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**Topic:** The representation of women in liquor print advertisements

**Summary:** In this paper, I will examine the ways that liquor companies, in particular, Skyy vodka, depicts women in its advertisements. In many industries, women are portrayed as servile, sexual objects that only exist to serve men, most times sexually. In ad after ad, women are trapped in domestic spaces, shackled by needy children, serving their families, and as is the case with Skyy vodka, women are frequently depicted only as body parts and objects for male consumption. Frequently, Skyy vodka employs the technique of turning women into actual objects by making women's bodies akin to the alcohol itself, rendering women helpless, lifeless, and designed for consumption. In addition to being portrayed as actual objects, women in these ads are often pictured without heads or faces, and instead exist as sexually symbolic disembodied appendages like legs, buttocks, breasts, hands, and midriffs. The lack of heads and faces suggests the company's message is that women do not, or perhaps should not, have brains, opinions, or voices. The implicit *should not* in this idea is indicative of the veiled threat of violence against women often employed by alcohol ads. In several ads in Skyy's "Go Natural" campaign, the female sexuality on display is exacerbated by the prominent display of fruits like cherries and passion fruit, both of which symbolize the vagina. In addition, these ads frequently include men in dominant, sometimes violent, positions and women in submissive positions. The men themselves are often pictured physically above the women in the ads and oftentimes, the bottle itself, which serves as unmistakable phallic imagery, dominates the scene and the women.

**Working Thesis:** By using fruit as sexual imagery and featuring women as disembodied appendages, Skyy vodka depicts women as submissive, sexual objects designed for men's, sometimes violent, consumption.

### **Sections:**

- 1. Traditional understandings of masculinity and femininity**
  - a. Men as unemotional, powerful, intelligent, sex-crazed
  - b. Women as overly-emotional, weak, dumb, slutty/prude, frivolous
  - c. How have these stereotypes been traditionally used in alcohol advertisements?
- 2. Skyy Vodka depicts women as submissive (ad examples)**
  - a. Separating the head, face, voice, brain, eyes from the woman's body and/or appendages dehumanizes the women
  - b. Page layout frequently puts men over top of women or positioned between women's legs ready to insert.
  - c. Men fully dressed, women are not. Men are in action and women are static.
- 3. Women as sexual objects (ad examples)**
  - a. Women inside of or part of the actual product, or a replacement for the whole product
  - b. Women holding or placed next to or seductively touching phallic images, most often the bottle of alcohol
  - c. Women scantily clad and frequently positioned in sexually provocative ways, particularly with other women.