number of examples in which both male and female users are presented with female-personified machinery simultaneously, thus creating problems. As we will see in chapter four, in these cases the female-personified machine generally did not take well to being manipulated by female users.

Feminist scholars tend to be adamant about the distinction between sex and gender in humans and by extension the natural world and inanimate objects. Traditionally, gender has been understood through an essentialist/constructionist debate. The essentialists believe that gendered characteristics of people result from a biological sex assigned at birth; whereas the constructionists believe that there are major differences between 'sex' and 'gender' and believe gender to be something that is socially constructed outside of the human body. This understanding of gender, in comparison to biological categories of sex, has influenced a major change in the study of women's history.

¹⁹ See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Trans. by Annette Lavers (New York: The Noonday Press, 1972). Of particular interest is the essay "Myth Today," 109-158.

As women's historians worked to re-write history to include women, they were criticized for simply 'adding women to the pot and stirring.' Thus, as gender history²⁰ has gained in popularity, scholars have articulated a need to examine notions of masculinity and femininity as well as a more theoretical analysis of the available sources.

In the introduction to their book *Gender Conflicts* Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde speak of the various gendered relationships addressed in its chapters. They write, "by hinting at the wide array of relationships that women either forged or were thrust into, the incidents also shed light on the crucial role played by gender relations—that is, the formation of femininity, masculinity, and the relations between these two constructs—in shaping people's lives in the past."²¹ As well, they write that "the purpose of gender history is to understand all social relations as gendered—which is very different from the search for previously neglected subjects."²² My thesis supports these goals for gender history, but takes the search for the formation of masculinity and femininity outside of male and female sexed bodies to consider cultural representations of war-time machinery, something that has not been examined in the historiography to date.

Traditionally, the major debate in the field of gender history, relating to the Second World War, has been whether or not it aided in the emancipation of women.

²⁰ For a complete discussion on the relationship between women's history and gender history see Karen Dubinsky and Lynne Marks, "Beyond Purity: A Response to Sangster," *Left History* 3, 4 (1995-6): 205-220; Franca Iacovetta and Linda Kealey, "Women's History, Gender History and Debating Dichotomies," *Left History* 3, 4 (1995-6): 221-237; Joan Sangster, "Reconsidering Dichotomies" *Left History* 3, 4 (1995-6): 239-248; and Joan Sangster, "Beyond Dichotomies: Re-Assessing Gender History and Women's History in Canada," *Left History* 3, 1 (1995): 109-121.

²¹ Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds., *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), xii.

²² *Ibid.*, xx.

Historians, as well as researchers from other disciplines, are lined up on either side of this binary disagreement, using a wide array of sources. Yet, the challenge of writing, and re-writing, about the impact of war on the lives of women has recently gone beyond a simple continuity-versus-change debate and has led to important developments in the historiography of gender and the Second World War.

Researchers interested in the debate about whether or not the war was liberating for women have moved through three phases of historical coverage of this issue. In the Canadian context, the first phase can be seen in the work of popular historians, such as Barry Broadfoot,²³ who argue that the Second World War did wonders for the cause of women's liberation. The second phase can be seen in the work of academic historians, such as Ruth Roach Pierson,²⁴ who argue that the war actually did not have a lasting effect on the lives of women. The third phase, which can be witnessed in the work of social historians such as Jeffrey Keshen²⁵, goes beyond this debate and argues that the war may not have had *more* influence on the lives of women than any other event or movement, but that it did create change.

In his book *Six War Years, 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home and Abroad*, written in 1974, Barry Broadfoot argued that "although the phrase had not been invented then, the war did wonders for the cause of Women's Lib."²⁶ Ruth Roach Pierson reacts to this statement in her book, *"They're still women after all": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*, by claiming that the war did not have

²³ See Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years, 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home and Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1974).

²⁴ See Ruth Roach Pierson, *"They're still women after all": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986).

²⁵ See Jeffrey Keshen, "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 30, 60 (1997): 239-266.

²⁶ Broadfoot, 353.

a significant, or lasting, effect on the status of Canadian women. One important line of reasoning she uses is that the work that women did during the war was considered to be temporary. As she writes, “the massive recruitment of women into jobs outside the home was intended to be only for the duration of the war and represented no concession of the principle of women’s right to work.”²⁷ Speaking of income tax concessions and Wartime Day Nurseries, she also explains that, “this was not a long-term government commitment to facilitate women’s employment by easing their domestic responsibilities; only the war emergency justified these measures, and they were rescinded once the war was over.”²⁸ In chapter two, which she writes with economist Marjorie Cohen, she also shows how the vocational training women received during the war differed from men’s before, during, and after the war.

Pierson also examines, in depth, the types of jobs women performed during the war. She writes, “jobs deemed most appropriate for women tended to be ones men had no interest in and hence training women for them posed no threat of female competition. Domestic service was seen as meeting this qualification most satisfactorily, after as well as before the war, despite the distaste shown for this occupation by ex-service-women and unemployed female workers.”²⁹ She concludes that if women’s desire to serve in the military had not “coincided with developing manpower shortages in the armed forces, it is doubtful whether women’s services would ever have been formed.”³⁰ Finally, she also argues that the power to make

²⁷ Pierson, 9.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 12.

³⁰ Ibid., 13.

political and military decisions regarding women's involvement in the war remained entirely in the hands of men.

Susan M. Bland, in her article, "Henrietta the Homemaker, and 'Rosie the Riveter': Images of Women in Advertising in *Maclean's Magazine*, 1939-50," poses the questions, "did attitudes towards women's roles in society change during the war? If so, did these changes in attitude outlast the war? Did women's changing roles in society during the war advance or set back the cause of women's emancipation?"³¹ She ultimately makes the argument for continuity over change. She explains that, "advertisers may have changed the roles of women portrayed in advertisements to reflect the reality of war, but the traditional themes of 1939 remain in the advertisements."³²

The same approach can be seen in the American context as well, Sherrie A. Kossoudji and Laura J. Dresser in their article, "The End of a Riveting Experience: Occupational Shifts at Ford After World War II," examined women workers at one Ford plant. They write that,

After V-J Day, the percentage of women in heavy industry fell nearly to its prewar level...Reconversion to peacetime production led to massive postwar layoffs. During this period of reconversion, some plants, including Ford's Willow Run bomber plant, almost completely shut down. Yet evidence that these layoffs were disproportionately borne by women workers indicates that women were in a unique disadvantage position in this labor market.³³

³¹ Susan M. Bland, "Henrietta the Homemaker, and 'Rosie the Riveter': Images of Women in Advertising in *Maclean's Magazine*, 1939-50," *Atlantis* 8, 2 (1983): 63.

³² *Ibid*, 82.

³³ Sherrie A. Kossoudji and Laura J. Dresser, "The End of a Riveting Experience: Occupational Shifts at Ford After World War II," *The American Economic Review* 82, 2 (May, 1992): 519.

Similarly, economist Claudia D. Goldin, in her article, "The Role of World War II in the Rise of Women's Employment" argues that the "war had several significant indirect impacts on women's employment, but its direct influence appears to have been more modest."³⁴

Also taking the side of continuity over change is historian Leila Rupp who examines American and German experiences of women during the Second World War. In her book *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945*, Rupp compares the war propaganda efforts of Nazi Germany to that of the United States in an effort to understand the relationship between propaganda and the success or failure of mobilization. In the end she concludes that this relationship is too complex to be explained with complete certainty.³⁵ She discards the notion that women were manipulated in and out of the workforce by propagandists by arguing that the number one reason women took wartime jobs was financial need.

Conversely, Jeffrey Keshen, in his article, "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," argues that while most historians agree with Ruth Roach Pierson, there needs to be more attention paid to the process of historical change.³⁶ He writes, "[u]ndoubtedly, transformations in the daily lives of so many women during World War II raised widely reported fears over social instability and ultimately helped strengthen a post-war conservative reaction; but it also appears that

³⁴Claudia D. Goldin, "The Role of World War II in the Rise of Women's Employment," *The American Economic Review* 81, 4 (Sept. 1991): 741.

³⁵ Leila Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978): 167.

³⁶ Keshen, "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," 240.

too much had transpired for too many women to permit things to return to the *status quo ante bellum*.”³⁷

American scholars, Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith in their article, “U.S. Women on the Home Front in World War II” have been able to re-examine the debate around whether or not the war was liberating for women by using personal letters. They explain that most of the histories on women and World War II have

paid considerable attention to the public record. They have sifted through the archives of many wartime agencies as well as other government reports and documents, examined the records of labor unions, analyzed public opinion polls, scrutinized popular fiction, read widely in contemporary newspapers and magazines and investigated perceptions of womanhood in popular culture. Although the specific conclusions of these scholars differ, they agree that the wartime changes that affected women were not lasting.³⁸

Litoff and Smith use women’s voices to argue that there was some change in that “young wives frequently wrote that they were becoming more self-reliant as they traveled to distant places to be with their husbands, learned to live on meager budgets, coped with raising young children alone, shared their experiences with other ‘wandering members of [the] huge unorganized mob’ of war brides and grappled with worry, loneliness, and despair...learning how to ‘make do’ on limited wartime budgets also heightened women’s sense of their own capabilities.”³⁹

This thesis appreciates the importance of these sources and of this debate and situates itself in the third phase of historical coverage of this issue, supporting the argument put forth by Jeffrey Keshen. However, I intend to explore something

³⁷ Ibid., 242.

³⁸ Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, “U.S. Women on the Home Front in World War II” *Historian* 57, 2 (Winter 1995): 1.

³⁹ Ibid., 3.

altogether different. By examining the gendered and sexualized identities of, and relationships between, human actors and machinery in two Canadian magazines, I am hoping to add a new historical contribution to the study of gender and media during the Second World War.

While women's and gender historians have worked to explore the complex relationships between masculinity and femininity during the Second World War, few studies have analyzed how these concepts can be applied to non-human actors. What remains to be studied, then, is how gender was expressed in the use of machinery in Canadian magazines. The wartime production of machinery was unprecedented. Barry Broadfoot explains that in Canada alone,

the totals are staggering. In 1939 Canada had no war industry. By war's end, 1,100,000 men and women—about one-tenth of the total population—working in war plants had turned out 900,000 rifles, 794,000 motor vehicles for military purposes, 244,000 light machine guns, 16,000 aircraft of nearly 80 different types and 486 navy vessels plus 391 cargo vessels and 3,500 craft for various support purposes, all necessary to the war effort. In 1939 probably only a few Canadians had ever seen a tank; but by 1945 the nation had produced 6,500 which, it could be pointed out, equaled 13 months of tank production from Germany, one of the mightiest industrial war machines the world has ever seen.⁴⁰

The constant references to machines, and machine culture, during the Second World War in Canadian magazines are astounding. In fact, one GoodYear Tire advertisement from 1941 offered the headline “[t]his is a war of machines.”⁴¹ Thus, studying the gendered identities and sexualized relationships between humans and these machines in the media can provide some interesting sources for cultural historical analysis.

⁴⁰ Broadfoot, xii.

⁴¹ Ad for GoodYear, “This is a war of machines,” *Macleans*, December 1, 1941, 65.

Lately, and to my mind, more convincing than the constructionist/essentialist models of gender, are the postmodernist cultural theories that step outside of the gender-as-biological or gender-as-socially constructed binary. Theorists such as Judith Butler have argued while feminists have struggled to understand gender as a social construct, created through a process of acculturation, they have simply replaced 'biology is destiny' with 'culture is destiny.' As Butler explains,

on some accounts, the notion that gender is constructed suggests a certain determinism of gender meanings inscribed on anatomically differentiated bodies, where those bodies are understood as passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law. When the relevant 'culture' that 'constructs' gender is understood in terms of such a law or set of laws, then it seems that gender is as determined and fixed as it was under the biology-is-destiny formulation. In such a case, not biology, but culture, becomes destiny.⁴²

Instead, Butler understands gender as a performance. She writes that, "gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*."⁴³ Translated into more accessible language, Butler argues that a gendered identity is not static but fluid, and does not provide a stable place from which one can act (locus of agency). Instead, gender is an identity (but not a stable one) that can change in different times and spaces, originating from outside of the human subject and expressed through individual performances.

Joan Scott similarly argues that, "gender identification, although it always appears coherent and fixed, is, in fact, highly unstable."⁴⁴ And of course, war is a time

⁴² Butler, 12.

⁴³ Ibid., 179.

⁴⁴ Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History, Revised Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999): 38.

when gender roles are particularly mutable, fluid and unstable in real life and in the media. As Maureen Honey writes in her book *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender and Propaganda During World War Two*, “the fact that a woman could step into a man’s shoes and wear them rather comfortably posed an implicit challenge to traditional notions about femininity and female limitations.”⁴⁵

Pamela Wakewich, Helen Smith and Jeannette Lynes in their article “Women’s Wartime Work and Identities: Women Workers at Canadian Car and Foundry Co. Limited, Fort William, Ontario, 1938-1945” explain that times of social turmoil offer an occasion to examine complex understandings of gender expectations and experiences. They write, “these periods allow historical analysts the opportunity to study the multifaceted complexities of gender construction by analyzing the interplay among prewar, war and postwar ideals and representations, and the various ways in which women actually functioned in relation to these ideals.”⁴⁶ If we can accept Butler’s understanding of gender performance, and Scott’s understanding of gender as fluid, the next step may be to examine how gender is performed by non-human subjects in media depictions, in this case technology, during the Second World War and its connection with sexual representation.

Butler’s understanding of gender performance is also linked closely with sexuality. She argues that while the male sex is seen to ‘cause’ the masculine gender and the female sex is seen to ‘cause’ the feminine gender, gender is assumed to

⁴⁵ Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender and Propaganda During World War Two* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 1.

⁴⁶ Pamela Wakewich, Helen Smith and Jeannette Lynes, “Women’s Wartime Work and Identities: Women Workers at Canadian Car and Foundry Co. Limited, Fort William, Ontario, 1938-1945,” in *Framing Our Past: Canadian Women’s History in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Sharon Anne Cook, Lorna R. McLean, and Kate O’Rourke, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2001), 415.

'cause' heterosexual desire. Instead, Butler overthrows this conventional and static understanding of sex, gender and desire, seeing them instead as fluid. However, in the heteronormative culture of the Second World War, the media sources here indicate that the concepts of sex and gender, both inside and outside of human bodies, could be redefined much more easily than could the notion of desire which was inextricably linked with compulsory heterosexuality. In other words, it could limit the fluidity of gender roles even in wartime media.

As we will explore in the following chapters, the relationship between machines and their users was depicted in Canadian magazines during the Second World War using sexual imagery with the non-human actor generally personified as female. As I began this research, I assumed that as women became regular users, the relationship between machine and user would become desexualized, or I would find insinuated lesbian relationships in the primary sources. As Karen Dubinsky writes, "historians live in the present."⁴⁷ Thus, I was informed by the popular culture representations of machinery from today in which machinery, such as automobiles, are almost exclusively personified as female regardless of the user, and sexuality, especially, is suggested to be fluid.⁴⁸ I was surprised to find that while there are examples in the sources I studied from the Second World War of the relationship between female user and machine being de-sexualized, there are also instances where

⁴⁷ Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); 1.

⁴⁸ For example, in the 2000 movie *Gone in Sixty Seconds*, Angelina Jolie plays an attractive (presumably heterosexual) mechanic, and car thief, named Sara 'Sway' Wayland. Looking at a parking garage full of new cars Sway remarks with a mischievous grin, "Hello ladies," then fixating on a bright red car says, "I always was a sucker for a redhead."

the automobile or female-user goes through a process of gender shifting in order to maintain the appearance of a heterosexual relationship.

One purpose here is to highlight the complex historical construction of the myth of naturalized or compulsory heterosexuality as it existed during the Second World War. This is an important goal because when we deconstruct a myth we limit its impact since myths derive most of their power from their ability to be perceived as natural. Consequently, one aim of this thesis is to highlight the construction of the myth of naturalized or compulsory heterosexuality. Judith Butler uses the term 'regulatory fiction' rather than myth. In her discussion of gender she argues that the concept of 'true gender' identity is a regulatory fiction, which she sees as a made-up story that regulates our actions.⁴⁹ Similarly, this thesis argues that the myth of compulsory heterosexuality is a regulatory fiction. Yet, deconstructing the myth may limit its power to regulate thoughts and actions.

As many researchers of the history of sexuality have noted, masculine gender performances by women have historically been linked with female homosexuality.⁵⁰ A related fear over women becoming regular users of machinery in Second World War media was not only that women would immediately turn sexually to other women, but that they would develop masculine characteristics which were assumed to be incredibly dangerous to gender expectations. As Michael Berger states, writing about the emergence of female drivers in the pre-war period, "who knew what feeling of

⁴⁹ Butler, 180.

⁵⁰ [See] Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Discourses of Sexuality and Subjectivity: The New Woman, 1870-1936," in *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, edited by Martin Duberman et al., (New York: Meridian, 1989); 264-280; Esther Newton, "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman," in *Ibid.*, 281-293; and, Martha Vicinus, "'They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong': The Historical Roots of the Modern Lesbian Identity," in *Ibid.*, 432-452.

excitement and independence, long suppressed by societal conventions, might be liberated by such joy riding!”⁵¹

The link between using machinery and the masculinization of women was evident even prior to the twentieth century. As Julie Wosk examines in her book *Women and the Machine: Non-fiction Representations from the Spinning Wheel to the Electronic Age*, the sight of women on bicycles from the 1890s to the beginning of the twentieth century, had cartoonists drawing parodying the “‘New Women’ who carted their tiny husbands around in their bicycle baskets.”⁵²

This trend continued through the First World War. For instance, some women who patriotically worked as mechanics did not want to step aside at the end of the war and give up their trade to men. While a woman working as a mechanic during the war was praised, she was ridiculed in the post war years as a threat to masculinity. For example, in Anita Loos’ 1925 hit *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, the protagonist describes her sister-in-law as abnormal because,

she never had on a man’s collar and necktie until she drove an amulants [sic] in the war, and now they cannot get her to take them off. Because ever since the aristice [sic], Henry’s sister seems to have the idea that women’s clothes are effeminate. So Henry’s sister seems to think of nothing but either horses or automobiles and when she is not in a garage the only other place she is happy in is a stable... Henry says that what the war did to a girl like his sister is really worse than the war itself.⁵³

⁵¹ Michael L. Berger, “Women Drivers: How a stereotype kept distaff drivers in their place,” *Road and Track* 36, 9 (May 1985): 56.

⁵² Julie Wosk, *Women and the Machine: Non-fiction Representations from the Spinning Wheel to the Electronic Age* (New York: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), xii.

⁵³ Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 107.

The message here is clear: a fascination with cars and a rejection of feminine clothing meant that Henry's sister was a failure as a woman. In this story, it is not overtly stated that the sister-in-law is a lesbian; however, she does not appear to behave as the idealized feminine partner required for a companionate marriage.

Angus MacLaren, in his chapter titled "'The Cult of the Clitoris': Sexual Panics and the First World War," from his 1999 book *Twentieth-Century Sexuality: A History*, demonstrated this concern. He writes, "the war violently ushered in a world of science, technology and mechanization. But in both Berlin and London the fear that traditional sexual standards could not stand up to such an onslaught led the anxious to be all the more zealous in their defence of them."⁵⁴ The title for the chapter refers to the "bizarre rumour that sex-starved English women, deprived by the war of male companionship, were turning to lesbianism."⁵⁵

This thesis argues that the increased use of machinery by women led to a perceived 'masculinization' and consequently subtle, rather than overt, fears over lesbianism. In this case, there was a fear over insinuating that human females could be seen in romantic relationships with the bodies of female-personified machines. Thus, in this sense, the argument can be made that wartime fears over femininity may have been somewhat rooted in fears over maintaining compulsory heterosexuality but they were not expressed directly.

In addition to exploring the masculinization of women as they enter into relationships with machinery, this thesis is also concerned with the sexualized identity

⁵⁴ Angus MacLaren, *Twentieth-Century Sexuality: A History* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999), 10.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

of machinery in Canadian magazines. Infusing objects with gender is a common way of giving them meaning. Once items are given a gendered identity, a sexualized one often follows. This was true of many, but not all, of the media depictions examined here.

Women's history and gender historians have worked to investigate both masculinity and femininity, as they are constructed and expressed, but few studies have explored how these concepts work outside of real life male and female bodies. There is, however, literature emerging on the gendered and sexualized imagery of land and of food. For example, in her book *The Second Greatest Disappointment*, Karen Dubinsky examines the gendering and sexualization of Niagara Falls.

Dubinsky describes what she refers to as, the 'imaginary geography of Niagara': "that is, in the way travelers speak about the waterfall as though it were female and invest it with dangerous, alluring, and quite sexual powers."⁵⁶ Using the colourful descriptions of the falls offered by travel writers, guidebooks and tourist promotion literature, Dubinsky gives examples of the sexual imagery used to depict the falls. She writes,

The spray from the mist was often described as a 'kiss.' The sound of the water rushing was a 'moan.' Islands rest on 'bosom' of the waterfall, and the 'soft shales' of the cliff 'gradually yield before the attack' of the rushing water. The 'clinging curves' of water 'embrace' the islands, and water 'writhes,' 'gyrates,' and 'caresses the shore.' The whirlpool is 'passionate.' Some writers recoil from the 'mad desire' of the waters. For others, 'no where else is Nature more tender, constrained, and softly clad.' Niagara—'nature unclothed'—was 'seductively restless' and 'tries to win your heart with her beauty.'⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

Thus, she explains, that the situating of the waterfall as female and the observer as male “enhanced the pleasure of ‘doing’ Niagara.”⁵⁸

Dubinsky also explores how the gendered and sexualized relationship between the falls and observers changed when women wrote about Niagara. For the most part, she concludes that “women, too, gendered Niagara female;”⁵⁹ yet, unlike men, women “rarely positioned themselves as suitors wooing a seductive or restless icon.”⁶⁰ One exception is the character Isabel March in William Howells’s 1943 novel *Their Wedding Journey*. As Dubinsky explains, “Isabel, positioning the waterfall as a sexual male, confesses that she cannot contain herself any longer: I’m tossed upon rapids, and flung from cataract brinks, and dizzied in whirlpools; I’m no longer yours, Basil; I’m most unhappily married to Niagara. Fly with me, save me from my awful lord!”⁶¹ Thus, my thesis corresponds to what Dubinsky has found here, that when referring to non-human actors, at least during the Second World War in Canada, the presumed relationship between gender and sexuality, that gender ‘causes’ desire (in the form of heterosexuality), is reversed indicating that the need to present a heterosexual relationship actually ‘causes’ the gendered identity of non-human actors. The concept of compulsory heterosexuality forces the gendered identity of the falls, or in my case of machinery, to be fluid.

Amy Bentley’s book *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* examines images from the Second World War that portray meat as

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Karen Dubinsky, “‘The pleasure is exquisite but violent’: the imaginary geography of Niagara Falls in the nineteenth century,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29, 2 (Summer 1994): 11. Accessed through Proquest.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment*, 43.

masculinized and sugar as feminized. She does an excellent job of showing how gender is embedded in all aspects of life, by analyzing and deconstructing the gendered aspects of food products and family meal dynamics. In her introduction she explains that,

eating, after all, is much more than ingesting nutrients for biological survival. Food plays a significant role in social relationships, is a highly symbolic element in religious and magical rites, and aids in the developing and maintaining of cultural identities. Food also helps designate class and gender; food production and management have determined much of the female identity.⁶²

In chapter four she argues that “assigning gender is a common way of identifying and infusing meaning into objects.”⁶³ She explains that “in the English language, for example, boats, countries, and cars have been considered female, while it was long assumed that the masculine pronoun could function as universal.”⁶⁴ Her subsequent analysis of meat as masculine and sugar as feminine is extremely perceptive. To prove how engrained the concept of meat as masculine and sugar as feminine is in our society, she explains that “we learn that little boys are made of such carnivorous delicacies as snails and puppy dog tails, while little girls are made of sugar and spice—everything ‘nice.’”⁶⁵

Yet, the literature on how this process works on machinery is sparse. Laura Behling, in her two articles, “Fisher’s Bodies: Automobile Advertisements and the Framing of Modern American Female Identity,” and “The Woman at the Wheel: Marketing Ideal Womanhood, 1915-1934,” examines the expression of gender outside

⁶² Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* Urbana: (University of Illinois Press, 1998), 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

of sexed bodies in the 'Bodies by Fisher' ad campaign of the 1920s. However, while she explores the gendering of these automobiles, she does not examine the complexities of the implied sexual relationship between machine and user, nor does she analyze how that relationship changes as women become users. Thus, the intention of this thesis is to fill a gap in the literature relating to the cultural history of gender and sexuality.

In this study I have examined advertisements, fiction and non-fiction from *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* magazine from 1939-1945. In total, from *Maclean's* 725 advertisements, 40 fiction stories, and 105 non-fiction stories were analyzed; from *Chatelaine* 195 advertisements, 22 fiction stories, and 120 non-fiction stories, including the monthly editorials, were analyzed. I have looked at all of the advertisements from this period involving machines used for transportation (boats, planes, cars, tanks, and tractors) as well as ads for other products picturing machines and ads utilizing machine terminology. The fiction and non-fiction stories collected were selected based on my impression of their relevance to topic of gender and machinery. More sources were collected from *Maclean's* than *Chatelaine*, in part because it was published bi-weekly during this period, whereas *Chatelaine* was published monthly. Thus, 168 issues of *Maclean's* were examined in comparison to 84 issues of *Chatelaine*. As well, there were simply more advertisements, fiction stories and non-fiction articles involving machinery in the issues of *Maclean's*.

In the Canadian context, media sources can be valuable for understanding cultural aspects of men and women during the Second World War. As Jeffrey Keshen writes, "[t]he wartime print media, now the most readily accessible barometer of mass

opinion, was in numerical terms the most prominent source of public information during the 1940s.”⁶⁶ In addition, I have also explored the Maclean-Hunter fonds at the Archives of Ontario to find supporting documentation in the files pertaining to *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*. The material in these holdings helped my analysis by providing additional media sources and also by illustrating the workings of the media industry in Canada during the Second World War.

I chose to use both a magazine aimed at women, and one aimed at Canadians more generally, in the hopes that I would be able to compare how, or if, gendered and sexualized performances differed depending on the intended audience. *Chatelaine* and *Maclean's* were chosen because they were both widely-read by the Canadian public. Both magazines were produced by the Maclean-Hunter publishing company, proclaimed by *Canadian Home Journal* editor Hector Charlesworth as “the greatest and most widely ramified publishing unit in the Dominion of Canada; and one of the greatest in the English speaking world.”⁶⁷

In her article, “Fashion and War in Canada, 1939-1945,” Susan Turnbull Caton justifies her decision to use *Chatelaine* magazine by writing, “*Chatelaine* was chosen because throughout the war years it was a nationally read magazine that dealt directly with issues of concern to Canadian women.”⁶⁸ Analyzing mediums directed specifically at women are important in the understanding of the gendered nature of

⁶⁶ Keshen, “Revisiting Canada’s Civilian Women During World War II,” 240.

⁶⁷ F138, C-2-1, box 155, file: “Charlesworth, Hector” 1940, Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

⁶⁸ Susan Turnbull Caton, “Fashion and War in Canada, 1939-1945,” in *Fashion: A Canadian Perspective* edited by Alexandra Palmer, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 253.

popular culture and consumption. As Jennifer Scanlon writes, “the women’s magazine was and still is an important cultural medium for female readers.”⁶⁹

But there is also merit in examining gendered and sexualized representations of people and machines in a magazine directed at both men and women. A survey by Time Inc., done during the war, showed that 64% of Canadians said that *Maclean’s* was the most important magazine in Canada (see figure 1).⁷⁰ I found the sexual imagery of machinery in fiction stories in *Maclean’s* to be far more obvious than the more subtle examples in *Chatelaine*. Using *Maclean’s* as a source for understanding issues of gender in Canadian history is not unusual. In her article “Henrietta the Homemaker, and ‘Rosie the Riveter’: Images of Women in Advertising in *Maclean’s* Magazine, 1939-50,” Susan Bland justifies her use of *Maclean’s* by writing that rather than using *Chatelaine* or *The Ladies Home Journal*, “*Maclean’s* was chosen because it was a general news magazine which included but was not devoted exclusively to advertising focused on women.”⁷¹

Of course, like any study using only one media source, in this case magazines, the potential exists for this study to be idiosyncratic. In studies such as this one, researchers are never able to look at all of the available media sources and consequently must choose wisely the comparatively small sample they will work with. However, I hope that by choosing two of the largest magazines in the country at the time I will be able to draw, or at least suggest, conclusions that may hold true when

⁶⁹ Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies’ Home Journal, Gender and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1995), 9.

⁷⁰ Ad for *Maclean’s*, “What is the most important magazine in Canada today?” *Maclean’s*, nd, np. F138,C-2-1, box 158, file: “Maclean’s Magazine” Maclean-Hunter Fonds, archives of Ontario.

⁷¹ Bland, 64.

examined with different primary source material. I am not alone in making this assumption. For instance, in her book *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender and Propaganda During World War Two*, Maureen Honey examines two magazines, *True Story* and *Saturday Evening Post*. She recognizes the possibility that her study may not be truly representative of all media sources of the time, but argues that since both magazines were leaders in their fields, they were, in all likelihood, moderately characteristic of the other magazines of the industry.⁷²

Both the text and imagery of these sources, advertisements, fiction and non-fiction stories, have been analyzed and interpreted for direct and potentially implied meanings. Originally, my intent was to examine only the advertisements from these magazines. In their article, "Images of Rosie: A Content Analysis of Women Workers in American Magazine Advertising, 1940-1946," Lewis and Neville write that "a growing body of literature exists that explores women's images in advertising, but the topic of women's images during the historical context of World War II remains quite unexplored."⁷³ While much work has been done in this field in the last decade since they published their article in 1995, much remains to be done. Beyond the study of "women's images" there is a great deal more to explore regarding gendered images, especially outside of male and female bodies. Thus, I was hoping to fill in part of the gap in the literature, regarding advertising, that they suggest. Yet, after examining a few months from *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* I was surprised by the amount of fiction

⁷² Honey, 14.

⁷³ Charles Lewis and John Neville, "Images of Rosie: A Content Analysis of Women Workers in American Magazine Advertising, 1940-1946," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 72, 1 (1995): 218.

and non-fiction stories that included gendered and sexualized imagery of machinery and was persuaded to broaden my primary source material.

The next chapter will outline the content analysis of media sources used here. This methodology is influenced by the semiological theories of Roland Barthes as well as by the work of scholars in the field of media history in general. Chapter two explores how media sources, such as the advertisements, fiction stories and non-fiction articles used in this thesis, can present a difficult challenge for the researcher. However, using the theories of Roland Marchand, I argue that these sources are “useful historical documents.”⁷⁴ As well, chapter two examines the varying opinions regarding the impact that media sources have had on the internalization of gender roles by individual men and women. In addition, chapter two also explores the history of *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* magazines as well as the history of magazine production during the Second World War.

Chapter three uses the knowledge examined in the first two chapters and applies it to advertisements from the Second World War. This chapter argues that as women became more regular users of machinery, fears over the masculinization of women became visible in advertising. Chapter three also explores how the machine culture created during the Second World War blurred the line between humans and machines. We will see that in the advertisements examined in this study, machines were sometimes given a feminine gendered identity. This relationship was uncomplicated as long as men were the primary users. However, as women became regular users during the Second World War, the relationship between machine and

⁷⁴ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), xviii.

user needed to be desexualized. This chapter also argues that examining the gendered representations of machinery can be a valid way for researchers to understand gender roles and ideologies from a particular period.

The fourth chapter expands on the conclusions drawn in the previous chapter and applies the same theories to fiction and non-fiction stories. Similar to the pattern noticed in advertisements, the line between human and machine was also blurred in fiction and non-fiction articles. This chapter argues that, in non-fiction stories, the use of machinery by women inspired fears over the masculinization of women. As well, the fiction stories examined in this chapter give examples of male users in implied romantic relationships, both subtly and explicitly, with female personified machines. These stories are informative because they can tell the researcher what magazine editors, writers and publishers thought about women in general. The sources in this chapter differ from those in chapter three because they show examples in which the machine undergoes a process of gender-shifting so that the myth of naturalized heterosexuality can remain static.

The final chapter summarizes the arguments made in the previous chapters and explores the numerous avenues available for future research. The examination of masculinity and femininity outside of male and female sexed bodies is still an emerging area of research and there are many possibilities left to be explored.

Chapter 2: Gender and Media during the Second World War

Using media sources as historical texts can be a challenge for the researcher.

One of the most often cited author in this discussion is Roland Marchand. Published in 1985, Marchand's book *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* has provided many writers and researchers of advertising history with the foundation from which to argue that advertisements are "useful historical documents."⁷⁵

Marchand explains his idealistic beginnings as an advertising historian by writing,

I marveled that historians could have written so much about social values and popular attitudes without examining the ads—a profusion of documents aimed precisely at reflecting those values and shaping those ideas! In my more romantic moods, I saw myself as a crusader charging off to rescue all those neglected damsels, the advertisements from the dungeons and dustbins of history.⁷⁶

He proves that advertisements are legitimate sources by comparing them to other historical sources such as religious tracts, social manifestoes, commemorative addresses and political campaign speeches. He argues that we would like to believe that all of these sources reflect something about the values of their audiences, but we really have no proof. He then concludes that, "once we have placed advertisements in the same category as many traditional historical documents, it may be possible to argue that ads actually surpass most other recorded communications as a basis for *plausible inference* about popular attitudes and values."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., xv.

⁷⁷ Ibid., xix.

The literature surrounding how researchers can, and should, use fiction and non-fiction stories in the media is less developed than that on advertising. However, as we will see, there is a large body of literature dealing specifically with the various ways historians, and other scholars, use the media, particularly magazines, to uncover aspects of the past.

The relationship between women, gender and media has been the focus of much scholarly attention in the last few decades. Historians, and other researchers, have examined the relationships between women and mainstream media, women's magazines and alternative media sources. A variety of perspectives have been used and many different conclusions drawn. Consequently, scholars from various fields of academic inquiry have accepted that media and consumption are important areas of study for understanding relations of gender and class both historically and in the present. Writing in 1992 in her article "'Feminine Trifles of Vast Importance': Writing Gender into the History of Consumption," Cynthia Wright argues that much work needs to be done in the field of gender and the history of consumption. She concludes that "the history of mass consumption is arguably central to analysis of class and gender relations in twentieth-century Canada."⁷⁸

Researchers interested in the relationship between gender and media, particularly advertising directed at female consumers, have long debated the historic and contemporary influences of media sources on women. While the common feminist critique of most mainstream media sources is that the industry, in particular

⁷⁸ Cynthia Wright, "'Feminine Trifles of Vast Importance': Writing Gender into the History of Consumption," in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History* edited by Franca Iacovetta and Marianna Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc., 1992), 230.

the advertising industry, is a vehicle for the perpetuation of male sexism, other scholars have explored the possibility that this inclusion into the world of consumerism was beneficial for women. As European historian Victoria de Grazia writes, “[g]iven the stakes, the quarrel can be ferocious. Once side asserts that mass consumption victimizes women. ... the other side argues that mass consumption liberates women by freeing them from the constraints of domesticity.”⁷⁹ Speaking of this argument, Joy Parr explains that in our modern understanding the term “‘consumer’ has entered the public discourse as a synonym for ‘citizen.’”⁸⁰ This belief is especially relevant in relation to women. As Parr explains in her article “Shopping for a Good Stove: A Parable about Gender, Design, and the Market,” we have become comfortable “thinking of women as shoppers and shoppers as women.”⁸¹

The former argument, that advertising works to reinforce male sexism seems too simplistic and limited, considering the complex relationship between gender and media. The latter argument, that the power of female consumers leads to the democracy of the market place, may be a way to give women of the past agency and power in a seemingly powerless situation; however, it is an inherently Liberal-capitalist theory that regards buying power as empowering. A Marxist interpretation of this issue would undoubtedly find much fault with this approach. Victoria de Grazia explains that a Marxian critique “sustains that goods are the bearer of false consciousness; commodity fetishism occludes the nature of human exploitation, and

⁷⁹ Victoria de Grazia (ed.) with Ellen Furlough, *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (London: University of California Press, 1996), 7.

⁸⁰ Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 4.

⁸¹ Joy Parr, “Shopping for a Good Stove: A Parable about Gender, Design, and the Market,” in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980*, edited by Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 74.

the 'society of spectacle,' to recall Guy Debord's term, which is in effect the highest stage of commodification, so transmogrifies the nature of human social interactions that radical social movement is preempted."⁸² De Grazia explains that the articles in the book she has edited, *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, have "clearly moved beyond the Manichaeian view that divides the world of goods into things that are either manipulative or emancipatory."⁸³ This thesis takes a similar perspective by examining both advertisements for goods as well as representations of gender, sexuality and machinery in both fiction and non-fiction magazine material. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the various points of view.

One reason why feminists have seen advertising directed at women, and the culture of consumption in general, as oppressive is because female consumers have been assumed to be passive, monolithic and easily manipulated, whereas male consumers have been imagined as objective. In her article, "Soft Sell: Marketing Rhetoric in Feminist Criticism," Rachel Bowlby, professor of English at Sussex University, writes that,

for some time, then, the consumer has been a fairly hybrid being, half of it (more or less a feminine half) being that unhappy, or perhaps stupidly happy, victim of advertising's forces; and the other (more or less a masculine half) being a sober, rational sort of being who knows what he wants and makes the best possible decision based on the information available to get it.⁸⁴

The false dichotomy that assumes that feminine consumers are passive and irrational, whereas masculine consumers are active and objective, and furthermore that within

⁸² de Grazia, 276.

⁸³ Ibid., 279.

⁸⁴ Rachel Bowlby, "Soft Sell: Marketing Rhetoric in Feminist Criticism," in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, edited by Victoria de Grazia (ed.) with Ellen Furlough (London: University of California Press, 1996), 382.

those two categories there is little variation, is both dangerous and erroneous. As Joy Parr explains in the introduction to her book *Domestic Goods*, there are serious consequences to the belief that denies that consumers are heterogeneous and “diversely derived.”⁸⁵

The post-war assumption that female consumers acted as one monolithic group can be easily seen in J.L. Wolff’s 1958 book *What Makes Women Buy*. Seeing men and women as inherently different, Wolff titled one of her chapters, “why women’s bodies make them buy differently,”⁸⁶ in which she concludes that “a man is a mind, a woman is a body.”⁸⁷ Wolff gave potential advertisers advice based on how she perceived ‘Mrs. Consumer’s’ needs and wants. Her advice included such suggestions as “women are more interested in people than in things... this is due in large part to woman’s basic interest in people’s feelings, the fact that her interest usually depends on becoming personally involved, and the importance of social relations to her happiness.”⁸⁸ As well, she wrote, “[c]ommunicating with women involves a sensitive approach and the establishment of a feminine atmosphere in the means of communication.”⁸⁹

In contrast, researchers such as Daniel Delis Hill see the female consumer as a powerful purchasing agent who has been able to gain equality through consumption. Hill uses the changes that occurred to the North American automobile in the first few decades of the twentieth century to illustrate his point. He argues that these changes

⁸⁵ Parr, *Domestic Goods*, 7.

⁸⁶ J.L. Wolff, *What Makes Women Buy* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1958), 61-62

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 258.

were indicative of the power women influenced over the predominantly male industry. In February of 1930, the magazine *Fortune* published an article titled "Color in Industry." The author explained how, as Henry Ford clung to the idea that cars should be only available in black, his competitor, Chevrolet, listened to the desires of women by offering his cars in a variety of colours and was gaining a larger share of the automobile market.⁹⁰ In discussing this situation, Daniel Delis Hill has stated that, "[e]ven the mighty Ford was brought to his knees by Mrs. Consumer's Power."⁹¹

Certainly, this image of Mrs. Consumer as almighty is attractive; however, what Hill seems to ignore here, is that obtaining colour options for an automobile cannot be used as a litmus test for obtaining power in society. Instead of being viewed as forceful consumers who demanded safer, more comfortable and more attractive looking cars, women became stereotyped as unnatural drivers and scapegoats for the, presumably less 'natural' and emasculating, changes that occurred to the design of automobiles during this period. While it may seem tempting for historians to claim that, collectively, women made demands upon auto makers, the reality is that the changes to the automobile were presented as "a gift from men to women."⁹² Writing for *Maclean's* in 1936 B.W. Keightley explained that, "[i]t was too much to expect the ladies to remember which was spark and which was throttle, so the makers invented an automatic spark advance which did away with one lever completely, then turned the

⁹⁰ "Color in Industry" *Fortune*, February 1930, 86.

⁹¹ Daniel Delis Hill, *Advertising to the American Woman, 1900-1999* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 171.

⁹² Georgine Clarsen, "'The Dainty Female Toe' and the 'Brawny Male Arm': Conceptions of Bodies and Power in Automobile Technology," *Australian Feminist Studies* 15, 32 (July 2000): 153.

other one into a foot pedal.”⁹³ Thus, women were not active agents in the change of design, but passive recipients.

Similar arguments can be made relating not just to women as consumers and advertising targets, but also in their relationship to women’s magazines more generally. In her book *Roughing It in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, Valerie Korinek explains that,

the study of women’s magazines has been hampered by the wholesale adoption of a number of myths and generalizations about these periodicals—their purpose, effect, and content. These distortions arose out of the historical and popular literature on women’s magazines. Within that literature there is an analytical continuum from Betty Friedan to Naomi Wolf which contends that women’s magazines are ‘bad.’⁹⁴

She describes how these authors maintain that women’s magazines are damaging for women, designed as a patriarchal plot to advocate an absolutely domestic role.⁹⁵

Consequently, this theory argues that women’s magazines produce a condition of, what Jennifer Scanlon has termed ‘inarticulate longings.’⁹⁶ By studying the *Ladies’ Home Journal*, Scanlon “explores the relationship between popular culture and the culture of consumption between 1910-1930.”⁹⁷ She criticizes the *Journal* for suggesting that “democracy for women meant little more than the choice between one brand of soap and another, one flavor of soup and another.”⁹⁸

Feminists, and other researchers, who view the media as oppressive to women generally do so because of a related debate surrounding the power of media sources.

⁹³ B. W. Keightley, “Gas Buggies,” *Maclean’s*, November 15, 1936, 31.

⁹⁴ Valerie Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazines in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 9.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ See Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 5.

Ultimately, the intent of many researchers has been to understand the role of the media in the internalization of gender ideologies by both men and women. This sort of discussion presents a theoretical *chicken and egg* dilemma. The question is, did media images and promises simply reflect the gender roles of a particular time; or, were they responsible, at least in part, for constructing gender roles in society? Answering this question definitively is difficult, but historians of popular culture have offered a wide range of answers. Susannah J. Wilson has explained that the traditional perspective of humanities and social sciences researchers has been to assume that “media content reflects the norms and values of a society.”⁹⁹ Through this definition, historians can use advertisements and other forms of popular culture to learn about a society, or subgroup of society, from the past. On the other hand, historians also argue that advertisements have been able to act as agents of socialization in creating ideals and enticing consumers to internalize them. E.S. Turner explains that advertising has been able to sell products by associating them with “well-being, elegance, youth, social success, cheerfulness, masculinity, or romance.”¹⁰⁰ Roland Marchand argues that the upwardly mobile values of the white male copy writers were embedded in the ads they produced in the post World War I era.¹⁰¹

One researcher who argues that media images are simply unproblematic reflections of society is English researcher Anthony Joseph Cortese. In his book, *Provocateur: Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising*, he takes the position that advertising does not create ideals but merely reflects them. He writes,

⁹⁹ Susannah J. Wilson, “The Changing Image of Women in Canadian Mass Circulating Magazines, 1930-70,” *Atlantis* 2, 2, pt. 2 (1977): 33.

¹⁰⁰ E.S. Turner, *The Shocking History of Advertising*, (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 235.

¹⁰¹ Marchand, 194.

“advertising does not function by formulating values and attitudes on it [sic] own; rather, it draws upon and redirects issues that the target audience or common culture already share. Advertising packages our emotions and sells them back to us.”¹⁰²

However, Cortese is not joined by many researchers on this side of the debate as feminism, and studies of cultural analysis, have more often than not argued that the media has played an important role in the internalization of gender roles for men and women.

Another way to understand this argument is to contend that advertising influences ideals by reflecting only a small part of society. Carolyn Kitch uses the work of Gaye Tuchman to make this argument. Writing in 1978 Tuchman called this approach to advertising research the ‘reflection hypothesis.’ The argument is that “media imagery... is really prescriptive not descriptive and that much is left out of the picture they paint of American life.”¹⁰³ Kitch also quotes Mary P. Ryan who warns that media images “must not be confused with the actual life experience of women.”¹⁰⁴

Many researchers look to Roland Marchand’s work to help make sense of this debate. Marchand explains that advertisements do not create an exact mirrored reflection of society, but instead offer a “Zerrspiegel, a distorting mirror that would enhance certain images.”¹⁰⁵ In his book, *Images of Woman: Advertising in Women's Magazines*, Trevor Millum explains this idea with an illustrative example. He writes,

¹⁰² Anthony Joseph Paul Cortese, *Provocateur: Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 11.

¹⁰³ Carolyn L. Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: the origins of visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of N. Carolina Press, 2001), 3.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁵ Marchand, xvii.

it is obvious, though, that advertisements do not reflect reality in any simple way. If they did then there would be far more pictures of tenement and council houses than of town-houses and sleek semidetacheds. To take the example of hair-styles, a large number of advertisements seem to feature girls with long fair hair, where as the majority of girls has neither... In this way advertising would be seen to portray an interpretation of reality which reinforces or transforms certain aspects of it.¹⁰⁶

Similarly, in her article, "Smoke and Mirrors: Gender Representation in North American Tobacco and Alcohol Advertisements Before 1950," Cheryl Krasnick Warsh argues that "advertising can shape the direction of our beliefs as well as our concepts of self, freedom and rebellion."¹⁰⁷ As well, writing about magazines in general, Heather Rymell, in her article, "Images of Women in the Magazines of the '30s and '40s" argues that magazines, and other forms of media, are responsible, to a certain extent, for "creating the scene they reflect."¹⁰⁸

If one agrees that the media is, at least in part, responsible for creating the reality it represents, it may be because it creates the promise of an ideal way of life that seems more appealing to consumers than their own, and proposes the possibility of purchasing that ideal. In her book *New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939*, Veronica Strong Boag explains how in the first half of the twentieth century "[i]deal femininity was in this way transformed into a purchasable commodity, the possession of which promised success in the marriage

¹⁰⁶ Trevor Millum, *Images of Woman: Advertising in Women's Magazines* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975), 44.

¹⁰⁷ Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, "Smoke and Mirrors: Gender Representation in North American Tobacco and Alcohol Advertisements Before 1950," *Social History* 31, 62 (1999), 189.

¹⁰⁸ Heather Rymell, "Images of Women in the Magazines of the '30s and '40s," *Canadian Woman Studies* 3 (1981), 96.

market.”¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Ellen Garvey, in her book *The Adman in the Parlor* examines how women became familiar with advertising during the 1880s and 90s. She concludes that mass magazines were an important influence in the shaping of modern consumer culture. Writing about the cultural phenomenon of the 1880s, in which women made scrapbooks out of advertisements and called them “wishbooks,” Garvey writes that “what’s wished for may not be the merchandise, but the particular relationship to the world [that is] expressed.”¹¹⁰

It is important here to clarify that scholars who believe that media images have a part in constructing, or influencing, the gendered identities of readers do not necessarily suppose that all decisions are made on a conscious level. For instance, Heather Rymell writes, “[w]hile it would be absurd to imagine a group of magazine executives actively collaborating to dictate norms to their readership, it can be said that their decisions regarding content do have an effect on the public mind.”¹¹¹ Similarly, Helen Damon-Moore, in her book *Magazines for the Millions: Gender and Commerce in the Ladies Home Journal and The Saturday Evening Post, 1880-1910*, writes, “producers, advertisers, and readers conspired, sometimes intentionally and sometimes unintentionally, in a process that helped to create a gendered commercial discourse and a commercial gender discourse.”¹¹² The authors examined here do not

¹⁰⁹ Veronica Strong Boag, *New Day Recalled: lives of girls and women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 86.

¹¹⁰ Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 31.

¹¹¹ Rymell, 96.

¹¹² Helen Damon-Moore, *Magazines for the Millions: Gender and Commerce in the Ladies Home Journal and The Saturday Evening Post, 1880-1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 3.

imagine the magazine producers to be all-powerful, but instead dependent on the needs and desires of both advertisers and readers.

There are also researchers who argue that print media had little, if any, effect on North American society. Writing about advertising, Michael Schudson, in his book *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its dubious impact on American Society* argues that the effects of advertisements on society have been inconsequential. The concept for Schudson's book was born out of discussion with his students in the sociology course, "Mass Media and Society."¹¹³ Within this course, Schudson tried to convince his students that the communication medium was limited in its ability to mould thought and action. His students were skeptical of his assertion and challenged him to look at advertising. However, he concluded that advertising, like other media, did not have a lasting affect on society. One of Schudson's main arguments is that consumers do not believe advertisements, and thus, they must have little or no impact. He writes, "but why do most people most of the time tune out advertisements? Because, to put it simply, advertising is propaganda and everyone knows it."¹¹⁴ He then continues to explain that, "a 1976 survey found that 46 percent of the public holds all or most television advertising to be 'seriously misleading' with 83 percent responding that at least 'some' television advertising is seriously misleading."¹¹⁵ Thus, he concludes that, "the question, what work does advertising do in the culture? Quickly becomes the question, How can it do any work if people are so inattentive to it? And when

¹¹³ Michael Schudson, *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its dubious impact on American Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1984) ix.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 10.

attentive, so critical, so able at recognizing its propagandistic intent and techniques?”¹¹⁶

While Schudson’s work is important because it offers a different perspective on the topic of advertising, his conclusions seem rather flawed and naïve. Assuming that it is true that most consumers realize that advertisements consist largely of misleading propaganda, that does not mean that the advertising images and messages do not affect their perceptions of themselves and others.

Schudson also argues that despite the common belief of the persuasive power of advertising, the industry actually has very little power over the minds of consumers. On the surface, this might be a positive argument, it gives consumers agency and does not assume the advertiser to be *all powerful*. However, he also claims that advertising does not convince consumers to buy things they do not need but simply persuades them to switch brands.¹¹⁷ By making this statement, it is clear that Schudson has not paid close attention to Marchand’s work. Marchand explains the yeast craze of the 1930’s that was motivated entirely by advertisers. The yeast ads explained that “the pressures of modern civilization had led to constipation and advised readers to eat half a cake of yeast three times a day to counteract ‘intestinal fatigue.’”¹¹⁸ North American men and women readily spent their money on yeast even though it had no real benefit, tasted awful, and was expensive.¹¹⁹

Other arguments can be found in the literature on women and media in general. Valerie Korinek goes beyond this debate by examining the reader reaction to

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹¹⁸ Marchand, 76.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Chatelaine magazine in the fifties and sixties. Rather than assuming the readers to be passive absorbers of the messages directed to them by editors, writers and advertisers, Korinek explains that “in the hands of readers, the text underwent a process of interpretation, revision, critique, and debate that put another layer of meaning on the product.”¹²⁰ She criticizes works such as *Magazines for Millions*, *Inarticulate Longings*, and *The Adman in the Parlor* for being text based studies that “focus on content, production, and academic ‘readings’ of the material, and seldom contain anything from readers. They all presume that the magazines were ‘prescriptive’ products that taught middle-class American women how to behave and, most important, how to consumer brand-name products.”¹²¹ Korinek’s interpretation on this matter is greatly influenced by Foucault and his understanding of power and resistance. Using his theory that “[w]here there is power, there is resistance,”¹²² she shows how it is deceptive to understand power as a possession that can belong to certain groups of people and not to others. Consequently, her work “prioritizes the act of reading, as opposed to the more traditional emphasis on the text and creators.”¹²³

In her article, “Don’t let your girlfriends ruin your marriage: Lesbian imagery in *Chatelaine* magazine, 1950-1969,” Korinek makes a similar argument, asserting that readers of a particular text can often purposely misread the text in order to make it applicable to their own experiences. Thus, she argues, lesbian women reading *Chatelaine* magazine may have willfully ignored the intended meaning, instead focusing on different issues or subverting the message to suit their perspective. For

¹²⁰ Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 8.

¹²¹ Ibid., 14.

¹²² Ibid., 19.

¹²³ Ibid., 18.

example, lesbian readers may have read more into a story about a close friendship between two women than heterosexual women most likely would have. Korinek uses the work of literary critic Bonnie Zimmerman¹²⁴ who theorizes about the ability of readers to see a 'perverse reading' of a text. According to Zimmerman, "a perverse reader is one highly conscious of her own agency, who takes an active role in shaping the text she reads in accordance with her perspective of the world."¹²⁵ As well, Korinek cites Diana Fuss,¹²⁶ who has "explored the 'homospectatorial look' in contemporary women's fashion magazines and contends that those periodicals 'provide a socially sanctioned structure in which women are encouraged to consume... the images of other women.'"¹²⁷

Similarly, in her book *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years*, Joy Parr focuses her attention on the records left by consumer groups as well as interviews and letters from women in Canada who set up households in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The main focus of Parr's book is on the actual goods purchased by Canadian domestic consumers. She writes that the essays in her book "consider both the technologies and aesthetics which influenced the physical form of things, and the economic and social ideologies which organized thinking about them."¹²⁸ In regard to the lack of analysis on consumer reaction Parr writes "the

¹²⁴ see Bonnie Zimmerman, "Perverse Reading: The Lesbian Appropriation of Literature," in *Sexual Practice, Textual Theory: Lesbian Cultural Criticism*, edited by Susan J. Wolfe and Julia Penelope (London: Blackwell, 1993), 135-49.

¹²⁵ quoted in Valerie Korinek, "'Don't let your girlfriends ruin your marriage': Lesbian imagery in Chatelaine Magazine, 1950-1969," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33, 3 (Fall 1998): 4. Accessed through Proquest.

¹²⁶ See Diana Fuss, "Fashion and the Homospectatorial Look," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Summer 1992): 713-737.

¹²⁷ Korinek, "'Don't let your girlfriends ruin your marriage,'" 4.

¹²⁸ Parr, *Domestic Goods*, 3.

entrepreneurial archives, upon which most historical research about consumption is based, tell us little about who bought or why, and by extension reveal little about autonomous changes in demand over time.”¹²⁹ Thus, Parr argues that it is problematic that researchers “know more about Mr. Eaton than about Mr. Eaton’s customers, and are tempted to infer what Mr. Eaton’s customers thought from what Mr. Eaton thought.”¹³⁰

Parr explains that, in the 1980s, theorists influenced by postmodernism changed their thinking about consumers. She writes, “[t]his theorizing posited a historical transition. The modern world of dependent consumers yielded interpretively to a postmodern world of consumers actively at play with goods offered for sale. Increasingly, consumption was described as a process of mediation rather than destruction.”¹³¹ Thus, she positions herself as part of this group influenced by postmodernism.

While the work done by Korinek and Parr is an important addition to the field of media studies, one should not assume that it is necessary to analyze reader responses to a particular text for the study of it to be useful. The questions being addressed in this thesis, relating to the fluid gendered and sexualized relationships between human actors and machines in Canadian print media, have not yet been asked. Thus, the first step of deconstructive analysis is necessary before any attempt at understanding reader responses can, or should, be taken. This project is still at the

¹²⁹ Ibid., 8.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., 9.

stage of deconstructing the mythology. As a result, reader interpretation is not yet part of this goal but may be in the future.

Ultimately, the majority of media researchers have settled on a perspective that lies somewhere in between the two camps of creation and reflection. As Fraser Sutherland writes, “whether women’s magazines led or followed their audiences is a moot sociological point.”¹³² Similarly, Paul Rutherford explains that, “whatever social reality the media have reflected, though they have also moulded—whether this term be defined to mean reinforce, legitimate, glorify, enshrine or alter.”¹³³

As previously stated, this thesis is informed by these debates and takes the position that the media had, at least some, power to influence gendered ideologies. In the introduction to *The Sex of Things*, Victoria de Grazia writes that, “the essays here, though not indifferent to such debates, advance a different set of concerns. First, they focus on the construction of gender roles rather than on an unexamined acceptance of a category of ‘woman’ and thus construe the process of gendering broadly, in terms of male as well as female identities.”¹³⁴ The work done in this thesis shares the goal articulated by de Grazia, but also moves it forward by including analysis of sexuality and examining the gendering and sexualization of both humans and machines in magazines.

For the researcher interested in media history, wartime presents an interesting case study. In his book *The Making of the Canadian Media*, Paul Rutherford explains that the notion that advertising could sell ideas in addition to products began during the

¹³² Fraser Sutherland, *The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines* (Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1989), 51.

¹³³ Paul. *The Making of the Canadian Media*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1978 125.

¹³⁴ de Grazia, 7.

First World War when the government turned to advertising for war propaganda.¹³⁵

By the Second World War magazine producers and advertisers were acutely aware of this notion and began to seriously focus their attention on women. In her discussion of American media sources Amy Bentley writes that “women were the focus of much wartime propaganda.”¹³⁶ The same argument can be made relating to Canadian women.

Mary Vipond, while studying the image of women in mass circulating magazines in Canada, discovered that in the 1920s women who worked after marriage were regularly ignored by the magazines.¹³⁷ However, a little over a decade later, as Canada entered the Second World War and the government desired the use of women’s labour, magazine editors and writers began to target working women. Statistics indicate that the women entered both the workforce and the armed forces during this period in record numbers, a trend that only increased as the war continued. According to a publication called “Canada at War” published by Maclean-Hunter, women in the armed forces grew from 1 in 1250 in 1941 to 1 in 66 by 1943 (see figure 2)¹³⁸. As well, the number of women in industry grew from 1 in 186 in 1940 to 1 in 24 by 1943 (see figure 3)¹³⁹. By 1944, *Maclean’s* journalist Janet Tupper, wrote that “Twenty-five percent of the 750,000 employees in ‘essential war industry’ are women; 6% of

¹³⁵ Paul Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1978), 62.

¹³⁶ Bentley, 6.

¹³⁷ See Mary Vipond, “The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920s,” in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women’s History*, edited by Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), 116-24.

¹³⁸ F138 C-2-1, box 155, file: “Canada at War,” February 1944, Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

190,000 employees in ancillary war industries like transportation, mining, logging and power are women.”¹⁴⁰

The relationship between the Canadian government and Canadian print media during the Second World War is an interesting and complex one. While many non-essential trades were put on hold because of the sky-rocketing costs and the government’s need for available labour, the print media industry persevered. Even as the printing costs soared¹⁴¹, and many companies reduced or eliminated their advertising budgets, both *Maclean’s* and *Chatelaine* flourished during the war. However, paper and resource shortages did affect the quality and length of all magazines during this period.¹⁴² Fraser Sutherland writes that during the war “*Chatelaine* was not at its visual best: photos were blurry, the art slapdash.”¹⁴³

National magazines with a wide-ranging readership such as *Maclean’s* and *Chatelaine* were seen as essential to the wartime fight for victory. *Chatelaine* editor Byrne Hope Sanders believed that *Chatelaine* was essential to the war effort by acting as a “‘connecting link’ among the women of Canada.”¹⁴⁴ As far as the parent company was concerned, that was the magazine’s wartime responsibility. As *Maclean-Hunter* published in 1941,

At the outset of war [*Chatelaine*] helped to mobilize women for national service. It became a national force in promoting the Red Cross. It has played an increasingly important role in wartime nutrition and

¹⁴⁰ Janet Tupper, “Little Woman—What Now?” *Maclean’s*, November 1, 1944, 20.

¹⁴¹ F138, C-2-1, box 155, file: “Mr. Brewer” from the *Maclean-Hunter* Fonds available at the Archives of Ontario is a good source for anyone interested in examining the rising printing costs in Canada during World War II.

¹⁴² Sutherland, 161.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹⁴⁴ Inez Houlihan, “The Image of Women in *Chatelaine* Editorials, March 1928 to September 1977,” (MA Thesis, University of Toronto, 1984), 24.

assisted in marketing surplus foods. It initiated a Buy British-Buy Canadian campaign which has influenced purchasing habits.¹⁴⁵

The publishers of *Chatelaine* made it clear to the Canadian public that they were willing to do whatever it took to assist with the war effort. They even loaned out the labour of their editor, Sanders, from March 1942 until December 1946, so that she could serve as the director of the Consumers' Representation Branch at the Wartime Prices and Trade Board. As well, prior to her temporary leave of absence, "Sanders gave and withdrew her approval of single women in the work force depending on the perceived employment needs of men."¹⁴⁶

The Canadian government also recruited Maclean-Hunter to convince the public of the importance of buying Victory Bonds, a task that the company readily accepted. In 1943, as the Federal Government prepared to launch the Fifth Victory Loan Campaign, all Maclean-Hunter employees were required to attend a film on the campaign produced by Coca-Cola and narrated by *Maclean's* editor Napier Moore.¹⁴⁷

Maclean-Hunter, and the print media industry in general, had to convince companies to continue advertising during the war, even if their product was not being sold. They did so by telling cautionary tales of companies who chose not to continue advertising during the First World War and disappeared from the public eye in the post-war economy.¹⁴⁸ Companies were also encouraged to include messages of the importance of Victory Bonds in their advertisements. For example, in 1943

Maclean's ran an ad for the International Business Machines Company Limited which

¹⁴⁵ F138 A-4-1, box 37, file: "booklets," Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

¹⁴⁶ Houlihan, 37.

¹⁴⁷ F138 C-2-1, box 161, file: "Victory Loan," Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

¹⁴⁸ See the article "Wartime Advertising Serves As Well As Sells," *Domestic Commerce* (April 1, 1943); 29. F138 C-2-1, box 155, file: "Mr. Chalmers," Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

read, "INVADING Canada's fighting forces are invading. It is our obligation to see that they have everything they need to finish the job. Victory Bonds will do it[.] Buy them[.]"¹⁴⁹

Moreover, the Canadian print media aimed a great deal of their material at women during the Second World War. Whether they were working for the military, in factories or doing volunteer work, all women were seen as 'home soldiers.'¹⁵⁰ One of the biggest concerns felt by Canada's propagandists was over the maintenance of femininity in women. In her article, "Propaganda and Identity Construction: Media Representation in Canada of Finnish and Finnish-Canadian Women during the Winter War of 1939-1940," Varpu Lindstrom shows how "the stories and photo images of Finnish women workers happily doing 'men's work' while maintaining their 'femininity' helped set the stage for the later strong recruitment of Canadian women into the war industries."¹⁵¹

Artists and journalists were recruited by the government to encourage women to support the war effort. A case in point is the experiences of novelist and journalist Madge Macbeth, a government propagandist who wrote articles and broadcast messages for women during the war. Barbara M. Freeman explains that while Macbeth's work experiences fell within the boundaries of proper femininity, her relationship with her son, an army officer at the front, convinced her that women

¹⁴⁹ International Business Machines Company Limited, "Invading," Advertisement, *Maclean's* (November 1, 1943); 53.

¹⁵⁰ F 138, C-2-1, box 155, file: "Canada at war, No. 33" February 1944, Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

¹⁵¹ Varpu Lindstrom, "Propaganda and Identity Construction: Media Representation in Canada of Finnish and Finnish-Canadian Women during the Winter War of 1939-1940," in *Sisters or Strangers: Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, edited by Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta and Frances Swyripa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 297.

should be more aggressive in their support of Canada's troops. Freeman writes, "in other words, the social construction of the female gender could and should shift to meet the fascist challenge."¹⁵²

Magazine editors and advertisers realized that during the war women took on extra responsibility regarding the family's finances than they had previously. Women whose husbands were away fighting were left in charge of financial decisions and female war workers were earning their own money. Consequently, "Mrs. Consumer" was the target of much media attention.

Historians and other researchers interested in gender and the Second World War have utilized a variety of media sources. Magazine and newspaper articles, films, advertisements and war propaganda have been particularly useful. For instance, Jeffrey Keshen uses print media sources to show how the war raised fears about moral laxity as women entered the workforce. Yvonne Mathews-Klein uses films by the National Film Board of Canada during 1940's-50's to analyze the conflicting sex-roles expressed in these films. Susan M. Bland uses advertisements to investigate women's wartime experiences. She explains that advertisements are a valid historical tool because they "can tell us much about what advertisers thought was important to women."¹⁵³

There are also a number of researchers within other academic disciplines who have done excellent research in the field. One of the strengths of Maureen Honey's book *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender and Propaganda During World War Two* is

¹⁵² Barbara M. Freeman, "Mother and Son: Gender, Class, and War Propaganda in Canada, 1939-1945," *American Journalism* 12, 3 (1995), 264.

¹⁵³ Bland, 64.

its interdisciplinary methodology. Being a professor of English with a specialization in literature and iconography, Honey is able to produce a study that differs from the kind of book a historian would likely create. Her training in literature allows her to dissect the fictional stories in her magazine samples in a more analytical way than many historians would. Her book is a great resource for understanding how social values can be constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed; and thus, are never cast immutably in stone. The purpose of her book is to weigh-in on the continuity-versus-change debate by examining,

why the media's legitimization of female entry into male work failed to supplant the traditional image of women as homemakers, unsuited by nature for wielding power outside the domestic province, for competently manipulating the machinery at the heart of our industrial society, and for holding jobs normally allocated to male 'breadwinners.'¹⁵⁴

Honey chose to look at two magazines, *True Story* and *Saturday Evening Post*. Her reasoning for choosing these magazines was that she felt that both had a large readership of women and that they would represent propaganda directed at both working-class and middle-class women respectively.

Also taking a position in the debate over the influence of media sources on individuals, Honey shows how most scholars tend to believe that the media has/had at least some influence. She writes, "most analysts of wartime popular culture agree with this perspective and caution against the temptation to attribute more power to the media than was the case."¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, she still argues that to recognize that propaganda was not a purely top-down phenomenon that manipulated a gullible audience into betraying its own interests, does not mean that it did not negatively

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 10.

affect women.¹⁵⁶ She concludes that “we ought not to minimize the power of images to frame the parameters of what people consider appropriate goals and behaviour for themselves.”¹⁵⁷

Thus, this thesis is informed by debates surrounding the influence of the Second World War on the lives of Canadian men and women as well as the possible impact of media sources on the internalization of gendered ideologies. The position taken here is that the media did, in fact, have, at least a limited amount of, power in this process. The sources examined here helped to reinforce the myth of naturalized heterosexuality.

In her book *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity*, Amy Bentley is able to produce an original look at the Second World War because of her innovative use of media sources; the propaganda and documentation surrounding the rationed foods, such as meat and sugar. Bentley was likely able to accomplish this feat because of her work in the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at New York University. Bentley examines how government officials, business elites and individual families dealt with food-related propaganda surrounding rationing. She deconstructs the dual, and at times contradictory, message that rationing food and sending it to the *boys overseas* was crucial for the war effort, but so was maintaining a sense of *normality* in which women prepared nutritious food for their families.

As well, Bentley explains that within the study of women and the Second World War, especially those which employ media sources, there has been an almost

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 11.

exclusive focus on 'Rosie the Riveter.'¹⁵⁸ A quick glance over the titles of books and articles in this field corroborates her claim. For example, Maureen Honey's *Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender and Propaganda During World War Two*, Susan M. Bland's "Henrietta the Homemaker, and 'Rosie the Riveter': Images of Women in Advertising in *Maclean's* Magazine, 1939-50," and Charles Lewis and John Neville's "Images of Rosie: A Content Analysis of Women Workers in American Magazine Advertising, 1940-1946," all refer to 'Rosie' in their titles. While these sources do not focus exclusively on the image of Rosie the Riveter, the prominence of her image in the titles of their works indicates her importance.

Certainly the image of Rosie is an important area of study. As Mei-ling Yang explains in her article "Selling Patriotism: The Representation of Women in Magazine Advertising in World War II,"

Rosie the Riveter, the industrial heroine originally created by the War Manpower Commission in World War II, has become the most prominent icon of American womanhood in the war era. Outfitted with overalls, goggles, and a bright bandanna, the quintessential war worker with a confident 'victory smile' served to rally women's support for the nation's war effort.¹⁵⁹

However, as Lewis and Neville argue, "the tendency of scholars to focus on 'Rosie the Riveter' obscures the fact that most wartime housewives did remain in the home and did not receive credit for their role in keeping families intact."¹⁶⁰ The image of Rosie the Riveter is important to this study, only in that her masculinized image as a woman wearing wartime work clothes as she works with machinery gives credence to my

¹⁵⁸ Bentley, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵⁹ Mei-ling Yang, "Selling Patriotism: The Representation of Women in Magazine Advertising in World War II," *American Journalism* 12, 3 (1995): 304.

¹⁶⁰ Lewis and Neville, p. 219.

argument about the interaction of Canadian women and men with machinery in Canadian magazines.

The following chapters will ‘unpack’ the complex and multi-layered meanings from advertisements as well as fiction and non-fiction stories from *Maclean’s* and *Chatelaine* during the Second World War. This deconstruction is influenced by theories of semiology as described by Roland Barthes. My analysis of both the textual and visual aspects of the advertisements, fiction and non-fiction stories examined here is influenced by this work. In particular, I have utilized his essay “Myth Today” in the translated version of his book *Mythologies*. This book is a collection of essays that examine the inclination of contemporary social value systems to construct modern myths. In “Myth Today” Barthes uses the idea of semiology (the study of signs) to describe the manner in which historical signs are transformed into naturalized signs or ‘myths.’ His theories are particularly useful when examining advertisements because of the industry’s reliance on pictures to convey messages. As Barthes argues, “pictures, to be sure, are more imperative than writing, they impose meaning at one stroke, without analyzing or diluting it.”¹⁶¹

Barthes deconstructs myths into three parts; “the signifier, the signified and the sign, which is the associative total of the first two terms.”¹⁶² The signified is referred to as the *concept* in the mythical system, and the sign (which is the deliberate combination of the signifier and signified) is referred to in the mythical system as *signification*.

¹⁶¹ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 110.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 113.

It follows, then, that the form of the myth has a history. Meaning contains a whole value system made up of a history, a geography and a morality. This history is then put at the viewer's disposal, creating a "constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines the myth."¹⁶³

Myth then becomes a distortion of reality. As Barthes explains, "the reader lives the myth as a story at once true and unreal."¹⁶⁴ Consequently, the very principal of myth is that it "transforms history into nature."¹⁶⁵ For instance, as we will examine here, the idea of compulsory heterosexuality is not 'natural,' meaning that it is not necessarily inevitable or eternal, rather it is a historical construction. However, in the mythical system it is understood to be naturalized.

Semiology, as described by Barthes, is the historical science of studying "ideas-in-form."¹⁶⁶ The idea, or myth, that I am exploring is that of compulsory heterosexuality. For example, if we imagine an advertisement in which there is an implied relationship between a male user and a female-personified machine, the signifier would be the feminized machine, and concept of heterosexuality would be the signified. Thus, the sign, or myth, is the presence of compulsory heterosexuality through the feminized machine. It is the formation of the idea in the media that I am attempting to uncover and not, at least at this stage, the internalization of that idea by Canadian men and women during the Second World War. Nonetheless, based on the conclusions of other media historians examined in this chapter about the power of the

¹⁶³ Ibid., 118.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 128.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 112.

media to internalize beliefs, I will hypothesize that this myth-making process had at least some ability to reinforce the idea that heterosexuality was compulsory.

Barthes maintains that is important to clearly stress the “open character of the concept; it is not at all an abstract, purified essence; it is a formless, unstable, nebulous condensation, whose unity and coherence are above all due to its function.”¹⁶⁷ Thus, the reading of a particular myth is open to interpretation. As Korinek explains, using Barthes’ analysis, “the mythological level of interpretation depends on the situation, the textual references, and, ultimately, on the person who views or reads the sign. The importance of this theory for our purposes is that semiotics liberates the analyses of cultural products from strictly deterministic interpretations, allowing that any given text can have multiple meanings and is open to interpretation.”¹⁶⁸ Consequently, my readings of the texts in the following chapters are interpretations of multiple potential meanings. Although grounded in Canadian women’s, gender, social and cultural history, this work is necessarily speculative and the sources used here are open for further interpretation.

Roland Barthes, in his 1968 essay “The Death of the Author”¹⁶⁹ argues that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author.” While previous theories of audience interpretation assumed that the reader of a text acted only as a receiver of meaning and did not create it, Barthes contends that any text can exist in a multitude of times and places in which meanings unforeseen by the author can be

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 119.

¹⁶⁸ Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 18.

¹⁶⁹ Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image-Music-Text*, translated and edited by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill, 1977), 148.

interpreted. Thus, some of the readings of texts offered here do not necessarily need to be congruent with the intention of the author to be significant.

Chapter 3: “Pin-Up Girl of Guadalcanal”: An Examination of Advertisements

During the Second World War, the unprecedented use of machines by women seemingly panicked the media defenders of the status quo, who worked to reinforce the eroticization of heterosexuality and the requirements of femininity. Since operating machinery was assumed to be an active, male endeavor, they may have feared that a female machine operator would find this male world sexually exciting, leading her to a desire to be masculine. In the heteronormative culture that existed during the 1940s in Canada, masculinity and femininity were understood only as complements of one another, so the female machine operator had to be implicitly discouraged from regarding the equipment in its usual guise as female. By examining the heteronormativity of machine culture during the Second World War, the sexualization of machinery, and the representations of ideal femininity in advertisements, this chapter will argue that the phenomenon of women using machinery increased concern about masculine women and actually strengthened the compulsory nature of feminine attractiveness and heterosexuality.

Historically, advertising has played an important role in the publication of newspapers and magazines. In his book *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada*, Paul Rutherford argues that in the late 19th century advertising replaced earlier methods of newspaper financing, including subscriptions and patronage. He contends that by the 1890s, advertising made up two-thirds of

newspaper revenue.¹⁷⁰ The advertising industry was especially important to both publishers and government officials during wartime because the elites of the country needed a medium to impart wartime messages in a persuasive, but sometimes subtle, format. And, as Leila Rupp explains, “advertising is a medium peculiarly fitted to present facts in ways that carry conviction.”¹⁷¹ To illustrate, in 1941, Mr. R. Deupree, president of Proctor and Gamble, argued that “[a]dvertising is essential to the proper growth of the nation and its people.”¹⁷² Thus, advertising, during the Second World War, provides the researcher with primary source material that is both interesting and illuminating.

As was explored in chapter two, the Second World War changed the media industry substantially. As Joy Parr explains, “In wartime, public purposes were more important than private needs.”¹⁷³ Consequently, there were many shortages of goods that the media, in particular the advertising industry had to deal with. Publishing companies, such as Maclean-Hunter, were recruited by the government to aid in propagandist goals. This trend is particularly visible in advertising from this period. A number of companies advertising in *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* changed their advertising strategies and turned their focus toward helping the war effort. For instance, Sweet Corporal Cigarettes ran a number of ads that had absolutely nothing to do with cigarettes. One ad from 1945 shows two men at a blood donor clinic with the quote, “‘Joe, this plasma comes from a millionaire blood donor.’ ‘Gee, I ought to be

¹⁷⁰ William J. Buxton and Catherine McKercher, “Newspapers, Magazines and Journalism in Canada: Towards a Critical Historiography,” *Acadiensis* 28, 1 (1998): 119.

¹⁷¹ Rupp, 93.

¹⁷² R. Deupree, “P&G’s President Speaks: Printer’s Ink, Reporting the A.N.P.A. Convention,” F138 C-2-1, box 158, file: “miscellaneous M,” Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

¹⁷³ Parr, 23.

able to make pots of money after the war!’”¹⁷⁴ The title of the ad reminds the consumer that, “Blood donors are urgently needed.”¹⁷⁵ In this ad, humour is used to convey a wartime message, but neither of the presumably joking men are presented as subjects to be mocked. However, when women are used to convey a wartime message they are often represented as naïve and laughable. For instance, one ad for Sweet Caporal Cigarettes, found in *Maclean's*, pictures two women talking with a dialogue box that reads, “I always buy my extra meat from a man at the back door, I’ve never even seen a black market!”¹⁷⁶

Maclean-Hunter also needed to persuade companies to continue advertising during the war, even if their product was not being sold because of war restrictions. The goal was to convince consumers to pay attention to those ads, even if they were not able to buy the products at that time. To accomplish this goal, Maclean-Hunter published advertisements promoting the companies who advertised in their magazines. One ad from 1943 begins with the line, “Tires are not for sale to the average consumer—and still the tire industry continues to advertise in *Maclean's*.”¹⁷⁷ Trying to increase their advertising revenue, the advertisement reads, “*Maclean's* today is more important than ever as an advertising medium, whether you advertise for immediate sales or strengthen your position in the better consumer market of tomorrow.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Ad for Sweet Corporal Cigarettes, “Blood donors are urgently needed. Save a life. Visit your local Red Cross Blood Clinic today,” *Maclean's*, March 15, 1945, 52.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ad for Sweet Caporal Cigarettes, *Maclean's*, February 15, 1944, 43.

¹⁷⁷ Ad for “Not a Tire to Sell. Yet in there Fighting,” *Maclean's*, February 15, 1943, 4.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

As a result, a number of companies produced advertisements that let the consumer know that their product would be available in the post-war era and that they were working towards the war effort in the meantime. One ad for Wear-Ever Aluminum Cooking Utensils tells the reader that they are playing a vital role in the construction of war planes, but maintains that “when conditions return to normal, the call for Service on the Home Front will still be answered by ‘Wear-Ever’ Aluminum Cooking Utensils.”¹⁷⁹ In 1941 *Chatelaine* re-iterated this point in their feature “This Month With Our Advertisers,” which reads “[t]hat’s an interesting message on page 39 on aluminum. Perhaps you can’t buy it now, but you’ll be wanting it after the war, and ‘WearEver’ are making sure you don’t forget the name.”¹⁸⁰

Moreover, the many advances in technology during the Second World War created a machine culture that spilled over heavily into the advertising industry. Canadian men and women, both in the armed forces and in civilian life, were using machinery more than ever before and in many different ways. By working in factories, female war workers entered into relationships with machinery that they had previously never experienced. They used public transportation more frequently to get to and from work,¹⁸¹ used new machines in the factories and were trained to work as mechanics in record numbers.

The language of machinery became so ingrained into Canadian culture that advertisements for non-machine products even used the lingo. For example, one

¹⁷⁹ Ad for Wear-Ever Aluminum Cooking Utensils, “Out of the frying pan into the ‘SPITFIRE’” *Chatelaine*, December 1940, 62.

¹⁸⁰ “This Month With Our Advertisers,” *Chatelaine*, August 1941, 48.

¹⁸¹ See Donald F. Davis and Barbara Lorenskowski, “A Platform for Gender Tensions: Women Working and Riding on Canadian Urban Public Transit in the 1940’s,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 79, 3 (September 1998): 431-62.

Nugget Shoe Polish ad featured in *Chatelaine* in 1939 used the slogan “More Mileage to a Nugget Shine.”¹⁸² Similarly, an ad for Parker Vacumatic pens borrows terms from the airplane industry by suggesting that service men would “appreciate an active service pen... one that ‘takes off’ in an instant... fairly flies over the paper.”¹⁸³ The same ad also refers to armoured vehicles; “He’ll like the Pen that is a regular ‘tank’ for ink.”¹⁸⁴ In addition to cars, ships and planes, the ads examined here also refer to weapons. For example, one ad for W.A. Jenkins MFG-Co-Limited uses the headline, “Vegetables are the Ammunition for the Home Front.”¹⁸⁵

Wartime ads in *Maclean’s* and *Chatelaine* have the reader imagining a world in which everything is mechanized. The advertisers suggest that the postwar world will look nothing like it did prior to the Second World War, and give much of the credit to advances in technology. One advertisement for Caterpillar Diesel suggests that such machinery was “Changing the face of the Earth.”¹⁸⁶ The text of the ad reads: “countless projects, carrying inestimable benefits to mankind, have become realities through the ability of modern equipment to move vast yardages of earth and rock with speed and economy.”¹⁸⁷

The mechanized world that some advertisers predicted would be almost laughable by today’s standards. As one ad for The House of Seagram stated, “Meal Planning and Meal Buying will be a cheep instead of a chore when groceries on

¹⁸² Ad for Nugget Shoe Polish, “More Mileage to a Nugget Shine,” *Chatelaine*, March 1939, 2.

¹⁸³ Ad for Parker Vacumatic, “Get them to write often,” *Chatelaine*, November 1940, 50.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ad for W.A. Jenkins MFG-Co-Limited, “Vegetables are the Ammunition for the Home Front,” *Maclean’s*, April 1, 1940, 56.

¹⁸⁶ Ad for Caterpillar Diesel. “Changing the face of the Earth,” *Maclean’s* September 15, 1945, inside cover.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

wheels rush fresh goods to the housewife's door! Spotless, glass-roofed giant trailers, stopping in every block, will open up one side, creating platform and steps... and madam's grocery and meat market is ready for business."¹⁸⁸ Another ad for Wright Aircraft Engines suggested that in the future people would use airplanes as a regular form of transportation. It reads, "think of the astronomical total of money which had to be spent on railway and highway construction to bring out the full use these two carriers on a world scale...the airplane, with all of its inherent utility needs no similar sums."¹⁸⁹

The intensified mechanized culture during the Second World War was most likely confusing and overwhelming to Canadians. It may be that machines were given human attributes in an attempt to make them seem more familiar. This chapter will examine the ways that machinery was personified in advertisements from *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*, and then attributed with sexualized and gendered identities.

Some of the ads specifically connected the human machine and war. One ad for International Harvester Trucks reads, "we know that the real fighting machine in this march to Tokyo is the soldier himself. What a machine! All speeds forward... none reverse. Tough... rugged... smart. A superlative fighter. A superb citizen."¹⁹⁰ In the ads examined in this study the line separating humans and machines is noticeably blurred. Yet, for the researcher concerned with the history of both gender and sexuality, it is the personification of machines that can be even more interesting.

¹⁸⁸ Ad for The House of Seagram, "Here's your automarket, Madam... the gift of men who think of tomorrow," *Maclean's*, August 15, 1944, 33.

¹⁸⁹ Ad for Wright Aircraft Engines, "The HIGH Way Needs No Pavement," Advertisement, *Maclean's*, August 1, 1945, 39.

¹⁹⁰ Ad for International Harvester, "Tokyo, Here They Come!" *Maclean's* September 1, 1945, inside cover.

The bodies of automobiles were often described as being 'dressed.' For instance, one McLaughlin-Buick ad reads "All dressed up... and *Everywhere* to go."¹⁹¹ As well, automobile parts were often compared to body parts. For example, in 1940 Studebaker called their new low priced car "broad-shouldered."¹⁹² Similarly, Plymouth invited consumers to "Put the nose of this new Plymouth to the wind!"¹⁹³ It is difficult to determine if these comparisons are referring to human or animal parts, yet it is possible that these metaphors could have invoked images of human subjects by the reader.

In addition, machines, especially cars, were implied to be living subjects. In 1942 Ford told consumers that their factory was the "Birthplace of a *War Machine*."¹⁹⁴ Also, one 1941 ad reads, "Dodge quality means longer life."¹⁹⁵ Taking the comparison a step further, another Dodge ad implied that their vehicle was a better choice because it came from better genes. The text of the ad tells consumers to "Examine the 'Life Line' of the trucks you buy!"¹⁹⁶

Machines were also attributed with other human qualities, such as the ability to reason or argue. For instance, one 1944 General Motors ad asks "Who said, 'you can't argue with a tank?'"¹⁹⁷ The text of the ad goes on to explain that their new Anti-

¹⁹¹ Ad for McLaughlin-Buick, "All dressed up," *Maclean's*, April 1, 1939, 37.

¹⁹² Ad for Studebaker, "For style and size, it's the big surprise of the low price cars," *Maclean's*, October 15, 1940, 85.

¹⁹³ Ad for Plymouth, "See and Drive the New 1941 Plymouth!" *Maclean's*, November 15, 1940, 25.

¹⁹⁴ Ad for Ford Motor Company, "Birthplace of a *War Machine*," *Maclean's*, July 1, 1942, 21.

¹⁹⁵ Ad for Dodge, "New 1941 Dodge Job-Rated Trucks," *Maclean's*, December 1, 1940, 51.

¹⁹⁶ Ad for Dodge, "Quality in the 'Life Line,'" *Maclean's*, January 15, 1941, 25.

¹⁹⁷ Ad for General Motors, "Who said, 'You can't argue with a tank?'" *MacLean's*, May 1, 1944, 36.

Tank Guns can ‘argue with a tank.’ As well, Whiz Motor Rhythm told consumers that their oil could make “that Ornery Car Behave.”¹⁹⁸

In addition to being given human characteristics, machines in the advertisements studied here were also given gendered and sexualized identities; for the most part, they were symbolized as female and heterosexual. The personification of machines as female is a historical construct that pre-dates the Second World War. Speaking of automobile ads, Jean Kilbourne writes that “until recently the car was always symbolized as a woman.”¹⁹⁹ In a large portion of the ads studied here, machines are referred to using female pronouns. For instance, the text of an ad for Hiram Walker & Sons, Limited reads, “miracles of aerial navigation are commonplace today because of the unfailing accuracy of the aerial compass. Here again, War Alcohol fulfils a vital function, for the airman’s compass is sealed in pure transparent alcohol to keep the needle steady and the ‘ship’ true on her course.”²⁰⁰ Other ads go farther than simply using female pronouns and give the machine a female name. For instance, an ad for Dominion Rubber explains that “[i]n the colorful lingo of the tank corps—‘Maggie’ is a machine gun nest.”²⁰¹

These machines were given female gendered identities because advertisers were also creating a sexualized relationship between the machine and the human user, and the user was most often assumed to be male. This sexualized relationship has been historically most clearly visible in automobile ads. As Virginia Scharff explains in her

¹⁹⁸ Ad for Whiz Motor Rhythm, “Motor Rhythm: Makes that Ornery Car Behave!” *Maclean’s*, January 1, 1945, 32.

¹⁹⁹ Jean Kilbourne, *Why Women and Girls Must Fight the Addictive Power of Advertising*, (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 98.

²⁰⁰ Ad for Hiram Walker & Sons, Ltd., “Rendez-Vous at a Pin Point on the Map,” *Maclean’s*, January 15, 1944, 23.

²⁰¹ Ad for Dominion Rubber, “Tank Talk,” *Maclean’s*, March 15, 1944, 23.

book *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age*, “the connection between men and cars has often been described as a ‘love affair,’ encompassing all the erotic and emotional complexity the metaphor conveys.”²⁰² Consequently, certain ‘kinds’ of cars have been compared to certain ‘kinds’ of women. In his article, “Three Ages of the Automobile: the Cultural Logics of the Car” David Gartman writes that “while Ford’s Model T was welcomed in the 1910’s as an instrument of democracy, bringing automobility to the masses, by the 1920’s it was commonly ridiculed as ugly and poorly built. One contemporary joke asked why a Model T was like a mistress. The answer: because you hate to be seen on the streets with one.”²⁰³

An earlier explicit example comparing the sexual relationships men were presumed to have with women to the relationships they had with automobiles, was published in *Vanity Fair* in May of 1920. The title reads, “Some New 1920 Motor Models: A Few Suggestions for the Motorist Who is Contemplating Matrimony”²⁰⁴ (see figure 4). While the descriptions seem to describe various cars such as the town car and the foreign car, the pictures are of women. The Limousine is personified by a large smiling woman with the description, “roomy and comfortable... built on the principle of rather full curves.” The Ford model pictures a plain, shy-looking young woman with the caption “simple, dependable and designed for all round use.” In addition, the Country Runabout Model pictures a care-free looking woman with the description, “this type is easy to start and will take anything on high.”²⁰⁵

²⁰² Scharff, 166.

²⁰³ Gartman, 173.

²⁰⁴ Behling, “The Woman at the Wheel: Marketing Ideal Womanhood, 1915-1934,” 17.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

While this article may appear comedic, and rather clever, upon first glance, we must examine the message it conveyed to its readers. In essence, it tells the male consumer that he should choose a wife like he chooses a car. Thus, he is given purchasing power over a variety of women who remain passive objects waiting to be acquired. Articles such as this imply that buying and driving an automobile are masculine activities since the automobile bodies are female. A woman attempting to purchase an automobile based on the advice of such an article would metaphorically be purchasing another woman.

In the essay "The New Citroen" from *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes also comments on the sexualized relationship between automobile and driver, although without gendered identities. He writes,

In the exhibition halls, the car on show is explored with an intense, amorous studiousness: it is the great tactile phase of discovery.... The bodywork, the lines of union are touched, the upholstery palpated, the seats tried, the doors caressed, the cushions fondled; before the wheel, one pretends to drive with one's whole body.²⁰⁶

Commenting on Barthes, Mimi Sheller in her article "Automotive Emotions: Feeling the Car," shows how the automobile has often been understood as a prosthetic extension of the body.²⁰⁷ Similarly, in her book *Those Wonderful Women in their Flying Machines: The Unknown Heroines of World War II*, Sally Van Wagenen Keil shows how Sigmund Freud used a similar metaphor relating to airplanes in volume XV of his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Freud writes,

The remarkable characteristic of the male organ, which enables it to rise up in defiance of the laws of gravity, one of the phenomena of

²⁰⁶ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 90.

²⁰⁷ Mimi Sheller, "Automotive Emotions: Feeling the Car," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, 4/5 (2004): 225.

erection, leads to it's being represented symbolically by *balloons, flying machines* and most recently by *zeppelin air ships*. But dreams can symbolize erection in yet another, far more expressive manner. They can treat the sexual organ as the essence of the dreamer's whole person and make himself *fly*.²⁰⁸

With regard to women having dreams of flying, Freud explains the symbolism by writing,

Remember that our dreams aim at being the fulfillments of wishes and that the wish to be a man is found so frequently, consciously or unconsciously, in women. Nor will anyone with acknowledge of anatomy be bewildered by the fact that it is possible for women to realize this wish through the same sensations as men.²⁰⁹

Thus, in this understanding, if the machine in question represents a phallic symbol, then a female user would metaphorically become masculinized. This thesis takes a slightly different approach, arguing that the machines were not seen as an extension of the human body, but as a completely separate gendered object in a relationship with the user. Thus, in a heteronormative culture, where males were seen as the primary users of machines, the machines were most often gendered as female.

However, as was explained in chapter one, the sources studied here indicate that the requirements of a heteronormative culture dictated the gendered identity of the machines in question. Unlike the general understanding of gender and desire which assumes that biological sex causes socially constructed gender, which in turn causes heterosexual desire in an individual, this thesis argues that, in this case, the myth of compulsory heterosexuality actually 'caused' the gendered identities of the machines in question based on who the primary user was. Thus, if the user of a machine is

²⁰⁸ Sally Van Wagenen Keil, *Those Wonderful Women in Their Flying Machines: The Unknown Heroines of World War II* (New York: Rawson, Wade Publishers, Inc., 1979), 53.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

female, either the user or the machine must become masculinized; or, the relationship needs to be desexualized completely. In the ads examined here, the relationship between female user and machine was desexualized.

In the sources studied here there are numerous examples of male users being, or at least desiring to be, in a metaphorical relationship with female gendered machines. One explicit example can be seen in a 1944 ad for Caterpillar Diesel titled “Pin-Up Girl of Guadalcanal,” in which the ‘pin-up girl’ is the tractor. The text of the ad reads,

They call her ‘Old Faithful’ as true a sweetheart as ever endeared herself to fighting men. No slim and shapely beauty, she holds the treasured spot in the hearts of thousands of U.S. Marines and Navy Seabees.

She was on duty at Wake Island when the war in the Pacific began. She’s seen wartime service on Midway and in the repairs to Pearl Harbor. Then off to Guadalcanal she went, to till and labor in the steaming heat of the jungles. And beneath the campaign stars which she so proudly wears is emblazoned the word ‘Tokyo,’ so there’s no telling how far her adventures may carry her.

Silly, you say, to speak that way of a ‘Caterpillar’ Diesel Tractor? Just ask any service man who has fought on the battlefields around the world! You’ll discover a genuine, deep-rooted affection for these rugged machines... an affection inspired by the brawny power and tireless dependability fighting men admire.²¹⁰

Another ad for International Trucks appearing in *Maclean’s* in 1939 reads, “[m]an and truck go all the way together, cross-town or cross-country—a close and intimate partnership that means a great deal for Canada!”²¹¹

The automobile company, Nash, used the metaphorically romantic relationship between man and car in many of their ads. For instance, one from 1939 reads,

²¹⁰ Ad for Caterpillar Diesel, “Pin-Up Girl of Guadalcanal,” *Maclean’s*, July 1, 1944, 41.

²¹¹ Ad for International Trucks, “The Man and the Truck... working partners of the highway,” *Maclean’s*, February 1, 1939, back cover.

“There’s only one in every man’s life... only one certain girl who ever really mattered [...] So we wonder what is going to happen to you when you drive a new Nash.”²¹²

Another ad for Nash from 1940 suggests that the automobile is a seductress with the title, “... and Away Goes Your Heart!”²¹³ The picture accompanying this ad shows a man looking at a car with a woman positioned in front of the car. At first glance it is unclear whether he is looking at the woman or the automobile, and the viewer is unsure to which one the man has lost his heart. However, the text of the ad continues with the line “OUT OF THE BLUE will come a warning—a flirtatious *toot toot*. Then up sails a new Nash—and away goes your heart!”²¹⁴

Other ads examined in this study refer to machines using terms such as ‘honey’ or ‘sweetheart.’ For instance, one 1941 ad for Mercury reads, “[y]ou see a lot of Mercurys around the airports. Flying folks say, ‘It’s a sweetheart of a car.’”²¹⁵ As well, an ad for McLaughlin-Buick tells the potential buyer that “[y]ou’ll feel it—you’ll marvel, too—when you feel this incredibly active, staunch, exciting mechanism come alive under your hands—this car that brings to flower the best that McLaughlin-Buick knows.”²¹⁶ The last line of this ad reads, “[i]t’s a honey for the money!”²¹⁷

By setting up a romantic relationship between male user and female machine, these ads are naturalizing, to borrow the term from Roland Barthes, the myth of compulsory heterosexuality. Thus, if we take the Nash ad discussed above, the

²¹² Ad for Nash, “When the Real Thing Comes Along,” *Maclean’s*, April 1, 1939, 27.

²¹³ Ad for Nash, “... and Away Goes Your Heart!” *Maclean’s*, May 1, 1940, back cover.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ad for Mercury, “Here’s Where Mercury Differs from the Rest!” *Maclean’s*, April 15, 1941, 26.

²¹⁶ Ad for McLaughlin-Buick. “What’s the Good Word for ’40? ‘Best bet’s Buick!” *Chatelaine*, November, 1939, 22-23.

²¹⁷ Ad for McLaughlin-Buick, “What’s the Good Word for ’40? ‘Best bet’s Buick!” *Chatelaine*, November, 1939, 22-23.

signifier is the man looking adoringly at the automobile and the signified is the concept of love and romance, creating the sign, or myth, of compulsory heterosexuality. In "Myth Today" Barthes explains that although we often imagine myths to be eternal, it would be impossible for them to be so. Myths, thus, can be ancient, but are created historically by human action and "cannot possibly evolve from the 'nature' of things."²¹⁸ In his book, *The Regulation of Desire*, Gary Kinsman argues that "heterosexuality was naturalized through advertising, the mass media and the entertainment industry."²¹⁹ However, what may be more plausible is that the myth of compulsory heterosexuality was given the illusion of naturalization through advertising, the mass media and the entertainment industry. As Karen Dubinsky argues, "for something that is allegedly natural, heterosexuality has changed dramatically over the years and requires enormous legal, social, and cultural support."²²⁰

In order to make the argument that the ads involving machinery in this study reinforce the myth of compulsory heterosexuality, it is also necessary to examine what happens when women are presented as primary users. Since using machinery had been historically presented as a somewhat erotic experience, it makes sense that there would be some fear over women becoming primary users, especially when the machines were commonly gendered as female. In his article, "Women Drivers: How a stereotype kept distaff drivers in their place," Michael Berger explains that as women became regular drivers of automobiles there was a "concern that women could become

²¹⁸ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 110.

²¹⁹ Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities*, 2nd edition (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1996), 69.

²²⁰ Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment*, 14.

sexually excited by operating a machine.”²²¹ However, Berger does not explore the possibility that perhaps it was the common habit of gendering the automobile as female that made cultural elites fearful of women drivers.

In the ads examined here, when women were presented as the primary users of machinery, the relationship between human and machine was de-sexualized. For instance, one ad for Ford appearing in *Chatelaine* in 1939 begins with the line “you’re going to be a very proud lady... whether this is your first Ford or your tenth!”²²² After establishing women as the intended user, the text goes on to read “Scientific soundproofing has made the Ford such a restful companion! As you travel together... in traffic lines or country lanes... there’s the safety of an all-steel body and new hydraulic brakes.”²²³ Another ad for Modess sanitary napkins portrays a woman standing next to a plane with the title, “Yes sir!—that’s my baby!” (see figure 5).²²⁴ While the title might seem unclear as to whether ‘baby’ implies a romantic relationship between the woman and the plane or a parental relationship, the text of the ad reads, “Time was when the only baby in my life was my kid brother Bill. But times have changed and Bill in his pilot’s uniform is no baby now. And I couldn’t let my kid brother get ahead of me, could I? That’s why I’m working in an aircraft factory. That’s why doing my job well is the most important thing in my life these days.”²²⁵

Thus, the woman in the ad views the plane more as a child in her care than as a romantic partner. Thus, in an ad for a feminine hygiene product, the femininity of the

²²¹ Berger, 60.

²²² Ad for Ford, “We do hope your new Ford arrives by daylight!” *Chatelaine*, February 1939, 75.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ad for Modess, “Yes sir!—that’s my baby!” *Chatelaine*, May 1943, 68.

²²⁵ Ibid.

female war worker is reinforced while her relation to the airplane becomes maternal rather than sexual. In the body of evidence examined here, there is a difference in the language used in ads portraying females with machines in comparison to the language used in ads portraying males with machines. Terms such as 'sweetheart' and 'honey' imply much more of a romantic or sexual relationship than does 'companion.'

The fear that women who used machinery would lose their feminine characteristics was linked with the fear of lesbianism. In fact, the 'unnaturalness' of women using machinery was so widely believed, that during the Second World War an American doctor, Dr. Monsrud, pioneered a medical study "to determine if women could take the strenuous and constant concentration of such demanding professional activity as daily flying."²²⁶ Sally Van Wagenen Keil explains that,

Comparing trainees' flying grades to their menstrual cycles, Dr. Monsrud compiled a unique document called 'Medical Considerations of the Women's Air force Service Pilots,' which he submitted to the Air Surgeon General in 1945. As he related in this report, Dr. Monsrud found no correlation between menses and elimination from training, nor was there any with high or low flying grades. No demonstrable menstrual factors were involved in any of Avenger Field's flying accidents.²²⁷

There were other concerns that their roles in wartime would make women as tough as men, in a negative way. In their article, "A Platform for Gender Tensions: Women Working and Riding on Canadian Urban Public Transit in the 1940's," Donald F. Davis and Barbara Lorenskowski show how, as women used public transit more regularly during the Second World War, their femininity was altered. They write,

²²⁶ Van Wagenen Keil, 154.

²²⁷ Ibid.

the overcrowding of buses and trams was so intense that even the 'language of the ladies' had become 'awful.' As the *Toronto Telegram* reported in 1946, one lady 'told another lady to shut her mouth,' during an altercation begun by the one climbing up the other's back 'in striving to enter the street car.' The *Telegram* fretted that the 'gnawing neurosis' induced in the women passengers by excessive crowding would soon require streetcars to carry the notice: 'Ladies will kindly refrain from using abusive language.'²²⁸

Thus, they conclude that the overcrowding had "dire implications for traditional gender roles."²²⁹

Consequently, many of the ads examined in this study illustrate the fear expressed in the media over the masculinization of women. One of the most explicit examples can be seen in an ad for Tangee Lipsticks titled "War, Women and Lipstick," (see figure 6). The text of the ad reads,

It's a reflection of the free democratic way of life that you have succeeded in keeping your femininity—even though you are doing man's work!

If a symbol were needed of this fine, independent spirit—of this courage and strength—I would choose a lipstick. It is one of those mysterious little essentials that have an importance far beyond their size or cost.

A woman's lipstick is an instrument of personal morale that helps her to conceal heartbreak or sorrow; gives her self-confidence when it's badly needed; heightens her loveliness when she wants to look her loveliest.

No lipstick—ours or anyone else's—will win the war. But it symbolizes one of the reasons why we are fighting... the precious right of women to be feminine and lovely—under any circumstances.²³⁰

In this ad the fear over women becoming more masculine as they interact with wartime machinery is so apparent that they go as far as to claim that being feminine was a 'right' of women that was somehow being threatened by the non-democratic

²²⁸ Davis and Lorenzkowski, 431.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ad for Tangee Lipsticks, "War, Women and Lipstick," *Chatelaine*, August, 1943, 4.

world. Of course, it is not even suggested that perhaps women might have been enjoying their new found freedom to dress, or behave, in more stereotypically masculine ways.

Another ad from Tangee appearing in *Chatelaine* in 1944 begins with the headline “WE ARE STILL THE WEAKER SEX.”²³¹ The text of the ad maintains the importance of women remaining feminine by saying “MANY OF US may be serving shoulder to shoulder with America’s fighting men—but we’re still the weaker sex... It’s still up to us to appear as alluring and lovely as possible.”²³²

Analyzing these advertisements is also an interesting way to uncover more information about gender ideologies of the time. Since most of the machines examined here were gendered as female, the qualities they were described to have can also tell us what magazine advertisers, publishers and editors thought were ideal characteristics for women to possess. In her article on American automobile advertising from 1915 to 1934, Laura Behling concludes that in the ads she has studied “the car is everything the woman is—dutiful, easy to handle, unselfish, pleasantly companionable [and] graceful.”²³³

The ads studied in this thesis are equally illuminating. For instance, one ad for Mercury praises the car for “combining dignity with modernity,”²³⁴ while also promising the driver that it “gives you 95 horsepower and a feeling of winged

²³¹ Ad for Tangee, “WE ARE STILL THE WEAKER SEX,” *Chatelaine*, August, 1944, 55.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ Laura L. Behling, “The Woman at the Wheel: Marketing Ideal Womanhood, 1915-1934,” *Journal of American Culture* 20, 3 (1997): 14.

²³⁴ Ad for Mercury, *Maclean’s*, February 15, 1939, Inside cover.

obedience to your demands.”²³⁵ In this advertisement the car is not given a specific gender identity, but one is left to wonder if, like the majority of ads that gender the automobile, this car is presumed to have a female identity. And, if so, if that implies that both a woman and a car should strive to be obedient.

As well, the importance of appearances for both machines and women are very clear in the advertisements studied here. For instance, one ad for Mercury reads, “we think Mercury is as pretty as a picture, inside and out.”²³⁶ Yet, one contradictory aspect of these advertisements is that it is presumed that only female consumers would care about the style and appearance of the machines, especially in relation to automobiles. Virginia Scharff points out that this presumption goes back to the onset of female drivers in North America. She uses the comments of writer Margaret Burlingame who said in 1913 that “[t]o a man, it would make little difference if his car were finished in black, blue, or red, just so the required horsepower was there.’ Women on the other hand, supposedly demanded ‘refinements’: ‘those things about an automobile which are not absolute necessities, except in the sense that a refined taste demands them.’”²³⁷

Alternatively, for men, too much interest in style could signal a lack of masculinity. David Gartman explains that the desire for an esthetically pleasing automobile was linked to both gender and class relations in North America and Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. He writes that “the diffusion of cars with style and beauty beyond the bourgeoisie threatened, however, to breach rigid concepts of

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ad for Mercury 8, “Get Out In Front With This One!” *Maclean's*, March 1, 1941, 53.

²³⁷ Scharff, 119.

separate gender spheres. While it may have been culturally acceptable for the 'effeminate' men of the upper class to be interested in aesthetics and beauty, these traits threatened the more masculine self images of middle-and especially working-class men."²³⁸

The presumption that only women were interested in the style of the automobile can be seen a 1940 ad for Pontiac (see figure 7). In the advertisement there are three men and one woman; the men are impressed with the L-head engine, knee-action and the low price, whereas the woman is impressed with the torpedo styling.²³⁹ Another ad for Ford includes the title, "My husband knows all about engines and brakes but I'm the expert on Style!"²⁴⁰ (see figure 8). The text of the ad continues to say, "TORQUE-TUBE drives and stabilizer bars are Greek to me. But I do know a beautiful, stylish, modern car when I see it!"²⁴¹

The interesting aspect of these ads is that female consumers become the active spectator, while the automobile remains the passive object. In these ads the automobile is not specifically given a gendered identity; however, the machine culture that existed during this period had already established the presumption that automobiles were, for the most part, gendered as female. Having women as the active viewer is unusual because, as Liesbet van Zoonen explains, "in western society to be looked at is the fate of women, while the act of looking is reserved to men."²⁴² Or, as John Berger writes in his study *Ways of Seeing*, "[m]en act and women appear. Men

²³⁸ Gartman, 175.

²³⁹ Ad for Pontiac, "5 New Series," *Chatelaine*, December, 1940, 43.

²⁴⁰ Ad for Ford, "My husband knows all about engines and brakes but I'm the expert on Style!" *Chatelaine*, April 1940, 61.

²⁴¹ Ad for Ford, "My husband knows all about engines and brakes but I'm the expert on Style!" *Chatelaine*, April 1940, 61.

²⁴² Liesbet van Zoonen, *Feminist Media Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 87.

look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at.”²⁴³ Therefore, the observer’s interest had to be a feminine one—focused on matters of style.

Thus, one is left to wonder, if we can imagine that the machines might have a gendered identity and that that identity is female, what it means when women are the spectators. Does this process make them more masculine? For, as John Berger argues, “the surveyor of woman in herself is male.”²⁴⁴ The possibilities for discussing how these relationships between the spectator and the looked-at can relate to the gendered and sexualized relationship between humans and machines are plentiful, and worthy of further study beyond the scope of this thesis.

This chapter has examined how the machine culture of the Second World War, as it was expressed in Canada in advertisements from *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*, worked to reinforce the myth of compulsory heterosexuality. When it was assumed that males would be the primary users of the machinery in question, the machines were gendered and sexualized as female to create a heterosexual relationship between user and machine. However, when women were presented as the machine-users, the relationship between user and machine was de-sexualized.

As I have previously argued, there must have been some impact on audiences, consciously or subconsciously. Operating machinery was assumed to be a masculine, active task; thus, it was feared that females might find this world sexually exciting and become more masculine. The fear was not explicitly that women would forsake men altogether, turning to lesbian relationships, but more simply that the common

²⁴³ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, UK, 1990), 47.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

understanding of a heterosexual relationship between one masculine partner and one feminine partner would be put in jeopardy if the woman lost her femininity.

**Chapter 4: “A Ship’s a Lady Too”:
an examination of fiction and non-fiction articles**

Good old engine—

Two friends met in the street.

One of them remarked on the dirty state of the other’s hands.

“Why,” he exclaimed, “your hands are covered with soot.”

“That’s because I was down at the station seeing my wife away,” replied his friend.

“But how does that affect your hands?”

“Well I patted the engine.” – *Vancouver News Herald* (1940).

As this thesis has explored in the previous chapters, the relationship between machines and their human users was sexualized in Canadian magazines during the Second World War. The machines were most often personified as female, which was not seen as problematic as long as males were the primary users. However, during the Second World War, women also became regular users of machinery, forcing the relationship between machine and user to be renegotiated. Either the relationship between machine and user had to be desexualized, or the gendered performance of one of the participants would need to be altered so that the appearance of compulsory heterosexuality could be maintained.

This chapter will examine how this process was carried out in both fiction and non-fiction articles in *Maclean’s* and *Chatelaine* magazines. Most of the fiction stories sexualized the relationship between male characters and female personified machines, but the same did not usually hold true for female characters. In fact, there are no examples of a woman character successfully using a machine that takes on a masculine or feminine gendered performance in *Maclean’s* and *Chatelaine* fiction during the Second World War. In a limited number of non-fiction articles studied in

this thesis female users were presented in romantic relationships with male-personified machines, or male and sometimes female, humans were described using mechanized language. Rarely were female users allowed to directly manipulate female personified machinery.

This thesis suggests that this pattern occurred because compulsory heterosexuality was a stronger force than gender or sexual fluidity in Second World War media culture. As this thesis has previously explored, this pattern suggests that, in the sources studied here, the common understanding of the relationships between sex, gender and desire has been altered. Rather than biological sex 'causing' a socially constructed gendered identity, which in turn would 'cause' sexual desire (presumably for the opposite gender), these sources indicate that the need to maintain the appearance of compulsory heterosexuality was so immutable it was able to dictate the gendered identities of the humans and machines assumed to be in romantic relationships. It is interesting to note that even though both *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* magazine were working to recruit women into war work, there are relatively few examples of women being presented as primary users of large types of machinery (automobiles, planes, boats, etc.) in fiction and non-fiction articles. Since these types of machines had historically been presented as female, magazine executives may have, at least subconsciously, been concerned about presenting women as primary users and implying lesbian relationships between female personified machines and female users. Since, in real life, there were concerns over female war workers becoming masculinized, the fears over implicating lesbian relationships between machines and users could have seemed very serious. Consequently, rather than dealing with this

complicated issue magazine executives may have simply wanted to avoid making such implications whenever possible. However, in the few examples described here where women were presented as primary users, compulsory heterosexuality was maintained and the gendered identity one of the participants was altered or the relationship was desexualized.

The line between humans and machines was blurred in the fiction and non-fiction stories examined here in the same manner that it was in the advertisements studied in the previous chapter. Most examples portraying a romantic relationship between machine and user are from the fiction stories. There are, nevertheless, a few notable non-fiction examples such as "Alice in Autoland," "Plane Vs. Sub," "What Price Canada's Ships?" and others. As well, a number of non-fiction articles that address the gender ideologies of Canadian women in general will be discussed.

The initial step in the process of gendering machines was to refer to parts of the machines as 'body' parts. As Georgine Clarsen explains, cars are personified as human bodies, "the engine as the heart of a vehicle, the carburetor as its lungs."²⁴⁵ Writing in 1940, journalist Warren Hastings described the new automobiles by writing, "one of the most conspicuous general advances is that almost without exception, bodies are more commodious. The majority are belled out at the waistline to provide more shoulder room."²⁴⁶ Planes were built using similar metaphors. Speaking of female war workers in 1942 Thelma Lecocq describes how the workers were "putting in ribs and stringers and applying the skin, a delicate operation that

²⁴⁵ Clarsen, p. 1.

²⁴⁶ Warren Hastings, "Motor Industry Carries On," *Maclean's*, October 15, 1940, 66.

requires the most careful use of hammer and chisel.”²⁴⁷ Consequently, like people, machines were assumed to have mortality. For instance, in a fiction story written by Frederick Edwards, a smashed car “shivered, just like a human being until at last it had stopped too.”²⁴⁸

In addition to being personified as human beings, the machines examined here in Canadian magazines were also often given a gendered identity. In the majority of both fiction and non-fiction stories these machines were gendered as female, but there are a few examples of male-personified machinery that will be explored as well.

Warrant Officer W.F. Beals, DFC in his article “Plane vs. Sub,” uses female pronouns to refer to the machines in question. After describing a plane being shot he writes, “[t]he skipper was standing up trying to get more speed out of her and from the look on his face you could tell that he was as excited as a kid.”²⁴⁹

Similarly, in the article “What Price Canada’s Ships?” Leonard L. Knott writes, “[t]he ship that took the water today, whether she rode down the ways in an eastern Canadian port, on the Pacific coast, or on the Great Lakes may be destined to become a sleek well-armed frigate, one of the last of the Canadian-built corvettes, or a speedy patrol boat, fit for the days and nights of dashing about in coastal waters.”²⁵⁰

As was discussed in relation to advertisements in the previous chapter, the escalated machine culture created by the Second World War was visible in the fiction and non-fiction stories examined here. Journalist Bruce MacKinnon even argued that it was a nation’s use of machinery that would affect its outcome. He wrote, “when all

²⁴⁷ Thelma Lecocq, “Woman Power,” *Maclean’s*, June 15, 1942, 10.

²⁴⁸ Frederick Edwards, “Accident,” *Chatelaine*, March 1939, 9.

²⁴⁹ Warrant Officer W.F. Beals, DFC. “Plane vs. Sub,” *Maclean’s*, March 15, 1944, 13.

²⁵⁰ Leonard L. Knott, “What Price Canada’s Ships?” *Maclean’s*, April 1, 1944, 17.

the chips are counted, the fact that Germany was (by comparison) a pedestrian nation before the war will undoubtedly be rated one of the prime factors for its defeat. For Germany, launching itself desperately into a mechanized war, was not (again by comparison) a mechanized nation."²⁵¹ With regard to automobiles, in 1941, "Canada [had] more automobiles in proportion to population than any other country except the United States and New Zealand."²⁵² By 1942, Canada was building army automotive units at a rate of one every three minutes.²⁵³ Also in 1942, 30, 000 workers were employed making military vehicles, 40, 000 were making ships and 42, 000 were involved in the aircraft industry.²⁵⁴ Airplanes were becoming so common that people actually believed that "birds [were] becoming plane conscious."²⁵⁵ These numbers suggest that by the onset of war Canada was already becoming a nation increasingly infused by machine culture, a trend that was considerably exacerbated by the Second World War.

Living in an environment increasingly infused with machine culture must have been somewhat unnerving. By gendering these machines, Canadian magazine writers and publishers may have been making the transition easier for their readers to accept. Sometimes women, like men, were even referred to as machines. Writing of the Rockettes, Thelma Lecocq wrote, "[g]lamour girls of Radio City Music Hall function like cog-wheels... essential parts in the machinery of the world's biggest

²⁵¹ Bruce MacKinnon, "Canada's Mighty Achievement," in Herbert J. Hodgins et al (eds.) *Women at War* (Toronto: The Maclean Publishing Company Ltd., 1943); 6. Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

²⁵² Lillian Millar, "That All Canadian Motor Trip," *Chatelaine*, June 1941, 12.

²⁵³ "Highlights of Canada's Industrial War Effort," *Maclean's*, May 15, 1942, 10.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ L.S.B. Shapiro, "Flight by Jet," *Maclean's*, March 1, 1944, 43.

entertainment factory.”²⁵⁶ But most of the samples examined here demonstrate the ways in which machines were gendered as female when males operated them, but not when females did.

If the gendered-identity of the machines were to remain female, then the compulsory nature of heterosexuality (requiring both a masculine and feminine counterpart) caused, at least subconscious, fears that women who used machines would become masculine. These fears were especially compounded as women war workers were dressing more like men.

To our modern understanding, women wearing pants or cutting their hair short is seen as practical and their choice to do so is not generally questioned. Yet, during the Second World War, fears over the protection of femininity were rampant. One female Ottawa native who served in the armed forces during the war writes that “I didn’t have too many problems—except for my long hair. I kept it up in a page-boy, but I was still constantly being told: ‘Stanger, get your hair up off your collar!’ Finally, I cut it off. My father didn’t talk to me for two weeks.”²⁵⁷

Working with heavy equipment in war factories required women to change their dress to accommodate the work. However, fashion history in Canada tells us that society, as seen through the media, has traditionally been fearful of allowing female dress codes to be masculinized.²⁵⁸ Yet, by 1942, Susan Turnbull Caton shows us that

²⁵⁶ Thelma Lecocq, “Precision Work,” *Maclean’s*, September 15, 1944, 8.

²⁵⁷ Lisa Banister, *Equal to the Challenge: An Anthology of Women’s Experiences During World War II*, (Ottawa: Lisa Banister, 2001), 156.

²⁵⁸ As Barbara M. Freeman writes of the women’s fashion features in the Toronto daily press at the end of the nineteenth century, “although they encouraged their readers to experiment with healthy reform dress, and to clothe themselves less restrictively than most fashion plates allowed, they also tended to draw the line at any perceived masculinity in women’s dress, especially anything resembling trousers.” Barbara M. Freeman, “Laced In and Let Down: Women’s Fashion Features in the Toronto Daily Press,

Chatelaine was on-board with women wearing pants. As one headline read, “We’re changing our mind about slacks.”²⁵⁹ The fear was, however, that women would not want to return to skirts at the war’s end. As *Chatelaine* writer Carolyn Damon wrote in the same year, “Elizabeth Hawes, the well known American designer, once said that the last war got women into trousers, and if there was ever was another one, you’d never get them out.”²⁶⁰ While wearing pants was seen as necessary for women doing war work, women in other spaces were not always encouraged to wear them. Carolyn Damon also wrote “slacks on the campus may be comfortable, but they’re not good form.”²⁶¹

Needing women to do war work, the government had to make it acceptable for women to wear pants in the city streets so that they could travel to and from work, but they also had to make it clear that women did not really belong in pants. The Department of Munitions and Supply for Canada put out a notice with the title, “Please don’t stare at my pants.”²⁶² The text assures the Canadian public that the appearance of women in pants “on the streets, on the street cars and in the shops” would be necessary during the war, and implied only during the war, so that the women could stand “behind their men in the hour of their country’s peril,” (see figure 9).

1890-1900,” in *Fashion: A Canadian Perspective*, edited by Alexandra Palmer (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); 292.

²⁵⁹ Caton, 260.

²⁶⁰ Carolyn Damon, “Essentials for Workers,” *Chatelaine*, September 1942, 22.

²⁶¹ Carolyn Damon, “College Women of the Year,” *Chatelaine*, August 1942, 14.

²⁶² Ad for The Department of Munitions and Supply for Canada, “Please don’t stare at my pants,” *Maclean’s*, December 1, 1941, 65.

In reaction to women wearing pants in unprecedented numbers, Thelma Lecocq wrote,

‘Women in pants!’ mutters the troubled male. ‘Where’s all this going to lead?’ At the moment we have about 80,000 war-working women in Canada. If the war continues much longer we’ll have at least twice that number. After two or three years of pants and pay envelopes, what will they demand of society? Perhaps—and we can only hope—they’ll be tired of it all and yearn in the old womanly way for a home and a baby and a big brave man. But what if they refuse to be stripped of the pants and deprived of the pay envelopes? What if they start looking round for some nice little chap who can cook and who’ll meet them lovingly at the door with their slippers in his hand? What if industry has to reorganize to give these women sabbatical years for having babies?²⁶³

Moreover, perhaps part of the fear during this period was that if women became more masculine, then to compensate men would have to become more feminine in order to facilitate the presumably compulsory nature of heterosexuality that required one masculine and one feminine partner. A cartoon by Vic Herman drawn for *Maclean’s* in 1945 uses humour to address this concern. The cartoon pictures a female war worker in overalls who has walked across the freshly cleaned kitchen floor with her dirty shoes, leaving a trail of footprints as she gets a turkey leg out of the fridge. In the background is her unimpressed husband wearing an apron and holding a mop (see figure 10)²⁶⁴.

In reaction to these fears about the masculinization of women, writers in Canadian magazines often took the time to point out and praise women who managed to work with machinery while maintaining their femininity. Pamela Wakewich, in her article, “The Queen of the Hurricanes”: Elsie Gregory MacGill, Aeronautical Engineer and Women’s Advocate,” explains that,

²⁶³ Thelma Lecocq, “Woman Power,” *Chatelaine*, June 15, 1942, 10.

²⁶⁴ Vic Herman (cartoonist), *Maclean’s*, September 1, 1945, 32.

MacGill's expertise and accomplishments were praised in the local, national, and international press during the war. However, as was done with respect to other women working in war industries, articles about her made a great deal of effort to reinforce prescribed notions of femininity—which emphasized women's decorativeness and maternal proclivity—and assure readers that despite her work in a 'man's field' she was 'very much a woman.'²⁶⁵

In his article "The Kitten and the Fighter," Jack Mosher describes MacGill by writing, "in marked contrast to the magnitude of her task, Elsie is quite a little lady. She weighs only 108 pounds, has brownish hair, blue eyes, and sees no reason why she shouldn't admit being thirty-five."²⁶⁶ It is clear from these examples that remaining feminine while working with heavy machinery was seen as something to be applauded.

Although not analyzed for this thesis, it is worthy of note that a number of cartoons were published in Canadian magazines that also made it seem like it was unnatural for women to be manipulating machinery at all. This perceived unnaturalness of women, driving cars for example, was not new to the Second World War.²⁶⁷ In many of the wartime cartoons women were seen as simply too irrational to be able to understand the nature of machinery, especially automobiles. One cartoon published in *Maclean's* magazine pictures a female driver speaking with car salesman in front of a wrecked car. The text accompanying the picture reads, "But it's

²⁶⁵ Pamela Wakewich, "'The Queen of the Hurricanes': Elsie Gregory MacGill, Aeronautical Engineer and Women's Advocate," in *Framing Our Past: Canadian Women's History in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Sharon Anne Cook, Lorna R. McLean, and Kate O'Rourke, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2001), 397.

²⁶⁶ Jack Mosher, "The Kitten and the Fighter," *Chatelaine*, August 1942, 40.

²⁶⁷ Writing in 1915, Herbert Towle Ladd exclaimed, "[w]hat changes a dozen years have wrought in motoring!"... we see women driving motor-cars for all the world as if they belonged at the wheel!" The message here is clear; according to Ladd, women did not belong at the wheel. See Laura Behling, "Fisher's Bodies: Automobile Advertisements and the Framing of Modern American Female Identity," *The Centennial Review* (1997): 515.

practically a new car—I only drove it once!”²⁶⁸ (see figure 11). One is consequently left to wonder if perhaps this uneasiness associated with women using machinery is linked to both their perceived ineptness and, at least partly, as a result of the common way that machines were gendered as female and, potentially at least, seen to be in a romantic relationship with their users.

Both possibilities are side-stepped by *Chatelaine* editor Mary-Etta MacPherson²⁶⁹ in her September 1942 “As An Editor Sees It” editorial. She describes the goings-on of one war factory by writing,

Above the hum and jangle of machinery, a man’s voice shouts: ‘Pick ‘er up and set ‘er down over there.’ A fifteen-ton crane moves the length of the factory, a giant hook descends from above, lifts a weighty anti-aircraft gun, sets it down at the other end of the building. You look up, trying to locate the controlling hand operation. Out of the crane cab, high above, pops a smiling face beneath a blonde ‘perm’. It’s a girl, sure enough—and there are at least five of them now employed as expert crane operators in Ontario plants.²⁷⁰

In this editorial the machine is referred to using female pronouns, “er” being short for her, and the main user of the machine is female. However, the female operator is not really in charge of the operation, but is being guided by the male supervisor. In effect, he is controlling both the human-female and the machine-female. As was discussed in chapter two, each text can have multiple meanings depending on audience interpretation. Thus, an alternative interpretation of this text may be that ‘sexually,’ these three (female machine, female worker and male supervisor) are in a ménage-a-trios, with the male directing the implied ‘lesbian’ activity. Of course, this

²⁶⁸ Henry Boltinoff (cartoonist), *Maclean's*, June 1, 1941, 53.

²⁶⁹ Mary-Etta MacPherson replace Byrne Hope Sanders as editor of *Chatelaine* from March 1942 until December 1946. See Inez Houlihan, “The Image of Women in *Chatelaine* Editorials, March 1928 to September 1977,” (MA Thesis, University of Toronto, 1984), 9.

²⁷⁰ Mary-Etta MacPherson, “As An Editor Sees It,” *Chatelaine*, September 1942, 64.

interpretation would exist only a very sub-conscious level as that idea would not have been approved of by the editor of *Chatelaine*. As was discussed in chapter two, using Roland Barthes' essay "The Death of the Author," interpretations of texts do not necessarily need to be compatible with the intention of the author to be significant.

The above examples portray the process of myth-making quite well. Through both visual images and textual examples the myth that men are predisposed to be better at using machinery is delivered to the audience. For instance, figure 11, shows the cartoon drawn by Henry Boltinoff for *Maclean's*. In this cartoon, the wrecked car acts as the signifier, while the concept of women as bad drivers acts as the signified. Consequently, the sign presented to the audience for their internalization is the combination of the signified and the signifier, which is the myth that women are 'unnatural' drivers. Of course, as we explored in chapter two, myths are historical constructs and therefore cannot be innate. However, the goal of myths is to appear naturalized, as it does in this case. What is left to be explored, then, is the author's reason for presenting this myth. In his 1968 essay "The Death of the Author" Roland Barthes argues that "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture."²⁷¹ By this statement, he means that the author's ideas, and his/her desire to produce them, exist inevitably in connection to a vast number of other ideas that came before.

Thus, it was not Boltinoff who originated the myth that women were unnatural drivers, instead he was influenced by other authors and other texts. It may be argued that driving gave women power and freedom which defenders of the status quo felt

²⁷¹ Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 146.

complied to restrict. However, there are also other possibilities that may work in conjunction with this line of reasoning. The argument being made here is that the myth that women are predisposed not to be mechanically inclined derives, at least in part, from the habit of personifying machine bodies as women's bodies and creating a romantic relationship between machine and user. Consequently, the myth of compulsory heterosexuality, and the habit of implying romantic relationships between female machines and male users, has helped to create the media myth of women as unnatural drivers because of, at least subconscious, fears about implied lesbian relationships between female machines and female users.

Unlike the articles and cartoons, in all of the fiction stories studied here, where one of the main characters is a non-human actor, the non-human is personified as female and the users are male. In some of the examples the relationship between the user and the machine is not explained in great detail or with overt romantic language. For instance, in the story "Bush Job" which appeared in *Maclean's* in 1940, the author writes, "with motor spitting the seaplane curved into the stream. Erikson nosed her up against the dying land wind. The engine sputter mounted to a battering roar as he gunned her; river water hammered the pontoons; then they were up and climbing speedily into the brightening sky."²⁷² In this story the plane is referred to using female pronouns, but it is not implied that the user is in a romantic relationship with the object, but it is clear that he is controlling its power. Again, if we want to speculate on possible alternative interpretations of the multiple meanings of texts, we can consider that it is possible to read an orgasmic experience into this passage. This idea can be

²⁷² "Bush Job," *Maclean's*, February 15, 1940, 5.

inferred from the above line “[t]he engine sputter mounted to a battering roar as he gunned her.”

Yet, in many of the stories, the user, or users, (always male) is, or are, presumed to be in a romantic relationship with the machines in question. The story “Short of War” by Allan Bosworth tells the story of the ship the *Galloping Galloway* and ‘her’ captain Swede Murphy. On the water “the *Galloway* had lost two of her boats to the long green wallowing seas that boarded her three hundred miles out on Neutrality Patrol.”²⁷³ Stopping at the Philadelphia Yard they “scraped the grease off her engines, cleaned her boilers, patted her on the fantail and wished her luck.”²⁷⁴ However, to Swede Murphy’s dismay, she was not ready to be back out at sea and was hit by an enemy submarine. The next time he saw her on land “she lay grey-hulled and aslant, a rusty-looking packet of some five thousand tons.”²⁷⁵ Murphy does not realize that he will see her again, sooner than later, in much better condition. When he runs into her by accident he is shocked but maintains that he would recognize her anywhere. Bosworth writes, “this was a reunion he’d never expected to see. So they’d patched her up; they’d straight-ended out her crumpled box and traded her to England. Why, he’d have known her, when she came closer, under any name or any flag. He knew *every* rivet in her sea-scarred hull; he knew every little eccentricity that possessed her.”²⁷⁶

Like a lover, Murphy claims to know every inch of his ship and believes that nobody else could possibly know her as well as he does. When he sees how the

²⁷³ Allan Bosworth, “Short of War,” *Maclean’s*, May 1, 1941, 7.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. 9.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

English navy is using her he thinks aloud, “‘they’re not handling her right.’”²⁷⁷ The surprise encounter between Murphy and the *Galloway* can, in a way, be compared to the meeting of two ex-lovers. The *Galloway* now has a new romantic partner, and Murphy, like many disgruntled ex-lovers, feels that nobody could possibly understand her as well as did, or treat her as well. The significant difference here, however, is that unlike a human woman, the *Galloway* is not an active participant in choosing who her partner will be.

A more blatant example can be seen in the story “*Some Go in Darkness*,” by W.E. Johns. The main character, Flight Lieutenant Clive Gilroy, is captivated by a photo left behind in the cockpit of a pretty blonde woman. The late Flight Lieutenant Barton had placed a picture of a woman named Joan on the dashboard for luck. After Barton died, his partner, Lacy, could not bring himself to take it down. He explains to Gilroy, “I got used to seeing it there. It was like having her—with us....if you see what I mean? The face sort of comes to life when the engines start. I suppose it’s the vibration. You watch her eyes.”²⁷⁸

Lacy goes on to explain to Gilroy how when Barton was flying the plane he would speak to it as if it was the woman in the picture. He explains that Barton “had a sort of ritual. For instance, when [they] started up he used to say, ‘Come on Joan, let’s go.’”²⁷⁹ Eventually Gilroy falls in love with the woman in the picture and figures out “why Lacy had left the portrait on the panel, [he] knew that without her there the

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ W.E. Johns, “*Some Go in Darkness*,” *Maclean’s*, February 15, 1942, 17.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

machine would be just a soulless thing of steel and fabric.”²⁸⁰ Thus, in this case, Joan’s face is put on the plane ‘body’ to create a combination of human and machine that the main character can fall in love with.

Some of the stories examined here even feature love triangles. One of the most interesting fiction stories analyzed in this study is “The 13th Jerry.” The caption reads, “A tender and moving story of a wild Irishman who was afraid his beloved Spitfire might be jealous of The Girl Child.”²⁸¹ The plane, named Banba after “the poet’s name for Ireland,”²⁸² was, prior to meeting the girl child, “the wild Irishman’s only love.”²⁸³ Every time Liam O’Conol climbed into Banba he stroked her gently for luck and in response Banba “spoke decisively when her master touched the tip of her guns.”²⁸⁴

While on leave, O’Conol meets an American girl,²⁸⁵ who is never referred to by name, and falls in love. When he returns to Banba he boards her “without stroking her cowl as he had done every time before.”²⁸⁶ Once in the air, O’Conol misjudges the enemy’s directions because he is daydreaming about ‘the girl child’ and Banba is hit by enemy fire. Banba is seriously injured and, at first, O’Conol is unable to regain altitude. Finally, he remembers that he has not stroked Banba as he usually does. He thinks aloud, “[m]aybe she’s mad jealous of the girl child, and is punishing me for

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ A.C. Lyons, “The 13th Jerry,” *Maclean’s*, January 1, 1944, 16.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ The age of the American woman is never given, but she is referred to throughout the story as ‘the girl child.’

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 17.

it.”²⁸⁷ And, “without being conscious that his mike was turned on, he said to himself, to Banba, a little sadly, ‘That’s our thirteenth, Banba—and the first we’ve ever let go while you had bullets in you...’”²⁸⁸ Miraculously, with the right encouragement, Banba manages to get O’Conol down to the ground in one piece. When one of his fellow officers asks about Banba’s condition, O’Conol replies, “‘Safe as a wounded bird, she is,’ Liam grinned at him. ‘Having her wings fixed and a new heart maybe and a hat for the one that was blown away...’”²⁸⁹ In the end he concludes that the entire problem was caused because Banba had been jealous of the girl child.

Another example of this kind of three-way romance is the story “The Stars Hang High,” by Martha Banning Thomas. In this story, the main character Jaime Cameron takes his girlfriend Thurza out on his boat, *the dory*. Due to the old age of the boat, they run into some problems while at sea and have to employ emergency procedures, which means that Thurza has to help Jaime with controlling *the dory*. Thurza is not sure of her ability to perform this task and asks “‘Jaime, will I do it right? This is pretty rough.’”²⁹⁰ To which Jaime replies, “‘Sure, you’ll do it all right.’”²⁹¹ However, *the dory* does not react well to Thurza’s maneuvering. The author writes that “[t]he dory rolled over and up. She shivered into a long lurch. There hung suspended one of the timeless chasms between one moment and the next, in which the

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 18.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 25.

²⁹⁰ Martha Banning Thomas, “The Stars Hang High,” *Maclean’s*, March 15, 1940, 10.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

worst can happen. And it did. Jaime pitched overboard as neatly as a codfish slides from a bucket.”²⁹²

What may be implied here, is that *the dory* was repulsed by being controlled by Thurza. With Jaime as the primary user the appearance of a heterosexual relationship, between machine and user, was maintained. However, when a second woman is brought into the mix, it seems as if the ship not only does not want to share ‘her man,’ she certainly does not want her body to be manipulated by ‘the other woman.’ Another interpretation may simply be that Thurza is mechanically inept, and *the dory* is reacting to her inability to handle the situation. As was discussed in chapter two, one of the important aspects of semiotics, as it is influenced by postmodern theory, is that it liberates a text from limited deterministic interpretations. Each text contains multiple possible meanings, and, as always, is open to interpretation.

Similar stories of three-way romance between male users, women and machines can be found in *Chatelaine*. A story by Richard Heckman titled “Voyage of the Heart” tells the story of Captain Compo, Victoria (the ship) and a beautiful but vain woman named Evie. The story begins as the ship is prepared for her voyage; “‘She’s all made up to go,’ the pilot said.”²⁹³ A woman named Evie convinces the Captain to let her board the ship so that she can sail to Halifax to visit her fiancé. Compo is not impressed with the idea, but the other four members of the crew are blinded by Evie’s beauty. The four crew members begin the journey by competing for Evie’s attention until the Victoria tips; “the canvas emptied and she plunged.”²⁹⁴

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Richard Heckman, “Voyage of the Heart,” *Chatelaine*, June 1941, 5.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 9.

Compo manages to stay on the ship which astoundingly makes it to shore, but the other four men and Evie end up on a life boat. Evie is so distraught by her appearance that she lies on the bottom of the life boat with a blanket over her head. She says, ““women weren’t made to be looked at in storms...no one will see me till shore.””²⁹⁵

Once back on land, Compo is much more concerned about the Victoria’s well-being than that of Evie or his crew. When he wakes up, “his first words were, ‘The girl the old girl, where is she?’ /Murray said, ‘Evie’s in the bow.’/‘Not her-the ship-The *Vic*.!’”²⁹⁶ Captain Compo figures out that when the Victoria tipped, one of the crew, Mr. Hall, had been holding hands with Evie which seemingly made the ship jealous. ““Curse you Mr. Hall,’ the pilot said. ‘Holding hands off deck, with the captain in his cabin. No wonder the *Vic* kicked over!’”²⁹⁷

Being in the lifeboat with Evie makes Mr. Hall realize “the type of loveliness [Evie] really had.”²⁹⁸ He remarks, ““She’s been in my own blood from the first night I laid eyes on her, and it took my own *Vic* to get her out of my hammering heart, but she’s left it now and I’ll die a free man at last.””²⁹⁹ The story seems to be implying that the ship was jealous of Evie, and the attention she was receiving, so *she* threw them all off, with the exception of Compo who was less impressed by Evie than the others. It seems as if the Victoria’s ulterior motive was to make Mr. Hall and the other men see how fleeting Evie’s beauty really was. As well, there may be some biblical imagery being used here since the woman’s name is Evie, similar to Eve. One is left

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 19.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 9.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 19.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 9.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 19.

to wonder if Evie is intended to represent the temptress Eve who, in the bible, convinced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, thereby condemning all humankind. Studying these sources shows us that in the Second World War, at least in the two Canadian magazines studied here, machine bodies were generally personified as female, and by association, female bodies in general, were owned, or available for purchase, by male subjects.³⁰⁰

The idea of ownership and mastery of personified female machines is common in the fiction stories examined here. For instance, in "Voyage of the Heart," Captain Compo remarks "I'm master of this ship,"³⁰¹ while consistently referring to it as 'her.' Similarly, in "Floating Coffin" the main character Wally Todd says, "'Possession...is nine points of the law. I'm in possession, technically, on salvage. This is my boat and I mean to keep her.'"³⁰² In the story "The 13th Jerry" discussed above, the pilot is also referred to as the master of the plane who could get her (the plane) to speak to him when he touched her.³⁰³ As well, in the story "A Ship's a Lady, Too," the captain says to his crew "'Just remember she is your ship as much as mine. And remember she is a lady.'"³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ Dr. Ernest Dichter illustrates this point in his "Mistress versus Wife" study done in the 1940s. Chrysler asked Dichter to explain why more men came into a car dealership if a convertible was in the window, even though they almost always purchased a family sedan. After careful consideration, Dichter concluded that men symbolized the convertible as a possible mistress, which made them think of youth, adventure and romance. Dichter explained that the men knew they were not going to buy the mistress, but were drawn into the showroom because of the day dream. He argued that once inside, the man will "chose a four-door sedan, just as he once married a plain girl who, he knew would make a fine wife and mother." See Vance Packard. *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1957), 87.

³⁰¹ Richard Heckman, "Voyage of the Heart," *Chatelaine*, June 1941, 5.

³⁰² "Floating Coffin," *Maclean's*, January 15, 1939, 20.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Alec Rackowe, "A Ship's a Lady, Too," *Chatelaine*, April 1944, 25.

In addition to establishing ownership and mastery, these stories also show how the male users of these machines must know them well and be in control of them at all times. For instance, in the article “Groundlings,” the unnamed journalist explains how “a pilot must know his plane.”³⁰⁵ As well, in the story “Loyalty” one of the main characters gives the ship a “minimum of helm—a sure sign that he had her well under control.”³⁰⁶

One component of ideal masculinity was to understand how females, both machines and humans, needed to be dealt with. In the story “Widow’s Mite,” the main character comments on another man’s manner which seems to say “‘Boy! What I know about handling women! And this woman is like all other women.’”³⁰⁷ In this example he is referring to human women rather than machines, but by using the word ‘handling’ he is implying that, like machines, women can be handled and controlled. This language is the same as that used in the story by Allan Bosworth, “Short of War,” discussed above. In that story the ship’s original captain, Murphy, feels that only he can ‘handle her’ correctly.

As was discussed in relation to advertising in the previous chapter, studying how machines were gendered in Canadian magazines can also be an interesting way to uncover information regarding gender ideologies of the time. Since the majority of the machines examined here were gendered as female, the qualities, both positive and negative, that they were described to possess can also tell us what magazine writers

³⁰⁵ “Groundlings,” *Macleans*, September 15, 1941, 23.

³⁰⁶ “Loyalty,” *Macleans*, March 1, 1939, 15.

³⁰⁷ Annette Ross, “Widow’s Mite,” December 15, 1943, 16.

and editors thought about women in general. Some of the qualities the machines in this study were implied to possess include jealousy and anger, humility and quietness.

The fiction stories “Voyage of the Heart” and “The 13th Jerry” discussed above clearly indicate that jealousy was assumed to be a common feminine quality. One is actually inspired to recall the line from William Congreve’s novel *The Mourning Bride*, which has since been adapted into a proverb that states “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.” In “Voyage the Heart” a ship is jealous about the attention a woman passenger is receiving, and in “The 13th Jerry” a plane is jealous that the captain has met a girl he likes. The message here is that while men could remain rational, women were more emotional. This sentiment was also iterated in non-fiction stories. For instance, Lotta Dempsey writes that “[women are] more erratic. No doubt about it, there are times when even the best of us seem to be doing an emotional tight rope walk-according to the men who watch us on the job. They’re right. Since women entered industry and the armed forces in large numbers, there have been more tears, absenteeism, jitters, and up and down production charts than ever before.”³⁰⁸

As well, the female personified machines in this study were able to get very angry. For instance, in the story “Floating Coffin,” a ship named Gabriel is stolen from Wolly Todd by Marriner who apparently does not know how ‘she’ likes to be handled. Consequently, while at sea, Marriner dies. A friend of Todd’s, Perry Connor comments, “‘You know it gives me kinda creepy feelin’. Like she waited ‘till she got him in the right place—an’ killed him for that.’”³⁰⁹ To which Todd replies, “‘Can you blame her?... If you’d been kidnapped an’ mutilated, wouldn’t you want to kill

³⁰⁸ Lotta Dempsey, “What They’ve Found Out About Us,” *Chatelaine*, September 1943, 53.

³⁰⁹ “Floating Coffin,” *Maclean’s*, January 15, 1939, 21.

somebody?”³¹⁰ In the story “The Caleuche” one of the characters explains how a ghost ship seems “to have two methods of destroying her victims.”³¹¹ Similarly, in the story “Super Sub-Hunters,” by Martyr Weston, the author tells of a sub-hunter named No. 33. He writes, “she has no name. The Navy calls her *No. 33*. What the enemy call her and her sisters I do not know; but I can guess what they think of her. Those of them with whom she has not yet had direct dealings must think of her with terror and dread and those who have met her not in a position to think at all. They’re dead.”³¹² In this story the ship’s anger and deadliness are seen less as a result of jealousy or being scorned and are seen more as being a ‘natural’ part of ‘her’ character.

Furthermore, the fiction stories examined here suggest that the ideal woman would not be vain or pretentious. In the story “Voyage of the Heart” the female character of Evie is punished for her vanity by being tossed off the ship where she had to lie under a blanket so that the men would not see her, and eventually losing the attention of the male crew. In contrast, the *Victoria* was still in the hearts of the men by the end of the story. Women in the non-fiction stories examined here are also praised when they are not vain or pretentious. For example, in the article “Ladies-In-Chief” by Rosa L. Shaw, a female senior commanding officer in the armed services, Lieutenant-Colonel Joan Catherine Barbara Kennedy is described as “[having] no swank. She has talked with kings when they visited Ottawa, but she calls her girls by their first names.”³¹³

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ “The Caleuche,” *Maclean’s*, February 1, 1939, 12.

³¹² Martyr Weston, “Super Sub-Hunters,” *Maclean’s*, May 1, 1940, 7.

³¹³ Rosa L. Shaw, “Ladies-In-Chief,” *Chatelaine*, December 1943, 12.

In addition, another presumably praise-worthy quality in females, both machines and humans, was the ability to be quiet. In the story "Super Sub-Hunters," the narrator praises the ship, *No. 33*. He comments, "this ship really is silent. She's a noiseless ship. She was built to be silent."³¹⁴ Similarly, the non-fiction article "Fighting Ship," by Charles Rawlings, tells the story of *Skeena* the destroyer, the lead ship in charge of a group of supporting corvettes. In the article, Rawlings describes how he witnessed *Skeena* scold "one ship who had lost her head and broken radio silence."³¹⁵ On the one hand, silence and stealth were important qualities for these ships to possess for the practical reason that they were needed to catch subs. On the other hand, it may be argued that these ships are praised for being silent because women were generally assumed to be talkative. Helen Sangster, in her story "Stand By To Serve!" appearing in *Chatelaine* in 1940, underscores how being talkative is a female quality but maintains that it is not necessarily negative. She writes,

What do the instructors think of their 'girl mechanics'? 'They're a big surprise to me' one of them said. 'I never thought women would take hold the way they have. They're as good as a class of men-maybe better. It's a matter of pride with them not to let anything beat them.' He grinned at a group of curly-headed, overalled figures clustered around a mechanic who was forcing an inner tube into a tire. 'They talk a lot.' He said benevolently, 'but that doesn't stop them from working. That's just the way girls are.'³¹⁶

Thus, by examining the qualities, both positive and negative, associated with feminized machinery in Canadian magazines during the Second World War, we can gain a better perspective on the virtues ideal female romantic partners were assumed to possess during this period.

³¹⁴ Weston Martyr, "Super Sub-Hunters," *Maclean's*, May 1, 1940, 7.

³¹⁵ Charles Rawlings, "Fighting Ship," *Maclean's*, March 15, 1942, 8.

³¹⁶ Helen Sangster, "Stand By To Serve!" *Chatelaine*, August 1940, 19.

In all of the fiction stories studied here, there are no implied romances between a masculine-personified machine and a woman. In fact, women are rarely present in the fiction stories that include a machine as a main character unless they are there to make the machine jealous or upset. Although this finding somewhat limits the sources for this study, the lack of examples is also significant as it reinforces cultural stereotypes about the “other woman.” During this period both *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* were devoted to mobilizing the female labour force, and yet the examples of women actually operating machinery were limited. There are a few non-fiction stories that deal with this complicated relationship, but not many, perhaps as a reflection of wartime attitudes towards romance.

The absence of male partners in real life encouraged women to form friendships with other women and these strengthened but presumed non-sexual social relationship took priority over heterosexual romance in non-fiction as the men left home to join up. One example that illustrates this idea is the article “I Like Other Women” in *Chatelaine* in 1943, in which the author explained how she nurtured female friendships but was uninterested in pursuing friendships with the few men available during the war because, presumably, the ‘good ones’ were all away fighting. She wrote, “for some reason or other I never found myself giving tongue on the subject to rheumatic old uncles or hard working, earnest father-of-six. Me, I want men for friends-but only the eight cylinder, special-finish jobs.”³¹⁷ This quote is one of the few examples found in this study of a male body being objectified like a machine, one that also underscores her interest in attractive men, whether or not they were just

³¹⁷ Felicia, “I Like Other Women,” *Chatelaine*, May 1943, 3.

friends, which is the essential component of compulsory heterosexuality. In their absence, she preferred to be friends with women.

When women wore masculine attire, their relationships with machinery became more complicated and inconsistent in non-fiction. Writing in *Maclean's* in 1942, Thelma Lecocq attempted to ascertain whether or not women would be returning to the home after the war. She writes that, "she's a wartime phenomenon—the pretty girl in slacks and jacket, colorful bandana on her head, lunch pail in her hand, riding a midnight trolley to her job in a war plant."³¹⁸ Yet, while they are still employed in factories, Lecocq hints at the potentially sexual relationship between human and machine. She says that a "girl worker's big moment [is] when a rolling, roaring, mechanism of steel begins to respond to her touch."³¹⁹ According to Lecocq, the war opened up new opportunities for women interested in machines. She tells of a woman who, prior to the war, worked fixing typewriters because "that was the best she could do in a world where a woman interested in machinery was regarded as queer."³²⁰ Then the gun plant called for women workers. She applied and in a few weeks had mastered every single-purpose machine about six or eight, in the plant. Not many women have that particular passion for machinery."³²¹

Lecocq also provided a more comfortable domestic meaning behind a woman's passion for machinery, however, quoting another woman comparing her

³¹⁸ Thelma Lecocq, "Woman Power," *Maclean's*, June 15, 1942, 10.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ In this example queer may be used to mean odd, not homosexual, but could also be read as lesbian.

³²¹ Lecocq, 10.

lathe to a household appliance, effectively de-sexualizing the relationship. The woman is quoted as saying, ““Why, it’s easier to run than a sewing machine.””³²²

Earlier, writing for *Chatelaine*, Lecocq made a more direct implication about the romantic relationship between women and machinery, specifically automobiles. Even though, in general, automobiles during this period are personified as female, Lecocq felt it necessary to alter that gendered identity so that the heterosexual norm could be maintained. In her article, “Alice in Autoland,” Lecocq examined the new cars of 1941 (see figure 12). She writes, “[i]f there’s one thing more than another calculated to make a girl wish she’d been born rich instead of beautiful, it’s the new cars of 1941. There’s always been something about a new car to make the heart beat faster.”³²³ Continuing with the implied romantic relationship between car and driver she writes, “no matter what your husband says, you may lose your heart to a smart paint job, and a two tone horn, and you won’t have to worry too much about what goes on under the hood.”³²⁴ As well, she argues that seeing the 1941 General Motors Buick is “an emotional experience.”³²⁵

It is not until halfway through her article that Lecocq makes it clear that if the driver of the automobile is female, then the automobile must be male. Speaking of the Plymouth, “first cousin [of the] Dodge,”³²⁶ she writes that “our old friend, the Rocky Mountain Ram, by which the least observant of us has learned to recognize the Dodge,

³²² Ibid., 11.

³²³ Thelma Lecocq, “Alice in Autoland,” *Chatelaine*, November 1940, 16.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

has been streamlined till you'd hardly know him."³²⁷ Continuing with male pronouns, she writes that "those of you with a few more dollars in your handbag would do well to look at Chevrolet's big brother, the Pontiac."³²⁸ Thus, in regard to the gendering of non-human subjects, it seems that in this instance 'sex' is unveiled as an artificial norm that is subject to change. It appears that it was easier to understand the automobile as going through a process of gender-shifting than it would be to threaten the heteronormative culture of the period by allowing a female user to maneuver, with romantic undertones, a female-personified machine.

Thus, exploring the fiction and non-fiction articles in *Chatelaine* and *Maclean's*, in which machines were given gendered identities, can be a useful way to uncover how issues of gender and sexuality were constructed and expressed during that period. As well, we can see that machines were gendered and sexualized (or de-gendered and de-sexualized) during the Second World War depending on the gender-identity of their users. Since owning and controlling a machine (driving an automobile, flying a plane, sailing a ship, etc) was assumed to be an active, male endeavor, it was feared that a female user would find this male world sexually exciting, leading to a desire to be masculine. In the heteronormative culture that existed during the Second World War in North America, masculinity and femininity were understood only as complements of one another. Consequently, a female-woman maneuvering, with romantic undertones, a female-machine would not have made sense. Or, at least, it might have seemed 'queer' in both senses of the word.

³²⁷ Ibid., 24.

³²⁸ Ibid., 25.

Conclusion

Amy Bentley writes that “the war upset traditional gender roles,”³²⁹ a thesis which this project supports. However, the argument being made here takes this idea one step further. The sources examined in this thesis suggest that the gendered roles, of both humans and machines, were much more fluid and mutable than many defenders of the status quo might have guessed. Yet, the compulsory nature of heterosexuality was not essentially challenged and appeared to have a limiting effect on the extent of that fluidity.

The common understanding of sex, gender and desire is that sex ‘causes’ gender, which in turn ‘causes’ desire (for the ‘opposite’ gender). However, it appears that, in the heteronormative culture of Canada during the Second World War, heterosexuality was seen as necessarily static, therefore ‘desire’ caused ‘gender,’ even in non-human actors. Consequently, gender performances, to borrow the term from Butler, were altered in order to maintain the appearance of a heterosexual romantic match between individuals and machines in Canadian magazines during the Second World War, or to desexualize them altogether.

The argument presented in this thesis is twofold. In a more historiographical sense, I have argued that exploring the gendering and sexualization of machinery in media sources is a valuable way for the historian to uncover ideologies of gender and sexuality as they existed in a particular time period. I have chosen the Second World War because of it is a period of change in relation to both gender roles and the use of machinery. The intensified machine culture created by the advances in technology

³²⁹ Bentley, 6.

during Second World War make this period an interesting case study for analysis. The second, and more specific argument, is that the notion of compulsory heterosexuality that existed during the Second World War was so immutable that it was easier for defenders of the status quo to take machines, or women, through a process of gender-shifting than to allow feminine women to be in implied romantic relationships with female-personified machinery.

Thus, this thesis has examined the representations of relationships between machines and their users in Canadian magazines. This relationship was not seen as problematic as long as the image of heterosexuality was maintained. In most cases, this relationship involved a male user and female-personified machine. However, as women became regular users of machinery, by working in both factories and the armed forces, the dynamic had to be altered. In order to maintain the presumption of heterosexuality, either the relationship between the woman and the machine had to be desexualized, or the gendered performance of one of them had to be masculinized. As we have explored in the previous chapters, women using machinery were often presented as portraying a masculine gender performance by wearing pants or cutting their hair short.

But rarely have we seen examples where machinery, specifically automobiles, which were previously personified mostly as female, were presented as male to allow for women becoming the primary users. It is difficult to hypothesize why machines were not masculinized in more of the sources. Ad copy writers often presented cars as female, not male, when the operator was a man; and neutered or, rarely, masculinized them, when the operator was a woman. In fiction, men operated female machines,

while secondary female characters interfered with that relationship in the same manner as the “other woman” interferes in real life romance.

In fiction, there simply are not any examples in which the woman is seen as the primary user of machinery, but the way female personified machines were described to be in heterosexual relationships with their male users suggests that cultural attitudes towards women had changed little, despite their real-life occupations which altered their gender roles during the war. Women are only presented as secondary and not particularly successful users, so the gendered performance of the female machine is not challenged. In relation to the non-fiction stories the reason for the relative absence of women operating masculine personified machines may be that in real life, women turned to other women for friendship more when the men were away fighting the war, so there was less heterosexual romance in real life, and this was reflected in the articles.

In addition, journalists were expected to be more factual and to take less literary license in their work.³³⁰ Machines are not biologically sexed bodies, and reporters may not have felt comfortable referring to machines using gendered pronouns, with a few exceptions. These patterns have, at times, been a challenge to the intentions of this thesis. However, in the end, the patterns in the sources studied can also be viewed as significant. *Chatelaine* and *Maclean's* magazines were committed, during this period, to recruiting women into the labour field that would require them to use machinery. And yet, there are relatively few examples of them

³³⁰ For a discussion on the requirements of journalistic objectivity see chapter two, “‘Top Perch Out for Newshens’: Journalistic ‘Objectivity’ on Trial,” in Barbara M. Freeman, *The Satellite Sex: The Media and Women's Issues in English Canada, 1966-1971* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2001).

actually doing so. It may have been that magazine executives were, at least subconsciously, concerned about highlighting the potentially romanticized relationship between women and machines that could be seen as queer depending on the assumed gendered identity of the machinery. In fact, the ads touting femininity, the fiction that stereotyped femaleness, and the few non-fiction samples involving female equipment operators suggest that there was some level of discomfort in that relationship.

Consequently, in these examples, the general understanding of the relationship between gender and desire is altered. The common understanding of the relationship is that gender causes desire (presumably heterosexual desire). Yet, in relation to machinery, during the Second World War, it seems that the obligation to maintain the media myth of compulsory heterosexuality actually ‘causes’ the gendered performances of the individuals and machinery involved in symbolically romantic relationships. This thesis contends that the increased use of machinery by women led to a presumably more masculinized identity for them and consequently subtle, rather than explicit, fears over lesbianism.

This thesis takes a place in both gender history and the history of sexuality. The goal here is to work towards examining the myth-making process that has made heterosexuality appear to be compulsory or naturalized. Roland Barthes writes that “myth is a system of communication, that is a message.”³³¹ Thus, in this case, the system of communication is media which delivers the message of the myth of compulsory heterosexuality. A myth, Barthes explains, “has in fact a double function:

³³¹ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 109.

it points out and notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it on us.”³³²

The sources examined in this thesis indicate that, in Canadian magazines during the Second World War, advertisements, fiction stories and non-fiction articles worked to make readers aware of the supposed compulsory nature of heterosexuality while simultaneously enforcing it. Thus, even though in reality the concept of compulsory heterosexuality was historically constructed, the process of myth-making, as was expressed in the sources examined here, fulfilled the ultimate principal of myth by “transform[ing] history into nature.”³³³

This thesis has examined the Canadian magazines *Chatelaine* and *Maclean's* from 1939 until 1945, in total this works out to 252 issues. Within these magazines, advertisements, fiction stories and non-fiction stories dealing with machinery and gendered representations have been studied. As well, to supplement these primary sources, I have also explored the Maclean-Hunter fonds at the Archives of Ontario.

The first chapter of this thesis explores my approach to the cultural representations of women and machinery, visible in Canadian magazines, which has been influenced by gender theorists such as Judith Butler and Joan Scott, while also shaped by the work of Canadian historians. Chapter one outlines the major debates in the historiography of women, gender and the Second World War. The main debate in this field has been in regard to whether or not the war was liberating for women. This chapter outlines the points in this debate as well as the key participants, but seeks to explore a different aspect of the history of gender and the Second World War by analyzing how concepts of masculinity, femininity and sexuality can be understood in

³³² Ibid., 117.

³³³ Ibid., 129.

respect to the relationships between humans and machines. As well, chapter one explores the emerging literature relating to how gender and sexuality are expressed outside of male and female sexed bodies. The literature in this area is still sparse, however, and examination of how this process works on machinery is just beginning.

Chapter two outlines the process of content analysis of media sources, used in this project, which has been influenced by the semiological theories of Roland Barthes and the debates in the field of media history in general. By surveying the literature on media history, specifically in relation to the Second World War, chapter two shows how using media sources such as advertisements, fiction stories and non-fiction stories can create a challenge for the researcher. However, I maintain that media sources, like other historical sources such as social manifestoes, political speeches and personal letters and diaries, can be useful historical documents.

This chapter examines the varying opinions regarding the impact that media, and in particular magazines, has had on the internalization of gender ideologies by men and women. The common feminist critique of mainstream media sources generally maintains that the industry has been, at least in part, responsible for the perpetuation of sexism in our society. However, there is also a different school of thought that argues that the inclusion of women in the world of consumerism was actually beneficial for women. In addition, chapter two looks at the history of both *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* magazine and explores the particular circumstances surrounding the role of the media in Canada during the Second World War.

Chapter three takes the theories and debates outlined in the first two chapters, and applies that knowledge to advertisements from *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* during

the Second World War. This chapter argues that the phenomenon of women using machinery during the Second World War increased concern over the masculinization of women and actually strengthened the compulsory nature of both feminine attractiveness and heterosexuality. Chapter three explores how the escalated machine culture created during wartime blurred the line between humans and machines in magazine advertising leaving the consumer imagining a world in which everything is mechanized.

In the majority of the advertisements examined in this chapter machinery that is given a gendered identity is presented as female. The user, implied to be in a romantic relationship with the machine, is thus generally represented as male. However, according to heterosexual norms, if the user of the machine is female, either the user or the machine must become masculinized, or, the relationship is desexualized entirely. In the advertisements examined here the relationship between female user and machine was desexualized. Yet, women presented as regular users of machinery were also seen in increasingly masculine terms. As well, chapter three also examines how studying the gendered and sexualized representations of machinery in advertisements can be an interesting way to uncover information surrounding gender ideologies of the time.

The fourth chapter of this thesis takes the debates and theories outlined in the first two chapters and applies that knowledge to fiction and non-fiction stories from *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* during the Second World War. The line between humans and machines were blurred in fiction and non-fiction stories in these magazines in the same way that it was in advertisements in the previous chapter. This chapter

investigates how, in non-fiction articles, the use of machinery by women, at least subconsciously, increased the fears over women becoming more masculine, especially with female war workers wearing pants rather than skirts.

In addition, chapter four also looks at how, in a number of fiction stories from both *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*, male users of machines such as planes and ships are said to be in a romantic relationship with the female personified machines. These stories are also illuminating because they tell the researcher much about how magazine writers, editors and publishers saw women. In contrast, this chapter also shows how, in a limited number of non-fiction stories, machines under-went a process of gender-shifting so that women could be presented as the primary user.

By examining how gender and sexuality were presented outside of male and female sexed bodies during the Second World War in Canadian magazines this thesis is working towards filling in a gap in the literature. However, there are many areas available for further research. Since this thesis only examines one seven-year period, as it was represented in only two magazines, it has the potential to be idiosyncratic. It would be interesting, therefore, to explore how the ideas presented here manifest in Canadian magazines both before and after the Second World War.

Unfortunately, few researchers have thus far commented on the direct link between the use of machinery and its potential to masculinize women. Yet, the sources available to the historian of the Second World War to make such a case are plentiful and not just in the media. For instance, one observer quoted in Barry Broadfoot's *Six War Years, 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home and Abroad* writes, "She handled that farm like a man, and she drove that truck and tractor and

one-way and combine like a man, and she even did a bit of custom farming around the district... and if you weren't close, in those rubber boots and overalls you'd think she was a man."³³⁴ Further research into this implied link might uncover some very interesting insights into the construction and expression of both gender and sexuality.

In the decades following the Second World War the media link between female bodies and machine bodies did not dissipate. For example, one Subaru ad from the 1970s reads more like a pornographic script than an advertisement for an automobile; but the message is clear, cars are women's bodies, and women's bodies are cars, waiting passively for men to *turn them on*. Speaking of the car, the text of the ad reads, "...a spirited woman who yearns to be tamed...Sleek. Agile. The sculptured lines of the one-piece body invite you in... Go to her... Surround yourself with the lushness of her interior appointments... Now. Turn her on."³³⁵ While this ad may be shocking in its explicitness, this thesis has shown that it is not original in its idea.

It would also be interesting to examine the relationship between women's bodies and machine bodies in advertising and other media sources after the second wave women's movement. Feminist criticisms of advertising have been prevalent in the last few decades. It may be worthwhile examining how, or if, the feminist movement has had any impact on the understanding of machine bodies as female. For instance, in the 1970s the automobile company Fiat had a series of billboards picturing a car with the slogan, "If it were a lady, it would get its bottom pinched."³³⁶ In reaction

³³⁴ Broadfoot, 355-6.

³³⁵ Kilbourne, 99.

³³⁶ Jill Posener (photographer), London: Acme Cards, 1979.

to this presumably sexist ad, someone spray painted “If this lady was a car she’d run you down”³³⁷ under the text. This picture is now sold as a postcard (see figure 13).

Feminist media critic Jean Kilbourne speaks extensively on the process within advertising that turns things into lovers and lovers into things. She explains how consumers are encouraged to believe that they are in relationships with products, “to feel passion for our products rather than our partners.”³³⁸ Her conclusion is that “[t]aken individually, these ads are silly, sometimes funny, certainly nothing to worry about. But cumulatively they create a climate of cynicism and alienation that is poisonous to relationships.”³³⁹ Yet, what has not yet been examined is how this process of turning lovers into things and visa-versa may be positive. For instance, if, in modern media sources, a machine body is personified as female and implied to be in a romantic relationship with a female user, does that help in the process of deconstructing the myth of compulsory heterosexuality? It seems simplistic to simply discount this habit of implying that people are in romantic relationships with goods as necessarily harmful.

While understanding reader reaction to the advertisements, fiction stories and non-fiction articles during the Second World War is a difficult, if not impossible, task; the researcher interested in modern sources may have an easier time. Nonetheless, if one were able to find a workable methodology, comparing reader reaction, about the sexualization of machinery, from the Second World War and today could prove very interesting. For example, are consumers today more able to consciously, or

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Kilbourne, 84.

³³⁹ Ibid., 85.

subconsciously, deconstruct messages in advertisements. Or, should we argue that, in our modern period, advertising is so much a part of our daily life that we internalize the messages presented without actually thinking about them. As Jean Kilborne observes, on a daily basis the average American sees approximately 3000 ads. Yet, surprisingly, the majority believe they are not influenced by the advertising industry.³⁴⁰

I am also left to wonder what conclusions could be drawn regarding gender ideologies from today by studying the personification of machinery in modern popular culture. For instance, in an episode of the popular teenage drama *The O.C.* one of the main characters, Seth, sells his boat due to lack of finances. Once he has earned the money he needs he approaches the man he sold the boat to and asks to buy it back. The man is accommodating but warns Seth that he has “made some modifications to her.” When he pulls the tarp covering the boat back we see that it is painted with a flame-design. Seth is shocked and exclaims, “Oh my God, she’s a slut.” It would be interesting to analyze the links between paint colours on boats and cars and clothing styles on women from this period.

It would also be interesting to explore the arguments made in this thesis using primary documents from French-speaking Canada as well as other countries. Gary Kinsman explains that during this period “English-Canadian media was influenced, if not dominated, by U.S. economic interests and advertising.”³⁴¹ So, perhaps using American source material would not produce different conclusions. Yet, we do not

³⁴⁰ Kilbourne, i.

³⁴¹ Kinsman, 136.

know how different European sources would be from the ones studied here, or if the media in France, for example, influenced that in Quebec.

In regard to automobile use and ownership, research has been done on how the industry has been defined as masculine.³⁴² However, what has not been investigated before now is whether or not the sexualization of automobile bodies as female bodies was related to the myth that men were more 'natural' drivers. Did the personification of automobiles as women's bodies make it more difficult for society, at least on a subconscious level, to accept women as drivers because of the implied lesbian relationship that could emerge between car and driver? Or, were automobiles sexualized as female to limit the use of cars by women? Because, as researchers interested in the social history of the automobile have shown, male elites generally regarded greater mobility for women as dangerous. As Scharff points out, in the first two decades of the twentieth century society was concerned that "mobile women would be beyond control socially [and] sexually."³⁴³

Clearly, much work remains to be done in this field. The relationship between human bodies and machine bodies, in many different periods and places, is left to be

³⁴² David Gartman writes, "[i]n general, automobiles were defined as masculine, both because they provided mobility in the public sphere and because they were utilitarian and mechanical objects of production. Women were supposed to confine themselves to the private, domestic sphere and to the nonutilitarian concerns of consumption and aesthetics. Consequently, car ownership and operation were considered culturally appropriate mainly for men." See Gartman, 173. Similarly, Sean O'Connell writes, '[d]riving skill was constantly identified as a natural masculine quality and the act of driving was often fetishised as something of an art form. As such, it was something to be savoured. Driving could re-energise a man. As an *Autocar* columnist put it in 1927, 'manhood is restored by swinging into the seat of something one can drive with precision and dexterity.' According to a driving instructor, who wrote to *Motor* in 1934, women did not 'think enough' about driving or look upon it 'as an art'. A regular stream of contributors to the popular and motoring press expressed a firm belief in the incompatibility of 'feminine' traits and driving. They employed conventional images of women as delicate creatures who were less rational than men and not always capable of handling some of the situations that arose in the more masculine world outside the home." See O'Connell, 53.

³⁴³ Scharff, 166.

studied. Also, a number of primary sources are available to the researcher who takes on this challenge. I have chosen to study magazine content because it was readily available during the Second World War. However, a researcher bringing this kind of study forward in time may be able to branch out to other forms of popular culture including commercials, movies, radio, television and music to name a few. For instance, one could make an interesting comparison between the stories analyzed here such as “The 13th Jerry” and “Voyage of the Heart” in which the machine is personified as a jealous woman, and Stephen King’s 1983 movie *Christine* in which the teenage male Arnie falls in love with, and then is completely controlled by, the car he names Christine.

As well, if we look at the 1963 album “Little Deuce Coupe” by the Beach Boys we can find a number of interesting comparisons between women and cars. In the song “Little Deuce Coupe” one line reads “She purrs like a kitten ‘till the lake pipes roar.” The song “Cherry, Cherry Coupe” contains the line “And she really gets sparks when she starts to whine.” The song “Ballad of Ole’ Betsy” begins with the line “she was born in ’32. And was she ever pretty. She rode a freight train west, all the way from Detroit City.” But the song gets much more explicit with the line “with some she traveled fast, with others it was slow... she must have had some others before I finally met her. And now that she’s all mine, they better just forget her.” Towards the end of the song the lyrics become less comfortable through a feminist lens when they sing, “Betsy was a lady, and that she will remain. Betsy took some beatings but she never once complained.” Of course, beating a car is not understood to

be morally wrong, however, when that car is metaphorically symbolized to be a woman the issue is less clear.

Another song from the same album, “Car Crazy Cutie” speaks to the argument made in this thesis that working closely with machinery had the potential to masculinize women threatening the myth of naturalized heterosexuality. The song tells of a girl who is “hip to everything, man, from customs to rails. And axle grease imbedded ‘neath her fingernails.” Towards the end of the song the singer admits, “But when I talk of lovin’ man, some kisses and hugs. She says she likes to take ‘em better clean and gap the plugs.” While the lyrics in the previous line are somewhat unclear, they seem to suggest that the girl is not interested in a heterosexual relationship with the man singing about her. It does not suggest that the girl is interested in women, but rather that she prefers cars.

Another potential area for further research may be to hypothesize on the potential ways that media audiences might have, or could, interpret the myth of naturalized or compulsory heterosexuality expressed in these sources. As Barthes explains, “[t]ruth to tell, the best weapon against myth is perhaps to mythify it in its turn, and to produce an *artificial myth*: and this reconstituted myth will in fact be a mythology.”³⁴⁴ In a way, Adrienne Rich’s article “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” is a part of this *artificial myth-making* process. In her article, Rich challenges the myth of compulsory heterosexuality by arguing that lesbian relationships have existed throughout history. Rich differentiates between lesbian existence, which “suggests both the fact of the historical presence of lesbians and our

³⁴⁴ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 135.

continuing creation of the meaning of that existence;”³⁴⁵ and what she terms the lesbian continuum which includes “a range—through each women’s life and throughout history—of woman-identified experience, not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman.”³⁴⁶

By redefining the term lesbian in this way, Rich is mythifying the myth of compulsory heterosexuality and, in turn, producing an artificial myth. Thus, one is left to wonder how this process of mythifying the myth might have been used in relation to the sources examined here. Were there any alternative media sources, or audience interpretations that challenged the myth of compulsory heterosexuality presented in the media representations of machine culture in Canada during the Second World War? I am also curious about how this process might have developed in other time periods.

Thus, as was discussed in chapter two, analyzing audience reactions to these sources might be an important next step in this process. Valerie Korinek in her book *Roughing It in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, and Joy Parr in her book *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years*, both show the value of this kind of research. As well, one of the goals of Barthes’ study of semiology has been to uncover what the role of the audience is in constructing the understandings of myths. Consequently, while this kind of interpretation was not possible for this study, it might prove to be very interesting.

As well, as was discussed in chapter three, the significance of female consumers, or media audience members, as the viewers of female personified

³⁴⁵ Rich, 239.

³⁴⁶ Rich, 239.

machines remains to be studied. Does this practice make women viewers more masculine? Does it challenge the myth of compulsory heterosexuality? The potential for exploring how the relationships between the spectator and the looked-at can transmit ideas about the gendered and sexualized relationship between humans and machines are ample and may offer interesting hypotheses.

The opportunities for further research are thus countless. Of course, studies such as this one are necessarily speculative. Understanding the implied relationship between human and machine, what that relationship says about gender ideologies and understandings of sexuality of the time in question, and how readers may have reacted to, or internalized, those ideas is not a concrete science. Nonetheless, this research can be very interesting and worthwhile and raise important questions about gender relations and the heterosexual imperative in our cultural history.

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What is the most
important magazine
in Canada today?

64%

of these Prominent Canadians say Maclean's

Recently an independent research organization, Canadian Facts, made a careful survey of a group of men and women listed in the 1943-44 "Who's Who in Canada." These prominent Canadians were asked the question "What do you consider the most important magazine in Canada today?" Maclean's Magazine received an overwhelming majority of votes — *far more than all other magazines combined.*

		PERCENTAGE OF MENTIONS
Q. What do you consider the most important magazine in Canada today?	MACLEAN'S	64%
	38 Other Magazines..	36%
		(Note: Time 4.5%; Reader's Digest 3.5%; Life 3.5%; Fortune 3.5%—The standings of these magazines are given in view of their mention in a report of a survey by Time Inc.)

Other surveys of a similar nature are now under way. In the meantime, we wish to thank the men and women of "Who's Who" for expressing their high opinion of Maclean's; and to give our assurance that we will continue our conscientious effort to fulfill the trust that has been placed in us as Canada's most important magazine.

MACLEAN'S
CANADA'S NATIONAL MAGAZINE

2. F138 C-2-1, box 155, file: "Canada at War," February 1944, Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

3. F138 C-2-1, box 155, file: "Canada at War," February 1944, Maclean-Hunter Fonds, Archives of Ontario.

- 4 "Some New 1920 Motor Models," *Vanity Fair*, May 1920, 56. Cited in Laura L. Behling, "The Woman at the Wheel: Marketing Ideal Womanhood, 1915-1934," *Journal of American Culture* 20, 3 (1997) 17

A SMART TOWN CAR

An up-to-date model for the city. Though the uppers is expensive, it is light in weight, built on graceful lines, and exquisite in its appointments. Has a streamline body, custom tailored, and many accessories, including amusing set and vanity case. Has a light top, a slightly tilted hood, and is most frequently used for shopping, theatre and other social purposes. An excellent example of style tendencies.

A STYLISH FOREIGN CAR

Owing to limited production, it is sometimes difficult to obtain exactly such a design in this country. It is usually carefully painted and decorated. Needs the most expensive and harmonious fabrics in the market. It has undoubtedly this, and is always greatly admired in the Paris Salon. Usually fast, and hardly ever reliable for family use. Smash-ups, due to this model, are frequent in our fashionable resorts.

LIMOUSINE

Built with an extra heavy, solid-cast body, vigorously uphoisted. For many years it has stood the ravages of weather, and the wear and tear of almost continuous running. Roomy and comfortable. Excessive turning radius. Not easily handled in traffic. Built for comfort rather than speed. Gets hot when it runs too long. Built on the principle of rather full curves.

THE FORD MODEL

A non-said model, that is simple, dependable and designed for all round use. For the man who prefers reliability to distinction of appearance, nothing has been found to equal this type. It runs smoothly, thus saving tire. Not spectacular or fast, but very serviceable. Body built with plain, straight lines. Needs little attention and only costs a trifle for maintenance. Can usually be secured on short notice, in any part of the country.

COUNTRY RUNABOUT MODEL

As the first warm days of spring approach, and the country calls, many men will be looking for just such a model—capable of long trips over mountain roads. Excellent for picnics and summer expeditions. This type is easy to start and will take anything on high. Air cooled. Is used frequently at bathing beaches. A good climber. Suitable for camping, fishing, or hunting trips. Rain will not mar the painted surface.

Some New 1920 Motor Models

A Few Practical Suggestions for the Motorist Who Is Contemplating Matrimony

Chatelaine, August, 1943

War, Women

by CONSTANCE LUFT HUHNS
Head of the House of Tangee

For the first time in history woman-power is a factor in war. Millions of you are fighting and working side by side with your men.

In fact, you are doing double duty—for you are still carrying on your traditional "woman's" work of cooking, and cleaning, and home-making. Yet, somehow, Canadian and American women are still the loveliest and most spirited in the world. The best dressed, the best informed, the best looking.

It's a reflection of the free democratic way of life that you have succeeded in keeping your femininity—even though you are doing man's work!

If a symbol were needed of this fine, independent spirit—of this courage and strength—I would choose a lipstick. It is one of those mysterious little essentials that have an importance far beyond their size or cost.

A woman's lipstick is an instrument of personal morale that helps her to conceal heartbreak or sorrow; gives her self-confidence when it's badly needed; heightens her loveliness when she wants to look her loveliest.

No lipstick—ours or anyone else's—will win the war. But it symbolizes one of the reasons why we are fighting...the precious right of women to be feminine and lovely—under any circumstances.

The Tangee Satin-Finish Lipstick of your choice will keep your lips smoother...longer! It will bring an exclusive grooming and a deep glowing "life" to your lips that defy both time and fate.

GLORY—glory of woman...
GLORY—glory of nations...
Protect them both...

BUY WAR SAVINGS
CERTIFICATES

TANGEE
WITH THE NEW
SATIN-FINISH
Lipsticks

Christmas, May, 1943

Yes sir! - that's my baby!

Time was when the only baby in my life was my kid brother Bill. But times have changed and Bill in his pilot's uniform is my baby now. And I couldn't let my kid brother get hurt, could I? That's why I'm working in an aircraft factory. That's why doing my job well is the most important thing in my life these days.

And naturally, time-out is something I try to do without. On these difficult days when I feel more like weeping than working, I've learned to depend on Modess to help me keep going.

Modess has a downy, soft, filler that prevents chafing, gives an extra measure of protection that helps me stay on the job - doing my part to "keep 'em flying".

First for Safety - First for Softness

Modess - for busy girls

**WANT AN
L-HEAD
ENGINE ?**

**ALL 1941
PONTIACS
HAVE THEM**

**WANT
TORPEDO
STYLING ?**

**PONTIACS ARE
ALL TORPEDOES
FOR 1941**

**WANT
KNEE-ACTION ?**

**ALL 1941 PONTIACS
HAVE IT—AND
PLENTY OF OTHER
FEATURES, TOO**

**WANT
LOW PRICE ?**

**PONTIAC'S
PRICES START
WITH
THE LOWEST**

PONTIAC

Fleetleader

5 NEW SERIES

A Pontiac to fit the Purse of ANY New Car Buyer

HEADING Pontiac's "Torpedo" Fleet for 1941 is the sensational, new *Fleetleader*, priced to match the lowest... and powered to match the finest. All five Pontiac series have L-Head Engines... long-famous for quiet, powerful, dependable operation... and economy. And all series have most advanced Knee-Action... a feature indispensable for supreme riding and driving comfort. These Pontiacs are the greatest cars that ever...
 ...and Eight from lowest price... They are all "Torpedoes" with distinctive styling that... practical, too. Bumping Boards are concealed... Bodies are longer, lower, wider... for greater roominess, convenience and safety. All series... provide amazing new riding comfort and ease of control. Day-long driving is a pleasure! Eight the Pontiac Streamliner "Torpedo" Eight.

7. Ad for Pontiac, "5 New Series," *Chatelaine*, December, 1940, 43.

CHATELAIN, APRIL, 1940 8. Ad for Ford, "My husband knows all about engines and brakes but I'm the expert on Style!" *Chatelaine*, April 1940, 61.

*"My husband knows all about engines and brakes
but I'm the expert on*

Style!"

"TORQUE-TUBE drives and stabilizer bars are Greek to me. But I do know a beautiful, stylish, modern car when I see it! That's why I was so anxious to get a big, roomy, luxurious Ford V-8 like this!"

"And my husband agreed — for different reasons, of course. He says the Ford V-8 engine is the most *modern* in engineering design. He's 'sold' on its performance and economy, and the way Ford cars are built to last for ages! 'Don't see how they do it for the money,' he says.

"Of course, we're both *raving* about the grand new riding qualities, and the roominess, and that marvellous Finger-Tip Gearshift on the steering post! Not to mention the low price!"

WE AGREED
ON A

Ford V-8"

"PLEASE DON'T STARE AT MY PANTS"

"Would you like to know why I wear trousers like the men when I go about the streets? Because I'm doing a man's job for my country's sake.

"My overalls are my working clothes. I wear them for safety's sake. They are less likely to become entangled in the factory machinery.

"I work in a munitions plant. Every piece of war material I help to produce helps to keep the Nazis and the Japs away from our shores.

On the streets, on the street cars and in the shops of our Canadian cities, you will see today many young ladies wearing blue trousers under their winter coats. They demonstrate the revival of the hero in spirit of the pioneers who laid the foundation of our country. The women folk in these days stand shoulder to shoulder with their men, either at the plow or the pickaxe. Today, these young women are again standing beside their men in the hour of their country's peril. In the months to come, the uniform of the blue trousers will be seen more and more frequently in our country because girls and women are contributing their skill and their delicacy of touch to the production of instruments of war for our fighting men.

This message is issued by the Department of Munitions and Supply for Canada

BR AVE M E N S H A L L N O T D I E B E C A U S E I F A L T E R E

9. Ad for The Department of Munitions and Supply for Canada, "Please don't stare at my pants," *Maclean's*, December 1, 1941, 65.

10. Vic Herman (cartoonist), *Maclean's*, September 1, 1945, 32.

Drawn for Maclean's by Vic Herman

11. Henry Boltinoff (cartoonist), *Maclean's*, June 1, 1941, 53

—Drawn for *Maclean's* by Henry Boltinoff.
"But it's practically a new car — I only drove it once!"

The speedster starts with a flourish.

She dreams of the perfect automobile—1941 version.

Getting the inside story.

The spokeswoman of the new Buick is an "11 story."

"Tell me about this."

She wants a new paint job for a new color job.

Home! And her husband comes in for some more transportation.

ALICE IN AUTOLAND

By THELMA LE COCQ

Sketches by E. Mawson

IF THERE'S one thing more than another calculated to make a girl wish she'd been born rich instead of beautiful, it's the new cars of 1941. There's always been something about a new car to make the heart beat faster, but the Forty-Oners give you the feeling that designers of automobiles have reached the peak of perfection and can't possibly have anything further to give for.

Women who are buying new cars will be hard put to it to know where to begin. Canada's next-year's automobiles vie with each other to give us more streamline, more color, more chrome, more glass; as well as wider cushions, roomier seats, sturdier bumpers and safer door locks for the children. Looking at these glowering new cars, one is apt to forget they have engines in them at all—or not to give a rap. Fortunately, cars don't break down with any alarming frequency these days. No matter what your husband says, you may lose your heart to a smart paint job and a two-tone horn, and you won't have to worry too much about what goes on under the hood.

The first of these to dazzle the town with the wonder of a 1941 car was General Motors with the Buick, the first of which is a pretty nice to begin an emotional experience. At the first breath-taking glance you think it's one of those long, sweeping coupes that takes you back to your youth when there were no babies to tuck in the back seat. But when you look again, you'll see that it's all an illusion of line and that this Buick actually has a back seat that will hold three good-sized adults in the very lap of luxury. Buick calls this car a Sedanet, and claims with no exaggeration that it gives you the best features of coupe and sedan. This car carries Buick's 1941 "teardrop" design to a dramatic length from a massive front to a flowing, tapered tail, accentuating the line with long ribbons of chrome.

The Sedanet is only one of the upulent Buick models, any one of which will make you feel like a twenty-five-

thousand-dollar-a-year girl, though plenty of Buicks can be fitted into much lower incomes. Even the most inexpensive cars in this make look fleet as arrows, with their aerodynamic bodies and slashing speed-lines of chrome; and the fire-ball engine, double-acting shock absorbers, and Foamtex cushions ride like a dream.

IF YOU'RE the sort that doesn't like to miss a trick, the new Buicks will keep you fascinated for hours. Open the door and on go the courtesy lights, thoughtful little glows that will keep you from missing a step. Look in the back seat and see the swing arm rest that may be brought down when two people wish to travel in semi-chair comfort; or flipped back into the rear cushions when three people are going along. On the outside, note the gravel guard at the back, the bumper four-times guarded in case you climb a tree, the concealed running boards that give extra width to the inside of the car and a look of grandeur to the outside.

The first of the little 1941 cars to come our way was the Plymouth—not so little, mind, except so far as the price is concerned—and just the sort of car a girl would love to take home. This year even the ship on the Plymouth is streamlined, and the whole car mills back from a juddering chrome front to a sleek, sleek rear delight to the eye. Those who have a weakness for color will find Plymouth two-toners just their cup of tea. Plymouth greens have a real beauty all their own, and a custom sedan with a top of pale amethystian green over a body of darker garland green, is one of the season's best to look upon.

The Plymouth does not stop with appearance. It has nice habits too, such as window regulators, safety glass, hydraulic brakes, and for those with a weakness for speeding, the warning signals on the speedometer should cut down the price of fines. One feature of this car not to be overlooked, is its safety. For a second year Plymouth has been awarded a *Continued on page 11*

12. Thelma Lecocq, "Alice in Autoland," *Chatelaine*, November 1940, 16.

13. Jill Posener (photographer), London: Acme Cards, 1979.