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Transforming feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis: A collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalytic theory

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The Ohio State University, 1994
TRANSFORMING FEMINIST RHETORICAL THEORY
AND SCHIZOANALYSIS:
A COLLABORATION BETWEEN FEMINIST RHETORICAL THEORY
AND SCHIZOANALYTIC THEORY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

On either side is Oedipus, the double impasse. And if a schizo is produced here as an entity, this occurs for the simple reason that there is no other means of escaping this double path, where normality is no less blocked than neurosis, and where the solution offers no more of a way out than does the problem.¹

Like many of Deleuze's terms, I take de-coding to be a transformer: you wind it up, insert it in a given conceptual problematic, and it goes to work transforming old concepts and making new connections with historical contexts. It's like the Duracell-powered mechanical toy that suddenly interrupts what appeared to be a program or an other commercial, and transforms it into mere background for the battery ad: "de-coding" interrupts the "strategies of containment" that keep critical methodologies bottled up within disciplinary boundaries, transforming disciplinary content into background and foregrounding (or indeed forging) new connections with Real history instead.²

The relationship between feminist rhetorical scholarship and other theoretical perspectives always has

¹Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992) 80, emphasis added.

been ambivalent. On one hand, almost all of the major theoretical paradigms that are popular in the academy are silent about feminist concerns. Consequently, feminist rhetorical scholars have had to revision theoretical paradigms from feminist perspectives before utilizing them for feminist rhetorical scholarship. Once revisioned from a feminist perspective, many of the theoretical paradigms have offered profound and important insights into forms of oppression and patriarchy. Many feminists scholars, however, argue that theoretical perspectives, even after revisioning, remain problematic for feminism because revisioning only alters an original theory rather than transforming it.

For example, historically, "liberal" feminism claimed that the route to equality for women was for women to gain access to the same arenas as men. Feminists, however, soon discovered that the "add-women-and-stir" approach did not fundamentally alter the masculine biases that drive liberalism. Moreover, by only advocating partial change, women found themselves caught in a double bind when they realized that the system did not fundamentally change; women were "given" entry into male arenas and gained access to equality but only on the condition that they did not challenge the current forms of domination--women had to be just like men in the system. In short, the add-women strategy both gave women more access to male arenas and also
led feminism to contribute to its own oppression by not fundamentally challenging the central principles of domination.

Revising theoretical paradigms from feminist perspectives is also problematic because the engagement between the two remains unequal; the dominant theory maintains its place as the original, while feminism adjusts the original. To date, feminism is left in the position of being the younger sister of male theories. Consequently, engagement between feminism and founding theoretical paradigms remains deeply troubling for feminist scholars because they have learned, as Turkle explains, that "you cannot use something that contributes to its camouflage."³

Such dilemmas raise questions for feminist rhetorical scholars: can they ever fully step out of the patriarchal system to theorize from a state of feminist "purity"? Is there any "untainted" or "pure" paradigm that feminist rhetorical scholars can employ? If not, and existing theories are only altered, then feminist theorists are caught in a perplexing double bind that contains two competing messages: If feminists ignore the theoretical tools of the academy, they lose powerful insights into the systems of oppression that harm women, and even when revised, the theoretical tools of the academy may camouflage

feminist concerns. Feminist rhetorical scholars may be at
the same kind of theoretical double impasse that Deleuze and
Guattari address: when utilizing the dominant theoretical
paradigms, feminists cannot escape the double path, where
"normal" scholarship is blocked and where the solution
offers no more of a way out than does the problem. In order
to step out of the theoretical double bind, feminist
scholars must move from engagements with other theoretical
paradigms to a collaboration with a dominant theory that
offers the tools to transform old theoretical paradigms,
disrupts strategies of containment, and offers the means
necessary for making new connections to end oppression.
I suggest that schizoanalysis offers tools that
feminist rhetorical scholars can use in order to dismantle
permanently the theoretical double bind. Schizoanalysis
offers a route out of the theoretical double bind for
feminists while simultaneously offering a form of
collaboration that is mutually transformative. To date,
however, feminist rhetorical scholarship and schizoanalysis
have yet to be connected. Hence, in this study, I attempt
to theorize the connections between schizoanalysis and
feminist rhetorical scholarship in order to transform both
schizoanalysis and feminist rhetorical theory.
In order to address adequately all of the areas that
are necessary to connect feminist rhetorical scholarship and
schizoanalysis, a somewhat long detour through the
literature on feminist rhetorical scholarship and an initial explanation of schizoanalysis are necessary. Once done, however, the study will be positioned to address the research questions that guide the project. The best place to begin is to understand what constitutes feminist rhetorical scholarship in the academy.

Feminism and Rhetorical Scholarship

Feminist rhetorical scholarship is a relatively new area within communication that is continuing to evolve. Agreement does not even exist among feminist communication scholars about what feminism is. For the purposes of this project, I will use Catherine MacKinnon’s definition of feminism, which brings to the forefront the fundamental connection among sexuality, patriarchy, and gender. In defining feminism, MacKinnon asserts that "sexuality is to feminism what work is to marxism."4 MacKinnon believes that a definition of feminism ought to begin with sexuality—in a move parallel to that made by Marxism with work—because "both sexuality and work focus on that which is most one's own, that which most makes one the being the theory addresses, as that which is most taken away by what the theory criticizes."5 Sexuality and work are the basic components for analysis: all humans are sexual and must

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5 MacKinnon 48.
engage in some form of work to be human. Sexuality, in MacKinnon's view, is "the social process that creates, organizes, expresses and directs desire." Sexuality, however, cannot be the exclusive focus in a MacKinnian perspective because social understandings about sexuality are translated into key social forms—gender and patriarchy—that are historically specific and fundamentally related to sexuality. A feminist focus on sexuality, then, includes a focus on how gender and patriarchy mold, direct, and organize social relations between the two sexes. In this view, gender and patriarchy are viewed as analogous to the role of class and private property in Marxism; gender and patriarchy underlie social structures and social relations and are as pervasive as class and private property are to Marxism. MacKinnon's definition is particularly helpful because she brings to the forefront the specific focus that marks feminism off from other forms of scholarship and allows for multiple avenues in the exploration of sexuality, gender, and patriarchy.

Uncovering what constitutes feminist scholarship in communication is also important in order to situate the study. As with a definition of feminism, there is no definitive agreement about what constitutes feminist communication scholarship. A unifying core and a foundational principle of feminist communication scholarship

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6MacKinnon 49.
is feminism's challenge to dominant paradigms— theoretical, social, and political. Also central to feminist scholarship is the refusal to engage in codification of its principles into one feminist theory. Feminist scholarship, then, both nurtures and critiques dominant theories and itself, without advocating one theory. Feminist scholars' refusal to advocate the definitive feminist theory is also indicative of feminism's stance toward self-reflexive critique; feminism problematizes both its own history and the history of communication theory so that it rewrites, reviews, reinterprets, and challenges "traditional communication theory."7

Feminist rhetorical scholars also do not agree on a single definition of rhetoric, although there seems to be implicit agreement that the construction of sexuality and gender is inherently a rhetorical process; as Foss argues, "constructions of gender are accomplished through rhetoric."8 The rhetorical focus for feminist rhetorical scholars is on how symbols are used to influence thoughts, actions, and/or beliefs in constructions of gender. Feminist rhetoricians bring to the forefront the analysis of

how gender is constructed in both rhetorical paradigms and rhetorical artifacts. By highlighting gender and sexuality in rhetorical scholarship, feminist rhetorical scholars have challenged and continue to challenge rhetorical theory and criticism.

Foss, Foss, and Trapp argue that there are two primary stages in the feminist challenge to rhetorical scholarship. First is the "inclusion stage," in which women's communication is included as data in rhetorical studies. The inclusion stage is broken into four areas of study: (1) language; (2) differences between women and men's communication; (3) great women speakers; and (4) women's communication as a separate culture.

Historically, as women's communication began to be valued in its own right, many of the rhetorical traditions

9Although feminist rhetoricians seem to center their analyses on gender, and MacKinnon and I argue for sexuality as the central focus of feminism, I believe that the positions are compatible because of the intimate and symbiotic connection between gender and sexuality. By analyzing gender—a key social form of sexuality—feminist rhetoricians are analyzing implicitly how sexuality is constructed.

that were theorized from men's experiences began to "seem inappropriate and irrelevant." As the inappropriateness of rhetorical traditions began to become apparent, the second stage of the feminist challenge to the rhetorical tradition developed.

The second stage of feminist rhetorical scholarship is the "revisionist stage," which involves the use of the information gathered about women's rhetorical practices to revise and reformulate traditional notions of rhetoric and rhetorical theory. The primary emphasis in this stage is the "re-turn" to traditional rhetorical constructs from a feminist perspective in order to uncover if and how women are present in the constructs and then to "re-vision" them to include women's experiences. Most often, in revising rhetorical constructs, scholars employ rhetorical analyses from a feminist perspective in order to uncover the gender constructions at work in the rhetorical process.

More recently, a third stage of feminist literature, best described as "transformative," is developing that takes the feminist challenge beyond revising. Transformative feminist scholarship challenges the "roots"

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11Foss, Foss, and Trapp 284.

12Sonja K. Foss, personal conversation, April 1993.

13In describing how best to situate my project, Sonja Foss and I began to realize that a third stage, compatible with but moving beyond the Foss, Foss, and Trapp paradigm, was beginning to develop in feminist rhetorical scholarship.
and foundations of the rhetorical tradition. A scholar who revised rhetorical concepts would utilize data from women’s speech to alter the boundaries of what counted as speech making, for example, whereas a transformative scholar would challenge what constitutes the form of speech making. In short, although related, revisionist scholarship and transformative scholarship may differ most in the degree to which traditional forms are altered; revisionist scholars expand boundaries, while transformative scholars permanently alter what counts as the boundaries.

Although all three stages of feminist theorizing are important to feminist rhetorical scholarship, I will review only the second and third stages of the literature here. Stage one is excluded from my project because the purpose of my project is not to include women’s data; rather, my project begins in stage two by revising feminist rhetorical scholarship with schizoanalysis and then moves beyond to transform the boundaries of feminist rhetorical scholarship. Stage-one scholarship is also excluded because the primary arena for my project is the meta-level realm of feminist knowledge and feminist theorizing rather than the inclusion of women’s data to revision rhetorical theory. Finally, stage one is excluded from the literature review because, as a theoretical project, my project engages in feminist theorizing that transforms knowledge systems or paradigms from a feminist theoretical base. Thus, although my project
owes a heavy debt to stage-one theorizing, it does not fit into the review because that scholarship does not emphasize the radical transformation of both rhetorical and feminist theory. The best place to begin for this project is to begin with stage-two scholarship in order to lay the groundwork to move toward a further theorizing of stage three.

**Revisioning Theorizing**

The second stage of feminist rhetorical scholarship is the "revisionist stage," which involves the use of the information gathered about women's rhetorical practices to revise and reformulate traditional notions of rhetoric and rhetorical theory. This stage is exemplified by Jane DeGroot's dissertation, "A Reconceptualization of the Enthymeme From a Feminist Perspective." Her study draws on the feminist literature on women's generation of knowledge from the theorizing of Carol Gilligan in *In a Different Voice*; Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule in *Women's Ways of Knowing*; and Nel Noddings' *Caring* to re-vision the enthymeme. DeGroot concluded that the basic features of a revised enthymematic process as it is employed by feminist women include "subject matter of a relational nature, a developmental process underwritten by an ethic of care, and expressions of knowledge that are contextual and demonstrate
Sally Miller Gearhart's primary focus is to re-vision the definition of rhetoric in "The Womanization of Rhetoric." Gearhart fundamentally challenges traditional notions of rhetoric as the intent to persuade. Gearhart maintains that "any intent to persuade is an act of violence." She acknowledges that humans change each other daily because our "physical bodies respond to energy; even without our will they react in measurable ways to objects or people generating high energy." In fact, she recognizes that energy exchanges and interaction occur all the time. Gearhart draws upon Einstein's reduction of matter to energy for the foundation of her claim that it "is only in density that the energy fields surrounding each of us differs from the solid energy that is our physical bodies; it is only in density that the energy we generate in our minds or our psyches differs from our auras." Because of the constant interaction among energy forms, our physical being, our movements, and our thoughts are all forms of interacting and exchanging energy. Consequently, Gearhart believes that the acts of wishing someone ill and stabbing them do not

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16 Gearhart 196.

17 Gearhart 196.
significantly differ. Gearhart concludes that to change others is not itself a violation; rather, an act of violence occurs when one person intentionally attempts to change another, a violence that drives what she labels the "conquest" or "conversion" models of rhetoric.

In order to honor the fundamental exchange between energy and without causing violence through conquest, Gearhart proposes a view of rhetoric in which the purpose is for communication to co-create environments where all participants can change themselves, if they choose to do so. Rather than a rhetoric of conquest, Gearhart proposes an alternative model of rhetoric that employs "a mutual generation of energy for the purposes of growth . . . ."18 Because these kinds of communication practices tend to be similar to women's communication practices, Gearhart concludes that rhetoric and the communication discipline should become "womanized."

Celeste Condit's diagnosis of rhetoric is more optimistic than Gearhart's because Condit argues that rhetorical scholarship and feminist scholarship are both "oppositional practices." Consequently, rhetorical criticism has permitted some entry of "feminist ideas and activities . . . ."19 Condit argues, however, that much work still is

18Gearhart 198.

19Celeste Michelle Condit, "Opposites in an Oppositional Practice: Rhetorical Criticism and Feminism," Transforming Visions: Feminist Critiques in Communication, ed. Sheryl
needed to alter the male-dominated academy and the concurrent masculine biases that most often dominate rhetorical criticism. Condit also claims that because rhetoric has been labeled, at varying times, both a "masculine" and "feminine" activity, the ambiguity in the gendered preferences of rhetorical practices "suggests that rhetoric, rather than being either a masculine pursuit of a feminine deviation, may constitute a true hermaphrodite."\textsuperscript{20}

Condit proposes the concept of a \textit{gynandrous} rhetoric in order to revision and alter the boundaries of rhetorical scholarship. She suggests that \textit{gynandrous} denotes "respect for a variety of differences of human gender--not just between men and women, but among a broad range of different ways people have gendered themselves, all containing their positive elements, including androgynous, lesbian, feminine, tough, wimp, butch, gay and even the flexible multifaceted few who can dance through many of these genderings in different rhetorical contexts."\textsuperscript{21} Condit's reconceptualization of gender opens the space for an understanding of gender that attends to the infinite possibilities of gender rather than restricting gender to the traditional dichotomy of male versus female.

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\textsuperscript{20}Condit 206.

\textsuperscript{21}Condit 221.
Barbara Biesecker’s writing in the area of the history of rhetoric assesses the inclusion stage of feminist writing and, simultaneously, revisions the concept of techne from a feminist perspective. Biesecker argues that although worthy, the inclusion of women, specifically through the situating of "great women speakers" into the history of rhetorical scholarship, is problematic because adding women is an "affirmative action" approach that "signifies nothing less than the power of the center to affirm certain voices and to discount others." Hence, although women’s voices are heard and included in this kind of scholarship, in the long run, individuals are valorized at the expense of collectives, and feminists scholars have not challenged the underlying center of power that sets the standards for rhetorical canons.

In order to push the limits of dominating frameworks, Biesecker draws on Foucault’s and Derrida’s poststructural theories to recover Aristotle’s concept of techne. Biesecker claims that techne "can be used to refer to a kind of ‘getting through’ or ad hoc ‘making do’ by a subject whose resources are necessarily located in and circumscribed by the field within which she operates, but whose enunciation, in always and already exceeding and falling short of its intending subject, harbors within it the

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possibility of disrupting, fragmenting, and altering the horizon of human action out of which it emerges.\textsuperscript{23} In short, Biesecker calls for a gender-sensitive history of rhetoric that challenges the individualism of adding "great women speakers" and "presses for a feminist intervention into the history of rhetoric that persistently critiques its own practices of what Aristotle identified as 'the available means of persuasion.'\textsuperscript{24}

Feminist scholars who question traditional theoretical paradigms also are engaged in the process of revisioning. A significant amount of feminist theoretical revisioning in communication studies comes from cultural studies, often from a feminist-Marxist perspective or a feminist-psychoanalytic perspective. As such feminist theoretical revisionings have developed, many feminist theorists are "including varieties and combinations of Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism."\textsuperscript{25} Feminist rhetorical scholars also can utilize revisioned theoretical paradigms in order to enrich the understanding of gendered experiences and cultural constructions of gender.

Transformative Theorizing

Stage three of feminist theorizing--transformative

\textsuperscript{23}Biesecker 155.

\textsuperscript{24}Biesecker 157.

theorizing—has begun to develop within feminist scholarship and warrants further attention in this literature review. Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin's theorizing extends Gearhart's notion of creating change without engaging in traditional notions of persuasion. Their primary focus is theorizing a rhetoric that "centers on the creation of an environment that facilitates growth and change . . . ."\textsuperscript{26} Foss and Griffin describe a model of six different conditions that facilitate change: safety, value, freedom of identity, choice, autonomous interdependence, and order.\textsuperscript{27} They suggest that, if taken seriously, the model they propose for a feminist rhetoric "is very much a 'Gorbachev proposal' in that we have written ourselves out of the discipline and tradition of rhetoric, with its focus on persuasion."\textsuperscript{28} Foss and Griffin's extension of Gearhart's revisioning of rhetoric demonstrates a feature of the transformative stage of feminist theorizing: if taken seriously, such a re-writing of a "traditional" rhetorical concept leads to a radical transformation of rhetorical scholarship.

The revisioning of traditional rhetorical concepts is


\textsuperscript{27}Foss and Griffin 3.

\textsuperscript{28}Foss and Griffin 5.
vital for beginning the process of creating a more inclusive or expansive understanding of rhetoric. Feminist revisions, however, remain locked into a perspective that still privileges the original—often "male" perspectives—and theories of the world. Unfortunately, the tools that feminist rhetoricians utilize in revisions remain tainted by the original male perspectives and privileges. Also, because the traditional concepts are privileged, the meeting of feminist theory with traditional rhetorical concepts and theories is not a collaborative meeting between the two perspectives.

The implications of employing tools that are tainted, albeit less tainted than they are in the earlier stages of challenge, are troubling because, even though the tools may offer liberation, at the same time, the tools still can camouflage the forms of oppression that feminism hopes to uncover and eradicate. In short, feminist theorists cannot fully understand forms of oppression using theories and constructs that contribute to the camouflage of feminism. In such an approach, too, the disciplinary boundaries of rhetoric remain unchallenged. What feminist rhetorical theory needs are tools that transform theories and forms of oppression and that produce a theoretical collaboration positioned toward mutual change and transformation of both theoretical paradigms. I suggest that a collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis can
accomplish this, transforming feminist rhetorical scholarship and further adding to stage-three feminist rhetoric.

In order to understand more fully the collaboration between feminism and schizoanalysis, the basic tenets of schizoanalysis must be elaborated. Then, a review of previous feminist theorizing about schizoanalysis is necessary.

Schizoanalysis

Schizoanalysis has developed in the writing of Felix Guattari, a French psychiatrist, and Gilles Deleuze, a French philosopher. The foundations for schizoanalysis are laid out in Deleuze and Guattari's book, *The Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Schizoanalysis, a materialist psychiatry, is a post-Lacanian psychoanalysis that "apparently subsumes everything: Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, anthropology, history, literature, philosophy, and so on."29 In subsuming "everything," Deleuze and Guattari adopt much of the groundwork of previous theoretical paradigms at the same time that they reject and move beyond the groundwork in order to transform many central tenets of the theories.

Their approach to transforming theoretical concepts has been

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described as "guerrilla warfare"\textsuperscript{30} because they raid the conceptual tools of established theories and transform them for use in schizoanalysis. The result of the schizoanalytic approach of raiding paradigms is that schizoanalysis itself is not a theoretical system. Rather, schizoanalysis supplies tools or a toolbox that can be used by theorists. Because schizoanalysis is so all encompassing, the specific tools to employ are left up to each individual theorist. In fact, in an interview with Michel Cressole about the \textit{Anti-Oedipus}, Deleuze said that, ultimately, readers should take whatever worked best for them from the book and schizoanalysis.\textsuperscript{31}

The review of schizoanalysis that follows extracts four interrelated key concepts from schizoanalysis that will be used as the tools that guide this project. The components are: the critique of Oedipal subjectivity, the advent of borderline-narcissistic subjectivity, Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of contextualization, and the critique of interpretation.

\textbf{Critique of Oedipal Subjectivity}

As a post-Lacanian psychoanalysis, an issue that is central to schizoanalysis is that of Oedipal subjectivity; a


critique of Oedipal subjectivity is the linchpin of schizoanalytic theorizing. As a "critical" theory, schizoanalysis is both poststructuralist and postmodernist. Schizoanalysis retains strands of poststructuralism's understanding of the "axiom that subjectivity is an effect of social codes" and its insistence that schizoanalytic theorizing attend to the particular, historical context in analysis. It is also postmodern in its attention to the loss of the subject of modernity; Deleuze and Guattari call "into question the very foundations and premises of what we recognize as 'thinking.'"

All theories of subjectivity or of the self, including schizoanalysis, owe a debt to Freud's work, specifically Freud's introduction of the Oedipus complex as the key to the development of subjectivity and the self. In theorizing the Oedipus complex, Freud believed that infants' relationships with their parents are critical because the development of self is contingent on the parent-child relationship and incestual desire for the parent. In developing the self, both male and female infants experience the Oedipus complex—desire for the mother that rivals the all-powerful, castrating father. The initial attempt at

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resolution of the Oedipus complex, however, is different for male and female children. For boys, the threat of castration leads to an identification and alliance with the father. For girls, the lack of a penis is seen as a failure of provision from the mother, which leads the girl to reject hostilely the mother and to a desire for a penis; penis envy then is replaced with an unconscious wish to bear the father a child. For Freud, the resolution of the Oedipus complex is a life-long struggle that is never fully resolved, and the Oedipus complex remains the nucleus of desire. This desire lacks fulfillment, is continually repressed, and is the core of sexual identity. As the complex declines, the superego is formed, and societal rules and taboos become internalized into the psyche; thus, the Oedipus complex initiates children into societal structures, laws, and taboos.

In historicizing both the Oedipus complex and psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari argue that although Freud’s greatest discovery was the discovery of the unconscious (a discovery Deleuze and Guattari utilize in their own theorizing), Freud betrayed the logic of the unconscious by re-alienating desire into the Oedipus complex, thus subordinating desire to the family triangle of Mommy-Daddy-Me, itself a product of capitalist society. Deleuze and Guattari also see shortcomings in Lacanian psychoanalysis. They argue that although Lacan abstracted
the Oedipus complex outside of the nuclear family, thus pushing beyond Freud's work, he situated desire in a semiotic triangle founded on a concept of lack. In order to understand Deleuze and Guattari's critique of lack, a brief review of Lacan's theorizing about subjectivity is necessary.

Lacanian subjectivity employs two different, although related, notions of psychic splitting in coming to subjectivity. Lacan argues that infants have an immature psyche that he punningly refers to as the "l'homelette" to mean a human omelette with fluid, ever-changing boundaries in which infants lack control of their bodies. At this stage, Lacan maintains that the psyche has no sense of self or coherent self-image, and part-object representations predominate. The infant begins to develop a coherent sense of self "in the 'mirror stage' (his term for Klein's 'depressive stage'), when its reflection gives the still-immature infant a sense of its own coherence as a 'whole object'." Lacan maintains that the coherent mirror image of a whole ego is and always will be an imaginary fiction. Consequently, for Lacan "the split subject . . . signals the fundamental incompatibility of disparate drives with any function of unification or mastery attributable to the

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In short, subjectivity in the Lacanian paradigm is always a misrecognition of an imaginary fictional construct that is doomed to be unfulfilled in the Symbolic Order (the capital $\mathbb{S}$ is used to represent the structure of language)—governed by law-of-the-father and understood through the conventions and norms that are the linguistic Oedipal complex—that demands that desire must be met within and only within culturally sanctioned forms. The subject, then, is always split between two orientations: (1) the fictional search for wholeness of the "little s," or the Imaginary (the pre-Oedipal, pre-linguistic ideal ego), in which incomplete satisfaction is experienced through part-objects; and (2) the search for fulfillment of desire and the always inevitable dissatisfaction in the Symbolic Order. The Real (the subject's libidinal resources or needs and the field of brute existence over which the Imaginary and the Symbolic range in their rival attempts to control the Real) is forever ruptured and impossible to satisfy fully the moment the subject enters into the signifying practices of the Symbolic. Hence, the subject is always split in two ways—through the fictional search for wholeness and through language—which also forever dooms the subject to dissatisfaction, misrecognition, and a desire that lacks satisfaction.

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Holland, Baudelaire and Schizoanalysis 35.
For Lacan, gender identity is also acquired and confirmed the moment an infant enters into the Mommy-Daddy-Me semiotic Oedipus, which is phallocentric and governed by the law-of-the-father. The entry into the semiotic Oedipus leaves an infant with one of two choices in gender acquisition. Either the infant identifies with the father and develops a male identity, or the infant takes the father as the object of desire and develops a female identity. The semiotic acquisition of identity for Lacanian subjectivity is founded on a disjunctive gender dichotomy that rests on an "either/or" foundation. Entering the Symbolic necessarily means adopting a gender identity that is ordered around a binary opposition, an either/or disjunction. Consequently, as an either/or disjunction, binary gender is at the core of Oedipal subjectivity.

Deleuze and Guattari provide a critique of Lacan's position that desire is fueled by lack—that the subject lacks wholeness and lacks satisfaction in the Symbolic—by introducing psychoanalysis to Bataille's anthropological theorizing about the general economy of excess. They

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36Georges Bataille argues that the basic fact humans disregard is that there is a bombardment of excess energy on the surface of the globe from the sun that never can be completely absorbed. Consequently, the general economy of the planet is one that is "wealthy," with excessive energy that has no limits, only expenditure. Moreover, the excessive energy also transgresses boundaries and limits. Thus, the excessive economy also can be described as an economy of abundance that is transgressive, without limits or boundaries. In misunderstanding the basic economy, humans have implemented a rational economy that runs on a
argue that desire is the investment of excessive human energy for satisfaction. Desire, then, is not in the subject; rather, the subject is in desire. What is primary for Deleuze and Guattari is desire's connection to the environment. As an investment of excessive human energy, desire has no organization, no pre-ordained form, and no specific and particular investment. Desire is the radically free investment of energy without any boundaries that is the unconscious. The investment of human energy into an object (person, food, and/or sexual activity) occurs without any limits, boundaries, or specifics. The process is always an on-going and continuous process because desire has no permanent object or structure but only continual flows of connections. Consequently, there are only connections and connections and connections of the investment of energy into objects.

Radically free desire also knows nothing of castration and, therefore, is not structured around an understanding of gender fueled by lack. Desire in the unconscious, then, lacks nothing and, instead, is fueled by excess energy by connecting through multiple part-objects in a transexuality. 

logic of particular economies or systems that are conceived with limited ends, rather than viewing energy in its general economy. Deleuze and Guattari transform and expand Bataille's notion to their theorizing about a general economy of desire that also runs on the logic of excess. For a further clarification of Bataille's theorizing, see Georges Bataille, "Part I" and "The Notion of Expenditure," The Accursed Share (New York: Zone, 1988) 19-41, 116-29.
The result of transexuality is that a woman contains "as many men as the man, and the man as many women, all capable of entering—men with women, women with men—into relations of production of desire that overturn the statistical order of the sexes."³⁷ Desire and subjectivity do not have two sexes; rather, there are an infinite number of sexes or what Deleuze and Guattari term n sexes. Within the Deleuze and Guattarian paradigm, gender is accounted for in two ways. First, binary gender is considered the trap of Oedipal subjectivity as the either/or, us/them disjunction. Second, through the utopian n sexes, gender moves beyond the dualism to a form of gender that exceeds boundaries by being unbounded, unmeasurable, and inexhaustible. An important clarification about the form of gender that Deleuze and Guattari offer is necessary: utopian gender is not a form of "post-gendered" subjectivity. Rather, there are an infinite number of possibilities for gender that overturn the gender dichotomy that drives psychoanalysis.

The critique of gendered Oedipal subjectivity suggests, then, that psychoanalytic understandings of subjectivity that perpetuate gender dichotomies remain trapped in an understanding of subjectivity that takes lack as its linchpin and forever dooms subjectivity to misrecognition. In order to refuse the traps of gendered Oedipal subjectivity, schizoanalytic theorizing about subjectivity,

³⁷Deleuze and Guattari 296.
according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the "variable analysis of the n sexes in a subject, beyond the anthropomorphic representation that society imposes on this subject, and with which it represents its own sexuality." As a radically free form of investment—without any specific pre-ordained gendered object—desire is considered a schizophrenic process for Deleuze and Guattari. Desire as a schizophrenic process is not the clinical understanding of schizophrenia but the radically free flow of investment without determination. Schizoanalysis radically transforms psychoanalytic understandings of subjectivity by arguing that radically free desire is schizophrenic, and a radically free subjectivity is the schizophrenic process.

By transforming psychoanalytic understandings of subjectivity from an Oedipalized subjectivity to a radically free form of subjectivity, Deleuze and Guattari offer insight into a non-restricted desire. In current culture, however, desire is not radically free and remains restricted within a certain form of psyche formation. Because schizoanalysis insists on an understanding of subjectivity as a semiotic effect, the most important factor in determining psyche formation is the form of semiosis operating in a particular social formation. The semiosis

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38 Deleuze and Guattari 296.

39 Holland, "Schizoanalysis: the Postmodern Contextualization of Psychoanalysis" 408.
that operates under market capitalism creates a specific form of subjectivity that both frees and continues to restrict desire and is best described as a borderline-narcissistic subjectivity.

**Borderline Narcissism**

In the *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari present a typology of social forms and the concurrent semiotic processes that occur in each ideal form—savage society, despotic society, and capitalist society—in order to argue that the semiotic process that governs capitalism is decoding:

Capital's basic logic is a social process of "decoding" and "recoding" of desire. De-coding is Deleuze's term for the historical processes Max Weber and George Lukacs called rationalization and reification: roughly, the replacement of meaning by abstract calculation as the basis for social order.40

Deleuze argues that the process of decoding that governs the capitalist market and the predominance of exchange value is an axiomatic process whereby quantified factors of production (such as raw materials, skills, and knowledges) are joined together "in order to extract a differential surplus; de-coding both supports and results from axiomatization, transforming meaningful qualities into

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40 Holland, "Baudelaire and Schizoanalysis: Some Illustrations of 'De-coding' at work" 1. In more recent writing about schizoanalysis, authors who use de-coding and re-coding have dropped the hyphen. Unless quoting Deleuze and Guattari directly, I will employ *decoding* and *recoding* when discussing the concepts.
calculable quantities."\(^{41}\) The core process of decoding in market capitalism is to strip away qualitative meaning in order to quantify a calculable meaning. So, for example, the academy employs a form of decoding by paying a higher salary for those who produce the most publications—a quantifiable calculation—with less regard for the quality of the publication (and the unquantifiable value of teaching).

The consequence of the capitalist logic of decoding is that the market creates a market society that undermines and aggressively eliminates all pre-existing meanings and codes. The basis for capitalist society, then, is "not knit together by qualitative relations but by abstract, quantitative ones—by the 'cash nexus.'"\(^{42}\) Deleuze and Guattari view decoding as the positive moment in capitalist society because decoding frees desire from its capture and distortion. Decoding also can be employed as a tool in analysis in order to unleash and free restricted desire. Holland's "winding up" and insertion of decoding to free desire in his study of Baudelaire is an example of such use of the decoding tool.

Although decoding is the freeing moment in capitalism's logic, the logic always has a double movement because the

\(^{41}\)Holland, "Baudelaire and Schizoanalysis: Some Illustrations of 'De-coding' at work" 2.

\(^{42}\)Holland, "Schizoanalysis: the Postmodern Contextualization of Psychoanalysis" 406.
market system must tie desire back into codes to realize privately appropriated surplus value (to restrict the marketplace to a specific economy). Decoding, then, is always opposed by recoding, which overlays freed libidinal desire with codes. Recoding also operates in order to "endow this or that fragment of social life with a semblance of meaning so that various groups can work, administer, consume and so forth." In consumer culture, the nuclear family is no longer the "haven in a heartless world"; rather, the nuclear family is the very locus of consumption and recodes desire through consumption. Consumer capitalism, however, because of the capital logic of monopoly capitalism that constantly strives to reproduce more and better products/commodities, never can fully satisfy desire, even recoded desire. Consumer society thus contains a fundamental contradiction; it both decodes and frees desire and recodes and reconstricts desire. Moreover, the relationship between recoding and decoding in market capitalism is that decoded human value is overlaid with recoded exchange and use value.

In the Deleuze and Guattarian paradigm, the logic of decoding and recoding that drives the semiotic formation of capitalism is also the semiotic formation that creates individual psyches and the unconscious. The primary effects

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of decoding and recoding are that decoding frees desire, and recoding restricts desire. When decoding reaches a certain threshold of intensity, the predominant form of psychological disturbance is a culture of narcissistic subjects who have a libidinal structure "of capitalism itself: narcissism manifests what we might call the 'capital-logic' of contemporary culture." The result is that desire is always unsatisfied and unable to synthesize fully good and bad part-objects; subjects are caught in the double bind of recoding and decoding. Schizoanalysis, however, transforms and historicizes the disturbance of narcissistic subjectivity into a subjectivity that is best described as "borderline narcissism": a psyche that borders between the decoding of free schizophrenic desire (the freeing of revolutionary desire) and recoding of socially stipulated boundaried desire (which reconstrains the revolutionary potential of schizophrenia).

Borderline-narcissism, thus, encompasses splitting in two different, but related, forms. The borderline condition, manifest in the decoding of the ego into a fragmented, incoherent weak ego structure, is a result of ego splitting. Through the narcissistic reaction of recoding, the subject utilizes splitting as a defense mechanism that responds to the weak ego structure. Thus,

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44 Holland, "Schizoanalysis: The Postmodern Contextualization of Psychoanalysis" 412.
borderline narcissism refers to the subject's reaction (recoding) to the weak ego structure that results from decoding. In other words, splitting has two connected meanings: it is both the fundamental cause of ego weakness and a central defense mechanism of a borderline-narcissistic subjectivity.

Object-relations theorists have developed a specific diagnostic content for borderline-narcissitic patients. Borderline-narcissistic patients exhibit an intensification and pathological fixation on splitting, which leads to the process of black-and-white thinking. The defense mechanisms of the borderline condition are used to manage the anxiety that results from the subject's weak ego structures; they include: a denial of emotions, a sense of omnipotence, primitive idealization, projection, devaluation of others, and a deep underlying insecurity. Because the splitting process is a subject's primary defense mechanism, alternating, contradictory states of primitive idealization and devaluation are kept separate or "split apart" so that the borderline narcissist can manage the anxiety of the weak

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ego organization. Because the contradictory states are kept separate, often, when in one state, the borderline-narcissist cannot recall having had any contradictory feelings about another state. Moreover, the oscillation between good and bad occurs abruptly, without warning. Although the borderline-narcissist oscillates among states, the borderline is "capable of reality testing, that is, distinguishing the self from the non-self."\textsuperscript{46}

As with the defense mechanisms of the borderline condition, the traits of the narcissistic structure also can be found and are characterized by "boredom, restlessness, contempt for others, envy, grandiosity that hides feelings of worthlessness, shallow relationships, lack of empathy and lack of principle."\textsuperscript{47} The narcissistic internal world "contains idealized self representations, shadows of others, and dreaded enemies."\textsuperscript{48} Narcissists also have a great need for others, but because they fear arousing the dormant envy and hatred that resulted from the early frustration of their needs, narcissists fear dependence. Narcissists, accordingly, end up frustrated and unable to be fulfilled because they constantly oscillate between needing and fearing others.

\textsuperscript{46}Layton and Schapiro 17.
\textsuperscript{47}Layton and Schapiro 17.
\textsuperscript{48}Layton and Schapiro 17.
narcissistic subjectivity is used primarily for recoding. The grandiose sense of self, for example, is a recoding of the borderline condition, a recoding that attempts to counter the weak and incoherent ego structure. In addition, narcissistic recoding is employed as a means to split off parts of the self in order to maintain a comfortable distance from the undesirable parts of the self.

When Deleuze and Guattari, in the Anti-Oedipus, transform psychoanalysis by arguing that Real social factors account for any particular psyche formation, including borderline narcissism, they also transform the Lacanian view of causality. Because actual social factors—instead of the linguistic "Oedipal triangle"—always play the determining role in psychological phenomena, memories of infantile experiences are also constructed "apres coup."

"Schizoanalysis also transforms psychic causality from a linear model (Kernberg’s model) by extending both the Freudian and Lacanian conception of apres coup or "deferred action." Lacan drew on the Freudian notion of nachtraglichkeit, or "deferred action," in which Freud suggested that childhood events only become meaningful and psychologically effective after events occur; we have memories of childhood but not memories from childhood. Lacan’s view of the psyche and childhood memories, like his view of language, draws on the Freudian insight and extends it by applying the structural understanding that "words appearing early in a sentence only take on meaning when read ‘retroactively’ in the context of the completed sentence (or the entire discourse) . . . " (Holland, 295). As a result of the extension, the Lacanian view of psychic causality is not linear; rather, it is that meaning(s) attributed to earlier events signify more than the events themselves. For a more detailed discussion of apres coup, see Eugene Holland, Baudelaire and Schizoanalysis: Sociopoetics of Modernism (Boston: Cambridge UP, 1993) 294-96.
For schizoanalysis, "memories of infantile experience . . . serve at most as a screen onto which strictly contemporary concerns are projected and worked through." Causality for Deleuze and Guattari also is not linear; instead, Real social factors play the determining role in the particular form of psychic life and memory.

Capitalism and non-Oedipalized psychic development are both positive and negative for Deleuze and Guattari. Decoding is positive because it frees Oedipalized subjects from socially stipulated desire. Recoding, in constrast, is negative because it constrains freed desire back into socially stipulated forms—those of the state, the legal system, and bureaucracies. A primary form of semiosis found in bureaucracies, which are isolated from everyday life, is the abstract rationality of formal administration. For example, the welfare system is a system of mini-despotism that recodes women's desire into appropriate administrative agencies that "satisfy" it through the distribution of "appropriate" and predetermined benefits. In short, bureaucracies recode freed desire into socially appropriate, predetermined objects of desire. Recoding also colonizes and imperializes desire by channeling it through "proper" identifications that are restrictive and segmenting; your parents are your parents and nothing else, your sister is

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your sister and nothing else. Colonized desire is also controlled by psychoanalysis' continued insistence on and perpetuation of Oedipal subjectivity and identification, which are restrictive and oppositional. I am told, for example, that I am Dick and Nancy's daughter, and I do not have any other identity within my family triangle.

Under the capitalist market system, recoding is also at work as the basic function of what Jaques Attali refers to as a "designer" or "programmer." According to Attali, programmers endow and recode more or less worthless objects with semiotic surplus value (designer clothing) in order to enable the realization of economic surplus value by promoting the purchase of commodities. The primary mode for programming in capitalist culture is advertising, and the role of individual programmers (stars--movie, rock, TV talk-show hosts, and newsworthy individuals) is to capitalize on the market to create meaning value for their products and/or themselves. Programming also can be adopted as a strategy of recoding to manage and to capitalize on a borderline-narcissitic personality.

A programmer, for example, can sell split-off parts of the self in order to capitalize on the market to create meaning value for the split-off self that is sold. The recent "Amy Fisher" phenomenon of made-for-TV-movies, for example, exhibits the creation of surplus value based on a seemingly senseless act of murder. In fact, her story
created so much surplus value that two major networks created unauthorized films about her life and crime. Fisher adopted the position of programmer when she capitalized on her crime in order to realize surplus value by selling her story to a TV network and by writing a biography of the events from jail. In short, Fisher and the TV networks bracketed the value of murder (decoding) and marketed the murder in order to gain a surplus value (recoding). Programmers, then, who adopt the position of creating meaning in order to realize and capitalize surplus value from their own recoding also exhibit the decoding and recoding that underlie borderline narcissism.

Programmers also are capable of some reality testing in the sense that they maintain distance to distinguish the self from the non-self. Amy Fisher thus marketed and managed different parts of herself by selling herself in the role of "victimized" young woman. Recoding, then, necessarily takes place at the metalevel so that the programmer can maintain the distance necessary to manage the different parts of the self.

To review: Deleuze and Guattari's critique of Oedipal subjectivity suggests that subjectivity is an effect of something other than a desire permeated with lack. Deleuze and Guattari and schizoanalysis take the groundwork laid by Lacan that the psyche and the unconscious are a semiotic function—the Oedipus complex does not involve the
biological father but the "name-of-the-father" as a semiotic function in the Symbolic—and transform the view of the unconscious to a radically free form of desire that is not constrained by "the-name-of-the-father." Hence, the unconscious is structured like the "word salad" of schizophrenia, with no center and no law; it is an "orphan" with no name (mother, father, sister and/or brother). In addition, Deleuze and Guattari transform gender from a dichotomous form to a nonboundaried, infinite form. Under market capitalism, however, the semiotic formation that results and, consequently, the form of subjectivity and structure of particular subjects that predominates is borderline narcissism, a subjectivity that "borders" between decoded and recoded desire that has a specific diagnostic content. Finally, programming is a primary recoding strategy that can be utilized as a means of realizing a profit in the market and as a means to manage the underlying weak ego structure.

Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of Oedipal subjectivity also illuminates that the double movement of the investment of decoded and recoded desire has important implications for the understanding of a schizoanalytic perspective utilized for criticism, specifically Deleuze and Guattari’s theorizing about contextualization and interpretation.

Contextualization

Equally important to understanding the critique of
Oedipus and the notion of desire that guide Deleuze and Guattari's theorizing is the connection they make between what they call the molecular and molar. Deleuze and Guattari draw on both physics' and biology's understanding of molecular and molar and transform the concepts. Deleuze and Guattari take the understanding of molecular as the "particles" or "parts" of a system—the fragmented formations, detached parts, and play of multiplicities that contain the surplus value (excess) of codes. They view the molar as the whole or system that is constituted by molecules. The molecular and molar, then, are intimately connected and are mutually constituting. Within schizoanalysis, desire contains both the molecular and molar.

Consequently, the relationship between the molecular and the molar is one of double movement; the molecular and molar are constructed together. So, for example, society captures sexuality (the molecular) through the institution of gender (the molar). Moreover, because of the surplus value of codes (excess), there is a double movement between institutions and individuals that is mutually producing and leaves traces or resonance within and between the molecular and molar. A rock music video, for example, is excessive in the sense that it contains traces of both the molecular (the unconscious of the singer) and the molar institution that produces the video (the capitalist system of production).
By focusing on the mutually constituting process of production, schizoanalysis insists that all phenomena must be contextualized. Contextualization in the schizoanalytic paradigm includes historical contextualization—the situating of artifacts in their historical time. Contextualization also proposes that extra-textual phenomena (excess) be accounted for in understanding the effects of artifacts. In contextualizing, schizoanalysis thus brings to the foreground issues that are usually left in the background.

Contextualizing objects within the extra-textual phenomena—within the production process of an artifact—necessarily alters traditional conceptions of intentionality—specifically, notions that revolve around a study of the effects of the intentional acts of freely choosing authors/agents. Schizoanalysis, because it views both the unconscious and the molar and molecular as fueled by excess, radically alters the concept of intentionality to the study of the effects within the context of the production process of an object. The study of intentionality thus becomes the analysis of the effects of an object within its production process, were traces of both conscious intentional acts and unconscious acts resonate within and outside of objects. In other words, the excess driven production process of an object contains the double movement between institutions and specific subjects that is
mutually producing and the double movement between conscious and unconscious acts. Assessing intentionality thus entails exploring the contextualized effects displayed within an object, where traces of intentional and unintentional acts are found. A film, for example, is excessive in the sense that it contains traces of both the molecular (the unconscious of the star) and the molar institutions that produce the film (the system of production).

In refusing recoding and insisting on contextualizing objects of analysis, schizoanalysis also offers a critique of interpretation, the final tool that will be uncovered. Critique of Interpretation

Schizoanalysis resists recoding by refusing interpretations because "interpretation merely reinforces semiotic despotism by translating one authorized code--that of author or 'creator'--into another authorized code--that of critic." In order to avoid the authorized voice of authority of critics, schizoanalytic critics produce interference between the recoded authoritative codes in order to undermine Oedipalized authority. In running interference, critics are positioned to engage in decoding by freeing recoded, authoritative codes. As tools for critical analysis, schizoanalysis transforms criticism from recoding desire into interpretation to running interference

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51 Holland, "Schizoanalysis: The Postmodern Contextualization of Psychoanalysis" 413.
among recoded codes.

By refusing interpretation, schizoanalysis also refuses to uncover the "meaning" of cultural objects or the "meaning" of an author and focuses instead on the desire at work in an object. Deleuze and Guattari explain:

The unconscious poses no problem of meaning, only problems of use. The question posed by desire is not "What does it mean?" but rather "How does it work?" . . . What are the connections, what are the disjunctions, the conjunctions, what use is made of the syntheses?52

Schizoanalysis works by "reading" desire at work in order to uncover how it makes connections, disjunctions, and conjunctions and how desire uses the synthesis between the molecular and molar. Moreover, in order to avoid engaging in recoding, schizoanalytic analysis eschews engagement in the search for the definitive meaning of an object and, instead, attempts to capture only the connections that can be made among an object, a critic, and institutions. Hence, for Deleuze and Guattari, how an object works--how it functions--is the sole question of schizoanalysis.53

Exploring how an object works, engaging in excess-driven analyses, also fundamentally alters the understanding of texts: because there is excess, there is no division between the investment of desire and the social and no division between a product and its production. As such,

52Deleuze and Guattari 109.
53Deleuze and Guattari 180.
Deleuze says of "texts":

In no sense do I present myself as a textual commentator. A text, for me, is only a small cog within an extra-textual practice. It is not a question of commenting (on) the text in terms of textual practice, nor of any other methods, but of seeing its use in the extra-textual practice into which it extends.\textsuperscript{54}

In short, schizoanalysis collapses the "traditional" divisions among author, texts, culture, and politics, which segment and divide productions from products. Instead, schizoanalysis makes connections among author, texts, culture, and politics and situates them all in their extra-textual production practice. Consequently, there are no texts in schizoanalysis: there are only objects that are best described as artifacts\textsuperscript{55} that capture both the product

\textsuperscript{54}Deleuze quoted in Braidotti 69.

\textsuperscript{55}The term artifact captures the relationship to the molar and molecular that is underneath Deleuze's claims about texts. In schizoanalysis, the connection between the molecular and molar has a form of synthesis that Deleuze and Guattari refer to as "connective synthesis," which takes the form of product/producing. Connective synthesis among part-objects demands that producing is always something "grafted onto" the product, and for that reason, drawing clear distinctions between the production and end product of the production process is an artificially imposed segregation of the process of production. The powerful insight into the process of production of schizoanalysis is the mutual implication that occurs in the investment of desire that produces products. Deleuze and Guattari note in the Anti-Oedipus that "the pure 'thisness' of the object produced is carried over into a new act of producing." So, for example, there is no need to distinguish between the product and production of a table, the product and production of an MTV rock video, or the product and production of an artifact. Throughout the remainder of the dissertation, I will employ the term artifact to capture this schizoanalytic understanding of product/production. Deleuze and Guattari 7.
and production process that must be read in analysis.

One of the primary effects of the combination of the tools of contextualization and the critique of interpretation is that conceptions of authorship also are altered. Exploring the acts of any particular "author" or "agent" is best described as exploring the agency of the particular subject displayed within artifacts. Traditionally, agency is a term that feminist scholars utilize to describe the exploration of how and what kinds of power individuals have within oppressive systems. For feminists, the focus is usually on how much power individual women or "agents" have within the institutions of patriarchy, sexism, and racism. Fox-Genovese, for example, explores how much power both white and Black women had on Southern plantations. She argues that one form of agency—strategies of resistance of a constrained agent within the oppressive system of slavery—was to "pretend" not to hear the commands of plantation owners. At the crux of the concept of agency is the study of the acts of individual subjects within their constraints by structures of oppression.

The study of the artifacts of any particular subject or "author" in a schizoanalytic reading also entails employing the notion of agency, however, in a schizoanalytic

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perspective, agency becomes the study of the acts displayed within the production process of an artifact. In other words, any artifact contains the traces of the production process and the traces of the acts of the particular subject who produced the artifact, where the acts of the subject are constrained by both molecular and molar institutions—the unconscious of the subject and the structural systems of culture. Consequently, reading the agency of a particular subject, within its production process, entails exploring the acts displayed within an artifact, both intended and unintended.57

When doing readings, critics also must be aware of the Deleuzian distinction between "Just" ideas and just an idea. Traditionally, especially in philosophical theorizing, the role of the philosopher is to search for ideas that are "Just" in politics, ethics, and theory. Implicit in the search for such ideas is the goal of uncovering the political, ethical, and theoretical ideal. Deleuze counters the notion of the search for "Just ideas" with the search

57Because schizoanalysis transforms conceptual tools, specific terminology is also transformed. Thus, later in this study, because I am employing a notion of agency that entails both the intended and unintended acts displayed in an artifact, when I argue that the "author" does something, what I mean is that a particular act, intended or unintended, is displayed within the artifact. To put it another way, I am not exploring or making any claims about the intended actions of an author; rather, I am exploring the agency of the subject, which entails assessing the acts, both intended and unintended, exhibited within the production process of an artifact, whether the author is aware of the acts or not.
for "just an idea." Braidotti describes Deleuze's notion of just an idea as "bodies, lines [of thought] which point human rationality towards new ways; anything that creates possible tracks for desire, or carries the affirmative power of life to a higher level is an idea."\(^5\)\(^8\) In the Deleuzian paradigm, ideas are "launched" into time as trajectories that refuse all modes of codification but that can be positioned with other equally valid ideas. For Deleuze, philosophical thought is "just an idea" that can be connected with other ideas. For schizoanalysis, readings do not search for the meaning or the idea; rather, readings are just an idea that uncover the decoded and recoded desire at work in an artifact.

Braidotti argues that feminist theorists, who are interested in theorizing the multiplicity of collective feminist struggle, can employ Deleuze's understanding of ideas in order to insure that feminist ideas and theoretical discourse "could never become the articulation of an-other revolutionary gospel, an untouchable and sacred dogma, a norm handing out blame or praise, the foundation stone of a new bureaucracy of thought."\(^5\)\(^9\) Braidotti also concludes that Deleuze's refusal of all forms of codification, including those in the thinking process, can be employed by feminist theorists in order to restore to thinking the

\(^{58}\)Braidotti 125.

\(^{59}\)Braidotti 125.
creative freedom that it needs in order to provide theoretical and political support for feminist projects.

In brief, doing schizoanalytic readings in knowledge production can produce fruitful results for feminist scholars because engaging in the search for "just an idea" gives feminist scholars the opportunity to move beyond the system of codification that drives academic knowledge production. By producing just an idea, feminists scholars can move beyond a system of knowledge production that participates in and perpetuates codification to a transformative practice of scholarship that refuses permanent codification by participating in scholarship in process in order to uncover how desire is restricted (recoded) and to free desire from the effects of the socio-historical field (decoding).

The central difference in the concept of just an idea, thus, is the end product produced by the critic. Rather than producing readings to create ideas that are "Just" in politics, ethics, or theory, critics produce "just an idea" or knowledge that refuses the system of codification that limits and restricts criticism to only one "Just" idea about an artifact. Producing just an idea, however, does not mean that just any idea will do when brought to other critics; rather, the creation of any one idea about an artifact continues to be grounded in knowledge production, which necessarily demands that the idea can and should be held
accountable to the concerns of other critics who produce knowledge. Once an idea is produced, the ground for assessing the knowledge with other critics then becomes the context with which the idea has been produced. An idea produced about a book, for example, would be brought to a group of critics so that that idea can be connected to other ideas about the same book to search for how the desire is at work in the book, instead of searching for "the" meaning of the book.

The primary implication of the description of the conceptual toolbox taken from schizoanalysis is that schizoanalysis offers the conceptual tools to engage in a radically different form of scholarship. Consequently, because schizoanalysis is grounded in excess or abundance, schizoanalytic critics can engage in excessive readings that result in transgressive scholarship—readings that decode disciplinary boundaries and theoretical double binds. Unlike other theoretical perspectives, schizoanalysis offers the conceptual tools to understand how and why scholarship can move to transformative theorizing. In other words, critics can and must transform the limits and segmentation of theoretical boundaries (the how) because there is a general economy of excess rather than lack (the why). Thus, the conceptual toolbox of schizoanalysis can be employed to produce a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective that works to engage in transformative theorizing by
uncovering the desire at work in artifacts.

A feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective that utilizes the schizoanalytic critique of Oedipal subjectivity as its primary tool also can explore the desire at work in cultural artifacts in order to free desire from its constraints within its sociohistorical field. The extra- textual component also demands that the analysis of the intended and unintended effects of desire at work in cultural artifacts include attending to the effects at work among artistic, analytic, and revolutionary artifacts within and between objects to explode Oedipus in order to free desire and transform artistic, analytic, disciplinary, and revolutionary institutions.

Despite schizoanalysis' radical potential to make connections among generally segmented areas within the purview of communication scholarship, to date, communication scholars have failed to make use of schizoanalysis. Moreover, although Jardine argues that Deleuze and Guattari are "two of the rare male theorists in France who are publicly supportive of the feminist movement,. . . they have no or few women disciples." 60 Consequently, with the exception of Braidotti and Jardine--French feminist philosophers--feminist scholars have not made extensive use

60 Alice Jardine, "Woman in Limbo: Deleuze and his Br(others)," Substance 44/45 (1984): 47.
Because both Braidotti and Jardine have analyzed schizoanalysis from a feminist perspective, their work deserves further consideration before proposing a feminist schizoanalytic paradigm.

Feminism and Schizoanalysis

Both Braidotti and Jardine examine the same issue within Deleuze and Guattari's later writing about schizoanalysis: Deleuze and Guattari's idea of "becoming-woman," which is premised on Deleuze's theorizing about

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61 The 1993 Modern Language Association had a specific call for papers to address issues relevant to feminism and schizoanalysis. Thus, there are feminists in other fields who are beginning to address the issues that would accompany a collaboration between feminism and schizoanalysis. Unfortunately, the conference will occur after this project is completed.

62 Both Braidotti's and Jardine's critiques of Deleuze and Guattari are focused on Deleuze and Guattari's later writing rather than their writing in the Anti-Oedipus, the primary text for my project. A very brief overview, however, of their critiques in terms of subjectivity can add important insight into any feminist project concerned with Deleuze and Guattari's theorizing.

63 Becoming-woman is important for philosophical theorizing that draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis because, although there is significant disagreement among scholars about the exact nature of women in the Symbolic, there is general agreement that in coming to subjectivity through "the name-of-the father," the phallus as the signifier of desire, women occupy the space of the "Other" to male subjectivity. Because women are the Other, many philosophers, both feminist and non-feminist, have explored the potential revolutionary role that women hold as Other. So, for example, Derrida views the symbolic absence of the feminine as positive and as a counter-strategy by which to destabilize the Symbolic. Helene Cixous, a French feminist, employs and extends Derrida's theorizing by arguing that women's absence leaves women positioned in excess of the
"becoming." Braidotti argues that becoming is a "new scheme of human subjectivity, a new way of thinking the human being, beyond the Hegelian opposition between being and non-being, as being in process, in becoming." The revolutionary process for Deleuze is the process of becoming in order to surmount the dialectic or dichotomous process of being and not-being that dominates subjectivity. As a process of surmounting the dialectic, becoming necessarily subverts all of the concurrent dialectics that underlie Western metaphysics: rationality/non-rationality, master/slave and male/female. Consequently, according to Braidotti, the becoming process is revolutionary because it refuses the codification of dialectical thinking.

In the Deleuzian paradigm, the becoming process is the process of becoming-minority instead of being in the Symbolic instead of in the position of lack that drives male subjectivity. Cixous proposes that women must write from their feminine excess (L'ecture feminine) in order to write the yet-unknown feminine subject. Like Cixous, many philosophers view the feminine or the "becoming-woman" process as the enactment of a feminine subjectivity that is revolutionary. Deleuze and Guattari also theorize the process of becoming-woman. (Although Cixous also employs the notion of excess in theorizing, her theorizing may remain problematic for the very reasons that I challenge Braidotti's and Jardine's theorizing: the form of theorizing remains locked into a form of subjectivity that fails to transform notions of subjectivity.) For further elaboration of Cixous' theorizing, see Helene Cixous, "Castration or Decapitation?" Signs 7 (1981): 41-55.

64 Braidotti 109.
majority. For Deleuze and Guattari, being in the majority necessarily entails participating in a homogenous and constant system that is restrictive and recoded. Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari advocate becoming-minority as the best strategy for overturning the restrictive majority system. Because men are the main pole of the reference in the gendered binary opposition of the Symbolic, men are the majority, regardless of whether they are a statistical majority. Women, because of their positioning in relation to men, are always the minority, without any statistical sense of minority. The becoming-minority process includes becoming-woman, which "always has, over all the others, what D + G call a 'particular

65 The following passage is worth quoting in length in order to understand fully Deleuze's understanding of becoming-minority and the relationship between becoming-minority and becoming-women. Deleuze writes:
We have to distinguish between the majority, as a homogenous and constant system, and the minority, as on the one hand sub-systems, and on the other, the becoming-minority as process, both existent and potential, a creative possibility. The problem is never in gaining the majority, or even in putting in place a new constant. There is no becoming majority, majority is not a becoming. Women, regardless of their number, are a minority, definable as a state or a subset; but they only create by rendering possible a becoming, which is not their property, which they still have to enter, including those who are not women. Quoted in Braidotti 108.

66 In terms of political action, similar to the molecular, the minority is fragmented from the majority and, consequently, is better positioned toward the schizophrenic process.
introductory power'. . . ."67 Becoming-woman involves everyone and cannot be confused with only women and their struggles; rather, becoming-woman "connotes 'that which involves everyone', the strength of a development which will lead to a radical transformation of our conception of the human being."68 Jardine and Braidotti are both interested in further unpacking the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's "privileging" of becoming-woman within the process of "becoming-minority" in order to assess the implications for feminist scholars.

Jardine and Braidotti argue that Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-women is problematic for feminist scholars. Jardine argues that Man and men remain the subject of any becoming even if "he" is a woman; Man remains the privileged referent in the system. Jardine suggests that in the Deleuzian paradigm, woman "is never a subject but a limit--a border of and for Man--the 'becoming-woman' is l'avenir de l'homme tout entier—the future of all Mankind."69 In short, becoming-woman is what both men and women must become in order for the idea of Mankind (and all the ensuing dialectics that are part of setting the boundaries around Mankind) to disappear. Jardine's primary concern is that because women must "'become woman' first (in

67Jardine 52.
68Braidotti 116.
69Jardine 54.
order for men, in D + G's words, to 'follow her example'),
might that not mean that she must also be the first to
disappear?" In leading the way, women, in fact, may lead
the way for their own disappearance in an old allegory of
women becoming obsolete. Jardine concludes that Deleuze and
Guattari's theorizing on becoming-women holds no promise for
women and is, in fact, the same old story for "Deleuze's
Brothers." Jardine does argue, however, that women must
attend to Deleuze and Guattari's exploration so that women
do not "disappear from that space of exploration."

Braidotti is also concerned about Deleuze and
Guattari's understanding that becoming-minority/becoming-
woman leads to a supposedly gender-free sexuality that
creates a "postgender" subjectivity. Braidotti argues that
although she follows the consistency of Deleuze's argument
about the global rejection of binary opposition, including
the man/woman dichotomy, she is concerned about the
implications of a postgender subjectivity for women for the
very same reasons that Jardine is skeptical of becoming-
woman. Braidotti suggests that the post-gendered move is a
masculine one that derives from the fact, as Deleuze himself
points out, that being a man is doomed to the stasis of
self-preservation because he is the referent in the system
of domination; the only alternative, then, is to become-

70 Jardine 54, italicized in the text.

71 Jardine 59.
woman." Braidotti claims that the becoming-woman is the only alternative when being a man remains the referent under patriarchy. Becoming-woman retains masculinity because the masculine is still the dominant referent in the system.

Braidotti is also concerned because she believes that the becoming-woman that Deleuze and Guattari articulate is not grounded in "real" women; rather, becoming-woman is a process that transcends "real" women to a polysexuality. According to Braidotti, by transcending "real women," becoming-woman bears no connection to the real-life experiences of women and can serve no purpose for feminist scholars. In short, a multiplicity or polysexuality that does not take into account "the fundamental asymmetry between the sexes is but a subtler form of discrimination." Moreover, Braidotti argues, drawing on Irigary's writing, another level of discrimination that Deleuze and Guattari perpetuate is the misrecognition that to turn the "organless" polysexual body into a cause of jouissance assumes that women have had a relation to language and sex, a relation that, in fact, they never have had. Braidotti argues that feminist theorists cannot deconstruct a subjectivity they never have had and not to announce the "death" of the subject without first having been subjects. Historically, fragmentation of self has been

72Braidotti 120.
73Braidotti 121.
women's condition, and if feminist scholars take up Deleuze and Guattari's call to become-woman, Braidotti argues, they "are left with the option of theorizing a general 'becoming-woman' for both sexes, or else of flatly stating that women have been post-structuralist since the beginning of time." Braidotti is unwilling to take either position and argues that, in the end, becoming-woman is "a misogynist mode of thought."

Both Braidotti and Jardine offer important insights for feminists interested in utilizing Deleuze and Guattari's theorizing about subjectivity. Their critique of Deleuze and Guattari's theorizing attends to a primary issue that has troubled feminists interested in collaborating with psychoanalytic theories: Is feminism best served by theorizing the yet-unknown feminine subjectivity, or is feminism best served by advocating some form of a pluralized, post-gender subjectivity? Both theorists provide an excellent analysis of the central issues that are related to the debate that plagues psychoanalytic theorizing, but both remain locked into a form of theorizing subjectivity that is always potentially problematic for feminists. They also may have missed an important premise that underlies Deleuze and Guattari's critique of Oedipal subjectivity---that all subjects must become minority. The

74 Braidotti 122.
75 Braidotti 123.
best place to begin an analysis of Braidotti’s and Jardine’s concerns is to address this missing premise in schizoanalysis.

Braidotti acknowledges the radical potential in Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of the binary dialectics that undergird Oedipal subjectivity, but she takes up the idea of becoming-woman rather than the central claim of becoming-minority. For Deleuze and Guattari, because women are the statistical minority, becoming women may be an important first step. Their primary argument, however, is that all subjects must become minority. Becoming-minority—not becoming-woman—is the linchpin of Deleuze and Guattari’s subversion of the dichotomous dialectic that undergirds dichotomous subjectivity. Also important to note is that in becoming a minority, Deleuze and Guattari are not advocating some kind of death of the subject; rather, becoming-minority is a different form of subjectivity that is not undergirded by a disjunctive dialectic. As a psychoanalytic perspective, schizoanalysis provides a critique of the current understanding of subjectivity but does not erode that subjectivity. In fact, for Deleuze and Guattari, schizophrenia is the free form of subjectivity they advocate.

A central issue for feminists who employ psychoanalytic theory and that both Braidotti and Jardine address is what feminism’s position ought to be in terms of gender. Should
feminism theorize from the feminine (strategic essentialism, the recovery of women's voices, and/or the female excess in the Symbolic)? Or should feminism, following poststructuralism and postmodernism, advocate a form of "postgender" subjectivity (pluralizing and multiplying feminine gender)? Both Jardine and Braidotti pronounce schizoanalysis unacceptable for feminism because they believe that schizoanalysis advocates a form of post-gender subjectivity that they find troubling.

Although their critique illuminates central concerns that many feminists have about post-gender subjects, both Braidotti and Jardine fall short in their analyses because they do not account for the notion of n sexes in schizoanalysis. As was argued earlier, n sexes does not necessarily imply an understanding of a post-gender subjectivity; rather, n sexes indicates the infinite possibilities of gender. Moreover, the post-gender concern is only significant within a theoretical paradigm that views subjectivity as grounded in the codification of a disjunctive dialectics; post-gender is premised on and in a symbiotic relation to a form of gender that is dichotomous. Schizoanalysis radically alters conceptions of gender by taking the groundwork laid about gender and transforming the form of gender to n sexes or an infinite gender. The post-gender issue, then, does not appear to be a primary concern within schizoanalytic theorizing about n sexes because
schizoanalysis refuses disjunctive dialectics (the dichotomous form) by proposing a continual becoming process (becoming-minority) that refuses limits, boundaries, and recoding. In short, schizoanalysis advocates a radically free schizophrenic subjectivity that heralds the infinite gendered possibilities of sexuality and not a post-gendered sexuality.

Also of concern to Braidotti and Jardine and many other feminist theorists is the conception of women's real lived experiences (the foundation of feminist theory) within theoretical paradigms. Both theorists argue that schizoanalysis does not account for the real experiences of women, but there are two tools in schizoanalysis that can or already do recognize women's lives. First, because schizoanalysis recognizes both decoding (free desire) and recoding (restricted desire), schizoanalysis can be employed through decoding to free the real restrictions that oppress women's real lives. Second, schizoanalysis can attend to the current and real restrictions and oppression of women's everyday lives through the concept of recoding. The second transformative tool that schizoanalysis provides is the nature of the Real. A significant contribution to psychoanalytic understandings of subjectivity that schizoanalysis offers is the refusal to bracket the Real (the brute, material existence of life) in theorizing subjectivity. Also, given that Deleuze and Guattari
maintain that becoming-woman may be the first step to reaching the becoming-minority process, they do seem to be acknowledging that the real minority experiences of women must and are attended to in schizoanalysis, albeit their inclusion of real women's experiences may be underdeveloped. Consequently, schizoanalysis does supply the tools necessary to account for the "really" Real experiences of women.

A final point of clarification that is important to feminist scholars is that women must be full subjects before they are willing to move beyond gendered subjectivity. Although an important concern, the schizoanalytic question that is begged is: Have men and women ever realized a radically free subjectivity? Schizoanalysis maintains that neither men nor women have had a radically free form of subjectivity. Thus, the contention that women cannot begin the becoming-minority process before they reach a feminine subjectivity misses a fundamental point: "feminine" subjectivity is premised on a gender dichotomy that ultimately perpetuates Oedipal subjectivity. Feminist scholars who insist that feminism must theorize the feminine subject inadvertently lock themselves into a double bind: the feminine subject is privileged and simultaneously camouflages forms of oppression against women. Both Braidotti and Jardine seem locked into this Oedipalized double bind when they claim that either feminists must stay locked into the feminine paradigm (Jardine) or, if
schizoanalytic tools are utilized, then, a total post-gender sell out (Braidotti) will occur. Fortunately, the foundational premises of schizoanalysis offer the tools to move beyond Oedipalized forms of subjectivity that lock feminist scholars into either disjunctive position.

Both Jardine and Braidotti offer important analyses for feminist theorists interested in theorizing subjectivity. Their analyses, however, bring to the foreground an issue in schizoanalysis that seems to misrecognize the powerful potential that schizoanalysis can offer feminist theorists. This critique of Braidotti and Jardine's analysis makes clearer that schizoanalysis can offer feminism a truly radical critique of subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari transform the Oedipalized form of subjectivity that has led feminist scholars to position themselves in the following three ways: essentializing, pluralizing, or post-gender. Fortunately, schizoanalysis' conception of n sexes can move feminist scholars beyond the Oedipalized triad.

Feminist scholars may be concerned that the collaboration between feminism and schizoanalysis may cause feminism to lose its foundations in women's real experiences. Fortunately, because schizoanalysis insists on incorporating the Real in subjectivity--women's real sociohistorical experiences--the understandings that feminism takes as its expertise must be included in the collaboration. Consequently, feminist theory must bring its
expertise about women's real experiences as its primary tool in a feminist schizoanalytic collaboration and then transform the tool to a radically free form of subjectivity.

Schizoanalysis is also an important theoretical tool for feminist rhetorical scholarship because of the kind of connection that is demanded by schizoanalysis. Unlike other theoretical paradigms that refuse connection and only allow for "revisioning" from a feminist perspective, schizoanalysis connects without partitioning because schizoanalysis refuses to name its own codes; schizoanalysis only offers tools for collaboration. By refusing to name schizoanalytic codes, Deleuze and Guattari, on a meta-theoretical level, also are refusing ownership and fatherhood of schizoanalysis. Finally, because schizoanalysis is transformative and conceptual tools are always underdetermined, there is no reason to discount schizoanalysis a priori; the collaboration can transform underdeveloped tools without damaging the tools offered by schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis can connect with feminism in a collaboration that does not dominate feminism in order to maintain its own lineage because there is nothing "correct" to prove in schizoanalysis—there are only connections and lines of thought to read.

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76 In a conversation with Eugene Holland, he argued that the concepts in schizoanalysis are always underdetermined and open to change and transformation. Eugene Holland, personal conversation, Mar. 1993.
A final question must be addressed in advocating a collaboration between feminist rhetorical scholarship and schizoanalysis: If there is a refusal of codes, can anything ever be "known" within a schizoanalytic paradigm? Schizoanalysis itself clearly makes knowledge claims in relation to other theoretical paradigms; schizoanalysis does engage in its own form of codified knowledge production. The crucial difference, however, lies in the nature of the kinds of knowledge claims that schizoanalysis makes. Rather than insisting on a knowledge claim that transcends time and space, schizoanalysis is just an idea. As such, the idea of schizoanalysis can collaborate fully with feminist ideas and mark off boundaries for analysis within specific contexts. Moreover, a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective can read a textual phenomenon and come to know much about how the textual phenomenon works and its effects in order to bring other ideas about the same textual phenomenon into interaction. In other words, two readings of the same Guerilla Girls poster, for example, can be matched up. The crucial difference, however, is that neither reading searches for the "correct" interpretation; rather, each individual reading of the same Guerilla Girls poster can be brought together to explore the connections and differences between readings. Readings, then, do not ask, "who is correct?" Rather, the question becomes, "how can the readings connect with and enrich each other?"
The tools for reading that schizoanalysis offers scholars not only transform the form of scholarship but also transform what is to count as scholarship and knowledge production. A feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective, then, is significant for feminist rhetorical scholarship because the collaboration can transform feminist rhetorical studies. The collaboration also is significant beyond the boundaries of feminist rhetorical theory because the perspective explicitly engages in the meta-level question that schizoanalysis asks the academy: What is to count as knowledge and politics in present culture? Hence, a primary reason the project is significant is because a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective can transform both feminist rhetorical theory and engage in the epistemological and political discussion that schizoanalysis addresses.

The study is also significant because schizoanalysis historically contextualizes psychoanalysis in light of historical materialism and employs a generalized, materialist semiotics that includes both the production/circulation/consumption of goods and the communication/generation/reception of messages in discourse. Schizoanalysis thus is well positioned to study communication in a holistic sense and across boundaries. Schizoanalysis links production/consumption—generally the purview of critical cultural studies—and the generation and reception of messages—generally the purview of rhetorical
studies—together. Hence, for a scholar who attempts to work under both critical/cultural and rhetorical studies, schizoanalysis offers a bridge between generally divided areas. Consequently, the project is significant because the tools of schizoanalysis can serve to bridge the gaps between material and ideological critiques and between rhetorical and critical/cultural studies.

The primary bridge that schizoanalysis offers the field of communication is the critique of Oedipal subjectivity, which introduces a notion of desire driven by excess rather than lack. One result of the theorizing about desire is that a collaboration between feminist rhetorical scholarship and schizoanalysis opens the space to introduce both the critique of Oedipal subjectivity and desire into rhetorical studies. The introduction of desire is particularly important to feminist rhetorical criticism because the schizoanalytic conception of excessive desire demands that critics account for mutually constituting desire between critics and artifacts in criticism. By employing desire, feminist rhetorical critics can engage in excessive criticism that is holistic and mutually constituting rather than engaging in criticism that is restrictive and segments critics, artifacts, and institutions.

The critique of Oedipal subjectivity is also important for feminist rhetoricians because schizoanalysis historically situates subjectivity in order to illuminate
both decoded and recoded desire at work under capitalism. One implication of the critique is that feminist rhetoricians can explore further the historically specific forms of decoded desire that function to free women from oppression and the forms of recoded desire that function to restrict women's desire. Because recoding always overlays decoding, the focus on recoded desire under capitalism is particularly important to illuminate the specific forms of patriarchy under capitalism that restrict and oppress women's lives.

The critique of Oedipal subjectivity and desire, then, are significant because both offer feminist rhetoricians the tools for analyzing decoded and recoded desire under capitalism in order to assess the desire at work in current forms of subjectivity. As a consequence, the study is significant because schizoanalysis can offer the tools to introduce a critique of Oedipal subjectivity and the notion of desire to feminist rhetorical studies.

Statement of Purposes and Research Questions

If a primary function of feminist rhetoric is to uncover how things work, or more traditionally, how and in what way an artifact persuades, a connection can be made between Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of desire and the role that rhetorical studies plays in understanding how desire functions in objects of analyses. In other words, rhetorical studies can be linked with Deleuze and Guattari's
ideas to uncover how desire works in and among artifacts, critics, and institutions. The implication, of course, is that the first purpose of the project is to introduce Deleuze and Guattari's work to feminist rhetorical studies.

Because the desiring process and the tools of schizoanalysis are transformative, the collaboration between feminist rhetorical studies and schizoanalysis is transformative. As a result, the collaboration fulfills the second purpose of the study, which is to transform feminist rhetorical studies in order to move beyond the "strategies of containment" that bottle up feminist criticism. Fortunately, however, because schizoanalysis offers tools that make collaboration mutual, schizoanalysis also is altered in the collaboration. Schizoanalysis can supply feminist scholars with important tools to understand both theory and culture, while feminist rhetorical scholarship can supply the commitment to and knowledge about gender that further can develop schizoanalysis. The third purpose of the study, then, is to further explore and expand the tools of schizoanalysis.

The final purpose of the study is to develop and apply a feminist rhetorical schizoanalytic "method" in order to illuminate and assess its transformative potential for feminist rhetorical criticism. In other words, the collaborative perspective analyzes specific artifacts as a case study to explore further the effects of the
collaboration. In this study, Madonna artifacts are used to illuminate the collaboration between feminism and schizoanalysis.

In order to fulfill the purposes of the study, I engage in a feminist-schizoanalytic reading of three Madonna texts: *Truth or Dare*, "The Immaculate Collection," and *Sex*. The primary research question I address in the reading is:

1) What are the effects of the collaboration between feminist rhetoric and schizoanalysis?

The two minor research questions I address deal with the analysis of Madonna artifacts. They are:

2) What is the decoded and recoded desire at work in Madonna artifacts?

3) What do Madonna artifacts show about patriarchy under capitalism?

Survey of Literature

Because Madonna artifacts constitute the data for this project, literature related to Madonna will be reviewed here. The other two primary bodies of literature relevant to the project—feminist rhetorical scholarship and schizoanalysis—were reviewed earlier. Given the extensive nature of the literature on Madonna, a complete and full review is neither possible nor desirable. Instead, the review will focus on the work of feminist scholars interested in Madonna and will cover only academic
scholarship that explicitly deals with feminist issues and Madonna. This literature contains two major strands: (1) scholarship directed at discerning whether Madonna functions as a feminist role model; and (2) scholarship concerned with the issues that Madonna raises for feminist theorizing.

**Feminist Role Model**

In her play with gender roles and sexuality, Madonna has created much ambivalence for many feminist communication scholars. One primary concern in feminist scholarship "derives from arguments of whether she works to destroy stereotypes or only conforms to traditional roles and representations of women." The debate about the roles Madonna represents is not confined to questions about whether she is a feminist or not: it also concerns the meanings that Madonna's fans, especially young women, make of Madonna's play with roles. The central focus is not necessarily about Madonna as performer but the form of subjectivity Madonna models for her fans within the restrictive structures of gender subjectivity and/or within

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77 The literature on Madonna and feminism crosses disciplinary boundaries, but the recent publication of *The Madonna Connection*, which contains a significant number of chapters written by communication scholars, has focused the literature on communication concerns. Thus, much of the literature in the review comes from the field of communication.

the structure of the music industry. As a consequence of
the perception of how Madonna’s image is received, a
secondary and related area of focus is the potential
gendered agency presented by Madonna to her fans.

Lisa Lewis’ feminist project is to theorize and
describe women musicians’ "female" address on MTV to women
and girls. Although women musicians must struggle to create
alternative meanings within the male-dominated MTV
structure, Lewis argues that women musicians use two
interrelated sign systems in the struggle over meaning in
MTV. Access signs are signs that "visually appropriate the
privileged experience of boys and men," in contrast to
discovery signs, which interact and coexist with access
signs and attempt to depict and celebrate "those activities
in which females tend to engage apart from males."79

Although Lewis does not limit her analysis of women
musicians to Madonna, she does include Madonna in her study
and argues that Madonna’s early Borderline video presents
access signs that "appropriate activities and spaces
typically associated with male adolescence."80 Lewis
suggests that Madonna presents discovery signs in both her
videos and the "Madonna-look-alike" phenomenon of the mid-
1980s. She claims that the young girls who imitated the

79Lisa Lewis, "Female Address on Music Television: Being
Discovered," Jump Cut 35 (April 1990):
80Lewis 7.
Madonna style engaged in a form of fandom that requires a textual knowledge of Madonna's style; more important, this imitation is an example of "a girl's involvement in style as a form of female knowledge." For Lewis, then, Madonna is an exemplar woman musician who offers girls and women access to and celebration of a femininity that counters female dependence and passivity and allows them to engage in a form of female knowledge that is subversive within the male-dominated MTV system.

John Fiske's primary interest in Madonna concerns how girls make meaning of rock music videos that "contest and struggle against the patriarchal hegemony." Fiske does not focus exclusively on Madonna in his analysis, but he does argue that "Madonna offers some young girls the opportunity to find meanings of their own feminine sexuality that suit them, meanings that are independent." For Fiske, the meanings that Madonna offers young girls are ones that engage and struggle against patriarchal hegemony from a feminine subject position.

E. Ann Kaplan's early theorizing about the gendered nature of MTV—what she refers to as the social Imaginary of the MTV apparatus—is concerned with the way in which

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81 Lewis 11.
83 Fiske 274.
Madonna's *Material Girl* video offers a "post-feminist" subjectivity that challenges the usual "bi-polar categories—male/female, high art/pop art, film/television, fiction/reality, private/public, interior/exterior" that undergird culture. In short, Kaplan describes Madonna as the "female star who perhaps more than any other embodies the new post-feminist heroine in her odd combination of seductiveness and a gutsy sort of independence." 

Susan McClary, a feminist musicologist, notes that most critics push aside Madonna's music and only analyze the images that Madonna presents in her music videos. In contrast, she concentrates on Madonna's music in her analysis of Madonna's *Live to Tell* video. By analyzing the musical discourse of tone, key, and notes in the video, McClary finds there is no definitive closure in the song, which violates the Western tradition of narrative closure. McClary argues that because Madonna's music refuses narrative closure, she also subverts the gender codes that are marked throughout narrative closure. As a consequence, Madonna refuses to choose between identity and Other, which also invokes and then rejects the very terms of the schema.

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85 Kaplan, "Whose Imaginary?" 140.
of narrative organization,\textsuperscript{86} an organization that is also the foundation for Oedipal subjectivity. In short, McClary views Madonna as "engaged in rewriting some very fundamental levels of Western thought."\textsuperscript{87} When McClary moves to the analysis of Madonna's \textit{Open Your Heart} and \textit{Like A Prayer} videos, she also finds multiple rather than unitary identities that celebrate continuation rather than closure. McClary asserts that "Madonna's counternarratives of female heterosexual desire are remarkable."\textsuperscript{88}

Although bell hooks acknowledges the subversive potential of Madonna's work in both \textit{Like A Prayer} and \textit{Truth or Dare}, she argues that in \textit{Like A Prayer}, "Madonna appropriates black culture in ways that mock and undermine, making her presentation one that upstages."\textsuperscript{89} Hooks claims that Madonna, in fact, is participating in an appropriation of black culture that hooks terms as \textit{radical chic}, the practice of white culture's appropriation of black culture by interacting with and exoticizing the Other in order to add special flavor or spice to life.\textsuperscript{90} Hooks concludes of Madonna's work that "all that is transgressive and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{86}Susan McClary, \textit{Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality} (Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 1991) 160.
  \item McClary 160.
  \item McClary 165.
  \item Bell hooks, \textit{Black Looks: Race and Representation} (Boston: South End, 1992) 161.
  \item Hooks 157.
\end{itemize}
potentially empowering to feminist women and men about Madonna’s work may be undermined by all that it contains that is reactionary and in no way unconventional or new."\textsuperscript{91} In short, the subjectivity that Madonna presents is a cooptation of the Other in order to add spice to the existing dominant referent in Western culture.

Most of the literature that deals with Madonna as a potential feminist model, then, suggests that Madonna’s work offers subversive or alternative meanings for girls and women who take up the feminine side of gendered identity and subjectivity. The literature also indicates an emphasis on the potential effects or reception of Madonna rather than on an analysis of Madonna as subversive or traditional. Although the literature suggests that Madonna’s work has potential effects for girls and women, the literature does not address why Madonna is so enormously popular among girls and women. The literature also reveals a gap in how the effects work for Madonna’s many audiences--girls, women, scholars, and popular critics. Finally, the literature also reveals an understanding of subjectivity that remains locked into the binary double bind of the Oedipus complex: Madonna is perceived as modeling a subversive femininity or an oppressive feminine subjectivity that may give up gendered understandings. In short, the literature does not question gendered subjectivity; rather, the literature attends to the

\textsuperscript{91}hooks 164.
issues raised from the feminine side of gendered subjectivity. The failure to critique subjectivity at a meta-theoretical level means that understandings about subjectivity are not transformed, and they remain locked into the gender binaries of Oedipus.

**Madonna and Postmodern/Poststructural Feminist Theorizing**

Another body of literature from feminist scholars deals with the questions Madonna raises for feminist theorists who employ postmodern and poststructural theory. In order to understand fully these issues as they are attended to by feminist scholars, a brief introduction to postmodern theory is warranted.

Although postmodernism "must be the most overused and under-defined"\(^{92}\) term in the academy, most often, its meaning is associated with Jean-Francis Lyotard's introduction of the term in *The Postmodern Condition*. Fraser and Nicholson summarize Lyotard's understanding of the postmodernism condition as

one in which "grand narratives" of legitimation are no longer credible. By grand narratives he means overarching philosophies of history like the Enlightenment story of the gradual but steady progress of reason and freedom, Hegel's dialectic of Spirit coming to know itself, and most importantly, Marx's drama of the forward march of human productive capacities via class conflict culminating in proletarian revolution. For Lyotard, these metanarratives instantiate a specifically modern approach to the problem of

Postmodernism, then, problematizes the grand narratives of the Enlightenment project. Consequently, the ontological, epistemological, and ethical legacy of modernism—the belief that reality can be known by the "all-knowing" subject, who utilizes rational thinking to gain access to universal or first principles of "Truth" and "Justice"—are also problematized. Hence, an absolute grounding or a "God’s eye view" of the world is replaced with a form of "legitimation [that] becomes plural, local, and immanent." Postmodern theories posit ontologies, epistemologies, subjectivities, and politics that are always provisional, multiple, and contested. They fundamentally erode authenticity, unity, and stable categories—the foundational tenets of modernism.

Although there are many points of contention between feminism and postmodernism, a primary issue concerns how

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94 Fraser and Nicholson 23.

95 For a summary of the potential problems, points of contention, and connections between feminism and postmodernism, see Linda Nicholson, ed., Feminism/Postmodernism (New York: Routledge, 1990). Also helpful is Heckman’s comprehensive survey of the debate(s) between feminism and postmodernism and her subsequent call for a postmodern feminism: Linda Heckman, Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a Postmodern Feminism (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1990). Also see Lather’s thorough discussion of the issues that relate to feminist research and pedagogy within postmodernism in Patti Lather, Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern
feminism can collaborate with postmodernism without losing its commitment to politics. The concern is of particular importance given that postmodern theorists tend to take up the philosophical side of the issue, often ignoring women and feminist political concerns. Consequently, many feminists have resisted the totalizing theories of modernism and have criticized modernism's foundationalist epistemologies, moral philosophies, and political theories. As Fraser and Nicholson note, feminists "have criticized modern foundationalist epistemologies and moral and political theories, exposing the contingent, partial and historically situated character of what has passed in the mainstream for necessary, universal, and ahistorical truths." Feminism, then, also has called into question the God's eye view of the world that transcends particular, historical contexts.

Feminism's critiques of modernist principles took a very different path from that taken by postmodernist critiques. Feminists were "led to them by the demands of political practice" that served the struggle to end sexism

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98 Fraser and Nicholson 26
and patriarchy. In short, by insisting on adding women's voices and experiences, feminism theorized modernism's exclusion of women. Moreover, the insistence on political commitment for women--feminism's hallmark--saved feminists from postmodernism's difficulty in grounding theory in political practices. Fraser and Nicholson write that "women whose theorizing was to serve the struggle against sexism were not about to abandon powerful political tools merely as a result of intramural debates in professional philosophy."\(^9^9\)

Feminism's commitment to erode sexism has led many feminist theorists to employ "realist" theories that are woman-centered or that rely on feminine identity as an organizing principle for collective political action. Even though the woman-centered analysis often assumes multiplicity among women, there is still a "unified identity for the category 'woman' as its foundation (as in 'women's culture,' feminism writing,' or 'female discourse'), . . . .”\(^1^0^0\) Consequently and paradoxically, much feminist theorizing is accused by postmodern theorists of resembling modernism's metanarrative of the all-knowing unified subject. The engagement and points of contention between feminism and postmodernism continue to be addressed by feminist scholars, including feminist scholars interested in


\(^1^0^0\)Schwichtenberg 131.
The final area of the literature review involves the meta-theoretical concerns in the feminism/postmodernism engagement as exemplified by Madonna. Madonna's texts remain central to the literature; however, Oullette argues that feminist theorists are "are not so much interested in Madonna herself, but in the way they believe she shakes up traditional social roles and power hierarchies." The meta-theoretical debates among postmodernist theories are the central focus in the scholarship, while Madonna is utilized to illuminate the central issues of the debates. The primary issue, then, that guides feminist theorists' interest in postmodern theory is: What do Madonna's texts illuminate about the relationship(s) between feminism and postmodernism or poststructuralism? The first strand of feminist-postmodern theorizing is centered on the inability to "pin" an authentic or real subjectivity on Madonna.

**Madonna's postmodern subjectivity.** E. Ann Kaplan's entry into the postmodernism-feminism debate draws on the two differing interpretations of "masks" that guide notions of the "real" subject that traditionally inform feminist theorizing about Madonna. Kaplan argues that many feminists--she references Fiske and Lewis' work--who theorize Madonna's subversive potential rely on an understanding of the "real" Madonna behind her many masks

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103 Oullette 32.
that viewers are able to discern. Kaplan argues that this approach keeps intact the binarisms that guide modern epistemologies. Kaplan, drawing on Butler's work, proposes a "politics of the signifier" that employs a second understanding of masks that relies on a Foucauldian genealogy of masks. The Foucauldian genealogy of masks reveals that "there is no stable identity" behind the multiple masks that Madonna presents in her work. Rather, Kaplan argues, there is no "core" Madonna, only layers of constructed discourses about Madonna. Kaplan concludes that Madonna's primary strength for feminists and cultural studies is the production of complex debates about notions of the "real" subject that guide theorizing and that have "great implications for cultural studies methods in general . . . ." 102

E. Deidre Primbram also problematizes notions of the "real" or authentic self and argues that feminist ambivalence about whether Madonna destroys or reinforces traditional roles and images of women is "fueled by difficulties surrounding the Madonna personae, the difficulties of fixing her as one set of meanings or another." 103 Primbram argues that fixing meaning on Madonna


103Pribram 196-7, italicized in text.
is impossible for feminism in a postmodern world; consequently, feminism "must ask what she can elucidate (inadvertently or otherwise) about what it means to be feminist in a postmodern era."\textsuperscript{104}

Primbram draws on Jean Baudrillard's notion of simulation to explore what Madonna elucidates for feminism in a postmodern world. For Baudrillard, simulation is the central concept for his understanding of the poles between representation and the real that have collapsed in postmodern culture. Postmodern culture is simulation in that all references between the real and representation have collapsed so that postmodern culture "lacks all reference to a fixed and stable reality."\textsuperscript{105} Simulation, then, indicates the "hyperreal," "which stresses the artificial as 'dress-ups,' 'put-ons,' and 'make-overs,' . . . ."\textsuperscript{106} Primbram argues that Madonna exhibits in her work that "if there is no authentic, then the appearances themselves, by displacing the authentic, become the real (or, to use his [Baudrillard] term, the hyperreal)."\textsuperscript{107}

For Primbram, Madonna's constantly simulated subjectivity makes clear that she is someone who "lives as a

\textsuperscript{104}Primbram 198.
\textsuperscript{105}Schwichtenberg 133.
\textsuperscript{106}Schwichtenberg 132.
\textsuperscript{107}Primbram 202.
pure sign, who chooses to live as pure sign . . . ."\textsuperscript{108}

Madonna's choice to live as a pure sign is, according to Primbram, the path that feminists can take in order to move beyond the pessimism of Baudrillard and other postmodern theorists. Primbram concludes that Madonna's ability to seduce as she controls her own images and life "may be a point of departure in the articulation of postmodern feminism."\textsuperscript{109}

Melanie Morton enters the feminist debate on Madonna by specifically addressing issues related to subjectivity. Morton draws on postructuralist theory that links representational practices to power in order to analyze the connections between Madonna's \textit{Express Yourself} video and Fritz Lang's 1926 film, \textit{Metropolis}. She illuminates Madonna's purposeful re-presenting and revising of the strategies of domination in the film that simultaneously intervene in music practices that are also part of dominating practices.\textsuperscript{110} Morton argues that Madonna's interventions in \textit{Express Yourself} offer her the opportunity to challenge traditional notions of subjectivity that simultaneously include notions of the Other that are hierarchical, implicated in power, and gendered. For

\textsuperscript{108}Primbram 204.

\textsuperscript{109}Primbram 208.

\textsuperscript{110}The \textit{Express Yourself} video so obviously draws on Lang's film, \textit{Metropolis}, that the connection between the two has become regarded as common knowledge.
Morton, the representations that Madonna exhibits in *Express Yourself* not only subvert the narratives of *Metropolis* but also subvert the subjugation\(^{111}\) by refusing to present any stable subject or "maker of meaning" in the video. Morton finds that, in the *Express Yourself* video, against "the petrified images of a metropolis, Madonna sketches a world in struggle and in motion, with a beat you can dance to."\(^{112}\) Morton claims that the subjectivity that Madonna portrays in the video is one in which "we can produce 'talking cures' if we express ourselves, resist the seductions to complicity, and do not position our power in domination over others."\(^{113}\)

Similar to feminist disputes, in the first section of the review, about whether Madonna models feminist principles or not, the final strand of feminist scholarship begins with an interest in Madonna as a "feminist heroine"; the focus

\(^{111}\)Morton is the only feminist theorist who even mentions Deleuze and Guattari in reference to Madonna. I did not categorize Morton's as an example of feminist schizoanalysis because she only briefly notes the similarity between Deleuze and Guattari's theorizing about the repressive nature of Oedipus and De Lauretis' theorizing about subjugation and Oedipus. Morton quotes de Lauretis's claim that narrative cinema seduces women into a femininity that is based on the terms of Oedipus. Because the mention of Oedipus and Deleuze and Guattari is only tangentially related to Morton's larger project, Morton's work does not warrant categorization as employing schizoanalysis or schizoanalytic principles. For further reading, see Melanie Morton, "Don't Go for Second Sex, Baby!," *The Madonna Connection: Representational Politics, Subcultural Identities, and Cultural Theory*, ed. Cathy Schwichtenberg (Boulder: Westview, 1993) 189-212.

\(^{112}\)Morton 233.

\(^{113}\)Morton 233.
here, however, is on Madonna as a postmodern feminist heroine and the implications for postmodern feminist politics.

Madonna as a postmodern feminist heroine. Cathy Schwichtenberg analyzes Madonna’s *Express Yourself* and *Justify My Love* videos to explore "Madonna’s role as envoy of postmodernism, that, in its lack of authenticity, unity, and stable categories, challenges the more modernist foundational tenets of feminism itself." Schwichtenberg draws on Jean Baudrillard’s definition of simulation to analyze Madonna’s representations of femininity. Schwichtenberg claims that Madonna’s femininity as simulation, Madonna’s gender-bending, pin-stripped suit and crotch grabs in *Express Yourself*, her scene of Sapphic Titillation on *Late Night with David Letterman*, and her languid French kiss with *l’autre femme* in *Justify* all represent a deconstruction of lines and boundaries that fragment male/female gender polarities and pluralize sexual practices.

For Schwichtenberg, Madonna’s work represents a postmodern feminism that offers a critique of feminism’s reliance on gender polarities. Consequently, the postmodernism that Madonna illuminates is one that is unbounded by a specific feminine identity that unifies coalitionally rather than on the traditional foundations of feminism, woman, or patriarchy. Schwichtenberg concludes that a strategic

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114 Schwichtenberg 130.

115 Schwichtenberg 132.
postmodern theory may not be a political liability for feminism if feminism begins to utilize coalitional politics that pluralize and fragment identity through multiple and simultaneous identifications, of which Madonna is a model.

Roseann Mandziuk’s primary agenda is to assess the alliance between postmodern and feminist theorizing that is rooted in realist epistemologies and praxis. Mandziuk begins with Kaplan’s claim that Madonna is a "postmodern feminist heroine" and utilizes Madonna texts as the springboard for her analysis of Madonna’s postmodern politics of power, sexuality, and personal autonomy. Mandziuk argues that the politics exhibited in Madonna’s Nightline interview; the Rock the Vote MTV spot; and the music video, Vogue, "followed a progression that has taken us from the equation of political autonomy, with artistic expression, through the association of freedom of speech with sexual expression, to a final diminishment of the distinction between politics and pleasure." For Mandziuk, the postmodernism that Madonna’s texts exhibit adheres to postmodernism’s dream of multiple selves at the cost of staking any ground or claim to power. In short, to celebrate the postmodern feminist politics that Madonna represents means forgoing any sense of identity or ground

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for a form of identity that is pure "play" or "style." In losing any claim to a feminist identity, feminism also loses any claim to power. Mandziuk claims that "to celebrate the postmodern feminist politics represented by Madonna requires replacing the speech of intervention with the discourse of style." Although she remains troubled by the exclusion that often has accompanied realist feminism, Mandziuk maintains that feminism cannot be seduced by postmodernism, and feminist politics must maintain a ground in gendered identities.

Susan Bordo also engages in the feminism-postmodern debate by attending to the implications and assumptions that lead feminist scholars to claim that Madonna is a postmodern feminist heroine. Bordo's approach is to enter the debates through Schwichtenberg and other's understanding of the postmodern female body that uses simulation as an erotic politics to enact the flux of identities that speak in plural styles, of which Madonna is an exemplar. Bordo argues that erotic politics ignores the real material and substantial changes that have occurred in Madonna's body as her career has developed. Madonna's early "fleshy days" show "Madonna's refusal to be obedient to dominant and normalizing standards of female beauty." As her career

117 Mandziuk 183.

118 Susan Bordo, "'Material Girl': The Effacements of Postmodern Culture, "The Madonna Connection: Representational Politics, Subcultural Identities, and
has developed, her celebration of her fleshy body moved from pride to embarrassment as Madonna's body was transformed into a slender, tight, muscular body. According to Bordo, Madonna's body has been "normalized" to the dominant discourse of female beauty that is set by the male gaze. Bordo finds that the obsessive body politics that regulates and disciplines Madonna's life and the young women who emulate Madonna "makes its way into the representation of Madonna as postmodern heroine."\textsuperscript{119} For Bordo, the postmodern theorizing that Madonna exemplifies keeps the "body immaterial, so long as the imagination is free,"\textsuperscript{120} a notion that is ultimately problematic for feminists because erotic postmodern politics effaces and simply ignores the bodies and material praxis of people's everyday lives. In other words, the postmodern theorizing advocates ideological freedom (imaginative freedom) while completely ignoring any sense of real body politics (material freedom).

Unlike the feminist scholars who directly theorize feminist concerns through Madonna's texts or her body, David Tetzlaff engages in a meta-level analysis of Madonna's constant transformations and mass appeal to audiences in her "management of her own career quest for fame, fortune, and

\textsuperscript{119}Bordo 285.

\textsuperscript{120}Bordo 288.
independence." Tetzlaff begins his analysis by arguing that when audiences and scholars ignore or misread the obvious sexist content of Madonna's videos, the misreading is a result of the meta-level narrative that Madonna has created about herself--that Madonna "is the author of her own image, that she constructs it to suit her own desires, and that she can change it as she likes." In her creation, Madonna does not rely on any sense of an authentic self; rather, the central issues are Madonna's continued success and control of her always changing and contradictory gender images.

Tetzlaff argues that the postmodernism that Madonna's metatext exemplifies is a postmodernism that applies "commodity fetishism to aesthetics, emptying the use value of symbols in the search for exchange value, it also aestheticizes the realm of commodities, turning economic exchange into a spectacle of mass consumption." Madonna's contradictory appeal and play with gender, rather than being seen as liberating from a feminist perspective, is, according to Tetzlaff, the result of capitalist imperatives that "have displaced many of the traditional practices and


122 Tetzlaff 246.

123 Tetzlaff 248.
discourse of patriarchy." Because the current economic imperatives demand that women no longer stay out of the work force, capitalism has begun a new cultural address to women at the same time that the shift away from patriarchy is not "complete"—the "old" patriarchal values continue to persist in culture. In short, the gender contradictions that run through Madonna’s differing images can be viewed as "the Cosmo girl having taken a few more steps away from patriarchy toward capital along the path of postmodern irony." The primary problem, then, to which Madonna’s career points to as she shifted into her "Chameleon" phase—her constant shifting of identities with each new video or project—is that the only dominating presence in her sales pitch of herself is herself. Tetzlaff concludes that as "superstar, as icon of adulation, as repository of power--she is the commodity."

Tetzlaff’s central concern about Madonna’s commodification is her apparent choice to become a constantly changing, renewing commodity and the concurrent serious implications for cultural politics, including feminist politics, of celebrating Madonna’s choices. Tetzlaff argues that the form of empowerment of Madonna’s postmodern feminism, which moves through one appropriation

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124 Tetzlaff 250.
125 Tetzlaff 250.
126 Tetzlaff 257.
of the signs of the marginalized to another without staying long enough for any historical specificity, offers an autonomy over a postmodern culture that "has not become depthless of its own accord; depth has been purposefully sucked out of it." Tetzlaff concludes that the empowerment of the postmodern feminism that Madonna models is ultimately devoid of material power, ungrounded in cultural historicity. Feminism, then, is misserved by advocating the kind of postmodern feminism Madonna models.

The literature review reveals that although there is no agreement among feminist scholars about Madonna's role as a postmodern feminist heroine, there is very little dispute that Madonna does raise profound and interesting questions for feminist scholars interested in what might and can count as feminist postmodern politics. In addition, throughout all the literature reviewed, with only a few exceptions, scholars see Madonna as postmodern in the sense that her gendered presentation is not stable, consistent, or boundaried.

Although the literature review opens up more questions than it answers, in terms of feminism and postmodern/poststructural subjectivity, there are some important tentative findings and generalizations in reference to Madonna. First, on the theoretical level, although postmodern theories attempt to pluralize gendered

127 Tetzlaff 259.
subjectivity, the literature reveals that the gendered dichotomy that undergirds Oedipal subjectivity is not directly challenged in the pluralization of gender. In other words, the Oedipal form of subjectivity is not transformed; rather, Oedipalized subjectivity is pluralized.

The second and related finding, at the meta-theoretical level, is that the literature review shows that feminist scholars interested in the postmodern subjectivity that Madonna models may be locked into a double bind. Either they perpetuate a postmodern Oedipalized form of gendered subjectivity through either privileging the feminine side of the dichotomy or pluralizing the Oedipalized form, or they ignore postmodern theorizing for foundational theorizing that may perpetuate modernist forms of oppression. If the postmodern theorizing about subjectivity that is employed by feminist scholars remains locked into this Oedipal double bind, feminist scholars may be perpetuating a form of gender that is founded on lack, albeit a pluralized form.

The third finding from the literature is that the engagement between feminism and postmodern theorizing remains problematic because postmodern theorizing cannot account for the real, material existence of women (the foundation of much feminist theorizing). In short, feminist scholars who employ postmodern theorizing have trouble accounting for the material and economic conditions that affect women’s everyday lives and that serve as the
foundation of much feminist theorizing. Hence, Bordo's concern about postmodernism and feminism seems to be evident in the literature; postmodern theorists advocate ideological freedom (imaginative freedom) while completely ignoring any sense of real body politics (material freedom).

The literature suggests that several important questions have yet to be addressed by feminist scholars. First, and of most significance, is: Why is Madonna a postmodern subject? What are the effects at work that make Madonna postmodern? Although there is general agreement that Madonna exhibits a postmodern subjectivity—she defies categorization, she constantly plays with gender images, she is contradictory, and she perpetually remakes her image—there has been very little discussion about why Madonna is postmodern. A related question is: Is there a specific kind of postmodern subjectivity that Madonna exhibits? Moreover, there is very little discussion about the fact that Madonna is so amenable to postmodern theories. Questions that need to be asked include: Why does postmodern theory, and especially postmodern feminism, fit so well with Madonna? What is the mutual implication between the desire at work in feminist theories and postmodern theories?

The second issue that seems undertheorized that also is related to postmodern theory is: Why do feminist-postmodern theorists continue to perpetuate a postmodern subjectivity
that "feminizes" Madonna as a "postmodern heroine?" Another way to ask the question is: Why not describe Madonna as a postmodern hero? The insistence on feminizing Madonna's subjectivity may point to a potential problem in feminist theorizing: feminism well might employ a postmodern feminism that utilizes concepts that contribute to its camouflage. The early skepticism about the engagement between feminism and postmodernism may be warranted, however, and the question that remains to be answered is: What can Madonna suggest about how both theoretical paradigms are constrained or "bottled-up?"

With the exception of Bordo, the literature review also shows that feminists rarely attempt to situate Madonna's artifacts in relation to her life experiences and her own descriptions of herself. Oullette's telling comment about the feminist interest in Madonna is important to remember: "Madonna scholars are not so much interested in Madonna herself, but in the way they believe she shakes up traditional social roles and power hierarchies."128 Bordo's critique, however, illuminates that, when attention is paid to Madonna--for Bordo, to Madonna's changing body--very different understandings about Madonna and very different theoretical explanations emerge. Also missing in the "material" analysis of Madonna, with the exception of

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Tetzlaff’s theorizing, is explicit attention to Madonna’s role in the capitalist marketplace. Although Madonna’s enormous success within the capitalist marketplace is often noted by scholars, little analysis has attempted to explain why Madonna has been so successful in the capitalist system. Thus, the literature review suggests that attention to the material analysis and the specific forms of patriarchy that exist under capitalism may uncover very different understandings of Madonna. Moreover, attending to Madonna’s position as a subject in the capitalist marketplace might expand feminism’s understanding of patriarchy at work under capitalism.

To summarize: the literature review indicates that feminist scholars who employ and/or engage the dominant theoretical approaches to understanding subjectivity, especially postmodern theories, seem to get locked into a double impasse among feminine essentialism and pluralization of femininity/gender. Also uncovered is that previous engagements between feminist scholars interested in Madonna and subjectivity have produced a body of literature that has not had the means of escaping this double path, where the solution offers no more of a way out than does the problem.

In order to begin to address the questions that remain undertheorized in the feminist scholarship about Madonna, feminist scholars can turn to a collaboration of feminism with schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis and feminist theorizing
can collaborate in order to: (1) move feminist theorizing beyond the theoretical double bind in which feminist scholars are currently trapped; (2) transform theoretical understandings about subjectivity beyond the Oedipal triangle; (3) develop a feminist theory that simultaneously can attend to both the ideological and material issues that Madonna raises; and (4) allow feminist theorizing to collaborate with a postmodern theory that is mutually transformative, rather than building an alliance with a theory that both liberates and camouflages feminist concerns. Thus, my study illuminates the issues Madonna raises in the alliance between feminist rhetorical scholarship and schizoanalysis. By employing a postmodern theory that also refuses a recoding that leads to a double bind, the collaboration between schizoanalysis and feminism is mutually transforming.

The literature review also forms a foundation upon which I can further elaborate the remaining details of the project: the artifacts analyzed in the study, a brief discussion of the approach\(^{129}\) that guides the reading, and the projected outline of the study.

\(^{129}\) Clearly, the tools that schizoanalysis offers for collaboration transforms the traditional understanding of method from a restrictive, recoded approach to an approach that employs tools. However, in order to engage in scholarship, I will be required to set clear and specific boundaries in order to do a reading that is a case study. Consequently, for the purposes of this project, I am employing a schizoanalytic sense of method to mean the use of tools for reading.
Method

In order to accomplish my purpose of weaving together feminist rhetorical scholarship and schizoanalytic theory, I will proceed through two steps. First, I produce a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective that is a collaboration between feminist rhetoric and schizoanalysis. Second, I apply the feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective to Madonna artifacts in order to assess the paradigm as a tool for transforming feminist rhetorical scholarship. Consequently, the application of the paradigm to Madonna artifacts is best described as a "case study."

Although Chapter Two is devoted to a more detailed explanation of the perspective I develop, a general discussion about the four tools that guide the development of the perspective and more detail about how the Madonna artifacts are analyzed is necessary.

Tools for Reading

In order to address my research questions, I bring feminist rhetorical criticism and schizoanalysis together in order to construct a feminist-schizoanalytic-rhetorical perspective. The five tools for analysis to be used are: the focus on sexuality and gender; the critique of Oedipal subjectivity; the advent of borderline-narcissistic
subjectivity; contextualization; and the critique of interpretation.

First, from feminist rhetorical scholarship, I utilize the knowledge gained about how sexuality and gender are constructed in artifacts—the focus on how sexuality is constructed and how gender works through symbols to construct and inform communication. By extracting the feminist-rhetorical approach to the study of sexuality and gender, the understanding of sexuality that informs the reading serves as the starting place for analysis. The perspective constructed assumes that non-Oedipalized gender will move toward n sexes. Braidotti and Jardine’s concern that schizoanalysis amounts to a massive sell-out of gender to a post-gender sexuality is accounted for by a collaboration that insists that current understanding of sexuality and gender at work (women’s Real experiences) must be in the forefront of the analysis.

The next two tools, from schizoanalysis, are the critique of Oedipal subjectivity and the advent of borderline-narcissistic subjectivity. In applying the schizoanalytic critique of Oedipal subjectivity, I take up the reading from where Deleuze and Guattari end. I assume that borderline-narcissistic subjectivity predominates in current culture. In order to explore the specific content of a specific borderline-narcissistic subject, I connect the diagnostic content of object-relations theorists with the
tools of decoding and recoding from schizoanalysis. Because borderline narcissism is a composite term that refers to a subject's reaction (recoding) to the weak ego structure that results from decoding, the diagnostic focus is primarily on the narcissistic reaction to the assumed borderline condition. Thus, in exploring the content of a specific borderline narcissist, I associate decoding with the underlying borderline condition. Because it is the reaction to the borderline condition, I align recoding with narcissism to explore the specific diagnostic content and symptoms of the narcissistic reaction—for example, denial of emotions, black-and-white-thinking, and splitting.

Decoding and recoding are employed in two additional ways in the analysis. I utilize decoding as the primary tool to make the connection between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalytic theory. I also use decoding to explore the ways that the desire is freed in artifacts. Recoding, the reinscription of meaning and desire, also is utilized from schizoanalysis. As with decoding, I employ recoding at two levels. First, in constructing a perspective to connect feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalytic theory, I set temporary boundaries for the reading that entail a recoding in and of itself. The recoding, however, also employs Deleuze's notion of "just an idea"; consequently, the recoding creates an idea to connect later with other ideas about feminist-rhetorical-
schizoanalytic readings. The second sense of recoding that is integrated into the collaboration is the assumption that artifacts also recode desire into "socially acceptable" codes.

The fourth tool, from schizoanalysis, is the foregrounding of context in artifacts. By bringing the foreground to the front of the analysis, I insist, in my reading, on viewing the process of production in the artifacts. Also related to contextualization is the focus on the mutual implication among desire as it is displayed in artifacts, the desire that is displayed in the writing/criticism about artifacts analyzed, and the desire at work in the capitalist market place.

Finally, as my fifth tool, I take as the primary aim of the reading the running of interference between the decoded and recoded desire in artifacts. In running interference, a primary aim of the reading is to uncover the process of constitution of artifacts. Running interference, then, explores the process of constitution of artifacts and the simultaneous production of power relations in the artifacts. Implicit in running interference is the exploration of how the effects of the decoded and recoded codes work in their social, political, and economic contexts to discern the connections and breaks among social, political, and economic institutions.

*Application to Madonna Artifacts*
The perspective developed is applied to Madonna artifacts as a case study in order to test the method as a tool for analyses for transformative feminist rhetorical scholarship. Madonna artifacts are particularly important for a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective because of Madonna's enormous popularity. By engaging in a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic reading of Madonna artifacts, I engage in analyses of the desire (the investment of energy) at work in each of the artifacts described below. Based on an inductive process, I employ the five tools as a group to each one of the Madonna artifacts. Then, I connect each of the separate analyses together to investigate the patterns of effects at work in the Madonna phenomenon. Finally, I assess the feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic paradigm as an idea for transforming feminist rhetorical scholarship. I assess how the paradigm works and with what effects as an idea for feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic theorizing.

A feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic paradigm, because of its extra-textual focus, transforms traditional notions of "data" to the process of products/production that is captured in the term artifact. For this project, I analyze three separate but related Madonna artifacts. I have chosen the artifacts for two primary reasons. First, the different artifacts analyzed represent different historical moments in Madonna's career. These different periods provide a richer
understanding of her work as her career has developed. Such a consideration is especially important for a schizoanalytic interpretation given its primary attention to the imperatives of capitalism: the steady march forward to new and better products, the insatiability of desire, and the privileging of exchange value over use value. Equally important is the schizoanalytic demand to contextualize and connect the artifacts in order to contextualize Madonna’s effects in process.

Second, the artifacts were chosen for analysis because they are readily available for private purchase by readers/consumers. I have selected Madonna’s compilation album and music videos that are found in The Immaculate Collection; Madonna’s film, Truth or Dare; and her Sex book as my artifacts.

The Immaculate Collection is a compilation of Madonna’s music that includes both a compact disk and her music videos. The collection spans Madonna’s career from 1983 to 1990 and, when released, it was a collection of Madonna’s greatest hits to date. Seventeen tracks are included on the compact disk in this order: "Holiday," "Lucky Star," "Borderline," "Like a Virgin," "Material Girl," "Crazy for You," "Into the Groove," "Live to Tell," "Papa Don’t Preach," "Open your Heart," "La Isla Bonita," "Like a

130 Gene Sculatti, jacket cover inside The Immaculate Collection, 1990.
Prayer," "Express Yourself," "Cherish," "Vogue," "Justify my Love," and "Rescue Me." The video compilation does not include all of the songs; it contains 13 videos, all of which are on the compact disk with the exception of "Oh Father." The videos are: Lucky Star, Borderline, Like a Virgin (the original video rather than the "Blond Ambition" remake), Material Girl, Papa Don’t Preach, Open Your Heart, La Isla Bonita, Like A Prayer, Express Yourself, Cherish, Oh Father, and two different representations of "Vogue." As Madonna’s career has developed, she has begun to move away from a primary and exclusive focus on music in her career, but her music continues to be an important part of her career. The Immaculate Collection is the best artifact available that follows her music career across time, and an analysis of the collection provides a fuller understanding of Madonna’s career as a musician and her position in the music industry. The Immaculate Collection is also a useful artifact for analysis because a significant component of Madonna’s artifacts that is addressed in this project is Madonna’s constant reinvention of herself. The "different" and "changing" Madonnas are best displayed in her videos, and this compilation of her works provides an excellent avenue for viewing and analyzing Madonna’s presentations across time.

Truth or Dare is a documentary film that chronicled Madonna’s 1990 Blond Ambition concert tour. The movie is a
behind-the-scenes film that focuses on Madonna's personal and professional relationships, her road crew and tour managers, and her personal life. The film defies "traditional" categorization because, as Pribram describes it, "It is a docudrama of sorts: part documentary, part concert film, part dramatic enactment." The film is shot in both black and white and color; the color sequences show the concert portions of the film, while the black-and-white sequences portray the behind-the-scenes and personal coverage.

That the film is controversial can be seen in its description as "a touching, vulgar, erotic and revealing documentary . . . ." One source of the controversy derives from confusion about what Madonna does and does not reveal about herself in the film. In fact, the most often-asked question raised about the film is, "Is she revealing, or isn't she?" In short, much of the discussion about Truth or Dare and the film itself point to the feminist postmodern concern about the real, authenticity, and subjectivity.

The film raises other issues as well: What ought to and does count as a "real" representation? What are the

131 Pribram 189.
133 Pribram 189.
boundaries between public and private personas? What is at stake in the varying readings of the film? In short, Truth or Dare offers rich data to gain insight into the subjectivity that Madonna presents. Also because of the various issues that the film problematizes for critics attempting to do readings of the film, Truth or Dare also opens up the space to engage in meta-level questions about what counts as the boundaries of criticism. Thus, it is an ideal artifact for the kind of meta-level analysis that schizoanalysis requires.

The third and final artifact utilized for analysis is Madonna's book, Sex. Sex was released on October 21, 1992, and was distributed through "mainstream" bookstores in a vacuum-packed Mylar bag that included a single-cut compact disc of the song, "Erotica." Before the publication, Nancy Neiman, the editor of Sex, predicted that all copies of the book would sell and that Sex would be the book of the year. The book retails for $49.95 a copy, and 750,000 copies of the book went on sale simultaneously in Japan, Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. Madonna insisted that no copies of the book could be "displayed outside the Mylar bag, and the package carries a label warning that Sex is for adults only."

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134 Nancy Neiman, quoted in Mark Landler, "Would you Pay $49.95 for Sex?," Business Week, 26 Oct. 1992: 42.

release, many bookstores presold their shipments before they arrived, and on the first day of sales, Sex sold 150,000 copies.136

Sex is a compilation of mostly black-and-white and single-color "erotic" photos of Madonna and Madonna posing with others. The book "is billed as the enactment of Madonna's private sexual fantasies, brought to the page by her longtime collaborator, photographer Steven Meisel."137 The photographs are varied and display sadomasochism, heterosexual and homoerotic imagery, and masturbation. Accompanying the photographs is written text that supposedly conveys the fantasies of Dita Parlo, Madonna's persona in the book. Dita Parlo is a "name taken from an old French movie that Madonna became enamored of."138 Before Dita's fantasies begin, on page one of the book, Madonna writes, "The book is about sex. Sex is not love. Love is not sex. But the best of both worlds is created when they come together."139 Madonna also argues that the characters in the book are not depictions of real people, and any similarities to real people and events "is not only purely coincidental, text.

137Orth 206.
138Orth 206.
it’s ridiculous. Nothing in the book is true. I made it up.”¹⁴⁰

Although Sex sold well in bookstores, very little of the anticipated outrage over the book accompanied the sales. In fact, several reviewers of Sex described the post-release response as anticlimactic.¹⁴¹ Newsweek claimed that the reason Sex was anticlimactic was because "after all the buildup, the book is neither groundbreaking (save that it features a major star) or particularly sexy.”¹⁴² Calvin Tomkins explains the anticlimax as a result of Madonna "blowing it," and he adds that not only does Sex not break new ground, Sex is "boring, non-erotic, and dumb."¹⁴³

Because Sex deals explicitly with desire, the book offers important insight into notions of Madonna’s desire and subjectivity. The analysis opens the opportunity to fill in the gap exposed in the literature review by beginning to focus on the subjectivity that Madonna presents. Finally, as a mass-marketed commodity, Sex is uniquely positioned to allow exploration of the connections among Madonna’s desire, current capitalist imperatives, and patriarchy at work under capitalism. It is an ideal

¹⁴⁰Madonna 2.


¹⁴²Leland, Malone, and Peyser 96.

¹⁴³Tomkins 38.
artifact to explore the desire at work that schizoanalysis requires.

The analyses of the Madonna artifacts are important mediation sites for a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective interested in exploring the decoded and recoded desire at work in culture. An important avenue for exploring the desire at work in Madonna artifacts is to employ the schizoanalytic sense of popular in the analyses.

The use of popular in this study is much richer in meaning than claiming that Madonna has a lot of fans. Rather, in the context of this project, the term draws on the schizoanalytic sense of popular and indicates the enormous investment of human energy—desire—in Madonna as a staying and lasting phenomenon. Popularity also draws on the schizoanalytic notions of the molecular and molar, which insist that desire is mutually constituting between the normally divided and segmented arenas of popular culture and academic culture. The study of Madonna's popularity also transcends the normal boundaries that divide academic and popular-culture writing; thus, analysis that employs the schizoanalytic concept of the mutually implicating traces between molecular and molar desire also can illuminate the traces of desire that exist between the two that make Madonna so popular. Thus, the study of Madonna's popularity allows the project to explore the mutually constituting traces of desire at work in knowledge production across
boundaries. In order to capture, however, how and why the study of Madonna's popularity is significant for this project, a brief discussion of how popular Madonna is and why her popularity is so important to this study is necessary.

Madonna's popularity in non-academic writing is so prolific that one critic, after trying to gain a thorough examination of Madonna coverage in the popular press, laments, "I gave up this idea very quickly. One might as well contemplate mapping the vastness of the cosmos as attempt to collect, let alone read, everything that has been written about Madonna." Because schizoanalysis insists on historically situating artifacts, the very fact that Madonna attracts so much attention and response indicates that the enormous investment of energy (writing) about Madonna is no accident. Consequently, the simple meta-level question that deserves further analysis is: Why is Madonna so enormously popular in the non-academic press? What desire is at work for Madonna's viewers/listeners/readers? Clearly, then, because Madonna attracts so much attention in popular writing, attending to the effects at work in popular culture will begin to uncover the traces that exist in her artifacts between the molecular and molar institutions (capitalism, the music industry, and socially stipulated forms of gender.)

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Tetzlaff 239.
Unlike most popular culture icons, the interest in Madonna also has taken hold in academic theorizing to such an extent that scholars who study Madonna are referred to as "Madonna scholars." Moreover, the "Madonna Phenomenon," a phrase first coined by E. Ann Kaplan, is the term that signifies the enormous academic interest in Madonna as tool for academic analysis. Daniel Harris notes that the "meteoric growth of the MP [Madonna Phenomenon] reflects changes that are occurring in the perception of popular art not only among academics but among mainstream pop critics as well."¹⁴⁵ Related to the issues that the MP raises for what counts as "legitimate" academic theorizing is the critique of the MP. Harris, for example, ultimately assesses the Madonna Phenomenon as indicative of "contemporary academics' attempts to counteract their own marginality by making desperate forays into popular culture but also at the inadequacies of postmodernism itself and the conceptual limits of its application to specific uncanonized forms of lowbrow entertainment."¹⁴⁶

The rise of Madonna's popularity and the simultaneous critique of Madonna scholars raise important meta-level concerns for the academy—and illuminates further the conception of popular that is employed in this study—about

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¹⁴⁶Harris 790.
what is considered as "legitimate" university scholarship. What are the ways in which Madonna's desire hooks into or resonates with academics and academic standards of what is considered "legitimate" university scholarship? Or, more simply, what limits or boundaries of desire does Madonna raise and erase for academic critics? Because Madonna has attracted so much attention within the academy, the study of Madonna artifacts illuminates what desire is at work for academics that makes her so popular.

Finally, the Madonna Phenomenon is of specific importance to feminism and feminist rhetoricians for several reasons. First, part of Madonna's popularity for feminist scholars is her constant play with her presentation of self and her subjectivity. Consequently, Madonna raises important questions for feminist theorists interested in theorizing subjectivity. Also of importance is Oullette's claim that Madonna scholars are being criticized because the scholars, mostly women, are the recipients of a more general "backlash" against women's progress in the academy and the rise of feminism. In particular, Oullette charges that much of the backlash is evidenced through the form of attack against feminist scholars. Rather than an exclusive focus on the issues Madonna presents for scholars, there is a significant amount of criticism directed at feminist scholarship and the questions feminism is attempting to work
According to Oullette, the issues that are coming under fire by feminist scholars represent "new turns in feminist theory, and raise difficult questions about any sort of universal female subjectivity and oppression." Another indication of the backlash is that much of the criticism of Madonna scholars minimizes and devalues the scholarship done by feminist scholars. As Oullette argues, the discussion feminism is having about Madonna "is more relevant, and more interesting, than snide jokes about terms like 'Metatexual Girl.'" Attending to feminists' attraction to Madonna and critiques of feminist scholarship about Madonna provides a neccessary component needed to attend to the research questions.

Because many feminist theorists interested in subjectivity are attracted to Madonna, Madonna artifacts serve as important objects to understand feminist theorizing about subjectivity and the desire at work that attracts feminist theorists. Assessing the effects at work for feminist theorists and then connecting the analyses with the effects at work in popular writing illuminates Madonna's popularity in culture. Moreover, because Madonna has received so much attention by popular, academic, and

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147Oullette 32-3.

148Oullette 33.

149Oullette 32.
feminist critics, her artifacts are an important site of mediation to uncover the mutually constituting desire at work between the institutions.

The critique of feminist scholarship done about Madonna illuminates the final sense of how popular is employed in the study: What does Madonna’s popularity among feminist scholars show about what should count as legitimate scholarship? Because the central issue debated is whether Madonna scholars should count as legitimate scholars, the Madonna Phenomenon is important to study because implicit in the backlash is a central concern about how feminist scholars fit into the academy. In other words, the central question is: How does feminist interest in Madonna resonate and connect with larger political and theoretical concerns in the academy?

Madonna provides rich data for a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective because of its focus on how the popularity of a cultural icon can serve as the mediation point for the traces of desire at work within culture. As a result of the analyses of Madonna’s popularity, this project is able to illuminate the transformative potential of schizoanalysis for feminism because the traditional boundaries that divide academic and popular criticism are be refused a priori. Also, the focus on Madonna’s popularity brings to the forefront the mutual implication and connections that can be found among all levels of
Consequently, the focus on Madonna's popularity begins to uncover the traces of desire that exist among Madonna artifacts and molecular and molar institutions (capitalism, the music industry, and socially stipulated forms of gender.) In short, analysis of Madonna's popularity allows the study to engage in transgressive scholarship, which opens the space to address the research questions and the central issues that Madonna's popularity raises about knowledge production in order to connect the study with larger political and theoretical concerns in the academy.

Outline

Chapter Two is a description of the foundations for a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective, with those foundations translated into tools for reading. The tools for reading are applied to the Madonna artifacts, with each analyzed in a separate chapter. Prior to beginning the analysis of the first artifact, a brief biography about Madonna is given in Chapter Three. Chapter Four is an analysis of The Immaculate Collection, Chapter Five of Truth or Dare, and Chapter Six of Sex. Chapter Seven deals with insights developed about feminism and Madonna and the transformative potential of schizoanalysis for feminist rhetorical theory.
CHAPTER II
FEMINIST-RHETORICAL-SCHIZOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE

The primary research question that serves as the foundation of this study is: What are the effects of the collaboration between feminist rhetoric and schizoanalysis? The study's foremost purpose, then, is to develop and apply a feminist rhetorical schizoanalytic "method" in order to illuminate and assess its transformative potential for feminist rhetorical criticism. This method derives from the five tools for reading identified earlier as the significant tools for this project—the focus on sexuality and gender; the critique of Oedipal subjectivity; borderline-narcissistic subjectivity; contextualization; and the critique of interpretation.

The collaborative method developed is used to analyze three Madonna artifacts—Truth or Dare, "The Immaculate Collection," and Sex—as a case study to explore the effects of the collaboration. Two minor research questions deal with the analysis of the Madonna artifacts: (1) What is the decoded and recoded desire at work in Madonna artifacts? (2) What do Madonna artifacts show about patriarchy under Capitalism?
I will translate the five tools into a critical method through three steps. In the first step, I identify the theoretical requirements for a feminist rhetorical paradigm. In the second step, I identify the theoretical requirements of schizoanalysis. Finally, based on the combined requirements of both theoretical perspectives, I translate the tools for reading into a method of analysis.

Feminist Rhetorical Perspective: Theoretical Requirements

For the purposes of this study, the feminist rhetorical perspective brings to the forefront the fundamental connections among sexuality, patriarchy, and gender. In this view, sexuality is the central tenet, and gender and patriarchy are viewed as the cultural institutions that mold, direct, and organize the social structures and relations that affect sexuality. Feminist rhetorical criticism regards the construction of sexuality and gender as an inherently rhetorical process because the construction is accomplished through rhetoric. Feminist rhetoricians know the importance of communication in forming and maintaining constructions of gender and patriarchy; accordingly, they bring the analyses of these constructions of gender and patriarchy to the forefront of analysis.

To produce insight into the constructions of gender and patriarchy, a rhetorically focused feminist methodology must confront and account for three concerns, extracted from feminist rhetorical criticism (reviewed in Chapter One). A
crucial aspect that must be incorporated into this method is the focus on freeing women’s lives from oppression, specifically through the analysis of gender and patriarchy. In order to work to improve women’s lives, feminist rhetoricians have two primary goals. First, they must uncover the ways that women’s lives are oppressed under patriarchy; and second, they must explore the ways to remove that oppression. A feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method, then, must contribute to the achievement of these goals.

A second requirement of a feminist rhetorical method is that it must nurture and critique feminist theory in order to refuse codification of its principles into a monolithic feminist theory. Employing a method that nurtures feminist theory must develop and advance feminist concerns. In addition, the method must be founded on theoretical principles that provides the critic space for self-reflective critique; the critic employing the method must have the space to problematize the method which, simultaneously, rewrite, review, reinterpret, and challenge feminist rhetorical theory. Thus, a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method must open the space for critique and facilitate the development of feminist theory.

Third, a dual goal of feminist rhetorical scholarship is to uncover how the effects of communication work to construct sexuality and how gender and patriarchy work to
construct and inform communication. In an analysis of the effects of communication, the focus is not on what an artifact means; rather, the focus is on how the communication within an artifact works to construct gender and patriarchy and on how and in what ways an artifact persuades. Because communication and its effects are integral to the formation and maintenance of feminist concerns, they must be incorporated into a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method.

Schizoanalysis: Theoretical Requirements

Similar to the requirements for a feminist rhetorical method, a schizoanalytic methodology would confront and account for the three concerns introduced in the discussion of schizoanalysis in Chapter One. Because schizoanalytic theorizing is driven by an understanding of transgressive desire, it, too, engages in excessive theorizing. As a consequence, any schizoanalytic "method" must engage in scholarship and theorizing that is "excessive." In order to do so, a schizoanalytic method must not restrict or codify the approach to analysis into a monolithic schizoanalytic theoretical system; instead, a schizoanalytic method supplies tools or a toolbox that can be employed by theorists. The first requirement of a schizoanalytic method, accordingly, is that it makes no claims to being a monolithic theoretical system, because it only provides a toolbox for analysis; a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic
method must adhere to this same requirement.

Like a feminist rhetorical theory, but for reasons grounded in postmodern critical theory, a schizoanalytic toolbox attends to the particular, historical context in theorizing and in analysis. A method that attends to the particular, historical context has two primary tasks. First, the method itself must be situated in its own historical context and must accommodate critique; in other words, the method must problematize its own history and position in knowledge production. Second, critics who employ the method must view it as a historically specific approach to analysis—it brings the specific historical context to the forefront of analysis. A schizoanalytic method must be open for critique, problematize its own history, and feature historical context; consequently, a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method must do the same.

Yet another requirement of schizoanalytic theorizing is that scholarship and criticism be done in order to engage in the development of "just an idea." Deleuze counters the notion of the search for "Just" ideas with the search for "just in idea" and argues that "just an idea" is a line of thought that points human rationality toward a new way of thinking. Thus, anything that creates new lines of thought is "just an idea." In developing "just an idea," the critic does not search for the meaning or the idea; rather, readings, are just an idea that uncover the decoded and
recoded desire at work in the data of each artifact. The final requirement of a schizoanalytic method is that the goal of the resulting analysis is to produce "just an idea" about an artifact that is analyzed. As such, a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method takes as its goal the production of "just an idea" about artifacts.

The collaboration between feminist rhetorical and schizoanalytic theory must adhere to the requirements of both theoretical paradigms. Thus, a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective must fulfill many obligations. First, such a perspective must acknowledge the important role of communication and its effects. It must account for the focus on gender and patriarchy and produce additional insight into uncovering the specific manner in which women's lives are restricted and freed in contemporary culture. Further, the perspective must insist on nurturing, developing, and advancing a non-codified theory; remain open to self-reflexive critique; and be historically situated. Finally, the insights it produces constitute "just an idea" and not any objective, irrefutable claims about the artifacts under analysis. The result of such a collaboration is a method uniquely positioned to be employed to transform both feminist rhetorical theory and the schizoanalytic toolbox.
Translating the Tools Into Method

The theoretical collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis can be translated into a method that employs five tools for reading. Chapter One described the five tools for reading from a feminist rhetorical and schizoanalytic perspective—the exploration of sexuality and gender, the critique of Oedipal subjectivity, the advent of borderline-narcissistic subjectivity, contextualization, and the critique of interpretation. These tools serve as the foundation for a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method of criticism, and they constitute the basis for the method I develop. With each tool, I will begin with the specific issues that each highlights for analysis\(^1\) and then suggest the questions derived from the tool that constitute a feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method. These questions will be the questions that guide my analysis of the Madonna artifacts in the following chapters.

**Sexuality and Gender**

The focus on sexuality, gender, and patriarchy, which is derived from feminist rhetorical criticism, attends to

\(^1\)The tools of schizoanalysis are intimately connected and related; thus, there is some overlap in what each tool highlights (e.g., the notion of molecular and molar forms the foundation for contextualization and the critique of interpretation). The questions derived from each tool attempt to highlight the unique aspects that each tool brings to the methodology, although the overlap is implicit in the questions.
how communication constructs sexuality and how gender and patriarchy work through symbols to construct and inform communication. The critique of Oedipal subjectivity provides the assumption that non-Oedipalized gender will move toward n sexes, which is the investment of nonboundaried excessive desire that results in transexuality and has an infinite number of gender possibilities. The critique of Oedipal subjectivity, however, also makes clear that current forms of sexuality have not reached the utopian n sexes; rather, sexuality is freed through decoding and restricted through recoding into socially appropriate forms such as patriarchy and gender. Therefore, studying the sexuality evidenced in Madonna artifacts will provide important insight into the two minor research questions because recoding, decoding, and patriarchy under capitalism are intimately connected to the construction of current forms of sexuality. Hence, the question that guides the exploration of sexuality is:

(1) What form(s) of sexuality is(are) at work within Madonna artifacts?

An understanding of the form of sexuality within any artifact demands a concurrent analysis of the predominant form of subjectivity. Borderline narcissism—the second analytic tool—provides the theoretical insight to explore further current cultural forms of sexuality.
Critique of Oedipal Subjectivity and Borderline-Narcissistic Subjectivity

Schizoanalysis transforms Oedipal subjectivity by historicizing the diagnosis of the "culture of narcissism" to a culture of borderline-narcissistic subjects who have a libidinal structure of the semiosis found in capitalism: decoding frees schizophrenic desire, while recoding recontains and restricts desire into socially stipulated forms. The result of the capitalist logic is that desire is always unsatisfied and unable to synthesize fully good and bad part-objects; borderline-narcissistic subjects are caught in the double bind of recoding and decoding. Borderline-narcissism, then, is a composite term for a libidinal structure that is split between the decoding of free schizophrenic desire and the recoding of socially stipulated desire. The manifestations of borderline narcissism in artifacts are visible because of the splitting that is both the fundamental cause of ego weakness and a central defense mechanism of a borderline pathology. The splitting, thus, also divides the decoding of the borderline condition and the recoding of the narcissistic reaction of splitting off parts of self as a defense mechanism.

In transforming object relations theorists' clinical understanding of narcissistic-borderline pathology, schizoanalysis reconfigures the primary focus in the pathology to the borderline pathology—a result of decoding—that is overlaid by narcissism—a result of recoding. Thus, in schizoanalysis, the diagnostic term for the pathology is borderline narcissism.
The borderline-narcissistic tool assumes that borderline-narcissistic subjectivity is the most common form of subjectivity that predominates in current culture. Also, because borderline narcissism has a specific diagnostic content that is utilized in clinical understandings of the pathology, the clinical perspective can be used to explore the borderline-narcissistic subjectivity in artifacts (reviewed in Chapter One).

To summarize the clinical manifestations of the borderline-narcissistic subjectivity: borderline-narcissistic subjectivity is manifest in black-and-white thinking, denial of emotions, a sense of omnipotence, primitive idealization, projection, and a devaluation of others. This final manifestation is characterized by boredom, restlessness, contempt for others, envy, grandiosity that hides feelings of worthlessness, shallow relationships, lack of empathy, and lack of principle.

The narcissistic component of the borderline-narcissistic subjectivity is used primarily for recoding. The grandiose sense of self, for example, is a recoding of the borderline condition, a recoding that attempts to counter the weak and incoherent ego structure. In addition, narcissistic recoding is employed as a means to split off parts of the self in order to maintain a comfortable distance from the undesirable parts of the self.

A programmer, who recodes more or less worthless
objects with semiotic surplus value in order to enable the realization of economic surplus value, also recodes split-off parts of the self in order to realize a profit. Programmers, however, sell images of split-off parts of the self in order to capitalize on the market to create meaning value from the split-off self that is sold. A programmer, then, engages in a metalevel recoding of self in order to manage the incoherent parts of the self or to manage the different roles that these parts play in the marketplace. Amy Fisher, for example, marketed and managed different parts of herself by selling herself in the role of "victimized" young woman. Recoding, then, necessarily takes place at the metalevel so that the programmer can maintain the distance necessary to manage the different parts of the self.

In contemporary culture, many approaches to the study of borderline-narcissistic subjectivity could be taken; however, because splitting is the central component of borderline narcissism, analyses must maintain the centrality of splitting. A feminist rhetorical analysis of borderline narcissism, then, can focus on the splitting that occurs in relation to gender roles and identities. Given that Madonna’s hallmark is her play with gender identity, a rhetorical focus on the function of her gender play is necessary in order to analyze the specific form of borderline narcissism in Madonna artifacts. The borderline-
A narcissistic tool can assist in the discussion about Madonna's play with gender by exploring how Madonna splits off different gender roles. The focus, then, on the particular **content** of the multiple gender roles that Madonna uses—but splits off and from which she maintains distance—is necessary.

Because recoding always overlays any prior decoding, recoding also warrants attention. Again, there are many potential routes to studying the recoding at work in Madonna artifacts; however, the fact that feminist concerns are the foundation of the study warrants a focus on gender's role in recoding. In addition, attention to the rhetorical component of Madonna's programming—how her play with gender works—must be addressed in order to discern any pattern in the particular content of the multiple gender roles displayed in her artifacts.

Therefore, the questions that guide the exploration of Madonna's borderline narcissism and attend to the central focus on gender are:

1. What are the multiple gender roles that are exhibited in Madonna artifacts?

2. What is the content of her split-off gender roles in artifacts?

3. How does Madonna's programming, as revealed in her artifacts, work? Specifically, how does the artifact recode and recontain desire in her use of multiple gender roles?

4. How do Madonna's life experiences connect with the psychic formation displayed in Madonna artifacts?
Because the critique of Oedipal subjectivity is the linchpin of Deleuze and Guattari's theorizing, exploring Madonna's borderline narcissism will have the primary focus in analysis. Contextualization, however, is necessary in order to understand fully the effects of Madonna artifacts.

**Contextualization**

Within schizoanalysis, desire contains both the molecular and molar; the two are constructed together, and the relationship between them is a mutually constituting double movement. By focusing on the mutually constituting process of production, schizoanalysis insists that all phenomena must be contextualized. Contextualization includes historical contextualization—the situating of artifacts in their historical time—and it also proposes that extra-textual phenomena (excess) be accounted for in the understanding of the effects of artifacts. A critic who employs contextualization as a tool for analysis must insist on viewing the process of production in artifacts. This process includes the mutual implication among the author's desire displayed in artifacts, the writing/criticism about those artifacts, and the connections to the decoded and recoded desire at work in the capitalist marketplace. Consequently, as a tool for analysis, contextualization will

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³Attention to uncovering the traces of Madonna's desire in artifacts will be uncovered by the borderline-narcissism tool—question #4: How do Madonna's life experiences connect with the psychic formations displayed in Madonna artifacts?
explore the process of production in Madonna artifacts. Contextualizing Madonna artifacts will enrich the understanding of the second and third research questions because I will give specific attention to the transgressive process of production: the mutually implicating desire at work for Madonna and the institutions of patriarchy, gender, and capitalism.

The following questions will guide the exploration of the process of production and will account for the extra-textual components in the production process:

1. What traces of desire are at work in the existing writing/criticism about each artifact?

2. Does the artifact contain evidence of its constitution process?

3. How was the constitution process influenced by gender and patriarchy?

Utilizing the tool of contextualization requires an exploration of the process of production in Madonna artifacts in order to understand both this production and Madonna's borderline narcissism. By uncovering the process of production, the critique of interpretation provides the final tool for explaining the role of the critic in the analysis of the production process.

Critique of Interpretation

As a tool for analysis, the critique of interpretation has a two-part focus. First, the analysis of the artifacts will be done in order to develop "just an idea" about each
Madonna artifact. Theorists who engage in scholarship that searches for "just an idea" refuse codification; rather than search for the meaning or the idea, readings uncover how decoded and recoded desire works in artifacts, institutions, and criticism. Unlike the other tools, critics explore "just an idea" not through a specific set of questions; instead, the tool undergirds the goal of the analysis. Critics use the analysis of each artifact in order to develop "just an idea" about data found in an artifact.

The second component of the critique of interpretation is the primary role of the critic engaged in the analyses. The critic takes as a primary critical role that of running interference between the decoded and recoded desire found in the artifacts. In this role, the critic refuses to reinscribe semiotic despotism by engaging in interpretation and, instead, produces interference among the recoded authoritative codes in order to undermine Oedipal authority and power relations. As such, running interference from a feminist perspective must uncover primarily the process of sexuality's constitution within Madonna artifacts and the simultaneous production of gendered and patriarchal power relations in the artifacts. The questions that will guide the use of this tool are:

(1) What power relations of patriarchy are displayed in the artifacts?

(2) What implications do these power relations have for women?
Overall, then, the tools and the accompanying questions that constitute the feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method are:

**Sexuality and Gender**

(1) What form(s) of sexuality is(are) at work within Madonna artifacts?

**Critique of Oedipal Subjectivity and Borderline-Narcissistic Subjectivity**

(1) What multiple gender roles are exhibited in Madonna artifacts?

(2) What is the content of her split-off gender roles in artifacts?

(3) How does Madonna's programming, as revealed in her artifacts, work? Specifically, how does the artifact recode and recontain desire in her use of multiple gender roles?

(4) How do Madonna's life experiences connect with the psychic formation displayed in Madonna artifacts?

**Contextualization**

(1) What traces of desire are at work in the previous writing/criticism about each artifact?

(2) Does the artifact contain evidences of its constitution process?

(3) How was the constitution process influenced by gender and patriarchy?

**Critique of Interpretation**

(1) What power relations of patriarchy are displayed in the artifacts?

(2) What implications do these power relations have for women?
Application of the method in Chapters Four, Five, and Six will uncover the desire at work in Madonna artifacts. Answering the questions derived from the tools of analysis will enable me to present my findings and address the major research questions in Chapter Seven.
CHAPTER III:
BIOGRAPHY

The biographical information given in this chapter covers the relevant material prior to the release of the first artifact analyzed. Because I contextualize each artifact, I give the later, relevant biographical information prior to the analysis of each artifact in the following chapters. Thus, the biographical material in this chapter ends at 1990, the year The Immaculate Collection was released.

Madonna Louise Ciccone, named after her mother, was born August 16, 1958, in Bay City, Michigan. She was raised for the first six years of her life by her mother and her father, Tony Cicone, a Chrysler engineer. Because both of Madonna’s parents were devout Catholics, Madonna and her five siblings were raised in a traditionally strict Catholic home. After her mother’s death from cancer when she was six, Madonna and her family remained in Bay City. Her father married Joan Gustafson three years later, and the family moved to Rochester, Michigan, a move that signified the family’s upward mobility. The Gustafsons had two more children and continued to raise their family of eight
children within a strict Catholic framework. As a teenager, Madonna took dance lessons, was a school cheerleader, and maintained an outstanding academic record.\textsuperscript{1} After graduating from high school in 1976, she received a four-year dance scholarship to the University of Michigan, where she remained for five semesters before leaving for New York City for a career as a dancer in 1978; her father strongly objected to her move. Because she had used all the money she had saved for her plane fare, Madonna arrived in New York with one suitcase and $35 and was dropped off by a taxi in the center of Times Square.\textsuperscript{2} Hours after her arrival in New York, Madonna met a man who offered to let her stay with him for a few days. Madonna stayed with him for two weeks and began a several-year pattern of living as a nomad by moving around and living hand to mouth. She "moved from one apartment to another, eating popcorn for sustenance because it was cheap and filling."\textsuperscript{3} Madonna's habit of shopping for her clothes at thrift stores and wearing layers of those clothes began during these early days in New York City.

Shortly after arriving in New York City, Madonna secured an audition with the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre. She

\textsuperscript{1}Christopher Anderson, \textit{Madonna Unauthorized} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991) 49.

\textsuperscript{2}Mark Bego, \textit{Madonna: Blonde Ambition}, (New York: Harmony) 46.

\textsuperscript{3}Bego 47.
received a work scholarship in its third-string company, which only covered her dance fees. Consequently, Madonna still did not have any money for food and rent. To help support herself, Madonna began to work as a nude model for art classes and had a series of jobs at Dunkin Donuts, at Burger King, and as a coat checker at the Russian Tea Room. After several months in the Ailey company, Madonna won an audition and was accepted into the Pearl Lang Company. During her time with the Lang Company, she continued to work various jobs. When Madonna met Dan Gilroy and his brother, Ed, aspiring musicians, she moved in with them, and Dan Gilroy taught Madonna how to play the guitar. Shortly after being introduced to music, Madonna quit her dance training and switched aspirations from being a dancer to being a musician.

With the Gilroys and others, Madonna began a series of stints with various bands. As a band member, Madonna took responsibility for promoting and getting dates in bars for the bands. One day, while she was scouring the trade papers, Madonna came across an ad for a casting notice. She auditioned for a position as a backing singer for a world tour being produced by a French singer. Although she did not get the position, Jean Claude Pallerin and Jean Van Lieu, two French producers, offered Madonna the opportunity to go to Paris with them to continue to develop her star potential. Madonna was flown to Paris, where she worked
with a vocal coach and a dance teacher. All of her material and financial needs were provided by the producers, and she lived in luxury there. After six months, however, Madonna became frustrated by the producers' failure to make her a star. She left Paris with only one suitcase and returned to New York City and the Gilroys.

Madonna rejoined the Gilroy band and immediately took control of the band's marketing. During this time, Madonna returned to being a nude model and to scouring the trade papers. In 1979, she answered an advertisement for and received the starring role in an eight-mm film, her first movie, *A Certain Sacrifice*, for which the filming took two years. Throughout that time, Madonna continued to develop her skills as a musician and market the band.

In 1981, Madonna left the Gilroys and formed her own band with an old boyfriend, Steve Bray, from the University of Michigan, and she continued to try to market her band to various record companies. Again, she spent most of her time moving around and living hand to mouth. In the same year, Madonna met Camille Babone, who agreed to be her manager and set her up in an apartment. Babone fired Madonna's band and hired professional musicians as Madonna continued to develop her skills. In 1982, however, Madonna quit working for Babone because of differences about what style of music Madonna should play. Madonna went back to the East Village area and returned to her nomadic existence.
During this period, Madonna began developing the "Madonna look" by "purchasing previously owned 'antique' clothing—including garments that cost almost nothing—and then concoct[ing] one-of-a-kind outfits" characterized by "rags knotted in her hair and layers of junk jewelry . . . ."4 In this look, clothing is layered and symbolic of different periods: her hair accessories were reminiscent of the 1950s; her clothes suggested both a hard, street, punk look and seductiveness. Her unkempt, wild blonde hair with its dark roots signified a tough, defiant attitude that did not care if her roots were showing. Even her body, which constantly showed off her rounded stomach, signaled a purposeful violation of feminine standards of beauty and its requirement of thinness.

Madonna also began hanging out with graffiti artists and decided she needed her own signature; she began to use "Boy Toy" as her signature on the subway walls that she graffitied. During her early days, the label "Boy Toy" was applied to the first Madonna look.

Madonna also began to record demo tapes to distribute to club disc jockeys. In April of 1982, Madonna took a tape of her song, "Everybody," to Mark Kamins, a DJ at a club called Dancetaria, to play while she lipsynched and danced to the song. Kamins and Madonna polished "Everybody" and took it to Sire records, which signed Madonna to a contract.

4Bego 71.
for two dance singles. The singles Madonna produced were aimed at an urban, contemporary audience of largely Blacks and Puerto Ricans. Because Sire records targeted that audience, its managers were afraid that Madonna’s whiteness would be problem. As a result, her identity as a white woman was "masqueraded for the record buying public"\(^5\) when "Everybody" was released; Madonna did not appear on the record jacket. Although a video of the song was made for MTV, it was not even considered for distribution because MTV "considered her a one-shot dance artist."\(^6\)

Madonna began to make the dance-club circuit, singing and dancing to her music. By March of 1983, she released her second single, "Burning Up/Physical Attraction," on Sire records. Madonna did a video for the song—her first appearance on MTV. The video surprised many people, who saw Madonna for the first time and realized that she was a white artist.

Madonna began to work on her first album for Sire records, *Madonna*, at the close of 1983.\(^7\) *Madonna* sold nine million copies, and the first two singles on the album were

\(^5\)Bego 77.

\(^6\)Bego 77.

\(^7\)Authorship of the songs on this album is not clear. The compact-disk jacket claims, "All songs written by Madonna," but this statement is followed by copyrights that say, ‘Borderline’ and ‘Physical Attraction’ are written by Reggie Lucas and ‘Holiday’ is written by Curtis Hudson and Lisa Stevens." Bego credits Madonna with writing "Lucky Star," "Think of Me," and "I Know It" (85).
enormous hits for Madonna. After the release of Madonna, Madonna recorded her second album, Like a Virgin, in 1984, which sold 11 million copies. Madonna wrote one song on the album and co-wrote four other songs. While she was filming the Material Girl video from the album, Madonna met and began to date her future husband, Sean Penn.

In the summer of 1984, before the release of Like a Virgin and as Madonna's popularity began to rise, she was signed to play Susan in the film, Desperately Seeking Susan. The character of Susan is a nomad who moves around from city to city; when she returns to New York, she places advertisements in the newspaper so that her on-again, off-again boyfriend knows she is in town. Madonna objected to the original plan for Susan's dress and style and, in fact, utilized much of her own wardrobe for the part. Madonna said about Susan's dress, "I put together things, like one outfit will be my shirt, their skirt, my socks, their shoes." Desperately Seeking Susan was released on March 29, 1985, and "it became an immediate comedy hit, and suddenly people were falling all over themselves with praise for the film--and for Madonna." By the time of the release, Madonna's fame had grown to such an extent that she began to receive equal billing on the film with the star, Rosanna Arquette.

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8 Bego 110.
9 Bego 122.
A month after the release of *Desperately Seeking Susan*, in April of 1985, Madonna began her first concert tour to sell *Like a Virgin*. The Virgin Tour, although it met with mixed critical reviews, "sold out across the board [in America]." The primary audience for the tour was young girls. In fact, unlike the audience for most concert tours, 60% of the audience were women, mostly teenage girls, who dressed up like Madonna for the concert.

After completing the Virgin Tour, Madonna met Sean Penn in Nashville where he was filming *At Close Range*, and during their week together, they became engaged. They were married in August of 1985. Shortly before they were married, in July of 1985, *Playboy* magazine published a series of naked photos of Madonna from her art-modeling days. Although the release of the photos was troubling to Madonna not because they were nude pictures of her but because she felt out of control, their release did not damage her career and, in fact, seemed to fuel the Madonna craze.

During 1986, Madonna recorded her third album, *True*

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10 Bego 127.

11 Bego 129.

12 *Penthouse* was the first to announce publication of the nude photos for September of 1985; however, *Playboy* "scooped" *Penthouse* and published the first series on July 10, 1985. In response, *Penthouse* rushed its printing of the photos for July 16, 1985. As a result, in July, two magazines published nude photos of Madonna.

13 Bego 137
Blue. Madonna produced the album with Patrick Leonard and Stephen Bray and is given lead authorship on all of the songs that she co-wrote with the exception of "Papa Don't Preach," where she is credited with providing additional lyrics. The album sold 17 million copies and contained several hits, including four top-five hit singles. A significant amount of the discussion about the release of True Blue centered on the new Madonna look that accompanied the release of the album. The wild, boy-toy look was replaced with a sleek, slender Madonna who is described as "a combination of Marilyn Monroe, Jean Seberg, and Kim Novak. Gone was the assemblage of crucifixes and hair rags. In its place was a new gamine Madonna for 1986."14

Madonna said of her new look:

I see my new look as very innocent and feminine and unadorned. It makes me feel good. Growing up, I admired the kind of beautiful glamorous women—from Bridgette Bardot to Grace Kelly—who [don't] seem to be around much anymore. It think it's time for that kind of glamour to come back.15

After recording True Blue, Madonna and Penn began to film and star in Shanghai Surprise, although their relationship remained stormy. During the filming of the

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movie and from the beginning of their marriage, Madonna and Penn's marriage was watched closely by the media, which was troublesome to Penn.\textsuperscript{16} The close media attention resulted in the media's dubbing of Madonna and Penn as "the Poison Penns" both for their refusal to speak to the press and because of their stormy relationship with one another. Although Madonna and George Harrison, the director of the film, attempted to counter the negative press the filming received, the film was a box-office flop when it opened on August 29, 1986.

In September of 1986, Madonna began production of her next movie, \textit{Slammer}. When the movie was released, the title had been changed to \textbf{Who's That Girl?} Again, both Madonna's performance and the movie were panned. Madonna, however, began her second concert tour, titled the "Who's that Girl?" tour in Japan on June 14, 1987. The North American leg of the tour encompassed 19 cities, and the first stop in Miami's Orange Bowl grossed $1 million in ticket sales, which set a record for a female artist in an Orange Bowl appearance.\textsuperscript{17}

The Penn and Madonna marriage continued to be troubled and, at Thanksgiving in 1987, Madonna served Penn with divorce papers, although she rescinded them on December 16, \textsuperscript{16}Penn was arrested and charged twice with battery for attacking reporters who were covering him and Madonna. He served six months in jail for one attack.

\textsuperscript{17}Bego 194.
1987. Also in November of 1987, Madonna released her fourth album, *You Can Dance*, a compilation of extended dance remixes of six of her dance songs from her other albums: "Spotlight," "Holiday," "Everybody," "Physical Attraction," "Over and Over," "Into the Groove," "Where's the Part?," and the dubbed version of "Holiday." As 1987 closed, Madonna ended the year as the seventh top-earning star and had an estimated gross income of $26 million dollars for the year.\(^{18}\)

At the beginning of 1988, Madonna concentrated on her acting career and began filming the *Bloodhounds of Broadway*, a film in which she was only one of several stars. The film was Madonna’s third box-office bomb. Madonna turned next to the Broadway play, *Speed-the-Plow*. The play reviews were mixed, but Madonna was credited for keeping the play sold out for its entire run.\(^{19}\) Both projects, then, failed to advance Madonna’s acting career. During Madonna’s time in the play, her marriage to Penn continued to be stormy, and she struck up a friendship with comedian Sandra Bernhard, whose one-woman show was also on Broadway. Speculation about a possible lesbian relationship between Bernhard and Madonna began shortly after their friendship blossomed. Both fueled the speculation with an appearance together on a June 28 segment of *Late Night with David Letterman*. They

\(^{18}\)Bego 200.

\(^{19}\)Bego 206.
announced that they frequented lesbian bars together and that Bernhard had had sex with both Madonna and Penn. As the press fueled the controversy, both women denied that they had had a lesbian relationship and claimed that the whole thing had been a joke.

By the close of 1988, Madonna was being courted by Warren Beatty for a role in his upcoming film, *Dick Tracy*, which she accepted. Also, in December of 1988, after a fight with Madonna, Penn reportedly tied and gagged Madonna for nine hours in their home.²⁰ Madonna never confirmed or denied the incident, but on January 15, 1989, she filed for divorce. The divorce was granted, and Madonna began working on her fifth album, *Like a Prayer*.

*Like a Prayer* was co-produced by Madonna and Patrick Leonard; it sold 11 million copies and came with an informative insert that outlined AIDS-prevention instructions. Madonna co-wrote all of the songs on the album. Shortly after releasing the album, Madonna began filming her part as Breathless Mahoney in *Dick Tracy* and had a much-publicized relationship with Warren Beatty. As 1989 closed, Madonna was "one of People magazine's '20 Who Defined the Decade.'" She was one of *Time*’s ten 'Faces of the Decade.' . . . [and] *Musician* magazine crowned her the

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²⁰Bego 214. Bego cites a Malibu police officer as confirming the incident.
'Artist of the Decade.'"21

As 1990 opened, the filming for Dick Tracy was completed, and Madonna had recorded her fifth album to accompany the release of the movie, I'm Breathless. I'm Breathless was produced by Madonna and Patrick Leonard and contained three songs from Dick Tracy written by Steven Sondheim, two songs written by Andy Paley, and five additional songs that Madonna co-wrote with Leonard that were based on the Breathless Mahoney character. Madonna then turned her attention to putting together her 1990 Blond Ambition tour, which served as the basis for the film, Truth or Dare. On April 13, 1990, the tour opened, and the filming began for the movie. At the close of 1990, Madonna produced with Shep Pettibone The Immaculate Collection for the 1990 Christmas season. Also by the close of 1990, Madonna was named the top-earning female entertainer of 1990 with an estimated gross for the year of $39 million.22 Thus, between 1986 and 1990, Madonna earned $125 million.23

In addition to being a top-earning female entertainer, by 1990, Madonna began to be described as "a rarity among entertainers: a star who runs her own business affairs."24

21Bego 232.


23Schrifin and Newcomb 162.

24Schifrin with Newcomb 162.
In running her own business affairs, Madonna insists on an enormous amount of control in her business ventures; she "seldom delegates major responsibility, makes it a point to be in on all negotiations that relate to her business and employs only two people full-time (both personal assistants)."\(^{25}\) Madonna's success and control of her career continued and, by 1991, her five companies—Boy Toy, Inc. (music and record royalties); Siren Films (film and video production); Webo Girl (music publishing); Music Tours, Inc.; and Slutco (an inactive video production company)—grossed $23 million.\(^{26}\)

This brief biography of Madonna's rise to music stardom suggests that from the time she reached New York, Madonna had one goal—to become a star. After meeting the Gilroy brothers, Madonna changed aspirations to becoming a music star. Her early days in New York were spent living as a nomad, creating the initial Madonna look, and attempting to break into the music industry. As Madonna's career flourished, she began to change her initial look, and by 1986, Madonna's look and body shifted to a new, sleek

\(^{25}\)Goodman 53. Jeffrey Katezenberg, chair of Disney Studios, describes Madonna as having "a very strong hand in dealmaking and financing of her enterprises. Nothing gets done without her participation . . . ." Also, Katezenberg claims that Madonna only uses advisers "as aides in making her own judgement, as opposed to having them run her life." See Katezenberg, quoted in Schifrin with Newcomb 162.

sophisticated image. By 1990, then, Madonna's goal of becoming a music star was reached; however, her attempts to reach equal success on stage and in film had met with failure. Thus, when the first artifact for analysis, The Immaculate Collection was released, Madonna's successful music career was established.
Chapter IV

ANALYSIS OF THE IMMACULATE COLLECTION

Borderline narcissism is employed in this dissertation in two senses—both as a structural diagnosis of the culture of borderline narcissism and as a psychological diagnosis of individual subjects. As a result, Chapters Three, Four, and Five privilege different perspectives in assessing the borderline narcissism at work in Madonna’s artifacts. In Chapter Four, I take an evolutionary and structural perspective in order to explore the borderline narcissism exhibited within the music industry and Madonna’s videos. Chapter Five, dealing with Truth or Dare, which contains Madonna’s own discourse about herself, features a psychological perspective in order to uncover Madonna’s own borderline narcissism. Because Sex contains both Madonna’s own writings about her desire and is intimately connected to the marketing strategies employed in the book, Chapter Six, which deals with Sex, incorporates both structural and psychological perspectives.

Exploration of how Madonna’s borderline narcissism has developed and continues to work within her music and videos requires an evolutionary and structural perspective that
privileges the context in which Madonna’s stardom and popularity arose, the music industry. The music industry is especially important to understanding Madonna’s borderline narcissism given that Madonna’s music is her claim to fame and the avenue for her rise to stardom: her first three albums sold over 30 million copies worldwide, and she had 11 consecutive singles that have reached the top five.\(^1\) Hence, Madonna’s videos are situated within the culture of borderline narcissism that exists within the institutions of the music industry, MTV, and Madonna’s videos themselves.

Analysis of Madonna’s videos will proceed in four parts. Section one describes the 12 videos that constitute The Immaculate Collection. In section two, I contextualize the videos within the music industry and MTV. Finally, in section three, I engage in a feminist-schizoanalytic reading of the videos and conclude with responses to the research questions that guide the study.

Description of The Immaculate Collection

The Immaculate Collection, released in 1990, is a compilation of Madonna’s music that includes both a compact disk and her music videos; it sold more than two million copies.\(^2\) The collection spans Madonna’s career from 1983 to 1990 and, when released, it was a collection of Madonna’s

\(^1\)Nicholas Jennings, "Pop’s Unstoppable Siren," Maclean’s 100 (1987): 40.

greatest hits to date. The video compilation contains 13 videos; in chronological order, they are: Lucky Star, Borderline, Like a Virgin, Material Girl, Papa Don’t Preach, Open Your Heart, La Isla Bonita, Like a Prayer, Express Yourself, Cherish, Oh Father, and two different versions of Vogue.

Although much has been written about Madonna’s career as it has developed, very little attention has been given to each individual video, including The Immaculate Collection.3 To analyze the compilation of videos as one artifact and to provide an evolutionary focus, a brief description of each video is necessary; this summary will follow the chronological order in which the videos appear in the

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3 I discovered only two articles about The Immaculate Collection. Rolling Stone mentions the collection in one paragraph; Steve Simels’ analysis in Stereo Review is a one-page article about it. Several of the videos as individual releases, however, did receive attention in both the popular and academic presses: Material Girl, Express Yourself, and Like a Prayer. Even so, the bulk of interest in Madonna and her videos occurred later in her career. The Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature, for example, lists 155 citations for Madonna from January, 1983, to September 30, 1993. One hundred of those citations are from 1990 to late 1993 and, for the most part, the discourse about Madonna pertains to her life and her appearance instead of her music. In addition, only 10 of the articles are reviews of Madonna’s albums. Finally, feminists’ interest in Madonna also appears to be focused on Madonna’s later videos. The literature review in Chapter One, for example, pertains, for the most part, to Express Yourself; Vogue; and the movie, Truth or Dare. For reviews of The Immaculate Collection, see: "Music Videos, The Immaculate Collection, Rolling Stone 29 Nov. 1990: 592; and Steve Simel, "Backbeat," Stereo Review April 1991: 56. For a complete list of the popular writing on Madonna, see The Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature, CD Rom. Jan. 1983 to Sept. 30, 1993. New York: H.W. Wilson.
collection.

**Lucky Star**

"Lucky Star" appeared on Madonna's first album, *Madonna*, which sold over one million copies. The *Lucky Star* video was released in Europe before the song received air play in the U.S.; the video then was given to MTV. Consequently, *Lucky Star* received air play on MTV before "Lucky Star" began to receive air play on radio stations. The song eventually reached number four on the American chart\(^4\) and was Madonna's first hit single that also had an accompanying video.\(^5\) This was the video that established that Madonna is white and introduced the viewing audience to the "Madonna look."

In the *Lucky Star* video, the Madonna look entails hair that is teased and overdone with a large red bow in it that is reminiscent of the 1950s. She wears a great deal of makeup, and her lips are bright red. Several different earrings, including a cross, dangle from both ears. Around her neck are several different long, beaded necklaces, including a cross. Her dress is a mix of vintage clothing and punk: she has on a midriff black net top, which leaves her stomach exposed, and she appears to be wearing dance

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\(^4\) The chart position for "Lucky Star" and all of the songs in the set can be found in Appendix B.

\(^5\) Madonna released two dance singles—"Everybody" and "Burning Up"/"Physical Attraction"—before her first video was produced.
tights covered with a puffy black skirt.

*Lucky Star* is not a performance of the narrative of the song; rather, the entire video occurs in an unknown setting and is comprised of watching Madonna's choreographed dancing as she sings the song with a white man and a black woman as backing dancers. The video opens with Madonna pulling down her sun glasses and looking directly into the camera. The instrumental music is heard as Madonna and her background dancers begin to dance. There are a couple of quick shots of Madonna, and then she begins to sing:

> You must be my lucky star  
> 'Cause you shine on me wherever you are  
> I just think of you and I start to glow  
> And I need your light  
> And baby you know  
> Starlight, starbright first star I see tonight

As she continues to sing, Madonna engages in direct looking into the camera, while the camera maintains an exclusive focus on her. As the rest of the video continues to feature Madonna as she sings her ode to the star, the camera follows her as she dances, wiggles suggestively on the floor, and looks directly into the camera. As the video closes, the camera pans to Madonna's face as she sticks her finger in her mouth and looks directly into the camera. The video closes with Madonna looking directly into the camera as she pulls her glasses up over her eyes and the video closes.

**Borderline**

"Borderline," also from the album, *Madonna*, reached number ten on the American charts. *Borderline* is structured
around Madonna's struggle or "bordering" between two men, her working-class boyfriend and a wealthy photographer. The video opens with the first of two versions of the Madonna look that occurs in the video, and Madonna is dancing in the street around a bunch of young boys who appear to be performing gymnastics as the instrumentals to the song are heard. Madonna's hair, makeup, jewelry, and accessories are layered and multiple; however, this time she is wearing jeans with a jeans vest, and her wild hair is held back by a large red bow. As Madonna begins to dance closely with her boyfriend, the photographer approaches her and gives her his card.

Next, in black and white, the model Madonna, the second version of the Madonna look, begins to perform for the photographer. Within the photographer's studio, the look takes two forms and is shot entirely in black and white. First is Madonna dressed in a black leather coat, form-fitting black pants, wild hair, and spiked heels as she begins the lyrics to the song, "Something in the way you love me won't let me be." Second, Madonna is shown dressed in a polka-dot bloomer outfit. Inside the photographer's studio, both images are interspersed as the camera follows Madonna performing for the photographer's camera. The camera cuts back and forth between the street and model images and between black and white and color throughout the rest of the video.
As the video concludes, the leather-clad model Madonna image inside the studio is spray painting the studio wall as the photographer both photographs and pursues her. When she goes too far by spray painting the photographer’s car, Madonna defiantly leaves the studio and begins to spray paint several buildings outside. She then seeks out and finds her boyfriend playing pool in a bar. After getting her man, the video closes with Madonna looking directly into the camera as she sings "da da da da" to the harmony of the song.

Like a Virgin

"Like a Virgin" is the title cut from Madonna’s second album of the same name, released in 1984. The album sold over a million copies, and the "Like a Virgin" single was number one on the American charts for six weeks. The video was filmed in Venice and features the Madonna look split between two distinct roles—the virgin and the whore. Both revolve around excessive makeup, layers of clothing, and layers of jewelry as the lyrics narrate Madonna’s struggle between both roles.

As the video opens, the whore Madonna has on several long necklaces, a form-fitting skirt, the boy-toy belt, and heavy makeup. She dances through the streets and on a boat

6Bego 107.

7As a feminist, I am reluctant to use the patriarchal labels, virgin and whore; however, part of the power of the video is that each role clearly suggests these labels.
through the canals of Venice, singing: "I made it through the wilderness/Somehow I made it through/Didn’t know how lost I was/Until I found you." As the lyrics continue, this image is interspersed with images of the virginal Madonna, who is dressed in a short, white wedding dress; a large chunky pearl necklace that wraps around her neck several times; heavy makeup; and white spiked boots. In the scenes that feature the virgin, she prepares her bed for a man who then carries her to the bed and lays her down on it.

The camera returns to the whore Madonna leaving the boat and walking down the street; the next image is of a lion walking. The man who was with the virgin now wears a mask, and he meets the whore Madonna. The virgin and whore Madonna become merged into a third Madonna image that closes the video. In the merged image, Madonna is dressed in a long, black, lace dress; heavy makeup; red lipstick; and several long, dangling necklaces. As the merged Madonna image boards a boat with the man, the camera returns to several shots of the whore Madonna back on the boat going through the canals.

Material Girl

The Material Girl video is also from the Like a Virgin album and, as a single, it reached number two on the American charts. There are two Madonna images in this video. One is the "Material Girl" Madonna, who mimics Marilyn Monroe’s dance from "Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best
Friend"; she is dressed in an exact replica of Monroe's dress. The long, red, satin dress exposes Madonna's upper chest and arms and has a split up the back. She is wearing rhinestone earrings, a necklace, and bracelets. The second Madonna image is the performer behind the scenes, which is the Madonna of the Madonna look.

The video opens with two men, a producer and a director, discussing Madonna's star potential as a film of her performance runs. The producer says, "She's fantastic, I know she could be a star." The director, George, replies, "She could be, she could be great, she could be a major star." The producer follows with, "She is a star, George," to which he replies, "The biggest star of the universe." The scene ends with the producer's assertion, "I want to meet her." The video then cuts to the material-girl Madonna receiving a gift on the set, a stripped-down version of the set from Marilyn Monroe's film, Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend. The material-girl Madonna is surrounded by a chorus of men who are dressed exactly like Monroe's chorus: they are in black tuxedos, bow ties, and have red bands running down their tops.

The material-girl Madonna receives a gift, revealed to be a diamond necklace, and the Madonna behind the scenes, dressed in a robe, is heard telling her friend that the man who is pursuing her has given it to her. She says, "He thinks he can impress me with expensive gifts. It's nice,
though. Do you want it?" On the right side of the frame, in the doorway, the producer is eavesdropping on her conversation. After hearing the conversation, he disposes of the gift he was going to present to Madonna.

The video cuts back to the material-girl Madonna, and she begins to sing the lyrics to the song, "Some boys kiss me, some boys hug me/I think they are o.k./If they don’t give me proper credit/I just walk away." As she continues to sing, the material-girl Madonna switches between maintaining direct and sustained eye contact with the men and with the camera.

The Madonna behind the scenes, dressed in the Madonna look, is seen playing cards with a man. In the background, she is singing, "I don’t let them play." The behind-the-scenes Madonna looks directly at the man with whom she is playing cards and sings, "No way." She ends the cut with, "Only boys that save their pennies/Make my rainy day."

As the video closes, the camera cuts to Madonna behind the scenes in her dressing room, and the producer hands her some daisies. Next, the producer hands a farmer money for the use of his old, beat-up truck. The behind-the-scenes Madonna appears dressed in the Madonna look: she is wearing a white, lace, long, midriff top; a form-fitting white skirt with her boy-toy belt; and a long cross necklace and rhinestone earrings. She gets into the truck as the producer holds the door for her. The final clip appears to
be shot from the other side of a window, in the rain, and Madonna and the producer kiss, suggesting that the Madonna behind the scenes is won over by the apparently non-material producer.

Papa Don't Preach

The next video, Papa Don't Preach, is from Madonna's third album, which she co-produced, entitled True Blue. When True Blue was released in 1986, it won critical acclaim for beginning to show Madonna's depth as a singer and songwriter. The song, "Papa Don't Preach," was another number-one hit for Madonna. As was noted in the biography, the Madonna look changed significantly with the release of the album and its accompanying videos. Instead of the hallmark Madonna look that signifies excess through layered clothing, multiple accessories, wild hair, and layers of makeup, Madonna’s new look takes sleekness and scarcity as its hallmark. Her hair is blonde and short cropped, she wears no jewelry, and her makeup is more subtle and sophisticated.

The central drama of the story, again featuring two Madonna images, concerns a young woman's struggle with telling her father that she is pregnant. The narrator, who is wearing Fifties' style black, pegged-leg pants and a sleek, form-fitting top that leaves her arms and upper chest bare, looks directly into the camera and sings, "Papa, I

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* Jennings 40; and Bego 167.
know you’re going to be upset.” The camera cuts to flashback films of a little girl, presumably the central character when she was young, playing with her father, doing the dishes with him, and then sleeping. The song continues, "’Cause I was always your little girl/But you should know by now/I’m not a baby."

The video then cuts to a young man walking down the street with his friends as the street Madonna and her friends watch. As the slender, jeans-clad Madonna—representing the second Madonna image—meets the young man, the lyrics are heard in the background: "The one you warned me all about/The one you said I could do without/We’re in an awful mess/And I don’t mean maybe - please."

The video then begins to flash to a series of shots of the street Madonna pursuing and then catching her boyfriend. Madonna is seen walking away from her friends, who are telling her that she is too young to keep her baby. The street Madonna and her boyfriend are seen on a boat with an older couple looking on with approval. Madonna then walks through the streets, preparing to tell her father. After telling her father, there are a series of fast shots of Madonna waiting for her father’s response to the news as he is seen in different rooms. Although the sequencing is in flashbacks, the video provides narrative closure when the father comes to Madonna, gives her his hand, and they embrace.
Open Your Heart

The sixth video, *Open Your Heart*, is also from the *True Blue* album; the song was another number-one hit for Madonna. This video is set in an unknown place within an upper-class, sophisticated burlesque show. The action revolves around Madonna’s performance of a love song about looking as she is watched by the burlesque viewers.

As instrumental music is heard, the video opens by panning down a huge cut-out of a naked woman above the entrance to the burlesque show. A little boy appears at the entrance to the show and covers and uncovers his eyes with his hands, an image returned to time and again throughout the rest of the video. As a small curtain begins to rise, the first shot is of two men in military outfits with their arms around one another as they sit behind a glass viewing window. As the curtain finishes rising, Madonna is revealed to be sitting on a chair. She is wearing very tight, form-fitting, black lingerie; long black gloves; and a black wig. Although her breasts are covered by the body suit, there are tassels hanging from them. As Madonna begins to raise her head, she sings, "I see you on the street and you walk on by." The camera cuts back and forth between Madonna and images of men watching her sing and perform, one of whom takes her picture. After taking her wig off, Madonna moves off the chair and uses it as a prop for dancing. She sings: "If you gave me half the chance you’d see/My desire burning
inside of me/But you choose to look the other way."

A series of quick images appear: the boy outside; two viewers watching Madonna, one of whom is a woman; the boy covering and uncovering his eyes; Madonna singing and dancing; and the viewers—the sailors, a man writing, and a man putting on coke-bottle glasses. As the man puts on the glasses, the screen becomes blurred, as if the camera is filming through the glasses. As Madonna comes into focus, she is back on the chair. She looks directly into the camera and sings, "I think you are afraid to look in my eyes." As she continues to sing and dance to the song, Madonna points her finger, like a pistol, and "shoots" at a poster of a man, which falls forward.

As Madonna’s performance ends, the viewers are seen ending the viewing session: one tightens his tie, for example, while the female viewer lights a cigarette. The next shot of Madonna is outside the theatre. Her street dress is very different from the performer dress; she is dressed in a grey pants suit with a lighter grey shirt. She leans down and kisses the little boy, who smiles at her. The ticket taker wakes up. Madonna and the boy, who both are wearing black hats, are seen dancing in circles in the street, side by side, arms locked together, looking directly into one another’s eyes. As the chorus is heard in the background, they unlock arms and continue to dance. The ticket taker runs out to them and speaks to them. His
comment appears in the bottom of the screen and reads, "Ritorna . . . Ritorna . . . Madonna . . . Abbiamo ancora bisogno di te." As the video closes, Madonna and the boy are seen skipping off into the sunset, holding hands.

La Isla Bonita

The seventh video, *La Isla Bonita*, is from the *True Blue* album and, as a single, it reached number four. The video is the performance of Madonna's Spanish lullaby about her love affair with San Pedro. The enactment of the lullaby revolves around two Madonna images—the sleek Madonna who is confined to a room and Madonna as exotic Spanish dancer, representing a split between the desire to remain inside away from the Spanish world and a desire to be outside on the street in that world.

The video opens on an urban street in a working-class neighborhood with a couple of quick shots of Spanish men playing instruments as the instrumental version of the song is heard. Madonna is seen in a window in a form-fitting, sleek, grey dress, and her cropped hair is brown. The lyrics begin: "Last night I dreamt of San Pedro/Just like I'd never gone, I knew the song/A young girl with eyes like the desert/It all seems like yesterday, not far away."

Next, the video cuts to the exotic Madonna, who is inside a red room and surrounded by burning candles. She is dressed in a very ornate red dress with a puffy collar; a form-fitting waist; and a long, hoop-like skirt. In her
hair is a large, red bow. She is gazing away from the camera as she dances and sings, "I fell in love with San Pedro/Warm wind carried on the sea, he called to me/Te diso te amo." As she continues, the camera alternates between the image of the confined Madonna praying at her altar of pictures and the exotic Madonna dancing. Then, the camera returns out to the street where the Spanish guitar player and his friends are playing for a crowd of people, who are dancing on the street. As they dance, the following lyrics are heard: "I want to be where the sun warms the sky/When it's time for Siesta you can watch them go by/Beautiful faces, no cares in this world."

The confined Madonna goes to the window and looks out. As she is looking onto the street, she is seen by the Spanish guitar player, who motions with his head for her to join them. The exotic Madonna leaves her room and joins the street party and begins to dance with the crowd. The camera returns to the face of the confined Madonna, looking out her window, and she says, "Te diso te amo, El dijo que te amo." The exotic Madonna walks away from the street party, off toward the city skyline that frames the street scene. The confined Madonna prays at an altar as the image fades out and closes the story.

Like a Prayer

The Like a Prayer video is the title cut from the album, Like a Prayer, which was released in 1989. The album
and the song, "Like a Prayer," another number-one hit, were billed as representing the debut of Madonna's philosophical side.9 The album also was described as "serious stuff, and nowhere is that more apparent than on the title cut."10

From the moment of its release, however, the Like a Prayer video was surrounded by controversy, which assumed two forms. One was a critique of the content of the video. Many people were upset by its religious and racial issues and accused Madonna of being sacrilegious for portraying herself as a Christ figure and for having sexual relations with a religious figure. A call to boycott Pepsi ensued as a result of the video because Pepsi had used the "Like A Prayer" song in a commercial that featured Madonna.11

Although the commercial did not utilize any footage from the video but did use the same song lyrics, Pepsi pulled the commercial after one showing of it. The video continued to play on MTV.

Like a Prayer unfolds through flashbacks and revolves

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11Prior to the release of the video, Madonna cut a deal for $5 million dollars in 1989 to do three commercials for Pepsi and to allow Pepsi to sponsor her upcoming tour. Pepsi spent millions of dollars producing and promoting the commercial, which debuted at the same time as the release of the Like a Prayer video. The "Like A Prayer" commercial aired on March 2, 1989. After cancelling the commercial due to the uproar over the video, Pepsi severed its relationship with Madonna. Madonna still was paid the $5 million promised to her for the endorsement by Pepsi.
around Madonna’s witnessing of a stabbing of a woman and the false arrest of a Black man for the crime. Having been seen by the real criminal, Madonna fears that she, too, will be a victim if she reveals the knowledge she has. The video opens with Madonna falling on the ground as police sirens and strong electric guitar chords are heard. Burning crosses appear, followed by a black man who looks sad. The front of what appears to be a church is seen, and as the sanctuary is shown, the first lines of the song are heard: "Life is a Mystery, everyone must stand alone/I hear you call my name." As Madonna enters the church, the lyrics are, "And it feels like home."

Madonna is dressed in a form-fitting, sleeveless, maroon dress with the black straps of her bra showing. She is wearing a small cross around her neck, and her hair is shoulder length and brown. Inside the sanctuary, Madonna sings, "I hear your voice," to a Black saint. The saint cries as the song is heard in the background. Madonna moves toward the cage in which the saint is confined and sings, "I

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12Kenneth M Nagelberg, "Justify My Purchase: Multiple Arguments in Madonna’s ‘Material Girl’ and ‘Like A Prayer’ Music Videos," Central States Speech Communication, Cleveland, May, 1992: 20. In his analysis, Nagelberg quotes Donald Wildmon, director of the American Family Association, as referring to the Black man as a priest. This is the only reference that I found that assumed that the Black man’s role was that of a priest. All other articles reviewed referred to the character as a saint. Moreover, when I spoke to Father Joseph at the Newman Center, Ohio State University, he told me that most statues in Catholic churches are of saints. Hence, I too, assume that the Black male character is, in fact, a saint.
hear your voice." Madonna then lies down on a church pew and closes her eyes while "I close my eyes" is heard. Madonna falls from the sky as she sings, "Oh, God, I think I’m falling/Out of the sky, I close my eyes/Heaven help me."

A Black woman, dressed in what appears to be a church robe, looks up at and catches Madonna. As Madonna comes into the woman's arms, Madonna and the woman look into one another's eyes. Madonna maintains eye contact with the Black woman while she catches, re-centers, and throws Madonna back up into the sky.

Madonna is seen in the church with the saint. "When you call my name, it's like a little prayer" is heard in the background, and Madonna walks over in front of the cage and kisses the saint's foot; she then unlocks the saint's cage. The saint moves toward Madonna and whispers in her ear; she sings to him, "I'll take you there." The saint kisses Madonna and then walks out of the church.

Madonna picks up a knife and winces. She is not cut, however; instead, two puncture holes appear in her hands. Madonna sings, "Let the choir sing," and a group attack of a woman is shown. Madonna views the attack and stabbing of a white woman by four white men. The white men are scared away by a Black man--the same man who is the saint--who comes to the aid of the wounded woman. Two white male police officers arrest the Black man, although he did not commit the crime. Back in the church, the choir sings,
"Just like a prayer." Madonna stares after witnessing both crimes—the crime against the woman and the arrest of the Black man who probably saved the wounded woman's life. Then, Madonna becomes the object of the violent and threatening gaze of the leader of the male attackers.

Madonna dances in front of burning crosses as she sings: "Life is a mystery, everyone must stand alone/I hear you call my name/And it feels like home." A young Black boy from the choir motions Madonna forward to join the choir as they sing. As Madonna steps forward, the Black woman who caught her steps forward to meet her, and they dance together.

Madonna lies on the pew, and the accused Black man/saint is lying on top of her. They look into one another's eyes and kiss. Immediately after the kiss, a series of quick shots appear: burning crosses; the Black man alone, looking frightened; the Black man as the saint with tears of blood flowing from his eyes; and children from the choir. Madonna and the Black woman then are seen singing to one another and dancing together. The Black man returns to the cage as the saint, and the iron gates close.

Madonna awakens on the pew as the choir leaves. Madonna tells a police officer that the Black man did not commit the crime. The camera cuts to the left, revealing that the set for the jail and the church are the same. After the Black man is released from the cell, a curtain
with "The End" on it falls. The curtain rises, and the performers from the video bow. As the video ends, the entire cast sings and dances together.

**Express Yourself**

The song, "Express Yourself," is on the Like a Prayer album and was a number-two hit. Similar to the Material Girl video, Express Yourself mimics a classic film, *Metropolis*. Again, the skeletal structure of the film is recalled more than the content or plot of the original film. The central theme of the song is Madonna’s advice to women that they should not "go for second best" when loving a man.

The video opens with a series of quick cuts of an unknown sleek, steel, and sophisticated city at night as instrumental music is heard. Madonna sits on a large, stone, bird statue dressed in a form-fitting black dress as she says, "Come on, girls, do you believe in love, because I have something to say about it, and it goes like this." The camera cuts away to a series of shots of an underground world, where muscular men without shirts are toiling. In the background is the chorus: "Don’t go for second best baby/Put your love to the test you know, you know you’ve got to/Make him express how he feels and maybe/Then you’ll know your love is real."

Madonna reappears, dressed in a sophisticated, long, form-fitting, sleeveless, green satin dress, and her blond hair is in a 1940s’ style. She holds a black cat as she
continues to sing the lyrics. Her image is interspersed with that of one of the workers in the factory below. The next Madonna is seen dressed in black lingerie and black stockings held up by a black garter belt. She dances behind a screen, silhouetted, singing, "You deserve the best in life/So if the time isn’t right then move on." Madonna then appears dressed in a dark men’s suit, without a shirt, and she has a monocle in her eye. As she dances and sings on top of a set of steps that are above the factory, pictures of the male worker seen before and other workers are interspersed with her dancing. As she dances, she grabs her crotch, exposes her bra, and sings, "Make him express how he feels and maybe/Then you’ll know your love is real."

A series of disconnected images of the boss and Black men with instruments confined to a glass cage are shown, followed by a fourth image of Madonna; she is naked and chained to a bed by a chain around her neck. She looks directly into the camera and sings, "And when you’re gone he might regret it." As the lyrics continue, a series of quick images of the boss, the glassed-in singers, and Madonna chained to the bed are seen. The cat arrives at the male worker’s steel bed; he picks it up and begins to pet it.

The fifth Madonna image appears. She has returned to the upper world and is dressed in a long, black, silk dress or nightgown; her hair appears to be wet and is hanging down around her face. She crawls across the floor under a table,
like a cat, as the song continues, "What you need is a big strong hand to/Lift you to your higher ground/Make you feel like a queen on a throne." Images of the suited Madonna holding a cigarette and sitting on a couch are interspersed with the crawling Madonna. She licks milk from a bowl on the floor, the male worker's shadowed body walks as he holds the cat, Madonna pours the milk over her right shoulder, and the male worker has milk poured over his face.

In the sixth image of Madonna in the video, only her face appears, with one eye covered by her hair. She looks directly at the camera and sings, "Don't go for second best baby/Put your love to the test you know." As the male worker arrives to find Madonna, she is naked and sitting on a bed, waiting for him, singing, "Express yourself/you've got to make him/express himself." Flashes of the other male workers fighting below are seen; then Madonna's male worker grabs her from the bed and pulls her to him. Large steel doors close, leading to an image of the city that opened the video, with Madonna's eyes overlaying the image. The video closes with the following words imposed on the large turning crank: "Without the Heart, There can be no understanding between the hand and the mind."

Cherish

Cherish, the tenth video in the collection, is from the Like a Prayer album and reached number two on the American charts. Cherish is shot entirely in black and white and was
directed by Herb Ritz, a photographer famous for his black-and-white photographs. Cherish is reminiscent of Madonna's earlier videos in that it involves Madonna simply singing and dancing as she employs direct address. The video, however, is markedly different from the early ones because the image she projects suggests sophistication and sleekness—a wealthy glamour woman on a photo shoot.

The video opens with a young boy running through the waves on a beach. Madonna is dressed in a solid black, low-cut dress and is lying on her back with waves swirling around. She has short, blond hair that is wet. A man spins around a merchild, an image followed with Madonna standing as she begins the lyrics: "So tired of broken hearts, of losing at this game/Before I start this dance/I take a chance in telling you/I want more than just romance/You are my destiny, I can't let go baby/Can't you see/Cupid please take your aim at me/Cherish the thought." Madonna looks directly into the camera as she dances and rolls around in the waves with periodic shots of three muscular mermen swimming in the ocean behind her, playing with a merchild. After playing with the merchild herself, Madonna sings, "Cherish is the word I use to remind me of your love" and runs her hands down her body. As the tempo picks up, Madonna begins to do a series of quick poses for the camera as she sings the chorus, "Cherish, give me faith/Give me joy my boy/I will always cherish you."
The merchild, now with legs, is seen running back into the ocean, and Madonna lies down in the sand. The merchild reappears and looks directly into the camera. The camera returns to Madonna, lying in the sand and looking directly into the camera as the image fades out.

Oh Father

The eleventh video, Oh Father, is also from the Like a Prayer album. Unlike her other songs, "Oh Father" only reached number 20 on the American charts. The video is shot entirely in black and white and has a flashback narrative structure. There are three Madonna images in the video that tell the central story of living with, leaving, and healing from abusive relationships.

The video opens with the instrumental version of the song playing as a carousel of animals turns. A little girl plays outside of a house; she is running and twirling around in the snow as she is watched through a window by a priest. Inside the room with the priest, a man is sitting beside the bed of a woman who has died. Madonna, the narrator, appears sitting in the snow and is dressed in a long, black coat. As she looks away from the camera, she begins to sing, "It's funny that way, you can get used/To the tears and the pain." The camera returns to the little girl in a room, dressing up in women's clothes and putting makeup on. In the background, "What a child will believe" is heard. The girl's father enters, picks her up, and shakes her for
playing with her mother's things. As he shakes her, the camera cuts back and forth between Madonna as the narrator and Madonna as the little girl being shaken. Throughout the sequence, Madonna sings: "I got away from you, I never thought I would/You can't make me cry, you once had the power/I never felt so good about myself."

A man lying in bed, sleeping, appears; Madonna, dressed in a white silk nightgown, lies next to him. A series of quick images follow: statues in a cemetery singing, the little girl sitting at a grave in the cemetery, Madonna being slapped by someone, the girl and her father going to the cemetery, the little girl behind a large door, the mother kissing the girl as she sleeps, Madonna using makeup to cover the bruise from being slapped, and the girl and her father walking through the cemetery. Madonna appears in a confessional booth, praying as she sings, "Oh father if you never wanted to live that way/If you never wanted to hurt me/Why am I running away?" The father appears praying in front of a cross.

Madonna returns to the abusive man, kisses him, and leaves. As she walks away, her leaving is framed by a bottle of alcohol, and she sings, "You didn't mean to be cruel/Somebody hurt you, too." The abusive man wakes up and finds Madonna is gone, followed by the little girl looking in her mother's casket and seeing the mother's mouth sewn shut. A shadow image of the father yelling at the little
girl appears; Madonna runs out of the room, and the little girl's shadow leaves with her. Madonna then walks through the cemetery and meets her older father at her mother's grave. As the scene fades out, the last image is of the little girl dancing on the grave.

Vogue

The final two videos are two different representations of the same song, "Vogue." The song first appeared on Madonna's sixth album, I'm Breathless, released in 1990, and was another number-one hit on the American charts for Madonna. The central action of both videos is "voguing," which originated in gay ballrooms and dance clubs in the inner city of New York during the 1980s. The term, voguing, is taken from the title of the fashion magazine, Vogue, and involves dancing and "striking a pose" to music. Prior to the release of Madonna's song and video, very few Americans knew about voguing; however, the song and the video introduced America to the practice. The original voguers were Hispanic and Black gay men aligned with various "houses" that compete against each other. Rather than fighting each other in the street, the houses dance out their conflicts on the ballroom floor. Voguing competitions determine which houses and individual dancers are the best voguers.

13This discussion of voguing is taken from the 1990 documentary about voguing, Paris is Burning, Academy Entertainment, 1992.
In addition to encompassing posing, dancing, and competition, voguing also is intimately connected with dressing in a style that signifies each voguer's fantasy of being a wealthy, powerful superstar. Some voguers, for example, dress in elaborate, expensive drag—sequined dresses, heavy makeup, and very styled hair—while others wear expensive professional suits. In short, as one voguer said, "we are not comfortable being poor . . . we are living our fantasies of being a superstar."

The first version of Vogue appeared on MTV in 1990. The video is shot entirely in black and white in a high-rise apartment in an unknown city; the apartment is sleek, clean, and filled with the trappings of wealth. The video opens with two huge feathers coming apart to reveal a room filled with statues; framed paintings; and posed, statue-like male and female voguers. As the tempo of the instrumental music picks up, the voguers begin to move into other poses. Madonna appears with only a shot of her face framed by her own hands. Looking directly into the camera, she begins to sing, "Strike a pose."

Madonna says "vogue" several times and then the second Madonna image appears. She is dressed in a black lace top.

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14 In Paris is Burning, many of the dancers described how they either saved all their money to buy the one dress they would wear or invested enormous amounts of time and energy to sew the perfect ballroom outfit.

15 Unidentified voguer, Paris is Burning.
and a form-fitting, long, black skirt. As she begins the lyrics, she runs her hands down her body and sings: "Look around, everywhere you turn there’s heartache/It’s everywhere that you go/You try everything to escape the pain of life that you know." As the song continues, the third Madonna is revealed. She is lying on her back, runs her hands across her chest and arms, and sings, "There’s gold and sales/And you long to be something better than you are today/I know a place where you can get away/It’s called a dance floor/And here’s what it’s for." Madonna then appears in a fourth image. She is dressed in a dark suit with a low-cut top. Her hair is in a 1940s’ style, and she is surrounded by three male dancers who are dressed in tailored dark suits. As she sings, "Come on vogue/Let your body move to the music, hey, hey, hey/Let your body go with flow," she and the dancers begin to do a series of arm poses and movements.

After introducing her version of voguing, the fifth Madonna image appears. She is dressed in a floor-length black dress that is sophisticated and form fitting. She sings, "Go inside, all you’ll find is inspiration/Your dreams will open up the door," which introduces a series of images: a male dancer sitting in a chair that is turning, two female dancers singing, and Madonna’s face. In a sixth image, Madonna is looking directly at the camera, and her long, blonde hair is parted on one side and flows past her
shoulder. The voguing continues, introducing a seventh Madonna image; she is dressed in a white silk robe and a silk turban, and her head is thrown back. As the song continues, the eighth image of Madonna is revealed: her hair is styled in a 1940s' style, and her blouse is white and fluffy and surrounds her face. The video ends with Madonna in the suit dancing and voguing with the entire cast of dancers. As "vogue, vogue, vogue" is heard, Madonna and her cast strike and hold a group pose. The video closes with the opening feathers falling down on top of the image of the group pose.

MTV Vogue

The second Vogue video is taken from Madonna's live performance on the 1990 MTV music awards, a performance that featured the entire cast from the first Vogue. The staging and costuming of this video signify wealth and privilege, as did the original Vogue, but in this version, they suggest an 18th-century royal court. Half of the men are dressed in ornate gold-and-white jackets; white, ruffled, long-sleeved shirts; form-fitting, gold tights; and black shoes with buckles. The other half wear the same jackets, but instead of pants, they wear very short, tight, gold silk shorts. After posing, the men line up on either side of a door frame, hung with a curtain, which opens to reveal Madonna. She wears an elaborate, long dress that has a tight bodice and hoop skirt; a blond wig with a white feather plume in
the back; and white facial powder. She carries a fan. The female dancers behind her are wearing long dresses with tight bodices, and they also carry fans. As she begins to sing, "Strike a pose," Madonna points to the male dancers, who each strike a pose; the female dancers drop their fans and dance the same steps together.

Throughout the performance, as she sings, Madonna often looks toward the camera, but she does not look directly into the camera, and her face is expressionless. The voguing continues, done with constrained steps, and Madonna lifts her skirt so that a male dancer may look up her skirt. She later dances with a male dancer who grabs her breasts from behind. The video ends as Madonna sits down on a couch and fans herself; she is surrounded by the other performers and is carried out by the male dancers.

Analysis

The analysis of the videos in The Immaculate Collection is centered on the exploration of two primary components: (1) Madonna’s music history and the contextualization of MTV as a medium; and (2) the gender images and roles in the videos (incorporating the nonverbal communication depicted in the videos and Madonna’s subjectivity). The analysis that results will allow me to address the questions that constitute my feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic method. Sexuality and gender, the critique of Oedipal subjectivity, and the critique of interpretation are explored through both
the nonverbal communication and attention to the borderline narcissistic subjectivity displayed in the videos, whereas a contextualization of the medium, videos, and Madonna's own history is relevant to uncovering the constitution process within the videos.

**Madonna's Musical Talent**

Throughout her career, Madonna has made numerous attempts to cross media as she pursues her stardom, prompting some critics to question Madonna's commitment to her singing.\(^{16}\) With the exception of the success of the films, *Desperately Seeking Susan* and *Truth or Dare*, however, Madonna's career as a musician has maintained and sustained her rise to stardom: her first three albums sold over 30 million copies, and she had 11 consecutive top-20 singles, five of which reached number one on the American charts.

Although Madonna's only successful avenue for her popularity and success is her music, her musical talent is questioned constantly by critics. There is general agreement that Madonna's vocal ability is very limited. One critic writes, "As a singer, she has limited range. But she knows how to seduce a pop song."\(^{17}\) Similarly, a reviewer of Madonna's *I'm Breathless* writes that her attempt to sing


Steven Sondheim's songs falls short because her "limited vocal equipment is inadequate to the task at hand."\textsuperscript{18} Several critics also note that in Truth or Dare, Madonna herself admits that she is not a very good singer or dancer.\textsuperscript{19} Even her musical lyrics come under fire. Mick Jagger, for example, describes Madonna's lyrics as having a "central dumbness."\textsuperscript{20} Simel's attempt to understand Madonna's popularity in The Immaculate Collection provides a summary of critical reaction to Madonna's music:

> It's true that if Madonna had been run over by a truck in 1985 the subsequent direction of pop would not have been altered one wit, and it's hard to imagine a young musician somewhere listening to her albums and thinking, "Wow, what a cool riff. I oughtta steal it."\textsuperscript{21}

In addition to finding general agreement among critics about Madonna's poor lyrics and vocal inability, there is also agreement that Madonna's primary claim to fame as a musician is through her videos and concert performances. Her videos constitute the foundation of her musical career because Madonna did not perform live until 1984. Consequently, in describing her rise to stardom as a musician, Connelly writes, "It's likely that her videos were


\textsuperscript{20}Johnson et al. 50.

the breakthrough"^{22}\text{ in her career. One critic notes that} "it was Madonna’s provocative poses on video and on stage that fuelled her stardom."^{23}\text{ Madonna is credited with being one of the first pop stars to understand the "nascent power of the video clip . . . [and] to issue songs that were inseparably entwined with the visual imagery of their MTV illustrations in the minds of consumers."}^{24}

To summarize: Although Madonna has made many attempts to become a star in other media, Madonna’s music is her primary means of success, although her musical talent is suspect. In short, Madonna’s music career is her only sustained avenue for her success, but her success does not appear to be a result of her musical talent. MTV and its format, then, have and continue to be the central medium for Madonna’s success and stardom. In order to analyze Madonna’s music videos, a deeper understanding of MTV is necessary.

MTV

As a cultural medium, MTV is relatively new:\^{25}\text{ on}

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\textsuperscript{22}\text{Christopher Connelly, "Madonna Goes All the Way," Rolling Stone 22 Nov. 1984: 18.}

\textsuperscript{23}\text{Johnson et al. 50.}

\textsuperscript{24}\text{Sante 26.}

\textsuperscript{25}\text{One implication of MTV’s newness as a cultural institution is that scholars only recently have begun to theorize MTV’s cultural position. As a result, I draw heavily on Kaplan’s ground-breaking work on MTV in order to contextualize both the medium and Madonna’s videos. Although I utilize much of Kaplan’s theorizing, before I employ her work in the}
August 1, 1981, Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Company began broadcasting the continuous and on-going 24-hour format of MTV into two million cable homes, targeted specifically at youth.²⁶ By 1990 and 30 million²⁷ homes later, MTV had taken its place as an important cultural phenomenon. Two dimensions of MTV are particularly relevant to the context it provides for Madonna's videos—its postmodern format and its function as a mechanism of consumption, which create a particular kind of desire and subject position. These will be discussed in turn as the starting point for a schizoanalytic reading of Madonna's videos.

A primary characteristic of MTV is its postmodern


²⁷Hansen and Hansen, "Rock Music Videos and Antisocial Behavior" 357.
format. The format of MTV is postmodern because it is a 24-hour, on-going station, without boundaries or closure. The medium itself is an endless series of texts that offer spectators continuous options, even when the TV set is off. The viewer is always a potential viewer because, unlike the film spectator who pays for and views a limited text, the TV spectator always has the option of viewing by the flick of a switch. The format and the viewing experience, thus, are both postmodern. The videos that appear on the MTV channel also all gesture toward postmodernism because of the format of the medium. All videos, in varying degrees, employ postmodern or what Kaplan calls avant-garde strategies: the use of self-reflexivity, play with images, pastiche, the foregrounding of performance, the use of film clips without referents, and the refusal to maintain previously sacred aesthetic and orienting boundaries through the elements of genres.  

Although the format of and videos within MTV challenge boundaries, the primary aim of MTV is to sell: it must sell itself to the music industry as the primary promoter of rock stars, and it must sell advertising space for its commercials; MTV, then, creates and sustains a specific form of desire that it sells to viewers/consumers. The fundamental connection between musical stardom and selling through MTV videos has dominated MTV from its inception:

28Kaplan 57.
Six weeks after MTV aired in selected test markets, "record sales rose for certain musical artists getting heavy play on the channel," and by 1983, MTV influenced "63% of its viewers to buy certain albums." Moreover, for every nine albums sold, four purchases were directly linked to the viewing of videos on MTV. Consequently, MTV and its video format are the most powerful tools in the music industry for selling musicians to audiences. Kaplan argues that MTV's sales pitch is captured in videos because they "function like advertising, in which the signifier that addresses desire is linked to a commodity." Within the videos, accordingly, the sales pitch cannot be distinguished from the entertainment and the entertainer. The desire that is linked to MTV commodities sold to the viewer/consumer, then, also is fundamentally connected to MTV's postmodern, 24-hour, on-going, and continuous format. Consequently, a second characteristic of MTV is the desire, within a specific subject position, that it perpetuates.

The desire constructed through MTV is different from that constructed in film. This difference has been explicated most thoroughly by Kaplan, who identifies the desire incorporated in film using Freudian and Lacanian

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30Lewis 3.

31Kaplan 17.
theory and then suggests how such a theory is not applicable to MTV.

Because Freud and Lacan view subjectivity as an on-going, life-long struggle, Freudian and Lacanian perspectives treat films as reactivating and re-resolving the Oedipal trauma. Film is seen as an ideal mechanism for the reenactment of the drama because mainstream film portrays a sealed world indifferent to the audience. Film also produces for the audience members the sense of separation and distance needed to enact what Freud isolated in his work as scopophilic pleasure, or pleasure in looking. Scopophilic pleasure occurs in film through voyeuristic looking, which occurs when the audience members are positioned from a distance and able to enact their voyeuristic fantasies and attain pleasure by looking in on the private and forbidden worlds of others. In other words, the pleasure results from looking at others as objects, from subjecting them to the control of the gaze of the looker. The darkened viewing experience of film also enhances scopophilic pleasure because audience members have the distance to take the Others in the film as objects of their gaze.

Lacanian theory creates an analogy between the mirror phase and the screen of film. Film viewing is seen as reactivating and resolving the mirror phase when the infant begins to recognize itself from the mother or mirror. The
infant sees in the reflection of both the mother and the mirror image a sense of completeness or unity. The recognition that occurs in the mirror phase is always a misrecognition of a superior or ideal ego or self, which prepares the way for identification with others and forever begins to doom the subject to split subjectivity the moment the infant enters the symbolic (see Chapter One for further review of the relationship between the mirror phase and split subjectivity). Film viewing reinvokes the desire to return to the unified self or plentitude of the ideal ego in the Imaginary through identification with the subject of action in the film, who appears to represent the ideal ego.

Consequently, identification occurs for viewers of films as the protagonists in film reactivate, reenact, and resolve the Oedipal trauma and the desire for plentitude. Because the world that produces film is ordered around sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking and identification with the protagonists in film are dominated by patriarchal codes. Thus, in mainstream film, looking and identification traditionally are split between the active/male, who dominates the settings, actions, and narratives of film, and the passive/female, who symbolizes the lack of a penis. The passive/female reinvokes castration anxiety for the active male that must be conquered and controlled to re-resolve the Oedipal terror for men. Early film theorists thus theorized male spectatorship or the "male gaze" as projecting and
resolving their castration anxiety onto the male protagonist in the film.

In analyzing videos, Kaplan argues that film theory cannot be imported wholesale because of the differences between the two media. She does view the desire to return to the ideal ego and the pre-split plentitude as central to MTV, but she sees the viewing experience in MTV, because it reinvokes the desire for plentitude, as always forever deferred, leaving the subject decentered, forever hoping for but constantly deferred from the desire for plentitude. Kaplan argues, then, that the consumptive mechanism of MTV creates a desire to consume endlessly in order to fulfill "the constant hope for a forthcoming but never realized plentitude." 32

The viewing experience of each video in MTV, then, offers the spectator a commodity to be purchased—the music of the rock star—but each commodity cannot not fulfill the desire for on-going plentitude of continuous consumption. The search for plentitude, which is momentarily centered on the consumption of one album, thus is satisfied only until the next album or video is introduced. As a result, Kaplan argues, the consumptive mechanism of MTV creates a desire that situates the viewer "as endlessly consuming, endlessly in the state of an about-to-be-filled desire." 33 In other

32Kaplan 28.
33Kaplan 29.
words, the TV screen and the MTV video format present the subject with constantly changing and continuous desire or "texts"—both advertisements and the videos—that provide the constant promise of plentitude forever deferred.

Because subjectivity is always an on-going process and MTV produces desire within a consumptive postmodern format, it also promotes a very specific subject position for its spectators. As a result of the momentary centering for consumption, Kaplan argues that the subject position of MTV "keeps the subject in the position of discovery of split subjectivity before the mirror and the actual ensuing decenteredness." In other words, where film appears to harness the subject's desire for plentitude through the spectator's projection onto and identification with the character or star of film, momentarily providing the longed-for-plentitude, the TV screen's constantly changing texts leaves the spectator's projection onto and identification with the rock star locked into the constant promise of plentitude, momentarily centered on the commodity within the video but forever deferred or unsatisfied in the on-going, 24-hour format.

In describing MTV's postmodern format, Kaplan also situates MTV's postmodernism within a schizophrenic framework. Kaplan suggests that TV's postmodernism—where the reader or spectator cannot associate any meanings or

34Kaplan 50.
recognize any boundaries or differences between the present and the past—is embodied in MTV, and she argues that MTV represents "the schizophrenic stance as a postmodernist phenomenon." Kaplan also argues that the schizophrenic strategy of self-conscious play between the traditional boundaries of high art and popular culture in videos may be liberating because they avoid old polarities, and the strategy may be the only option for creating new images in current culture.

In summary: The desire, the subject position, and the format of MTV promote and sustain a schizophrenic stance toward postmodernism. Kaplan, however, maintains that even though all three gesture toward postmodernism and that, by 1986, the postmodern video began to dominate MTV in varying degrees, not all videos are best classified as "fully" postmodern because some videos are more postmodern. Rather, Kaplan argues, because MTV draws on the ideologies of rock music, there are five basic rock ideologies or types of videos that appear on MTV. The five types of videos are:

35Kaplan draws on Lacan and Jameson's connection between schizophrenia and postmodernism; however, unlike them, she utilizes a more positive stance toward the schizophrenic position. See Kaplan 45.

36Rock music has a tradition of addressing and sustaining types of audiences or subject positions, and MTV takes over the five basic ideologies by reproducing the basic style, dress, and mood of the ideologies in order to popularize them. Kaplan suggests that the result of the popularizing is that MTV then flattens each ideology "out into one continuous present of the 24-hour flow, eliding the basic historical addresses" (53).
"romantic" (i.e. looking back to the 1960s soft rock, popularized); "socially conscious" or "modernist" (deriving vaguely from rock groups in the 1960s and 1970s that took oppositional stances); and "nihilist" (deriving from heavy metal, here watered down.) . . . [The fourth kind is] "classical" because it adheres more than others to narrative codes (not necessarily following Hollywood strictly) . . . [and] the postmodernist video as a separate type, embodying in an extreme form what many videos now evidence.37

The overall tone, music, and style create a mood that characterizes each type with accompanying themes and Oedipal positions. Because each type occurs within a postmodern format, the classification scheme only approximates each type (the five types are summarized in Chart #1).

The classical type,38 for example, employs a narrative style that perpetuates the male gaze through voyeurism and fetishism and generally portrays the male as subject and the female as object.39 The postmodernist video, on the other hand, employs a pastiche style that shows non-linear images,

37Kaplan 56.

38In the classical type, there are separate stars, producers, and directors, which feature story lines or plots that showcase stars in central, tightly organized narrative plots that have clear beginnings and endings. See Kaplan 54 and 186.

39Kaplan 61. Sut Jhally’s analysis of MTV rock videos in Dreamworlds: Desire/Power/Sex in Rock Videos also supports Kaplan’s claim. Jhally argues that because the dreamworld of MTV is the male fantasy, the gendered identity of women in the dreamworld is bleak; women are objectified, shown as body parts, and want to be taken by the men in the videos. See the video and Jhally’s commentary on the video in Sut Jhally, "MTV, Cultural Politics and the Sex Wars: The Strange and Illuminating Case of Dreamworlds," Media Information Australia 64 (1992) 48-59.
plays with Oedipal positions, and is ambiguous in that it refuses to take a stand against its images by being neither for nor against authority. Kaplan argues that the move toward postmodernism in MTV also indicates a shift away from the traditional male gaze—as videos move into the postmodern stance, the blurring of boundaries and distinctions affects gendered address. Postmodern videos "do not evoke the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal configurations of the classical Hollywood film that belonged in the earlier 'intimate' universe." Instead, the refusal of the postmodern text to speak from a clear position, the use of pastiche, the blurring of genres and boundaries, and the tendency to incorporate instead of quote open up multiple spectator positions. As Kaplan suggests, "The issue of the gaze thus becomes confused: we have a sense of the text playing with Oedipal positions but not really adopting any of them." The gaze of postmodern videos, then, addresses both genders and sometimes entails a genderless address or adopts a variety of gender positions.

40 Kaplan 92.
41 Kaplan 140.
42 In Rocking Around the Clock, Kaplan argues that postmodern videos employ multiple gender positions and, sometimes, genderless presentations. Although I agree that within postmodern videos, there is a multiplicity of gender positions, I disagree with extending that claim to MTV's form given that both the music industry and videos are male dominated. Consequently, in order to understand fully the gendered nature of a video, it must be situated within the male-dominated music industry and MTV industries. Thus, as
The cultural codes that structure the dominant codes of the postmodern format are, according to Kaplan, symptomatic of Reagan's America in the 1980s in that they feature the deregulation of market forces that allowed finance capitalism to flourish unfettered by government. Reagan's policies tended to support and perpetuate unquestioned materialism, stripping the role of the use value of commodities for an almost pure form of exchange value. As a result, the unfettered flow and exchange of money became the dominant concern. The ambiance of Reagan's America has a concomitant upper-middle-class ambiance, which Kaplan argues also began to dominate MTV's postmodern videos. The upper-middle-class ambiance in videos is signified by "sleek, modern design settings, the emphasis on luxury items--big cars, fancy clothes, jewelry, [and] contemporary furniture."a

a cultural phenomenon, MTV remains male dominated in two ways. First, as McRobbie and Frith argue, the music industry itself is male dominated: "The music business is male run; popular musicians, writers, creators, technicians, engineers, and producers are mostly men." Second, even Kaplan acknowledges that within MTV videos, 83% of the videos feature male artists and bands. See Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality," On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word, eds. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (New York: Pantheon, 1990) 373; and Kaplan 115.

Because the postmodern format currently dominates MTV, Kaplan's current theorizing relies less on the early types. Kaplan, however, continues to view the postmodern distinction as "embodied in an extreme form what many videos now evidence" (56).

Kaplan 30.
Kaplan's frame for understanding MTV adds valuable insight into contextualizing Madonna videos, particularly her attempt to link the schizophrenic stance to a postmodern consumptive form. Although Kaplan attempts to situate MTV in its consumptive frame by recognizing MTV's sales pitch at multiple levels, she ultimately brackets and de-emphasizes the capitalist imperatives of MTV when she attempts to understand how MTV's schizophrenic stance toward postmodernism works. In other words, Kaplan acknowledges that the MTV format flattens or strips the histories and ideologies of rock videos (decoding), but she backs away from the second double movement that occurs in MTV—the recoding to sell commodities.

The addition of a schizooanalytic understanding of the relationship between schizophrenia and capitalism to Kaplan's analysis reveals that MTV's schizophrenic stance, enacted in its continuous format, is thoroughly constrained by the capitalist logic of decoding and recoding. In other words, any freeing from codes—what Kaplan discusses as pastiche or the exploding of boundaries (decoding)—is always recontained (recoded) by the drive to sell products. Within MTV videos, recoding occurs through the constant, narcissistic return to the body of the rock star. Recoding, however, also takes place when the dominant patriarchal codes that structure the rock videos, especially those that drive the Oedipus complex, are utilized. Thus,
the schizophrenic stance that is underneath MTV's postmodern format is not fully free; rather, the schizophrenia both decodes desire, boundaries, meanings, and histories and recodes the decoding in order to recontain and restrict desire in culturally stipulated forms to sell itself and the stars. The medium exhibits a borderline narcissistic structure—a schizophrenic freeing of codes that is always overlaid by recoding or reinscribing of Oedipal codes and laws to sell commodities. Accordingly, the subject position of the rock star within any video is also a borderline-narcissistic subjectivity: desire is decoded or freed from culturally instituted codes and then recoded or recontained within culturally sanctioned codes in order to sell.\textsuperscript{45}

In summary, a schizoanalytic scholar would agree with Kaplan that a potentially positive form of schizophrenia underlies MTV's postmodernism; that subjectivity is an always on-going and reactivating process; that media texts reactivate subject positions; and that the specific postmodern format reactivates desire, invoking a promise that is forever deferred. A schizoanalytic scholar's disagreement with and reworking of Kaplan's work, however, stems from the differing views on the kind of desire that is

\textsuperscript{45}Connecting Kaplan's theorizing with schizoanalysis also has potential implications for the kinds of spectatorship that are involved in MTV's spectatorship. Because my primary focus is on Madonna's subjectivity within the videos, I will not engage in the complicated debates about how spectators actually view MTV videos.
reactivated and deferred in MTV videos. Kaplan sees desire as fueled by the wish to return to the fictional plentitude of the Imaginary, while a schizoanalytic reading of MTV views both the structure and subjectivity within videos as revealing a borderline-narcissistic subjectivity that reactivates and decodes excessive desire, which is always recoded by the codes of Oedipus and the ensuing Oedipal laws.

Gender

To discern when decoding and recoding is at work in Madonna's videos requires a contextualization focused on gender. MTV as a medium and the five video ideologies create various borderline-narcissistic paths related in different ways to gender. A classic video, for example, exhibits the borderline narcissistic structure of the MTV postmodern format--decoding and recoding of cultural codes--within the frame of the classic genre, which entails the use of narrative, the male gaze, and the male as subject and the female as object. Thus, exploring the gender roles within videos requires attending to the double movement that drives MTV--the decoding and recoding of cultural codes through the MTV format and the decoding and recoding of cultural codes within the five ideologies.

To discover how gender works in the videos requires attention to Madonna's role as a programmer within a medium that primarily acts as an on-going advertisement for rock
stars. The primary mode for programming in capitalist culture is advertising, and the role of individual programmers such as Madonna is to capitalize on the market to create meaning value for their products and/or themselves. Assessment of the specific ways Madonna decodes and recodes gender in her videos in order to sell herself suggests much about the way gender is at work in the videos. Thus, the analysis of gender in Madonna's videos requires that each video first be contextualized, followed by an assessment of the ways that Madonna decodes and recodes gender as a programmer.

**Phase One.** Phase one, Madonna's role as a programmer of a nomad character, which has an underlying excessive working-class foundation, coincides with Madonna's early days in the music industry and is constituted by her first three videos—Lucky Star, Borderline, and Like a Virgin. Each of the three videos is categorized as classical because each video, in different ways, employs classic cinematic ideology and techniques: narrative story lines or plots that showcase stars in central, tightly organized narrative plots that have clear beginnings and endings, and a clear cause-effect structure that offers resolution to the drama presented. All three videos utilize closure and resolution in the videos: in Lucky Star, Madonna closes the video with her glasses; Borderline revolves around the classic strategy of resolving Madonna's return to her boyfriend; and Like a
Virgin provides closure with the synthesis and resolution of the struggle between the virgin and the whore. Lucky Star is also best categorized as classic, even though there is no narrative plot in the video, because the video revolves around and showcases her choreographed performance of the song--another signifier of the classic ideology. Borderline also revolves around the narrative structure that employs cause-effect techniques: Madonna's struggle to win back her boyfriend is explained by her interaction with the photographer. Finally, although Like a Virgin does not show a linear cause-effect structure, the video does reveal a cause-effect structure in the resolution: the virgin and whore become one after the interaction with the male character.

The character in each of the three videos also retains the Madonna of the first Madonna look, and Madonna is showcased as the star of each video. Thus, because the Madonna look occurs across each video, each perpetuates the classic star system of building a movie or video around a star to showcase the star. The Madonna look or the Madonna of phase one that permeates the first three videos signifies the working class through excess, violations of previous boundaries, and an "over-doneness." Her clothing is layered and symbolic of different periods: her hair accessories are reminiscent of the 1950s, whereas her clothes signify both a hard, street, "punk" look and the
tights of a dancer. Moreover, her unkempt, wild, blonde hair with its dark roots signifies a "tough" image. Finally, even her body, which constantly shows off her rounded stomach, signals a purposeful violation of the standards of beauty and a wanton disregard for feminine standards of thinness. In short, her look is symbolic of a thrift store in that it previously has been consumed; the items—both in purchase price and class status—have been stripped of their wealth and value and easily are purchased by anyone, especially the working class. Thus, although the specific combination of dress that signifies the Madonna look varies across the three videos, the form that crosses the videos is the Madonna of the Madonna look, who is the central character or star who narrates the videos and violates traditional gender roles by her actions and dress.

In Madonna's early excessive nomad days, the "character" that could be bought or copied—the commodity that Madonna sold in each video and that transcended the videos—is the excessive Madonna look: multiple layers of jewelry, makeup, and clothing, albeit with a bare midriff. The Madonna look, particularly the jewelry accessories, were marketed and sold to young women who could afford to copy Madonna's dress in part because much of her look was inexpensive and accessible. Madonna's rubber bracelets, which she used as accessories, for example, were actually O-rings used as drive belts for typewriters and were easily
bought at either department stores or rubber outlets. In addition, as Bego notes, although Cyndi Lauper also broke into the music scene at the same time Madonna did and also had an image that could be copied, for "little girls especially, her look [Madonna's] was much easier and cheaper to replicate than Cyndi Lauper's tie-dye hair." As a result of the Madonna-copycat phenomenon, Madonna began to be "looked upon in the fashion industry as a trend setter." As a trend setter in the marketplace, then, Madonna began to define fashion styles. Initially, Madonna's fashion style was a look that was easily accessible; thus, its value--both in purchase price and class status--has been stripped of its wealth and easily is purchased by anyone, including members of the working class. Rather than being confined to one style or genre, then, Madonna mixes boundaries and styles in a look that suggests excessiveness in that the supply or the ability to copy the look is not limited to the upper class: anyone can acquire the look at a thrift store.

Nonverbal enactment of gender through eye movement, facial expression, and the use of space and setting constitute important tools to use to discover the gender and power positions displayed in the videos. Such nonverbal dimensions often are important in discerning power relations.

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46Bego 98.
47Bego 98.
because, in a society that is structured around patriarchal dominance, they often signify and reinforce power relations. Traditionally, for example, women employ nonverbal communication that indicates their lower status in a patriarchal culture: they do not take up much space and engage in looking strategies that convey submissiveness.

Each of the classic videos showcases Madonna as the central, controlling character around whom the action revolves, which is a violation of the patriarchal codes of the classic genre that showcases men as the active protagonists and women as passive characters to be conquered/controlled. In Borderline, for example, Madonna's character not only narrates the heterosexual drama from the street, but she also takes charge and walks away from the wealthy photographer to return to the street and the man of her choice. Moreover, although Like a Virgin revolves around the split between the two classic heterosexual feminine positions—the virgin and the whore—not only does

48Because men are afforded status and power under patriarchy, their nonverbal communication often indicates and reflects the greater power and status they have over women. Men, for example, initiate more touching in mixed settings and often control the looking between themselves and others by refusing to return the looking of another. In contrast, women are taught to employ nonverbal cues that indicate receptivity, pleasantness, and passivity. As a result, because women are relegated to lower status positions, women often look at or to men for approval. For further elaboration of the relationship between gender and nonverbal communication, see Barbara Bate, Communication and the Sexes (New York: Harper & Row, 1988) 52-75 and Nancy M. Henley, Body Politics: Power, Sex, and Nonverbal Communication (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall 1977).
Madonna valorize the positions, but she does so by enacting an active, powerful femininity. Finally, in Lucky Star, Madonna is front and center throughout the performance, and she controls both the opening and closing of the video through her gesturing with her sunglasses. Thus, as the central control of the action within each video, Madonna is an active, feminine protagonist who violates the patriarchal classic structure.

Another nonverbal signifier that warrants attention is the looking that Madonna utilizes in the videos. Although the traditional study of the gaze is predominately linked to viewers, attending to Madonna's own gaze or looking within her videos suggests much about the gender roles she enacts. Within the first three videos, the predominant looking that Madonna employs is a direct address: she engages in direct, sustained looking that challenges traditional notions of gender.

The most obvious and sustained direct address occurs in the first video, Lucky Star. Not only is the video framed by Madonna's gaze as she pulls down her glasses, but throughout the entire video, Madonna maintains constant, sustained looking. As she wiggles seductively on the floor and bites her lip suggestively, she maintains direct eye contact with the camera, for example. The video is also closed--and consequently controlled--by Madonna's action when she pushes her glasses back up over her eyes. Both
Borderline and Like a Virgin are a bit more subtle than Lucky Star; however, within both, Madonna continually returns to a direct address. In Like a Virgin, not only is the higher status of the whore indicated by her role as narrator and controller of the story, but the whore Madonna engages in significantly more direct address than does the virgin. Consequently, even within the classic patriarchal dichotomy, Madonna privileges and valorizes the less valued side of the dichotomy. In Like a Virgin, Madonna’s explicit sexual dancing and performing as the boat moves through the canal is done entirely in direct address.49

The setting of each video is also an important nonverbal indicator of the gender roles Madonna is enacting in the videos. Lucky Star has an unknown setting, but because the video showcases and follows every move by Madonna, the setting remains dominated and controlled by Madonna. Both Borderline and Like a Virgin are set outside, on the street, where Madonna controls the action. With the settings of the street, the videos signify Madonna’s control and power to enter and engage in the outside, public realm, ________

49Madonna’s looking in the early phase, however, also indicates a certain powerlessness in that she also often appears to be desperately attempting to gain power—to seek approval—when she is performing. Her sustained and intense direct looking in Lucky Star, for example, could be read as failure to have the power and status to refuse the looking or to control the gaze by looking away. Although the contradiction is unresolvable, the fact that she is performing within the classical ideology and an almost-completely saturated male arena leads me to see the behavior as more subversive than not.
which is most often dominated by men. Although each video has a different setting, each connotes the economic position of a working-class setting, which has an ambiance of less wealth, status, and power than the economic position of the upper class. In Borderline, the working-class neighborhood frames the drama, and Madonna returns to both the working-class street and her working-class boyfriend. Whereas Like a Virgin is set in Venice with the trappings of a romantic, wealthy, European setting, the actual action in the street remains focused on the Madonna look, which also is deeply imbued with working-class ambiance.

The way that Madonna's body is shown in the first three videos is also important. Much debate continues to revolve around whether or not Madonna's use of her body--both in her dance steps and dress--indicates sexual freedom or oppression. Analysis of the decoding and recoding within the classic framework of the first three videos suggests that, although Madonna's suggestive dress and dance draw on many traditional feminine images, Madonna's apparent control of her position in the videos indicates her power to control those images. In other words, within the classic

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50In an often-quoted remark, Madonna has said about her sexuality in Like a Virgin, "And while it might have seemed like I was behaving in a stereotypical way, at the same time, I was also masterminding it. I was in control of everything I was doing, and I think that when people realized that, it confused them" (quoted in Gilmore 87). Within a classic video, taking control of sexuality is a powerful and potentially subversive position.
framework, Madonna decodes patriarchal positions for women within the classic framework and presents a powerful femininity vis 'a vis the traditional frame.

Jhally has suggested yet another gender signifier concerned with the body common to MTV videos. Often, the objectification of women's bodies occurs when women are looked at from particular angles--from below as if the camera is looking up their skirts or when women are only shown as body parts, with hands and legs detached from any real or full body. Madonna disrupts this practice throughout the first three videos: the wholeness of Madonna's body is maintained, and her entire body is shown as the center of action. Lucky Star, for example, revolves entirely around Madonna's full body, whereas Like a Virgin splits between two full-body images. Even when the model Madonna is being shot in Borderline, the photo session shows her entire body. Also, when Madonna's face is the only part of her body shown, more often than not Madonna's facial expression and looking convey her sense of power through her direct address. The gender image that Madonna models through her body is a complete and whole woman who is in charge of her destiny.

While all of the videos in phase one exude

\[5^1\]Jhally, "MTV, Cultural Politics and the Sex Wars" 51. Jhally's analysis is consistent with Kaplan's claim about the figurations for woman as body parts; women are simply there for display and control.
heterosexuality, Borderline and Like a Virgin explicitly suggest that the narrative performance revolves around the woman's perspective—Madonna's perspective—on heterosexual traumas. The heterosexual love trauma in Borderline is centered on a female experience in that the central action of the trauma centers on Madonna's struggle between two men rather than on watching one of the men's perspectives on the drama. Even the traditional male version and fantasy of the virgin/whore dichotomy that permeates female heterosexuality is told from the woman's perspective in Like a Virgin and then, rather than maintaining the dichotomy between the two, they are synthesized. By synthesizing the roles, Madonna suggests that both parts make up female sexuality and that all women must refuse the dichotomy between the two.

Within the classic ideology, Madonna's body and the Madonna look transgress and violate many feminine codes that dominate the male gaze. Her look is permeated by an excessive compilation of symbols, styles, and gender roles that invoke working-class images. Nonverbal dimensions within the videos also portray Madonna as violating boundaries and codes. The primary means of her control are suggested in the street settings, generally the purview of men; her narration of the other side of heterosexual dramas; and her engagement of direct address. In other words, Madonna does not appear as the ideal asexual mother, transcendent and nurturing the hero. Nor does Madonna slip
into being a fetishized object of the male gaze; her femininity exhibits the desire to be desired and remains powerful and privileged within the heterosexual dramas. Finally, even when Madonna’s presentation suggests a voyeuristic gaze, her body is not set up as mere object of sexual desire, having no intrinsic meaning. Instead, Madonna’s use of her body signifies her power and choice to use her body for her heterosexual pleasure or to enact her Oedipalized journey.

In the phase-one videos, Madonna is decoding female passivity and lack and showing that women also can be active, potent possessors of the phallus—there is excessive power, control, and potency. Madonna’s gender decoding, however, remains locked into the codes of Oedipus and the phallus because Madonna takes over a phallic position within the symbolism—she takes up the phallic position of the dominator. In other words, she strips feminine codes of their passivity and domination only to reinscribe femininity with male codes. As a result of Madonna’s gendered strategies, phase-one videos portray a gender image that is founded on an excess that decodes femininity—the excess of both Madonna’s body and style and the excessive accessibility of the Madonna character—only to be recoded by Madonna’s continued return to taking up the phallic position. In each video, Madonna takes control of the action and the narrative and dominates the Other, the Other
who is portrayed as less powerful and passive— for Madonna, a man. Thus, Madonna’s borderline-narcissistic subjectivity takes the following logic: the excessive gender and cultural decoding is recoded by taking up the phallic position of dominator and controller of the Other.

Phase one is also doubly recoded by the working-class ambiance of Madonna’s look and the settings shown in the videos. This working-class tone indicates Madonna’s power position within the music industry in phase one. If Oedipal recoding occurs primarily through restrictions and limits, one of the primary means of restricting access to power and wealth is through class divisions. These divisions between the working class and the upper class work in various ways. They restrict and limit access to the wealth of the upper class, limit the power of the working class, and have the ideological effect of maintaining class positions. Madonna’s presentation is imbued with working-class ambiance, which affects her agency as a programmer within the music industry. The powerful position that Madonna displays within the videos is contradicted by the real agency she held within the music industry at this time; she remained constrained by her minority status within the medium and its institutions. The image Madonna sells in the first videos, which is clearly working class, suggests the lack of power she had in the music industry. The borderline structure and gender position that Madonna sells, however,
begin to shift as she moves from phase one to phase two in her videos.

Transition Videos. Material Girl and Papa Don't Preach serve as the transition between Madonna's phase-one and phase-two videos. The videos are transitory because many of the characteristics of phase one remain, although new components are added that do not fit the classical schema of phase one. Material Girl and Papa Don't Preach continue to feature Madonna as the central controlling narrator, initiator of the action, and exhibitor of a powerful femininity. The videos, however, also introduce several new components: a fundamental change in the Madonna look, a move toward a postmodern format for the videos, the movement of the settings inside, and play with Oedipal positions.

Although both videos begin to exhibit more postmodern strategies than the phase-one videos, both of the transition videos retain a style, setting, narrative structure, and mood that best are conceptualized as classical. Both offer narratives that develop throughout the video and then are resolved. Material Girl offers two narrative plots: the material girl's struggle with materialism and the director's pursuit and subsequent "winning" of Madonna. Papa Don't Preach narrates the struggle and decision a woman makes about whether she should keep her baby. In both, Madonna remains the central controlling character who resolves the dilemmas presented. Finally, although neither develops in a
linear fashion (an indicator of the move toward a more postmodern format), each presents a cause-effect drama: Material Girl portrays the cause of Madonna's struggle with materialism through the male characters and her subsequent resolution and effect—she is won over by a non-material man. The Material Girl video continues Madonna's strategy of valorizing the feminine side of a heterosexual trauma—her struggle between two men and her choice to leave with one of the men. Papa Don't Preach, on the other hand, portrays two cause-effect relationships. First, the cause of the drama is the pregnancy, and the effect is the choice the woman makes. The second cause of trauma is the woman's fear of telling her father about the pregnancy and her subsequent revelation of it to him.

As in phase-one videos, there is more than one image presented in the phase-two videos; in fact, each presents two distinct Madonna images. The two different Madonna images in the transitory phase, however, reveal Madonna's foundational shift from the Madonna of the Madonna look to a new sophisticated Madonna. Consequently, Material Girl 

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5Within her classification scheme, Kaplan puts Material Girl in the postmodern category, although she acknowledges that the video retains remnants of the classic paradigm. Kaplan acknowledges the two Madonna roles but focuses primary attention on the material-girl Madonna. Because I take an evolutionary perspective, I see the behind-the-scenes Madonna as more important and as the narrator of the video. The narrator is the primary reason for my belief that the video retains too much of the classic ideology to be classified as postmodern.
introduces a more sophisticated Madonna look but also
retains the Madonna look of phase one. *Papa Don't Preach*,
on the other hand, finalizes the shift to phase two by
presenting the Madonna look that permeates phase two.

The *Material Girl* video is set and framed by the
opening exchange between the producer and his lackey. They
discuss whether or not the material-girl Madonna is truly a
star, and the producer decides that she is, in fact, one.
The discussion is indicative of what the video establishes
about Madonna, the music star: she is "a star, George ... the
biggest star of the universe." As the biggest star of
the universe, Madonna has moved from the working-class, less
powerful Madonna to an upper-class, sleek Madonna who has
power and wealth in the market.

The two Madonnas in the 1984 *Material Girl* video
suggest Madonna's transition from working class (phase one)
to almost upper class (phase two). The working-class
narrator behind the scenes is the Madonna of the Madonna
look who not only tells the story of a woman's struggle
between materialism and apparent non-materialism but who
also, in the end, drives off with the (seemingly) non-
material man, who happens to be her producer. The second
Madonna is the material-girl Madonna who is seen performing
a song about pure desire for materialism. This Madonna,
however, remains barely wealthy: she performs on a
stripped-down, barebones set; her jewelry remains "chunky"
and appears to be made of rhinestones and not diamonds; and her hair, although less wild, is styled in an unsophisticated style. The setting of the video is split between the interior performance space of the material-girl Madonna and the behind-the-scenes Madonna, who is mostly seen off stage in her dressing room. Within each setting, Madonna takes command of the space and dominates the action. The behind-the-scenes Madonna is seen rejecting the advances of a man while she is playing cards with him, and the material-girl Madonna remains front and center throughout the performance scenes.

The looking that occurs in the video also suggests control and dominance by the Madonnas of both images, although a new element is introduced in this transition video—looked-at-ness. The material-girl Madonna remains in control of the action with her chorus because she engages in direct address with her backing singers throughout their performance together. The transition, however, to less address and more looked-at-ness is revealed in the opening of Material Girl. The video begins in a traditional filmic style: the producer, the male spectator, is seen voyeuristically watching and assessing the material-girl Madonna. Madonna’s looked-at-ness also occurs through the producer’s own desire for and subsequent capture through wealth—or real power—of the non-material girl. In several scenes, the producer’s looking at both images dominates the
scene: when he watches as the behind-the-scenes Madonna tells her friend about the diamond necklace, when he watches her back stage, and when he watches her enter the studio.

The producer also signifies Madonna's continued lack of wealth in the video. Although the material-girl Madonna appears more wealthy than the behind-the-scenes Madonna, the material-girl Madonna's image is permeated by lack of real resources: the set, costuming, and jewelry all are imitations or spare. The material-girl look, then, remains deeply embedded in the working-class image that permeates the phase-one videos. The behind-the-scenes Madonna ultimately remains the character of the story by narrating the story and also by winning the man. The ending, however, is filled with irony due to the fact that the producer has purchased his non-materiality: the truck to attract the woman, the behind-the-scenes Madonna. The irony of the triumph of the behind-the-scenes Madonna, who continues to signify all the trappings of the working-class transgression of phase one, is that she has won by participating in a market exchange—the buying of non-materiality. The two Madonnas in Material Girl, then, represent the movement from a working-class image to the beginnings of an image of wealth; however, the lack of real wealth still permeates the images between which the video is split.

The Oedipal drama that is portrayed in Material Girl also shifts Madonna's portrayals closer to the traditional
male enactment of castration anxiety and fear of lack that drive the typical narrative plot of the classic format. The opening of the video indicates that, unlike the videos in phase one, the male side of the Oedipal drama will take on some importance in this video. The opening discussion suggests the centrality of the male struggle by including the male producer's desire and pursuit of Madonna, indicating his potency and status as a powerful male. His status is revealed by the suggestion in the exchange that if the producer wants to change anything about the image he is watching, he can, although he chooses not to make any changes. Also, the video follows the producer's attempt and success at winning the material girl. By winning the material girl, the producer resolves the anxiety invoked by a major star, a powerful woman: he ultimately can control her in a classic narrative plot. The video, however, also suggests powerful female images: both the material girl and the behind-the-scenes Madonna are shown controlling much of the action of the video and the interaction with the male characters. Thus, unlike phase-one videos, Material Girl presents powerful female images and traditional Oedipal dramas from a male protagonist's perspective.

The irony, however, that permeates Material Girl is that the behind-the-scenes Madonna's triumph over materialism and her real power as a powerful woman are bought at a cost by the producer. The producer has bought
her non-materialism, which indicates that, ultimately, his power and potency dominate the final scenes and resolution of the dilemma of the narrative. In terms of the Oedipal drama, the resolution also indicates that even a seemingly powerful woman can be bought, even if she is not aware of her commodification. Also significant about the resolution is that the image that is easily bought is the image of the behind-the-scenes Madonna of the Madonna look. Thus, even though *Material Girl* presents the introduction of a more wealthy Madonna image, the video serves as a metaphor to indicate that the Madonna look remains easily consumed.

The permanent shift to a wealthy image for Madonna, not accessible to all, occurs in *Papa Don't Preach*. Released in 1986, the year Kaplan suggests marks the movement toward more postmodern videos, the video presents Madonna as the sleek, sophisticated, wealthy women who is "the biggest star of the universe." Madonna's changed image in *Papa Don't Preach* is, in fact, one of the primary issues that surrounded the release of both the video and album. A new Madonna look is introduced that is sleek and sophisticated and is characterized by hair that is blonde and cropped short, makeup that is subtle and sophisticated, and no jewelry. This is a look described as "a combination of Marilyn Monroe, Jean Seberg, and Kim Novak. Gone was the assemblage of crucifixes and hair rags. In its place was a
new gamine Madonna for 1986." The new Madonna look is exhibited in both of the Madonna images around which the video is structured: the sleek, sophisticated narrator and the sleek, street Madonna, who remains connected to her lower class, urban background.

The video is a performance of a flashback narrative of a woman's struggle to decide what to do about her pregnancy and her fear of telling her father that she is pregnant. There are two Madonna images between which the video is split. First is the sophisticated, wealthy narrator who performs in an unknown setting. That she is wealthy is suggested by her contrast with the street Madonna: she commands the space she occupies; she is dressed in a more sophisticated style and manner, and she is outside the working-class world of the street Madonna. Her power is apparent because she is telling her own story and also controls her own destiny. The second image is the street Madonna, whose image is also sleek; however, the street Madonna's image remains permeated by a lower class dress and background, where most of the action takes place in the video.

The looking strategies in the video reveal much about the position within the video of both Madonna images and the gender dynamics that accompany both. As the sleek, sophisticated narrator tells the story of the drama, she

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begins the narrative by engaging in direct address. In later scenes, she is seen dancing and singing with her eyes looking away from the camera. As a result, unlike phase one, the looking of the narrator is split between direct address and looked-at-ness. The street Madonna’s looking also is split between direct address and looked-at-ness.

As she pursues and wins her boyfriend, Madonna first catches his attention with direct address. In addition, when she finds him working in the garage, she captures his look by engaging in direct address with him. In pursuit of her boyfriend, the street Madonna suggests a powerful woman who is pursuing what she wants. The street Madonna’s looking with the father, however, is characterized by Madonna looking down and deferring to the father. As they are seen in their house together eating, Madonna’s eyes remain down. After telling her father about the pregnancy, the street Madonna’s eyes also are downcast and waiting for a response from the father, suggesting deference.

The settings of the video also split between inside and outside. Although the narrator is in an unknown setting, the street Madonna is seen in both the streets and in her home with her father. Outside on the street, the street Madonna is seen walking confidently and with determination, indicating her comfort and power in the street. Inside with her father, however, the street Madonna’s nonverbal behavior suggests less power and deference to the father.
Within the classic frame, the sexuality that is enacted in the video is the classic Oedipal drama. The difference between this and the other videos, however, is that *Papa Don’t Preach* is the only video that appears to suggest some parts of the Electra Complex as the means to constrain the decoded desire. The Electra Complex, reviewed in Chapter One, is the name for the route that girl children take in coming to subjectivity: having interpreted the absence of a penis as a failure in provision on the part of the mother, the child competes with the mother for the father and replaces the unconscious wish for a penis with the wish to bear the father a child. Because there is no mother figure in *Papa Don’t Preach*, even in the scenes of childhood, neither Madonna image in the video has to rival the mother for the father’s attention. Both, however, continue to desire the approval of the father; they wish to please the father by bearing a child. Thus, although the video’s resolution and the narrator suggest that, in the end, the woman made her own choice and her life continued as she wished, the woman was still desperate for the approval and attention of the father. In terms of the Electra Complex, both the sophisticated narrator and the street Madonna enact their anxiety to please the father and direct their desire elsewhere in both the boyfriend and the baby they have created.

The decoding, then, that is suggested in the video--a
woman remains powerful even though she is potentially vulnerable because of the pregnancy—is recontained in the video by the desire for the approval of the father of Madonna’s decision. Consequently, although she continues to decode gender and cultural codes by her dominance and control within each video, Madonna’s recoding continues to rely on the phallic Oedipal codes in the transitionary videos. As Madonna strips femininity of its passivity and powerlessness, she takes up the position of the phallic controller of the action, setting, and narrative. The transition videos also begin to introduce a second recoding strategy in the videos—Madonna’s position as a sophisticated programmer.

Both videos introduce a new Madonna image, but by Papadon’t Preach, the new sleek, sophisticate image takes on the primary role of narrator of the story and replaces the behind-the-scenes Madonna in Material Girl. The new type of narrator in Papadon’t Preach, a shift away from the excessive character of the Madonna look to a new sleek, sophisticated image, shifts the structure of the borderline narcissism exhibited in the videos and also reworks the decoding and recoding that occur in them. As the sophisticate look takes over Madonna’s videos, Madonna moves to phase two of her borderline narcissism. Madonna’s new stance is suggested in her choice of setting, narrative closure, looking, and nonverbal behaviors.
Phase Two. The transition videos illuminate Madonna's move from a classic ideology toward a postmodern ideology in the videos. The shift toward a postmodern ideology in the videos accompanies Madonna's move to phase two. Similar to phase-one videos, phase-two videos are characterized by Madonna's programming strategy of selling a constant underlying image; however, the crucial difference is that the constant image sold shifts dramatically from an excessive working-class character to a sleek, sophisticated scrambler of images who has all the trappings of wealth and power as the foundation. The shift toward phase-two videos, then, is accompanied by Madonna's move to postmodern videos.

The phase-two videos—Open Your Heart, La Isla Bonita, Like a Prayer, Express Yourself, Cherish, Oh Father, and both versions of Vogue—are best categorized as postmodern because of their lack of narrative structure, the use of a pastiche style that shows non-linear images, play with Oedipal positions, and refusal to take a stand for or against authority. Thus, exploring the gender roles within the phase-two videos requires shifting the contextual ground for assessing the decoding and recoding at work to the postmodern context or frame. The remaining eight videos, however, display varying degrees of postmodernism and, as a result, an important place to begin to assess the gender roles within the phase is to explore the postmodern structure of the videos.
Three kinds of structure characterize the videos in phase two—structures that suggest connections among the images other than a cause-effect narrative structure are: sequencing, distancing, and extreme postmodernism. The first structure, which involves two different techniques, engages in sequencing that allows for some sense of a narrative plot to emerge without a linear, cause-effect structure.

The first technique involves flashback sequencing, as in Like a Prayer and Oh Father, so that strands of an aprés coup narrative structure are retained. The specific sequences make sense only after the fact, and the repeated returns to Madonna’s image allow the viewer to make sense of the performance. Like a Prayer, for example, begins in the middle of the trauma when Madonna is running away from the stabbing. The connection between the crime and Madonna’s witnessing of the violence to which women are subjected, however, does not occur until much later in the video when Madonna flashes back to the stabbing scene. Oh Father also jumps among three images—the survivor Madonna (the narrator), the victim child, and the adult victim—with a flashback sequencing that only makes sense with each connective return to Madonna, the narrator. The viewer only realizes that the adult victim and the adult survivor are the same person after the narrator is seen leaving the abusive husband. Both the videos, then, return, as Kaplan
suggests they will, to the rock star. The scrambled storyline continually reverts to the star in a narcissistic overcoded return to Madonna as an MTV product.

La Isla Bonita does not utilize a flashback sequencing; however, a general narrative emerges through the continual cutting between the two Madonna images—the confined Madonna and the exotic Spanish Madonna. As the video unfolds and the lyrics tell the tale of the love story with San Pedro, the confined Madonna looks out to the street to the Spanish guitar player as the Spanish Madonna dances. After the guitar player motions to the confined Madonna, the exotic Spanish Madonna leaves the inside world for one outside. After dancing with the street Spaniards, she walks off into the sunset. The resolution the video offers is the interaction with the Spaniards and the Spanish Madonna’s ability to leave the inside world for the outside world. Although the cause of her confinement is not revealed, the video shows the struggle between the desire to stay inside and confined and the desire to leave and enter the outside world of the Spaniards. The cause for leaving the confined world is clear, the beckoning of the Spanish guitar player. Once the Spanish Madonna interacts with Spaniards, she is able to continue on her journey out to the larger world.

Open Your Heart, Cherish and the MTV Vogue have no discernable narrative structure; instead, following a distancing strategy, they continually pivot back to a
primary Madonna image as she is being watched. Distancing occurs because spectators are continually made aware that they are watching Madonna from a distance. In Open Your Heart, the distancing is often three times removed when the spectator watches the burlesque viewers watching Madonna perform. Similarly, Cherish revolves around watching Madonna's performance for the camera, and the MTV Vogue shows a live audience watching the performance. Thus, even when Madonna engages in direct address with the camera, as she does in Open Your Heart, that address is framed through the glasses of the spectator.

The third structure suggests Madonna's most extreme postmodernism, which is exhibited in the first Vogue and Express Yourself. In both videos, a narrative structure is undiscernible and cut through with varying images that seem to have no connection to the video. In Vogue, for example, Madonna's changing appearance and performance seem to have little connection to the rest of the video, except that each exhibits a version of Madonna's sophisticated image. In short, what appears to be happening is that the multiple images are part of a high-class fashion show. Express Yourself also fails to connect the multiple and changing wealthy outfits that Madonna displays to any component of the video. The spectator is left wondering how, for example, the multiple sophisticate images connect to the content.
Although there are three different structures in the videos, all eight of the phase-two videos strip away any sense of setting. From Open Your Heart to the original version of Vogue, the settings are unknown, stripped of any reference to a specific historical time, geographical location, or to life events. Even though the setting of the MTV Vogue is clearly within the staging of an MTV awards ceremony, the historical costuming and set pieces remain stripped of their original context and unconnected to the MTV staging. All that is conveyed about the settings is sleekness, permeated with objects of wealth and sophistication. The original Vogue, for example, has the ambiance of a luxurious apartment in a high rise that towers above a city. Cherish is set at an unknown and uncrowded beach during a photo shoot, where Madonna apparently has had sufficient power to clear away everyone else but herself. Even La Isla Bonita, which retains some working-class imagery in the street with the Spaniards, is set in an unknown city, where the two sophisticated Madonnas remain above and distanced from the working-class imagery for most of the video. As a result of the stripped settings, the only means for grounding the videos is through the constant return to Madonna’s images/body, constantly showing Madonna as sophisticated and wealthy.

In addition to stripping away any reference to settings, the sophisticated Madonna decodes the original
revolutionary meaning from the films and genres she borrows. Although *Express Yourself* retains and recalls the film, *Metropolis*, the *Express Yourself* video completely decodes the revolutionary symbolism found in the original by utilizing the stripped-down frame of the earlier film as a forum for Madonna’s narcissistic, decoded fashion show as she sends for and receives the toiling worker from below.

Even though *Express Yourself* closes by flashing the central tenet of the position of the character, Maria, in *Metropolis*, the content and the value of those words have been decoded completely. Whereas Maria intended the heart and soul to be the foundation of the workers’ uprising, *Express Yourself* suggests that the heart is the foundation for a fashion show. Near the end of the movie, Maria, the nonviolent savior of the workers, says to Freder, the son of the capitalist who is working as a mediator between his capitalist father and the workers: "Between the mind that plans and the hands that build must be a mediator, and this must be the heart." Later, after there is panic because the city is flooding, Maria tells Freder, "Be their mediator, Freder! Without the heart, there can be no understanding between the hands and the mind." Not only does Madonna portray the capitalist in *Express Yourself*, but she mediates

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54 Fritz Lange’s *Metropolis* is filmed in black and white and is a silent film that uses subtitles. Franz Lang, *Metropolis*, Giorgia Maroder Enterprises, LTD., (video version) 1984.
nothing except her changing wardrobe, and the only heart she has is to send for the worker below to satisfy her desire. Express Yourself's closing, "Without the Heart, There can be no understanding between the hand and the mind," thus strips the original value from Maria's comment.

The original Vogue also strips the value of the meaning of voguing by presenting it as Madonna's narcissistic fashion show. In the original Vogue, the connection between intercity gay men's attempt to pose their way out of poverty, within their working-class, inner-city ballrooms, is lost completely in Madonna's version. First, Madonna's voguing occurs within an upper-class, sophisticated setting that is permeated with objects of wealth, luxury, and power; Madonna poses within the context of Real wealth and power that the inner-city men lack. In addition, rather than sharing the posing floor or space with the other voguers by taking turns posing, an important component of inner-city voguing, voguing in the video either focuses exclusively on Madonna or uses the background voguers to showcase her. In short, the value and meaning of the inner-city voguers are stripped of the potentially subversive content so that Madonna can showcase her Real wealth and power as she performs a fashion show.

Stripping the Real, material experiences of the people who live the everyday cultural codes with which Madonna plays in her videos also occurs in La Isla Bonita. Dressed
as an exotic Spanish dancer in the video, Madonna's outfit signifies the richness—both material and spiritual—of the Spanish culture. She also embodies this richness in the video because the real Spaniards are seen as working class in both their dress and setting. After the exotic Spanish dancer goes to the street—she enters and mixes with the Real world of the working-class Spaniards—the exotic Madonna is able to leave the working-class setting. Thus, Madonna exoticizes and strips the Spanish culture to empower herself so that she can leave the Real, everyday culture of the working-class Spaniards.

*Like a Prayer* strips racism and sexism of their original meaning and power. Instead of featuring the experiences of the attack on a woman and the false arrest of a black man for that crime—tangible Real effects of sexism and racism—Madonna overcodes those experiences with her own narcissistic struggle to decide whether or not she should save the falsely accused man. Moreover, many Black churches serve as the foundation for the struggle to fight racism and as a safe heaven for Blacks against persecution in the name of other religions. Thus, by mixing symbols from Black Baptist and Catholic churches, Madonna strips the symbolism of each to create a narcissistic place of worship for her own struggle against racism. Thus, whereas in phase-one videos, Madonna appears to be exploding the boundaries between Christianity and sexuality, phase-two Madonna adds
racism to the equation and strips the value of differing Christian traditions for her own narcissistic journey.

In the eight postmodern videos, Madonna’s own looking is split between direct address and looked-at-ness. The recoded return to Madonna’s image in Oh Father and Like a Prayer are two examples of this split between direct address and looked-at-ness. In Like a Prayer, Madonna’s image is split between direct address with the other performers and a looked-at-ness as she sings the lyrics into the camera. For most of Oh Father, Madonna, the narrator, does not engage in direct address. In fact, a significant amount of the video shows Madonna looking down, as if she is ashamed. Only when the narrator sings, "I got away from you," and she is empowered to leave does she engage in direct address. Even Open Your Heart, which addresses the issue of looking most fully, contains a split between Madonna’s direct address and looked-at-ness while she is performing within the burlesque frame. Madonna’s looking outside the burlesque frame, however, is characterized by direct address with the little boy. This indicates that when Madonna is outside the frame of the looking of others—when the frame for looking is direct, rather than from a distance—Madonna reacquires the power to control the gaze and engages in direct address.

Direct address also predominates in Cherish as Madonna performs for the camera. Although Cherish appears to engage in the same direct address as Lucky Star, the difference
between the two is the distancing strategy: in *Lucky Star*, Madonna's own looking, indicated by the use of her sunglasses to control the frame for the looking, controls the gaze of the camera. *Cherish* gives no similar signals to suggest Madonna's direct control of the gaze, but the looking is framed by the awareness that someone is behind the camera, and the viewer is twice removed from the photo shoot. As a result, the direct address in *Cherish* occurs within the frame of a photo shoot and is distanced from the performance, which keeps the spectator consciously aware of Madonna's direct address and the gaze of the camera.

The looking in *Express Yourself* is also split between direct address and looked-at-ness as Madonna expresses multiple images. The most intriguing component of the looking in this video occurs when Madonna appears to be most vulnerable. When she is chained and waiting naked for the worker, she engages in sustained direct address with the camera. In *Express Yourself*, instead of a looked-at-ness that is founded on Madonna's objectification, Madonna knows she is being watched and has gained power and refuses to return the look.

The postmodern videos, then, suggest that Madonna's looking slips among direct control of the looking, a refusal to be looked at, and the traditional looked-at-ness. Thus, unlike the phase-one videos, where the primary concern for Madonna is seeking power, control, and status through her
control of the gaze, phase-two videos alternate among differing strategies of looking and varying degrees of control of the gaze. Although Madonna allows herself to be looked at in a traditionally patriarchal manner, the significant change is that she is now the controlling factor behind the looking and does not need to seek the power to control the gaze. Even when Madonna engages in distancing strategies, she separates herself from the experience and, consequently, maintains her control, behind the scenes, of the looking. Her power is also indicated by the fact that when she appears most vulnerable in the postmodern videos, as in *Express Yourself*, she engages in sustained direct address. Thus, the change in looking strategies between phase one and phase two suggests that Madonna has gained access to the power to control the looking. Thus, no longer needing to take the power of the gaze, Madonna decides when she is to be looked at, when she refuses the look, when she engages in direct address, or when she splits between looking and being looked at.

The irony of the videos in phase two is that, although all of the videos engage in potentially subversive strategies—blurring boundaries, stripping content, oscillating between looking strategies, and different narrative structures such as flashback sequencing—those strategies always are centered by the return to the image of Madonna, as Kaplan predicts, in order to mark off the
boundaries of each product/video being sold. For example, *Express Yourself*, which exhibits the most extreme postmodern structure, always returns to Madonna as the central focus in the video, even though there is no explanation for her change among the seven sleek, sophisticated images. The use, then, of pivoting back to Madonna's body also indicates her dominance in each video; rather than being the controller of the narrative action as she is in the classic videos, the postmodern videos are dominated by Madonna's body. Thus, as each video jumps among multiple images, boundaries, and genres, the videos center by constantly returning, narcissistically, to Madonna's body to mark off the boundaries for the product of consumption.

The drive to set boundaries for consumption within the postmodern videos also is exhibited by the continual use of closure strategies. Although closure strategies recall the classic ideology, the postmodern closure strategies are markedly different; instead of offering resolution to a story, the postmodern closure offers closure for the product. *Cherish* ends as the camera fades out from Madonna's face, and *Oh Father* ends as it moves away from the little girl dancing. The fade out, however, only indicates that the video is over—not that any story line has ended. In the other videos—*Open Your Heart, La Isla Bonita, Like a Prayer, Express Yourself*, and the *MTV Vogue*—the videos close with classic narrative signals: Madonna is seen
walking away into the sunset (both literally in *Open Your Heart* and figuratively in *La Isla Bonita*), the curtain comes down in *Like a Prayer*, the doors to the world of *Express Yourself* are closed as if to show the final dictate about the heart, and Madonna is carried away in *Vogue*. Even the first *Vogue* is framed by opening and closing signifiers when the feathers lift open to reveal the video and come back together during the closing. Setting boundaries, then, in all of the phase-two videos remains important within their postmodern context.

The marking of boundaries thus serves as the final bracket for the degrees of postmodernism exhibited in the phase-two videos. The fact that the boundary marking is so explicit suggests that the need for closure remains paramount in phase two. When the strategy of closure is contextualized within the selling frame of MTV, the best explanation offered for the strategy is that the closure meets the imperative that each video must sell a product. As a result, the borderline-narcissistic structure of the sophisticate videos—the scrambled images, codes, and boundaries—are recoded by temporary closure and the narcissistic return to Madonna’s body to sell herself/commodities. The constant return to Madonna’s body to mark the boundaries of closure also suggests that the return is to the same content or foundations—the sleek, upper-class Madonna image. The constant image that crosses
all the postmodern videos, although varied in dress or on the surfaces, is a sophisticated programming Madonna. In other words, although Madonna’s surface-level dress and images change across the postmodern videos, underneath is a constant, stable image of sophistication that changes only appearances instead of altering a foundation.

The return to Madonna’s stable image also suggests the pivot for the Oedipalized drama within the videos. Because there are three postmodern structures within phase two, three slightly different versions of subjectivity characterize these videos. The sequencing structure continues to reference narrative grounding, which offers the kind of subjectivity that remains symbiotically tied to Oedipal codes. In both of the videos that utilize an *apres coup* sequencing—Like a Prayer and Oh Father—the abuse of power is addressed, specifically its use against women. Oh Father suggests the adult survivor stripping the power from all the fathers in the video: she leaves the abusive husband; she reconciles with the abusive father because she has saved herself and stripped him of the power to control/abuse her; and she strips the power from the Church by revealing that the Church’s solution—praying—could not stop the violence. Thus, in the end, the power to leave the abuse comes from the woman/victim.

Like a Prayer also centers on the abuse of power by those conferred with the power of the phallus—the law,
white men, and religion—and the victimage that occurs from that abuse. It depicts the stabbing of a woman, the false arrest of a Black man, and the fear that accompanies the challenge of the power of phallic institutions. As the central character of the video and as the savior of both the stabbed woman (by interrupting the stabbing) and the falsely arrested Black man, Madonna disrupts the codes and power of the phallus by stripping the power of the law when she "solves" the crime. Moreover, she also offers a solution for the abuse of power for the viewer: fight the power. The solution, however, remains ironic because of the video's ending—an elaborately staged closure, which leaves the viewer wondering if the whole video is a joke and whether Madonna herself takes the video and its subject seriously. In addition, the video seems to suggest that there is no way to stop the abuse of power—all individuals must reveal the abuse when they see it. Oh Father, in contrast, suggests that the solution is to leave the abuse rather than to stop the cause of the abuse. The drama and the solutions in Like a Prayer and Oh Father remain symbiotically tied to the codes of Oedipus and, as a result do not scramble Oedipal positions; instead, the solutions entail taking up the power of Oedipal codes.

The implications for subjectivity are that, although Oedipal codes are decoded, they are recoded by taking up the power positions of Oedipus. In other words, the abuse that
results from the Oedipal laws is revealed, without challenging the foundation of the codes. The subject position offered in the videos is one that continues to take up the position of the Other, where self and Other remain polarized and separate. Like a Prayer and Oh Father thus continue to offer a dichotomized subject position that is entrenched in power over the Other.

Although La Isla Bonita does have an apres coup structure, a narrative is still discernable. Rather than address the abuse of the power by phallic laws, this video engages in abuse of power by exoticizing the Other in order to re-empower Madonna. Both of the Madonna images in the video retain an upper-class ambiance. Moreover, even when the Spanish Madonna goes out into the street with the Spaniards, she continues to wear her exotic Spanish outfit. Both images, then, contrast and signify the working-class Spanish Other. Both Madonna images turn to the Other for empowerment: although the sleek, confined Madonna is beckoned to come out to the street by the guitar player, the Spanish Madonna is the one who leaves her confinement. Thus, only the exoticized Spanish Madonna image is able to move into the street. Rather than staying with the Other, however, the exotic Madonna leaves the Other in the Other's wealthy codes. The use of a culture in order to exoticize
and empower self is the exoticization\(^5\) of the Other only for a dominator's empowerment and continues to be an abuse of power. Thus, in this video, Madonna does not even take on the position of the Other; she uses her position as the powerful upper-class dominator so that she can mix with and then leave the Other. In terms of Oedipal subjectivity, *La Isla Bonita* also simply re-entrenches the power dynamics between self and Other by using the Other to exoticize self.

The second postmodern structure, distancing, that characterizes the MTV *Vogue*, *Cherish*, and *Open Your Heart* involves the continual return to Madonna's body as she is being watched. The distancing effect of the videos allows viewers to be self-consciously aware that they are watching the performance twice removed—they watch the constant Madonna image one step removed from the performance and from a distance. Thus, unlike the classic narrative that has the effect of allowing the viewer to identify with the protagonist who enacts the narrative, this structure keeps viewers at a self-conscious distance, similar to a Brechtian theatre performance. Brechtian theatre techniques—talking directly to the audience while in dialogue; making references within a performance that what is being shown is, in fact, a performance; and engaging in dialogue with the audience as the performance happens—often ensure a distance

between the audience and the show so that the viewer cannot identify with the performers. Brecht insists on these strategies so that audience members can maintain a distance for critical reflection about performances.56

Open Your Heart, Cherish and the MTV Vogue each involve a secondary distancing through the constitution of setting, which frames the action of the traditional looking of the male gaze that objectifies women: Open Your Heart is a burlesque performance, the MTV Vogue appears on a MTV awards show that valorizes MTV and its male-dominated station, and Cherish is a photo shoot. In all three, the distancing effect allows viewers to be aware of the looking process. The distancing insures that the audience members must utilize critical reflection in assessing the performances. Open Your Heart, for example, rather than presenting a woman who appears shameful in a burlesque show, presents Madonna performing a provocative dance for viewers as she gazes back at them and the camera. Open Your Heart provides the distance for viewers to think critically about the objectification of what occurs in burlesque images of women. Madonna also controls the action and space in the MTV Vogue; she tells the dancers to strike a pose, and they do. The MTV Vogue challenges viewers to assess women's passive and dominated position within the patriarchal lenses of MTV.

Cherish distances viewers because spectators watch Madonna’s photo shoot; thus, the spectator is one step removed from the gaze of the camera that shoots her poses. Madonna poses for the camera rather than for the spectator. Madonna’s direct gaze with the camera also suggests that she is aware that she is the object of the gaze of the camera.

The distancing effect in Cherish provides the distance to think critically about women’s objectification by the camera. Thus, rather than being just an object of the gaze, Madonna is distant from the gazes in each video, which allows the spectator the separation to think critically about the gaze. Consequently, the videos strip the power of the male gaze and allow the viewer the distance to assess Madonna’s/women’s positions within a traditionally objectifying gaze. By challenging the spectator to reflect on the traditional Oedipal positions for women, Madonna’s performances challenge Oedipal subjectivity. Although Madonna does not offer an alternative to the traditional Oedipal positions, her challenges create the space for spectators to think about those positions.

The extreme postmodern videos of phase two do not have any discernible narrative structure and present multiple images of Madonna that seem disconnected from one another. The only consistency Madonna maintains throughout her presentation of the multiple images in both the first Vogue and Express Yourself, for example, is Madonna’s control and
domination. Thus, as Madonna mixes the styles and codes of the 1940s with the 1980s, appears in gender-bending male suits, and appears in lingerie, she maintains her control above the toiling workers below. In both the videos, then, the multiplicity appears to suggest Madonna's play with Oedipal positions, signified in the multiple images—she is powerful, vulnerable, dominating, and waiting to be taken. In both videos, because there is no way to identify a cause-effect structure or connections among the multiple images, there is no way to assess Madonna's stance toward any one image, any one Oedipal position. There is, however, one ground in the extreme postmodern videos that suggests Madonna's power position within her play with gender and Oedipal positions.

Within the extreme postmodern videos, Madonna retains her power and control over the others in the videos: in Vogue, Madonna commands the other performers to strike a pose, and they do; in Express Yourself, Madonna summons and receives the toiling worker from below. In short, in both videos, the multiple Madonna images are never explained, and Madonna's source of power to control the others in the film also is not explained. But Madonna's ability to control the others is demonstrated throughout both. In other words, the only power and control that are shown are Madonna's power to control her own image and the action of others, without any explanation for her source of power. Thus, as Madonna
decodes and scrambles her multiple looks, gender codes, and Oedipal positions, the only central image to which the videos return is Madonna's underlying, powerful, lean and always well-dressed body.

Thus, Madonna programs an image that appears to be changing her look in each video or engaging in play with gender through pastiche or dressing up. As the sleek programmer, Madonna, indeed, does engage in a form of play with gender: as the videos exhibit varying degrees of postmodernism, Madonna's gender images and roles also present varying multiple gender positions. Express Yourself and the first Vogue, the most extreme postmodern videos in phase two, suggest a plethora of gender styles and images when Madonna mixes the boundaries of gender codes symbolized by her dress: in both, she mixes the styles and codes of the 1940s and the 1980s and appears in male suits and feminine lingerie. The videos also intimate that a woman can have the power, wealth, beauty, and control to move among multiple roles as Madonna changes outfits or dress; these surface changes seem to suggest the possibility of a multiplicity of gender for women. Moreover, although Like a Prayer and Cherish show one stable Madonna image, each image appears to be different from the one that precedes and follows it in the video. The multiple images, however, only entail multiplicity on a surface level; there is an underlying foundation of power and wealth in each video in
The narcissistic return to Madonna's body, dressed in the wealth of a sophisticate, indicates a different programming strategy for phase two. Similar to phase-one videos, in which Madonna's role as programmer— as the transgressive nomad character— entailed selling the same underlying working-class character who transgressed boundaries within and across the videos of phase one, phase-two videos sell a constant, underlying image. The crucial difference between the two phases, however, is that the constant image sold shifts dramatically from an excessive, working-class character who seeks power to a sleek, sophisticated scrambler of images who has all the trappings of wealth and power as the foundation. Thus, the central issue and theme that emerge from the phase-two videos are power and control, specifically Madonna's power and control of gender images and of the other performers in the videos. Madonna's borderline-narcissist subjectivity in phase two, then, reveals a very specific wealthy foundation that suggests gender play within the confines of the powerful and wealthy. Consequently, Madonna's multiplicity is confined to the multiplicity of the wealthy and powerful. In short, each time the outfit changes, the powerful wealthy programmer is underneath, controlling the changes.

The wealthy programmer who is underneath the phase-two videos has a borderline-narcissistic structure that works in
the following manner: the foundation is based on the power, scarcity, and lack of a wealthy programmer who splits off and sells gender roles, styles, and images. Whereas phase-one videos entail Madonna's programming of a borderline-narcissistic structure where the transgressive decoding of cultural codes of beauty, style, and order are recoded by the narcissistic Madonna character, phase-two videos invert the structure so that a wealthy, sleek, narcissistic recoder overcodes herself with a borderline (decoded) gender structure. In other words, the transgressive Madonna of phase one decoded both her image and her body of cultural codes until she emerged within the music industry and on MTV as a programmer in phase two who serves as the centering pivot for the splitting off of wealthy, sophisticated gender dress-ups.

From Open Your Heart on, a sophisticated, upper-class ambiance and style permeate Madonna's gender images within the videos, regardless of their specific content. In Cherish and Like a Prayer, for example, the one Madonna image that remains constant in the videos is one of a sleek, unadorned woman—an image that signifies access to the limited and restricted power of the wealthy. Even in Express Yourself and the first Vogue, where multiple gender images appear, the lean, wealthy capitalist who lives above the toiling workers and controls the other performers remains. Underneath each image or outfit is the scarcity
associated with the wealthy and powerful, a scarcity founded on class divisions that insure limited access and restriction from the power of wealthy capitalists. Finally, even when the videos portray classic positions of victimimage for women, the videos always return to the powerful, sophisticated woman surviving those positions. Thus, underlying the changing, scrambled looks are the codes of wealth and power in the market. Madonna's play with gender and dressing up, accordingly, is not the "pure" form of postmodernism with which she is often credited by feminists: underneath her multiplicity is a powerful and gendered programmer who is in control and has power.

To summarize the context and the analysis of the videos: The borderline-narcissistic structure that constitutes Madonna's videos is revealed in two ways. First, MTV's postmodernism is undergirded by a borderline-narcissistic stance that is a double movement--decoded cultural codes are centered by recoding in order to sell both the star and MTV. MTV creates borderline-narcissistic paths in advance of the videos, which lock videos into a structure of double movement: decoded cultural codes and rock ideologies always are recontained by recoding, primarily through Oedipal codes, in order to sell the medium and rock stars.

An additional borderline narcissism is exhibited in both phases found in Madonna's videos. Phase one, the
excessive nomad phase, follows the same borderline narcissistic path of MTV: cultural codes are stripped and then recoded by Oedipalized codes in order to sell the character of the first Madonna look. When Madonna begins to acquire the power of the capitalist structure that drives MTV, the sophisticate begins to appear and becomes a possibility in Material Girl and Papa Don't Preach. By 1986, when both MTV and Madonna are moving toward cultural postmodern iconicity, the decoding and recoding are inverted in the eight videos that constitute phase two. As Madonna plays with feminine Oedipal positions in the sequencing and distancing of postmodern structures and as she plays with multiple Oedipal positions in the extreme postmodern videos, she decodes multiple gender images and roles. Underneath the decoding, however, is the recoding of the sophisticated, sleek programmer who remains the narcissistic pivot as the foundation of the multiple gender images. The form of Madonna's sexuality also shifts from a foundation in excess and a potential schizophrenia to reinscribing a form of sexuality founded on lack and scarcity.

The shift in Madonna's programming strategies--her different borderline-narcissistic structures in the videos--is the result of the power dynamic that undergirds Madonna's borderline narcissism. Exploration of the power dynamic of Madonna's borderline narcissism requires attention to Madonna's connection to materiality because, ultimately,
power is a material issue, and "feeling empowered and being empowered are not the same thing."\textsuperscript{57} As the primary marketing tool of the music industry, MTV breaks, makes, and sustains music stars. MTV's primary vehicle to sustain itself and rock stars is its postmodern advertising technique, which creates the insatiable and ongoing desire for MTV, its commodities, and stars. Typical of much advertising, MTV sells a very specific lifestyle and modes of consumption. The world and lifestyle that MTV sells (and the culture in which MTV developed) are saturated by the greedy materialism of Reagan's America: one never can have enough money or objects of wealth. The greediness, however, is always intimately tied to power: the capitalists or owners of production, who must maintain limited access to products in order to keep the demand inaccessible and only partially satisfiable, maintain the control and power to limit commodities. Those with power have a vested interest and desire in maintaining their power by limiting Real access to it by always limiting and controlling the medium of production. Thus, any codes that MTV frees are always recoded to sell and limit the market. The capitalist logic that drives MTV and its use of power is the same logic that drives Madonna's shifting images—she moves from feeling

empowered as a nomad, without Real power in the music industry, to being empowered as a sleek, wealthy sophisticate who has gained more and more power within the music industry. In short, Madonna’s borderline-narcissistic structure follows her move, in Deleuzian terminology, from minority status to majority status.

The majority is a homogenous and constant system that works to maintain its majority status and power. The minority, in contrast, lives in the sub-systems and is marked by a becoming process that is both existent and potential and that allows for the creative possibility for change and revolution. For Deleuze, becoming a majority is always problematic because it entails always entering into the realm of the homogenous and restrictive system. Thus, the phase-one videos, characterized by the excessive, working-class nomad, have their origins in Madonna’s Real-life experiences, when she attempted to break into the music industry. As a minority in the Deleuzian sense,58 Madonna had no access to the Real power system of the industry: she was part of the working class, her only means of subsistence was to live a nomad lifestyle, and her character violated the boundaries of the system. Madonna’s presentation and style reflected that lack of conferred power and status. Furthermore, as a woman minority who engaged in gender decoding by drawing on excess, Madonna presented herself as

58For further review, see Chapter One.
within a potentially revolutionary becoming process within the MTV system.

In phase one, then, Madonna's entry into the video scene and her presentation of self and sexuality reflected her position within the MTV power frame. Consequently, Madonna's disruption of the classic male gaze, the violations of gender codes and boundaries, and her sustained direct address within the classic cinematic frame worked to sell a borderline-narcissistic programming that relied on excess for her gender decoding within the minority or becoming process captured in the Madonna look.

The Madonna look, however, was a poor marketing strategy in the sense that the early Madonna look could satisfy and was easily bought. In other words, her image privileged a schizophrenic commodity: the image sold excessive and easily accessible desire and thus could be bought and copied easily. Hers was a commodity and marketing strategy that violated market imperatives of lack, scarcity, and control over the products. The image might have sold itself out in the market had not Madonna changed her image in 1986.

By 1986, as Madonna began to acquire an unusual amount of material wealth and power within the music industry and the market, Madonna introduced an image and a form of sexuality that severed her ties to her previous minority status and that also indicates her acquired majority status
as a capitalist with power. After gaining Real wealth and power within the capitalist logic, Madonna moved into programming a position of a majority capitalist, taking scarcity as a primary principle and perpetuating power and sexuality through class divisions. The form of Madonna’s sexuality also shifts from roots in excess, a potential schizophrenia, to a form of sexuality that reinscribes a position of power, founded on lack and scarcity. Her inversion, then, of the borderline-narcissistic structure --her shift from the narcissistic recoding of power and wealth to an overlay of that recoding with decoding of gender--makes sense from a marketing perspective.

As Madonna acquired Real power--on MTV, in the music industry, and through the acquisition of material assets--she moved into a position of a powerful majority programmer. As a narcissistic-borderline programmer, instead of recoding worthless objects such as designer jeans, Madonna began to recode decoded gender looks and images from her position of power. Consequently, her programming strategy of splitting-off wealthy and multiple gender roles to keep the supply for Madonna’s gender roles in constant demand and limited insures Madonna’s position of power because the controlling wealth behind the multiplicity is inaccessible to most people. From a marketing perspective, Madonna made a brilliant market move: instead of being oversold in the market by projecting an accessible, easily bought image,
Madonna flipped the structure in order to have always available a commodity permeated by scarcity—one that is always undersold.

In sum, to maintain her viability on the market, Madonna banks on reconfiguring the structural imperatives of the MTV market. Having been oversold but having gained Real material power in the capitalist system, Madonna splits between the borderline disorder and the narcissistic reaction/recoding, thus inverting the structure of borderline-narcissistic subjectivity. Madonna’s becoming process shifts to a majority position, which entails developing as a narcissistic programmer who scrambles (decodes) her own gender images as a marketing strategy. Thus, as Madonna gains Real material power, she begins the process of ensuring limited access to herself and her product. Rather than being easily accessible and copied, her body literally embodies multiplicity: her image changes all the time and requires enormous wealth to copy. The key component of how Madonna’s borderline narcissism works, then, is Madonna’s connection to the power dynamics of the music industry. The bottom line about Madonna is that the constitution process—the logic of the capitalist MTV system—is the fundamental component of the basic Madonna images and her videos. Identification of the mode of Madonna’s borderline narcissism opens the space to answer the questions that undergird a feminist-schizoanalytic
method.

**Conclusions**

Power is a great aphrodisiac and I'm a very powerful person (Madonna).

The primary form of sexuality that is at work in Madonna's videos is a sexuality that shifts from a minority position that draws on excess to a majority position founded on scarcity and lack. Phase-one videos take excess as the content of the early, working-class nomad days—excess manifest in her body, her scrambling of codes, and the insistence that the feminine also can have power. In these videos, Madonna suggests a becoming process that disrupts the dominant, homogeneous codes of the music industry. The becoming process of phase one also exposes the desire at work in Madonna's programming. Madonna's programming in this phase appears to move toward n sexes and a revolutionary schizophrenia, fueled by excess energy that is always an on-going and continuous process.

The process, however, is constrained by the borderline-narcissistic paths of MTV, which, in phase one, recontain the desire into Oedipalized phallic positions: Madonna takes up powerful phallic positions. Thus, although Madonna's initial programming strategy draws on an excessive disruption of feminine gender codes, they are recoded by the

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phallic positions of power that drive MTV. In other words, Madonna’s programming strategy in the phase-one videos evidences an excessive revolutionary potential—schizophrenia—prior to entering MTV’s recoding strategies. Madonna could have continued to draw on excess; however, she does not and loses her excessive foundation. As she gains majority status, Madonna sells out her minority becoming process for a majority position based on scarcity to become, as *Material Girl* suggests, "the biggest star in the universe."

As she gains majority status, then, Madonna shifts to phase two and inverts the borderline-narcissistic subjectivity and sexuality found in her videos. Phase-two videos take scarcity and lack as the content of Madonna’s sleek, upper-class sophisticate days—in her body, her constant return to wealth and the upper class, and her display of pure power. She thus suggests a majority position that splits off gender codes as a means of re-entrenching the dominant, homogeneous codes of the music industry. The programming, then, in phase two also shifts, and the powerful, lean Madonna programs scarcity by splitting off multiple gender roles as a means of reconstraining majority desire. To put the issue another way, Madonna’s shift to phase-two programming strategies exposes Madonna’s cooptation to a majority capitalist, invested in restricting and maintaining her scarcity. A
primary means of Madonna's maintenance of her phase-two programming is to utilize multiple gender roles to fulfill capitalist imperatives that demand new and better products and commodities in order to perpetuate desire based on lack. Madonna's move from feeling empowered (phase one) to being materially empowered (phase two) profoundly affects her revolutionary potential, particularly for feminists.

Feminists who celebrate Madonna's postmodernism, particularly that displayed in Express Yourself and the original Vogue, claim that there is no real or core Madonna behind her multiple gender play, but they have not accounted for the specific form of postmodernism found in Madonna artifacts. The videos do not display a postmodern subjectivity that has no core or center; there is a center or core--Madonna's Real, wealthy, sophisticated image. The multiplicity that many authors note in Madonna and to which they are attracted is a multiplicity that is undergirded by Madonna's power position within the music industry. Kaplan's claim that there is no core Madonna, for example, misses the wealthy power pivot that serves as the core for Madonna's postmodernism. In addition, Schwichtenberg's claim that Madonna's critique of gender polarities in her

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60 For a review of feminists' claims about Madonna's postmodernism, see Chapter One.

videos offers insights for postmodern feminism into unbounded femininity stops short because she fails to recognize that Madonna's femininity is fundamentally connected to capitalist wealth and power.\textsuperscript{62}

Tetzlaff's analysis of Madonna is supported: Madonna's creation of a meta-level narrative in which she is the author of her own image, in which she constructs images to suit her own desires, and in which she can change herself at will is a postmodernism that is a result of capitalist imperatives.\textsuperscript{63} Tetzlaff's analysis, however, is enriched by uncovering the rhetorical components of Madonna's meta-level narrative. Madonna's programming works in phase two because the multiple gender roles found in Madonna's videos are emptied of their traditional use value in order to create a pure form of exchange value for multiple mass-commodity consumption: Madonna's gender play is based on power and the exchange of money. In short, Madonna's gender play, like the materialism of the 1980s, is an exchange based on power and money, where there is a reversal between use value and exchange value. The exchange of gender play is devoid or stripped of traditional use value and is replaced by an exchange of power: as a programmer with power, Madonna


\textsuperscript{63}Tetzlaff 239-64.
employs multiple gender images in order to perpetuate her power and to provide a commodity to be exchanged for money.

The two phases found in Madonna's videos and the use of gender within the phases has important and complex implications for cultural politics, especially in terms of assessing the Real revolutionary potential that Madonna may or may not model for feminism. Although many scholars remain ambivalent about MTV's role in cultural politics, from a schizoanalytic perspective, MTV, like capitalism, has the potential to free desire from its constraints because of MTV's on-going and continuous format. The recoding, however, that drives MTV continues, like capitalism, to recontain desire through the codes of Oedipus to re-restrict freed desire. Thus, MTV displays a borderline-narcissistic structure that contains the double movement of freed and recontained desire. Madonna's borderline-narcissistic structure in the phase-one videos, because it was founded on Madonna's Real life excess--her nomad lifestyle--exhibited a potential revolutionary structure that privileges the excessive borderline side of the structure. Consequently, phase-one videos contain the double movement of decoding and recoding of gender, and because the play is founded on excess, phase one contains revolutionary potential.

As Madonna shifts into phase two, however, her underlying borderline-narcissistic structure changes, and the foundation of the structure shifts to scarcity and lack.
As a result, in phase two, there is no core—a stable sense of self—to Madonna's subjectivity in the clinical sense; rather, Madonna's core is a pivot of material wealth and power in which she programs split-off gender parts to re-insure her power and wealth. Madonna's majority capitalist pivot, because it sells gender roles and images founded on scarcity and lack instead of transgressive gender roles and images, also is devoid of revolutionary potential. Madonna becomes coopted by the imperatives of the market, which she literally "embodies" in her own lean, sleek body that accompanies the shift in phases. To employ the terms of schizoanalytic theorizing, the borderline-narcissistic stance underlying Madonna's phase-two postmodernism both decodes and recodes gender only in order to sell a form of desire that is founded on lack and scarcity. This process lacks, ultimately, revolutionary potential.

In many ways, the position Madonna offers feminists in phase two is similar to the Nike ads that appear in women's magazines: women can be free to be anyone they want to be and powerful as long as they acquire and consume Nike products. The position Madonna models is that women can be free from dichotomous gender as long as they acquire and consume the wealth of the market. Madonna's play with gender, then, in the phase-two videos also is fundamentally related to the materiality of power and class: Women can be free as long as they have power and wealth in the market.
Thus, a specific definition of freedom is implied in phase two: freedom means gaining access to the materiality of the upper class and its power. Current postmodern forms of gender, accordingly, are not free from power and class and suggest that women are rigidly restricted by capitalism's class and wealth imperatives. Women can take on any gender role and power position they want as long as they consume a very specific wealthy, postmodern lifestyle. In short, what Madonna and the Nike ads indicate is a programming position, overlooked by classical Marxists, where women's lives and gender have been freed from traditional forms of gender (decoded) and remain restricted by classist forms of gender (recoding).

Analysis of the decoding and recoding of Madonna's videos provides some tentative answers to the primary research questions that guide the study. The decoded and recoded desire at work in Madonna's artifacts is intimately connected to class and power within the capitalist market. Patriarchy and capitalism, as they are revealed in Madonna artifacts, remain intimately connected to gender but are changing the discourse about gender. Madonna's position is seductive in that she is enacting much of feminism's own discourse about the freedom to choose gender roles and positions. Madonna and other women have had Real material gains from feminism's demands of culture: traditional gender roles are being freed (decoded) within culture. The
decoding of gender roles and feminism's own discourse, however, remains constrained (recoded) by class and capitalist imperatives that link decoding of gender to consumption, thus recoding desire back into market imperatives. The problem, then, that Madonna embodies is feminism's and culture's position on the cusp between a fully free postmodern condition and a postmodern condition constrained by capitalism.

Although current culture is much more complex than simply drawing a direct cause-and-effect conclusion based on one icon, Madonna's videos do illuminate some tentative findings about the privileging in the culture of borderline narcissism and the subsequent power dynamics of that split structure. As one model of cultural development, Madonna's changing phases suggest that as the materialism of the 1980s moved toward a deregulated market, one that privileged unfettered consumption by stripping use value for exchange value, the borderline structure was privileged in order to sell: for Madonna and other women, multiple and decoded gender roles are commodities to be bought for the wealthy upper class.

Feminist attraction to Madonna, thus, must account for what is behind the music, subjectivity, and politics Madonna sells in the music videos found in The Immaculate Collection. Analysis of the videos substantiates and further illuminates Simel's writing about the Immaculate
Collection:

the best of her singles [Madonna's] are, unquestionably, well crafted and damnably catchy, which is why a lot of folks--particularly feminists and gays understandably desperate for something politically correct to dance to--seem so ready to overlook or reinterpret what's actually being peddled. 

What is actually being peddled is Madonna's use of gender to continue to substantiate her power position in the market. For Madonna, pure power within the market, then, is the aphrodisiac that drives her desire and sexuality. An analysis of Madonna's videos suggests that feminism cannot celebrate Madonna's postmodernism until attention to her market position is added into the equation--specifically, her powerful class position that allows her to decode gender roles to perpetuate her own power. When class and power are considered, feminist theorists can begin to explore the complex and mutually constituting power and wealth dynamics that drive the semiosis of current culture and Madonna's subjectivity.

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"Simels 56."
Chart #1

Five Main Types of Videos on MTV
(Predominant MTV themes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Romantic</th>
<th>Socially Conscious</th>
<th>Nihilist</th>
<th>Classical</th>
<th>Post Modernist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Elements varied</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Anti-narrative</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Loss and reunion</td>
<td>Struggle for autonomy</td>
<td>Sadism/ masochism</td>
<td>The Male gaze</td>
<td>Play with Oedipal positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>(Pre-Oedipal)</td>
<td>Love as</td>
<td>Homoeroticism</td>
<td>(Voyeuristic problematic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Androgyny</td>
<td>fetishistic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Parent figures</td>
<td>Parent and (positive)</td>
<td>Nihilism</td>
<td>Male as public figures</td>
<td>Anarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>for nor</td>
<td>Cultural critique</td>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>Female as object</td>
<td>against authority (ambiguity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Kaplan 55.
CHAPTER V

TRUTH OR DARE

Truth or Dare is a film that chronicles Madonna's 1990 Blond Ambition concert tour. The primary component of the movie is the behind-the-scenes look at Madonna's personal life through footage of her interactions with her family, friends, lover, tour dancers, and her own narrations and discussions about her life. As a result, the film offers important insights into the specific psychological components of Madonna's borderline narcissism. Borderline narcissism thus is employed in the chapter from a clinical perspective to explore the specific psychological borderline-narcissistic structure found in the film.

By utilizing the psychological perspective, I will diagnosis Madonna specific borderline-narcissistic structure based on what is displayed in the film and Madonna's interviews about the film. Unlike Chapter Four, where the focus is an evolutionary perspective that reveals the structural decoding and recoding of cultural codes within videos, this chapter concentrates on the decoding and recoding that underlie a specific borderline-narcissistic subjectivity. In such a construction of subjectivity, decoding is the underlying borderline condition of a weak
ego structure, and recoding is the reactive defense mechanism of narcissism.

I will proceed, in this chapter, in three sections to assess the decoding and recoding at work in Madonna’s borderline narcissism. Section one is a description of the film. In section two, I contextualize both the film within current approaches to film analysis and the psychoanalytic clinical perspectives on borderline narcissism. Similar to Chapter Four, contextualization also entails reworking both approaches from a schizoanalytic perspective to engage in a feminist-schizoanalytic reading of the film. Section three concludes the chapter and constitutes a response to the research questions that guide the study.

Description of Truth or Dare

Truth of Dare is based on Madonna’s 1990 "Blond Ambition" concert tour. "Blond Ambition" was a multimillion-dollar production that featured Madonna with her seven dancers—two women and five men—in a tightly choreographed and staged performance of Madonna’s music. The show was a world tour; it began in Japan; moved to the United States, where it sold out in 27 cities; and then moved to Canada and Europe. The final show in the European leg of the tour was broadcast live on HBO—it was the

1Throughout the film, the dancers and tour crew are referred to only by their first names, although the closing credits indicate their full names. Consequently, to be consistent with the film, I use their first names in the description and analysis.
highest rated non-sport event shown on the cable channel.

Truth or Dare was created from footage filmed during the tour; its full title is Truth or Dare: On the Road, Behind the Scenes, and in Bed with Madonna. The film was released by Miramax Films and was produced by Propaganda Films/Boy Toy, Inc. Madonna was the executive producer of the film, investing four million dollars of her own money and "recouping her money even though the movie grossed only $15 million in U.S. ticket sales."2 Truth or Dare was directed and filmed by Alex Keshishian, who was asked to direct the film three days before the tour began.

Originally, the film was to be exclusively about the concerts; however, Madonna decided to give Keshishian total access to her for the film: He and his crew filmed Madonna during her concert performances and behind the scenes. The end result of the total access provided during the filming is a "docudrama of sorts: part documentary, part concert film, part dramatic enactment."3 Truth or Dare is shot in both black and white and color; the concert-performance sequences are in color, while the behind-the-scenes footage

2Fred Goodman, "The Company They Keep," Working Women Dec. 1991: 55. Goodman also describes Madonna's role in her film career—as executive producer of Truth or Dare and in taking a role in Dick Tracy—as exhibiting "an unusual measure of control in her film career. . . ." (55).

is in black and white. Although the film is in both, the black-and-white footage predominates in the movie because, with a few exceptions, most of the concert footage shows only partial performances of Madonna’s songs.4

The film opens in black and white, and as the opening credits begin, Madonna’s voice narrates the scene on screen. She describes how she thought she would feel about the tour’s end as she is seen lying on a couch and cleaning her room up after a party. She says about the end of the tour:

I really didn’t feel emotional . . . . It’s like when you know someone is dying, you have to make your peace kind of before they die . . . . I make my peace with it before it happens so I don’t get really hurt. Then when it happens, it’s like I don’t feel anything. I know I will feel something later, I just don’t know when that will be. I guess it is a protection device.

The film then fades to black and, as the credits continue, the pre-performance practice for the opening show in Japan is shown. During the practice, there are technical problems with the sound system, which annoy Madonna. Madonna finds her manager, Freddy Demann, and as they walk into a trailer,

"There are several reasons why I do not analyze the concert footage in the film. The first is because the non-concert footage predominates. Second, there are only five songs performed in their entirety during the film: the opening song, "Express Yourself"; the Toronto performance of "Like a Virgin"; "Vogue," which is interspersed with voguing fans; "Holiday"; and the song that closes the film, "Family, Keep it Together." The other songs that are shown in snippets are: "Oh Father," "Let’s Keep it Together," "Like a Prayer," "Live to Tell," and "Into the Groove." Third, because Madonna’s music is analyzed in the previous chapter and because my focus here is psychological, I attend to Madonna’s own discourse about herself, which occurs in the non-concert footage."
Madonna holds up her hand to the camera and says, "Get out, I'm having a business talk." Then, Madonna pulls the door shut. As the opening credits finish, the pre-concert preparation proceeds: the women dancers are made up; Madonna also gets makeup as she talks to a male dancer, Oliver; and the remaining male dancers are shown preparing for the show.

After showing the first concert footage in Japan in black and white, the film then presents 23 segments ranging from Madonna's pre-concert prayer sessions to Madonna's discussion of her mother's death to Madonna talking in bed with her dancers. I have identified six general themes that emerge in the film: family relationships, Madonna's private life/intimate relationships, gayness/homophobia, censorship/artistic integrity, truth or dare, and in bed with Madonna. I have structured the description of Truth or Dare around the themes. As a result, the description does not always follow the flow and order of each segment's appearance in the film.

**Family Relationships**

In the film, family relationships do not include only Madonna's biological family; instead, family is explored through three avenues: Madonna's relationship with the dancers, the dancers' relationships to their biological family members, and Madonna's own relationship with her biological family.
Representative of Madonna's relationship with the dancers is a scene in which Madonna is seen interacting with the dancers in Japan, in which she says, "I started feeling like a mother to them." Madonna also says that after returning to America, she had the opportunity to "meet the mothers of all the children that I had claimed as my own."

Different footage of the dancers interacting with their families is shown, and with several of the dancers, Madonna meets the family members back stage. The film, however, spends more time showing the meeting of one dancer, Oliver, with his father for the first time in five years. Oliver says the reason that he has not seen his father in five years is because "he told me, Oliver, you're not going to make it. . . . When he got to Houston, we had a little talk about this, he asked me to forgive him." After meeting the dancers' families, Madonna says about her mothering of the dancers: "I think that I have unconsciously chosen people who are emotionally crippled or who need mothering in some way. I think it comes very naturally to me, I think it fulfills some need in me."

Madonna's relationship with her biological family also is depicted in the film. Madonna's relationship with her father, Silvio "Tony" Ciccone, is introduced when Madonna is seen talking on the phone with him about getting tickets for the Detroit shows. After telling him that she thinks the show may be too racy for him to see, he is heard saying,
"You're getting racy on me." Madonna replies, "Dad, I'm not getting racy; I've been racy." Her father answers, "Can't you tone it down a bit?" Madonna replies, "What, for you? No, because that would be compromising my artistic integrity." Her father replies, "Of course. Do you undress in this performance?" Madonna replies, "No, of course I don't." After telling her father she can get as many tickets as he wants for the show, her father introduces into the film Madonna's relationship with her brother, Marty, by telling her that Marty wants to come to the show. Madonna then asks if Marty is "out of the rehab"—out of the rehabilitation center—where he had been in treatment for alcoholism.

Both Marty and Madonna's father are central to the footage shown from Detroit. Marty is interviewed on camera about his relationship with Madonna. He describes their relationship as, "Well, we're tight. She gives me advice and I give her advice. . . . We can get past that star bullshit." At the end of the show in Detroit, Madonna brings her father on stage to sing happy birthday to him. After introducing her father, Madonna bows at his feet, and Madonna, the dancers, and the audience sing happy birthday to him.

After the show, Madonna's father and stepmother are seen back stage with Madonna discussing the show. As Madonna undresses from the performance, she says, "That was
harder to do that show than the police in Toronto. I was more afraid of what my actions would result in." As Madonna's makeup is touched up, her father says that he could have done without some of the scenes, although he acknowledges, "I know they are arty." Madonna replies, "Dad, it doesn't have anything to do with art." Her brother repeats, "It doesn't have anything to do with art." Madonna says, "It's a journey, it's cathartic."

Later that night, as Madonna waits for her brother, Marty, to arrive at her hotel room, Madonna asks her security guard to let him in. She also tells the guard that if Marty arrives with an entourage, she wants the guard to also come in to be a chaperon because "my brother is crazy." The guard replies, "I know." Madonna says, "But, you have to be nice to him; he can't help it." As Madonna and her brother, Christopher, wait for Marty to come, they have a discussion about him. Madonna says, "Dad says he went to alcohol rehab to escape going to jail. He went for the wrong reasons; it wasn't proper motivation." Marty appears not to be coming, and Madonna goes to bed. Marty does arrive later, but Madonna does not answer the door.

Although Madonna has seven other siblings, none of them is seen in the film except her brother, Christopher, who is the art director of the tour. In addition to designing the sets for the tour, Christopher travelled with Madonna for the entire tour. Strangely, although Christopher is seen
frequently with Madonna and is shown accompanying Madonna to their mother’s grave, she never discusses her relationship with him.

While they are in Detroit, shot entirely in black and white, Madonna’s visit to her mother’s grave begins after her childhood friend, Maureen McFarland, tearfully describes how awful the death was for Madonna. As Madonna walks to the grave, Madonna describes her memories of her mother’s death:

My mother’s death was all a big mystery to me, nobody really explained it... What I remember most about my mother was that she was very kind, very gentle, very feminine. I don’t know, I guess she seemed like an angel to me, but I suppose everyone thinks that their mother is an angel when they are five. I also know that she was really religious. So, I never really understood why she was taken away from us; it just seemed so unfair. I never thought she had done anything wrong, so, often times, I wondered what I had done wrong.

In the background, the lyrics, "Little girl, you’ve got to forget the past," are heard. As the lyrics continue, Madonna lays down next to her mother’s grave.

The three kinds of family relationships shown in the film include Madonna’s interaction with three different families: her relationship with the dancers, the dancers’ relationships with their biological family members, and her own relationship with her biological family—her father, two brothers, and her memories of her mother.

Madonna’s Private Life/Intimate Relationships

In addition to showing some of Madonna’s family
relationships, *Truth or Dare* also shows many scenes from what most people would consider Madonna’s private life and her intimate relationships. While in Detroit, Madonna is reunited with her childhood friend, Maureen McFarland. Before Madonna meets McFarland, she says that her makeup artist, Sharon, was the kind of girl she used to beat up when she was a little girl. She then comments to her brother, Christopher, that Sharon reminds her of the McFarland family.

Next, Madonna and McFarland are shown individually talking and responding to each other about their childhood relationship. Madonna says that McFarland "let me borrow her stuffed bra, . . . showed me how to use tampons--not very well, I might add--and taught me how to make out." McFarland says, "I did not teach you how to use tampons, and if we got in bed together, I don’t remember that." Madonna replies, "She says she was never in bed with me. She’s a liar." Madonna also says that she remembers Maureen’s bed and that she "finger fucked me." Maureen continues to deny that she and Madonna were in bed together. After a couple of back-and-forth exchanges about whether they had any sexual experiences together, Maureen says, "See what happens when you take drugs and alcohol? I mean, you lose a lot of stuff."

The two women then are shown meeting each other outside of Madonna’s hotel room. McFarland says, "I have to ask you
something, can we sit down?" McFarland tells Madonna that she is pregnant again and asks Madonna if she would be the godmother. Madonna says she has to think about it, but Madonna also asks if she gets to decide on the name. McFarland says, "o.k." and asks Madonna to bless the child. Madonna puts her hand on Maureen's stomach and says, "Come out a girl and we're going to call you Madonna." McFarland gives Madonna a painting and then leaves. As Madonna leaves, McFarland says to Madonna, "you little shit."

In addition to her interaction with her childhood friend, the film also shows Madonna's interaction with Warren Beatty, the man she is dating during the tour, in several different scenes. In one scene, Madonna is seen preparing for a date with Beatty. As Madonna's makeup artist fixes Madonna's hair, Madonna picks the petals off a daisy as she says, "He loves me, he loves me not." After Madonna calls Beatty and tells him he is late and has to come pick her up immediately, Madonna picks up a clothing box and says that Beatty gave her a shirt. Madonna tosses the box aside and says, "I get what I want." As Madonna and Beatty are seen walking into a restaurant together, Madonna says, "I had a dream last night that Gorbechev came to the show, and my first reaction was Warren Beatty was going to be so jealous that I got to meet him first."

Madonna and Warren also are shown backstage after a performance as Madonna is having her makeup touched up.
Beatty is slouching in a couch behind Madonna, and she demands that he come talk to her. She says, "Warren, you stink, you pussy, get over here." He comes and stands behind her for a minute and puts his hands on her shoulders. He then shakes his head and walks away.

The most often noted interaction between Madonna and Beatty occurs while Madonna is being seen by a throat specialist. By the time the tour reached New York, Madonna’s throat was causing her serious problems with her singing, so a throat specialist came to check her throat. As the examination of Madonna’s throat ends, a voice is heard in the background saying, "This is crazy, nobody talks about this on film." The camera pans to the voice to reveal Beatty, who is sitting in a chair across from Madonna and the specialist. After Beatty’s comment, the following exchange happens:

**Madonna:** Talks about what?
**Beatty:** The insanity of doing this all in a documentary. This is a serious matter, your throat, yes?
**Madonna:** Why should I stop here?
**Beatty:** But, does anyone say it?
**Madonna:** Who is anyone?
**Beatty:** Anyone that comes into this insane atmosphere. You realize they all feel it when they come into this atmosphere. They all feel it when they come into the dressing room, when they come wherever you are. Do they talk about it?
**Madonna:** No, they accept it.
**Beatty:** Why don’t they talk about it? Don’t you want to think about that?
**Madonna:** No, I don’t. Let’s get back to my throat.
**Doctor:** Do you want to talk at all off camera?
**Beatty:** (laughing): She doesn’t want to live off camera, much less talk. Why would you say
something if it is off camera? What point is there of existing?

As the doctor closes his bag, Madonna narrates the end of the scene: "I had to admit that I am human and cancel some shows and rest in New York for a while."

Madonna is also seen spending time with her best friend, Sandra Bernhard. Scenes of the two of them chatting are interspersed with scenes of Oliver talking about Bernhard. He says about her, "I know that she is one of her best friends." After trying to pronounce Bernhard's last name, Oliver says about her, "She's scary." Bernhard and Madonna continue to talk, and Bernhard talks about a fling she is having with a gallery owner. Oliver returns and says of Bernhard, "She's pretty sexy. She looks like if she is having sex with someone, she would get a rope and strap you to the bed and shit." Bernhard continues to talk about the gallery owner: "I saw her before I left the other night. I'm like a drug addict." Madonna asks, "Are you still sleeping with her?" They both agree that they don't like her, and Madonna says, "I don't like any of the people I sleep with, either."

While Madonna and Bernhard are talking, Bernhard asks Madonna if there is anyone she would like to meet. Madonna says that she has wanted to meet Antonio Banderas, an actor from Madrid, for a long time. While in Madrid, a dinner party is thrown for Madonna so that she can meet Banderas. Madonna says that she wants to make Banderas fall in love
with her. As the film shows Madonna at the party talking to him, Madonna narrates the party. She says, "Unfortunately, the problem with Banderas is that he is married." As she leaves the party, she says that Banderas said he would call. Madonna says, "Needless to say, I never saw or heard from him again. I don't think he is such a good actor after all."

Madonna is also filmed in her hotel room in her robe as she is waking up. There is a large crowd chanting her name outside her room. Madonna says, "Even when I feel like shit, they still love me." As the camera follows Madonna in her room reading magazines and writing, various unidentified voices are heard describing Madonna. They say about her:

She is more in control [on this tour], she doesn't extend her personal emotion, her love. . . . She has always been very difficult to reach. . . . She is fishing for affection. . . . Madonna has a hard time connecting and giving herself away to any one person. Madonna is very in the moment. . . . Madonna is very impatient. . . . Everything is subject to her approval or disapproval, and everything has to do with what she wants, what she doesn't want. . . . Sometimes, I think she is a little girl lost in a storm.

Madonna's private life/intimate relationships are displayed through her interactions with McFarland, her childhood friend; Beatty, her current lover; and Bernhard, her best friend. With each, Madonna suggests much about her private life behind the scenes of the tour.

Gayness/Homophobia

Madonna's life behind the scenes is not the only
behind-the-scenes footage shown: the dancers' lives, particularly those of the male dancers are also an important part of the film. The footage of the male dancers, suggesting the third theme that emerged, revolves around the fact that six of the male dancers are gay. When the tour is temporarily on hold, while Madonna rests her throat in New York, the activities of the dancers during this unplanned hiatus are presented.

The introduction to the gay men is framed by Oliver, the only heterosexual male dancer, who says, "This is my first time working with fags. I mean I'm the only straight guy, and what, there's six of them." The gay men are seen at a gay-pride parade in New York. Then, Oliver returns to the screen and comments about Lewis, "We know he is a fag or gay, but you don't have to show it to everybody... It was scary, it really was. They wanted me, that's what they told me." When the tour starts back up, there is a lot of tension between the gay male dancers and Oliver. Madonna says, "I blamed myself. I felt like a mother who deserted her kids and then comes back home and finds out how much trouble they had gotten into." Before the first performance after the break, Madonna talks to both Oliver and the dancers. Madonna attributes the tension to a tabloid report that Oliver and Madonna are having an affair. She tells Oliver, "There are always going to be queens on the rag, you have to expect that of them, you got some press, you got
some attention, and they’re jealous." Oliver continues to appear sullen, and Madonna says to him, "Please try to rise above it. . . . Oliver, I won’t tolerate attitude." To the dancers, she says, "Be nice to him. He doesn’t have the thick skin you have."

Before the first show back, Madonna is also told that Sharon, a makeup artist on the tour, has been raped. As she is being told that Sharon thinks she was drugged because she woke up bleeding but could not remember anything, Madonna laughs. She says, "I’m sorry I’m laughing." Then, she says, "They drugged her ass. All I can think is about how she started talking that she was on tour with me, she was staying at the Ritz Carlton and those guys, whoever they are, got it in their minds that they were going to fuck with her."

After a successful New York performance, the tour moves to Europe. In Europe, Madonna says that the first few weeks were "almost perfect. It almost felt like the Partridge family tour, sort of." The film shows various shots of the dancers clowning around and having fun together and Madonna shopping with the male dancers.

The interactions among the dancers during the break in New York revolves around the gay male dancers’ personal lives and Oliver’s reaction to them. The break in New York also suggests Madonna’s response to the tension between Oliver and the gay men and her response to Sharon’s rape.
Having resolved the tension among the dancers, Madonna's interaction with the dancers in Europe is almost perfect.

Censorship/Artistic Integrity

The high of Europe, however, is interrupted by the threat from the Vatican to censor the show, the fourth theme of the film. To defend herself against the Vatican's attempt to ban the show, Madonna delivers a speech to the press about the Vatican. She says she is proud to be an Italian American because America "is the country that gave me the opportunities to be who I am today and a country that believes in freedom of speech and artist expression." As Madonna's defense continues, the film shows parts of Madonna's performance of "Live to Tell," which is filled with religious imagery. Madonna continues the defense by saying that the show is a theatrical presentation of her music and, like theatre,

it asks questions, provokes thoughts and takes you on an emotional journey. Portraying good and bad, light and dark, joy and sorrow, redemption and salvation. I do not endorse a way of life but describe one, and the audience is left to make its own decisions and judgments. This is what I consider freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought.

Madonna also says that every night before she performs, she says a prayer that the audience will watch with an open mind and heart. In the end, Madonna had to cancel a couple of shows while in Italy because of the threat of censorship.

Censorship was also a concern in Toronto. In Toronto, Madonna's brother tells her back stage that the Toronto
police are in the audience. The Toronto police have told Madonna’s manager that if Madonna does the masturbation scene in the "Like a Virgin" performance, she will be arrested and fined after the show. She is also told that her arrest will be in all the papers. Madonna replies, "Yeah. I’m not changing my fucking show." During the pre-show prayer, Madonna tells her dancers about the police threat. She says, "In the United States of America, there is freedom of speech." She tells her manager, "I’m not changing my show. I’m an artist, and this is how I choose to express myself." DeMann, Madonna’s manager, is seen reporting to the police Madonna’s claim that she is practicing her right to artistic integrity. As Madonna is shown getting her final makeup applied before the performance, she says, "Everything is going to have a whole new meaning in the show. Like when I say God, I’ll be praying I don’t get arrested." Before the performance, DeMann and Madonna’s body guards take a bet that the police threat will inspire Madonna to do the masturbation scene with more vigor. The film then shows Madonna’s performance that night, and she does not appear to have censored her performance.

After the Toronto performance, Madonna was not arrested. The film, however, shows a brief news clip, in color, of the coverage of the arrest threat. A broadcaster reports that "spokesmen for Madonna said Metro Police and
the Crown Attorney’s office threatened to arrest the star for a lewd and offensive show." The broadcaster then reports that the police department has a different version of the story; someone at police headquarters said that they "checked out the show because of complaints about the show, found nothing wrong, and left without incident."

Both the Vatican and Toronto threats of censorship caused Madonna to defend her right to artistic integrity. In her defense, Madonna relies on American principles of freedom of expression and artistic integrity as her primary protection against the threats leveled against the show.

**Truth or Dare**

Near the end of the film, after showing a full performance of "Vogue," which is interspersed with fans voguing and shots of Madonna and the dancers having fun at a beach, Madonna and her dancers are seen playing truth or dare, a game that is the fifth theme of the film. Although the actual footage of Madonna playing truth or dare is minor in terms of the elaboration or development of the other themes, the game is significant because it serves as the title of the film.

Truth or dare is a game in which the questioner asks a player whether he or she wants a truth or a dare. If the player selects truth, the questioner asks the player a question that must be answered honestly; if the player selects a dare, he or she must perform the dare that is
proposed by the questioner. Madonna and the dancers play truth or dare around a table in a scene filmed in black and white. The scene begins with Madonna daring a dancer to show her his penis, which he does by unzipping his jeans. After accepting a dare, another of the male dancers is told by Lewis to French kiss another male dancer. Madonna accepts a dare and is told to demonstrate oral sex on a bottle, which she does to the cheers and laughter of the other players. Finally, Madonna says she will tell the truth, and she is asked who is the love of her life. Madonna’s response is “Sean.” After playing truth or dare, the film shows Madonna in bed with the dancers, the final theme of the film.

In Bed with Madonna

Madonna is shown talking and joking with her dancers while they are in her bed. The scene opens with Madonna talking to the two female dancers as concert footage of their performance of "Into the Groove" is interspersed with the talk. "Into the Groove" shows Madonna and her dancers dancing together while they push each other and mock "kick" and "hit" each other. The performance ends with Madonna knocking both women to the ground and raising her arms in triumph. Madonna begins her talk with the dancers by saying that sometimes, when she is in her dressing room, she says to herself, "Who do I think I am, trying to pull this off?" Madonna also tells the dancers, "I know that I am not the
best singer and I know I am not the best dancer, but I’m not interested in that. I’m interested in pushing people’s buttons and being provocative and being political." They then begin talking about stardom. Niki, after saying she isn’t sure if she wants stardom, tells Madonna, "But, I think you always knew that you wanted to be a star." Madonna says to Niki, "You didn’t want to be a star? Niki, come on."

Madonna also is seen individually with each male dancer. To Carlton, she says, "Come to Mommy, get in bed." Before getting in bed with her, Carlton takes his clothes off. To Gabriel, Madonna says, "Gabriel, this is the moment I have been waiting for; I’m finally alone in bed with you." To Slam, she says, "Take your shirt off"; she later is seen kissing him. A series of shots of Madonna talking with the male dancers continues to develop this theme.

In another scene, all of the dancers are in bed with Madonna. They take Madonna’s shirt off, and as she covers her breasts with her hands, they all talk together. When the dancers ask if the pearls she has on are real, Madonna says that they are. The dancers begin to chant, "Madonna can’t afford real pearls." Madonna responds, "Yes, I can. I’m rich. I can have anything I want." The scene ends with a series of questions by Madonna. "Do we want to be accepted by Hollywood?" she asks. They all respond, "No." "Do we care what people think of us?" she asks. Again, they
all yell, "No." Next, she asks, "Do we want people to kiss our ass?" They respond, "Yes." The final question is, "Do you want an R rating or an X rating?" They all scream, "X." The film then cuts to the closing number from the concert, "Keep it Together."

The in-bed scenes show Madonna in bed with individual dancers and the entire dance troupe. The subtitle, accordingly, is exhibited in the theme; in bed with Madonna entails her talking and joking with the dancers as they join her in her bed. As the theme ends, Madonna and the entire dance troupe appear in bed discussing how they want the film to be rated and viewed by the audience.

Analysis

To answer the research questions of the study, I will begin the analysis by explaining the feminist-schizoanalytic-psychological approach within film theory and clinical understandings of borderline narcissism. Similar to the schizoanalytic revision of the psychoanalytic perspective utilized in Kaplan's theorizing about MTV, explanation of both current film theory and clinical understandings of borderline narcissism must be addressed and reworked in order to insure that they are compatible with a schizoanalytic perspective. Then, the six themes that emerged in the description of the film are explored to reveal how Madonna's borderline narcissism works. After exploring the themes, I will summarize the general findings
and address the research questions.

Film Theory

The major tenets of film theory were addressed in Chapter Three; however, a brief reminder of the central issues in film analysis is warranted before a schizoanalytic reworking of film theory is utilized. The review is necessary because a schizoanalytic perspective cannot adopt all the tenets of psychoanalytic film theory due to the fundamental difference between the two about what fuels the desire of the unconscious. For Lacanian theorists, desire is founded in lack; for schizoanalytic theorists, desire is founded on excess.

Before revising current film theory, a review of its tenets is necessary. Psychoanalytic film theorists draw on both the Freudian and Lacanian view that subjectivity is an on-going, life-long struggle and view film as reactivating and resolving the Oedipal trauma through identification with the protagonist of the narrative, who reactivates and re-resolves his or her own Oedipalized narratives. Because the world that produces film is ordered around sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking and identification with the

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5 Most psychoanalytic scholars theorize film theory from the perspective of the audience; thus, cultural codes predominate. Because I take a psychological approach to diagnosing Madonna's borderline narcissism, in this chapter, I focus only on Madonna's subjectivity in the film. Contextualizing her subjectivity within mainstream film, however, remains central to understanding the constraints imposed by the film industry on Madonna's subjectivity.
protagonists in film are dominated by patriarchal codes. Thus, traditionally, in mainstream film, looking and identification split between the active/male, who dominates the settings, actions, and narratives of film, and the passive/female, who symbolizes the lack of a penis. The passive/female reinvokes castration anxiety for the active male that must be conquered and controlled to re-resolve the Oedipal terror for men. Early film theorists thus theorized male spectatorship or the male gaze as projecting and resolving spectators' castration anxiety onto the male protagonist in the film. Film, then, unlike MTV, offers some sense of satisfaction and closure for the reactivated desire by resolving traumas through the techniques of classic film: the use of story lines or plots that showcase stars in central, tightly organized narrative plots that have clear beginnings and endings and cause-effect explanations throughout the drama of the film.

Although psychoanalytic film theory offers insights into the analysis of film, as I noted in Chapter Four, it cannot be applied wholesale to a feminist schizoanalytic reading of film because of the differing perspectives the two theories assume on desire. Film as a medium does not create borderline-narcissistic paths for viewing and relies on the techniques of classic film. Thus, a feminist-schizoanalytic perspective views film as ultimately offering closure for desire. Although decoding and recoding occur
within film, the film always recontains freed desire and offers satisfaction for freed desire for both the protagonist and spectators because of the narrative structure of the film. Also, because mainstream film sells stars through the film, the narrative resolution offers a commodity to be bought. The subject position of the star within any mainstream film, then, is one of borderline-narcissistic subjectivity: desire is decoded or freed from culturally instituted codes only to be recoded or recontained within culturally sanctioned codes within the film. A feminist-schizoanalytic reading of film sees the decoding and recoding within each film as driven by the Oedipal codes of closure, resolution, and boundary setting. As a result, all freed desire is necessarily reinscribed because of the structure of film, and any revolutionary potential found in the film also must be contextualized within the film's format.

**Borderline Narcissism**

Exploration of the psychological content of Madonna's borderline-narcissistic subjectivity within *Truth or Dare*

Clearly, the Hollywood star system and the Hollywood industry do not offer permanent resolution and, in fact, perpetuate on-going desire for film viewers and individual stars by constantly promoting and re-selling stars. Some examples of the constant selling of stars include the media industries that promote stars such as fan magazines; Hollywood TV shows such as *Entertainment Tonight*; and nightly talk shows that feature stars, especially with each new release of a film. Classic film, however, does offer temporary satisfaction for desire within each film as part of its conventions.
also requires attention to reworking the clinical understanding of borderline narcissism. The clinical characteristics of borderline narcissism were reviewed in Chapter Two. As a summary: borderline narcissism\textsuperscript{7} is a composite term for a libidinal structure that borders between the decoding of free schizophrenic desire and the recoding of socially stipulated desire, manifest in a specific diagnostic content. The manifestations of borderline narcissism in artifacts are visible because of the splitting that divides decoding and recoding. The borderline condition is the decoded ego that is fragmented and has an incoherent, weak ego, which results from ego splitting. Through the narcissistic reaction of recoding, the subject utilizes splitting as a defense mechanism that responds to the weak ego structure. Thus, borderline narcissism is a composite term that refers to the subject's reaction (recoding) to the weak ego structure that results from decoding. In other words, splitting has two connected meanings: it is both the fundamental cause of ego weakness and a central defense mechanism of a borderline pathology.

Borderline narcissistic patients exhibit an intensification and pathological fixation on splitting,

\textsuperscript{7}In transforming object-relations theorists' clinical understanding of narcissistic-borderline pathology, schizoanalysis reconfigures the primary focus in the pathology to the borderline pathology—a result of decoding—that is overlaid by narcissism—a result of recoding. Thus, in schizoanalysis, the diagnostic term for the pathology is \textit{borderline narcissism}. 
which leads to the process of black-and-white thinking. The defense mechanisms of the borderline condition, which are used to manage the anxiety that results from the weak ego structures, are: denial of emotions, a sense of omnipotence, primitive idealization, projection, devaluation of others, and a deep underlying insecurity. Because the splitting process is a subject's primary defense mechanism, alternating, contradictory states of primitive idealization and devaluation are kept separate or "split apart" so that the borderline narcissist can manage the anxiety of the weak ego's organization. Also, because the contradictory states are kept separate, often, when in one state, the borderline narcissist cannot recall having had any contradictory feelings about another state. Moreover, the oscillation between good and bad occurs abruptly, without warning. Although the borderline narcissist oscillates among states, he or she is "capable of reality testing, that is, distinguishing the self from the non-self." 

As with the defense mechanisms of the borderline

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9 Layton and Schapiro 17.
condition, the traits of the narcissistic reaction can be identified. They are characterized by "boredom, restlessness, contempt for others, envy, grandiosity that hides feelings of worthlessness, shallow relationships, lack of empathy and lack of principle."10 The narcissistic internal world "contains idealized self representations, shadows of others, and dreaded enemies."11 Narcissists also have a great need for others, but because they fear arousing the dormant envy and hatred that resulted from the early frustration of their needs, narcissists fear dependence. Narcissists, accordingly, end up frustrated and unable to be fulfilled because they constantly oscillate between needing and fearing others. Sussman describes the personality structure as having "the manifestation of a self that depends on others for content and values, a debt so staggering that a unilateral cancellation and a devaluation of its source to nothing are the only ways of coping with it."12

The narcissistic component of the borderline-narcissistic subjectivity is aligned with recoding in culture. The grandiose sense of self, for example, is a recoding of the borderline condition, a recoding that

10 Layton and Schapiro 17.
11 Layton and Schapiro 17.
attempts to counter the weak and incoherent ego structure. Narcissistic recoding is also employed as a means to split off parts of the self in order to maintain a comfortable distance from the undesirable parts of the self. The process, then, of distanciation can take two forms. First, distancing occurs as a reactive distancing from the undesirable parts of self to keep those parts separate. Borderline narcissists, for example, distance themselves by projecting onto others their own feelings of insecurity. Second, distancing occurs as a reactive defense mechanism to maintain distance or separation from others or from borderline narcissists' own experiences. Holland provides an illustration of this in his study of the poet Baudelaire. Holland argues that in many of Baudelaire's poems, neither the narrator of the poems nor Baudelaire identifies with the characters in poems, so that both "remain at a distance from everything, even from his own former selves and from his own experiences." Baudelaire also withdraws from the world, but he still watches the world "with an unbreachable reserve and at an unbridgeable distance."

A programmer who sells split-off parts of the self in order to capitalize on the market to create meaning value

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14 Holland 158.
also engages in distancing. A programmer engages in meta-level distancing by recoding different parts of the self in order to manage the incoherent parts of the self or to manage the different roles that these parts play in the marketplace as commodities. Programmers also are capable of some reality testing in the sense that they maintain distance to distinguish the self from the non-self or from the split-off parts sold, but there is no integration of the parts of the self.

Clearly, the clinical definition of the borderline condition is permeated with negative connotations because the clinical perspective assumes that borderline narcissism is a pathological problem, manifest in negative traits and characteristics. Schizoanalysis, however, does not require a negative evaluation of the borderline narcissism because schizoanalysis historicizes the condition and sees it as exhibiting the double movement of decoding and recoding of schizophrenic desire; the underlying disorganized ego structure is positive in the sense that desire is freed. Recoding, then, in the schizoanalytic perspective, is negative but with a wholly different connotation from the clinical perspective; recoding is the mechanism that recontains freed desire. Assessment of Madonna's borderline-narcissistic structure from a feminist schizoanalytic perspective, then, involves borrowing the clinical diagnosis and the diagnostic characteristics and
traits without also borrowing the negative connotations associated with the clinical perspective. The denial of emotions, for example, may be a characteristic of Madonna's subjectivity that need not be evaluated negatively.

Use of the clinical diagnostic tools also entails focusing primarily on recoding—on how the reaction to the underlying weak ego is manifest. In other words, the clinical perspective assumes the underlying disorganized weak ego is the cause of the borderline condition—what schizoanalysis terms decoding—and concentrates on the reactive defense mechanism of narcissism—what schizoanalysis terms recoding. The clinical diagnosis that emerges of Madonna's borderline-narcissistic structure then can be evaluated from a cultural perspective to explain, for example, how the denial of emotions might free Madonna from patriarchal codes. In this chapter, in other words, I assess Madonna's own psychological profile and then consider her subjectivity from a meta-level perspective in order to evaluate how Madonna's subject position strips (decodes) and recontains (recodes) cultural codes.

Because borderline narcissism is a diagnosis of both the structure of culture and each subject's psyche, assessing Madonna's borderline-narcissistic profile entails exploring the specific content of Madonna's borderline-narcissistic subjectivity displayed within the film. In order to do so, I draw on the biographical material found in
Chapter Three. Making connections between the subjectivity represented in the film and Madonna's real-life experiences described in the biography are necessary because, as noted in Chapter One, Deleuze and Guattari view actual social factors as playing the determining role in psychological phenomena, which include memories of infantile experiences that are constructed *apres coup* or after the fact. Psychic causality and memory thus are not linear; rather, they are constructed after the fact. Thus, returning to the biographical material to explore Madonna's representation of her subjectivity allows insight into how the film captures the traces of Madonna's real-life experiences (past and present), her memories of her experiences, and the intended and unintended acts within the film. As a result, in this chapter, exploring Madonna's psychological profile demands a viewing of the film as resonating with the traces of desire at work in Madonna's specific borderline-narcissistic subjectivity exhibited in the film. In other words, the film is viewed as the conglomeration of the traces of desire that make up Madonna's specific borderline-narcissistic subjectivity.

A feminist-schizoanalytic-psychological perspective needs to attend, as well, to the way that gender is at work in Madonna's subjectivity. Gender is especially important to understanding borderline-narcissistic subjectivity given that recent estimates "indicate that women borderlines
outnumber men by two to one among outpatients and perhaps by as much as four to one among hospitalized patients."\textsuperscript{15} Although clinicians do not agree about why more women are borderlines, Kreisman and Straus argue that "shifting role patterns over the last twenty-five years are central to theories on why BPD [Borderline Personality Disorder] is so prevalent among women."\textsuperscript{16} Thus, in contrast to Chapter Three, gender is placed in this chapter in the background in the initial analysis. First, the borderline structure is uncovered, and then I attend to how gender is connected or related to the structure in order to assess how Madonna's subjectivity is constituted by both gender and patriarchy.

Consequently, there are two levels of decoding and recoding that are analyzed in this chapter. The primary lens for the analysis is the focus on the recoded narcissistic reaction to the assumed, underlying ego disorganization. A second analytic tool will be decoding and recoding, used to assess how Madonna's borderline narcissism in the film decodes and recodes cultural codes from a meta-level perspective. Thus, in contrast to the analysis of Chapter Four, the contextualization of the decoding and recoding is laid out prior to the analysis. In a feminist-schizoanalytic-psychological analysis, the

\textsuperscript{15} Jerold J. Kreisman and Hal Straus, \textit{I Hate You: Don't Leave Me} (Los Angeles: Body, 1989) 12.

\textsuperscript{16} Kreisman and Straus 70.
decoding and recoding come from the clinical perspective, where the traits of decoding are associated with the weak ego structure and the characteristics of the recoding are associated with the narcissistic reaction. This analysis is combined with an analysis of gender, which occurs through the exploration of the institutions of patriarchy, where decoding is associated with the freeing of gender from Oedipal codes, and recoding is the recontaining of the freed desire back into Oedipal codes.

**Borderline Narcissism in Madonna’s Truth or Dare**

The best place to begin the analysis of Madonna’s specific borderline narcissism is to assess the themes that emerged in the description of *Truth or Dare*. From the opening and throughout the rest of the film, Madonna engages in distancing strategies. The first indication of the

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As noted in Chapter One, because schizoanalysis transforms conceptual tools, specific terminology is also transformed. Thus, in this study, because I am employing a notion of agency that entails both the intended and unintended acts displayed in an artifact, when I argue that Madonna does something, what I mean is that a particular act, intended or unintended, is displayed within the artifact. To put it another way, I am not exploring or making any claims about the intended actions of Madonna the *real* person; rather, I am exploring the acts exhibited within the production process of each artifact, conscious or not. In the case of distanciation, for example, I am arguing that the specific borderline-narcissistic personality exhibited in the film engages in distanciation. For a similar clinical approach to reading artifacts see Bersani’s work on Baudelaire, specifically his claim that "I don’t mean that Baudelaire was psychotic when he wrote these poems; he does, however, seem to have represented in them a psychotic relation to the world." See Leo Bersani, *Baudelaire and Freud* (Berkeley: Quantum, 1977) 128.
strategy is the use of black-and-white film for the behind-the-scenes footage and color for the concert footage as the structure of the film. Often, black-and-white film indicates a dream-like state, the unconscious, or the nonreal. Color, on the other hand, often signifies reality or real-life experiences. In Truth or Dare, the color segments, with one exception in the opening concert in Japan, are the concert segments, which supposedly are the central reason for the film—the filming of Madonna's world tour. The concert footage is the reality of the tour and thus represents the reality of the film. The black-and-white segments, the behind-the-scenes footage, depict what happens underneath or behind the scenes to make the tour run—the unknown and undisplayed structure of the concert experience.

By filming the events behind the scenes in black and white, the events shown are flattened out or devoid of color and depth, where the viewer is never sure if what is shown is real or a dream-like representation of life. In short, the separation between black and white and color in the film provides distance and separation between the concert and the events behind the concert, which also ensures separation between the two conditions of being in the film. Hence, from the beginning, the film sets up a viewing condition that oscillates between the real and the underneath and that
permanently divides and distances the two from each other.¹⁸

Madonna engages in a second distancing strategy as the film opens that reinforces the separation between the real and underneath and continues to create ambivalence about what is the reality of the film. Shot in black and white, the opening begins with Madonna lying on a couch discussing how she feels about the end of the tour; this scene is interspersed with images of her cleaning up after a party. She thus distances herself from her own experiences in the film. The content of the narration confirms Madonna’s use of distancing as a strategy when she says, "I make my peace with it before it happens so I don’t get really hurt," a statement that clearly is a strategy of preemptive defense reaction. Her elaboration, "then when it happens, I don’t feel anything," further suggests that Madonna protects herself by denying her emotions at the appropriate time.

¹⁸In any psychoanalytic analysis, exploration of the evidences of the unconscious in film is paramount. In Truth or Dare, the black-and-white footage seems to be more indicative of Madonna’s psyche, which is why I focus on it. The problem, however, is that Madonna’s distanciation strategy of splitting between black and white and color divides the unconscious or underneath footage from the real footage, a division that counters a schizoanalytic perspective that makes no such division between the unconscious and the real. Also, as I argue later, the split between the two also has important implications for understanding Madonna’s insistence that the materiality of her life, her power source, be stripped from the viewing experience. Thus, I make the connections between her real-life experiences, shown in the unconscious, black-and-white footage, and her real-life experiences, which she insists be separate from the film, in order to meet the demands of a schizoanalytic perspective. Madonna’s distanciation strategy, however, attempts to keep the two separate.
The strategy, however, does not work because she notes that she knows she will feel something later. For, now, however, Madonna feels nothing about the end of the tour and, as a result, she confirms that her primary coping strategy is distanciation from both the film and the emotions associated with what will be shown. What follows the opening, then, is Madonna's distanced programmed presentation of herself; from a distance, she programs and projects split-off parts of herself.

In summary, Madonna's own distancing from the experiences shown in the film and the fact that those experiences are shown in black and white suggests that what is displayed in the film is a behind-the-scenes look at Madonna's life that is flattened out and without depth. The view the film provides of Madonna's life suggests the depthless world of a borderline narcissist who both needs and fears others and her emotions.

Family Relationships. Madonna's fear of other people is also displayed in the film through her family relationships. Madonna presents three families in the film: the tour family, in which she is the matriarch; the reunion of the dancers with their biological family members; and her own biological family. Each family theme in the film shows much about how Madonna controls her oscillating between need for and fear of others.

The familial nature of the tour family is entirely
created and sustained by Madonna. A telling omission in the film is that not one of the dancers in the family ever describes the relations on the tour as familial. Madonna's feeling, thus, seems to be her own, and the tour family is exactly that--her own creation. The family was created when, as she says, "I started feeling like a mother to them." At the same time that Madonna describes herself as feeling like a mother to the dancers, she also describes what her attraction is to the dancers: "I think I unconsciously have chosen people who are emotionally crippled or who need mothering in some way. I think it comes very naturally to me, I think it fulfills some need in me." The family, then, that Madonna serves as a matriarch is fundamentally founded on Madonna's need to mother people whom she believes are emotionally crippled. Fearing her need, however, also makes Madonna engage in behavior with the tour family to maintain her superiority and control over the family, which also feeds her narcissistic and grandiose sense of self.

The interaction with the tour family presents both Madonna's need for and fear of the dancers when the tour members are seen with their biological families. At first glance, the reunion of the tour members with their biological families and Madonna's pointed interest in meeting the family members seem to indicate an interest in the dancers by Madonna that is not related to her. Several
scenes in the movie show other tour members interacting with their family members and introducing Madonna to those family members.

The interaction between Oliver and his father, however, suggests that what is really being shown is Madonna's power to reunite all the dancers and their family members. Oliver divulges in the film that he and his father have not spoken in over five years. They are reunited, however, when the tour reaches Houston because Oliver has made it; that he has made it is known because he is on a world tour with Madonna. In fact, Oliver also discloses that during the interaction, Oliver's father asks for his forgiveness for not believing that Oliver would be a successful dancer. The reunion with Oliver implies that not only is Madonna responsible for the reunion—she thus is the power behind the meeting—but also that Madonna has the power to make Oliver's father apologize to him. Oliver's family reunion and the other reunions show that the tour family revolves around Madonna's power over the dancers. They uncover how Madonna's power works with her grandiose sense of self: her role as mother is to "fix" both the family members (the emotional cripples) and their relationships with their biological families. Kevin, one of the dancers, makes explicit this relationship. He says of Madonna, "She was a very maternal figure, . . . She was always worried about us. There were always condoms in our per diem." Clearly, although he acknowledges the closeness
between the dancers and Madonna, Kevin's comment also
indicates the nature of the power relationship: Madonna's
mothering entailed her taking care of their lives.19

Madonna's relationship with her biological family,
which also is shown in the film, further suggests her
oscillation between need for and fear of others. Although
Madonna has seven siblings, only two are shown in the film--
her brother Christopher, who is the art director of the
tour, and her brother, Marty. Madonna's relationship with
each brother is very different and, in fact, Madonna's
interaction with each illuminates how Madonna splits her
brothers into "good" and "bad."

Marty's "badness" is shown throughout the film; the
film never shows anything positive about Marty, and every
segment about him is negative. The first evidence of
Marty's dubious characteristics is his alcohol problem.
After revealing that Marty is in a alcohol-rehabilitation
facility in her conversation with her father, Madonna also
tells Christopher that Marty only entered the rehabilitation
program to escape going to jail. Also, when Madonna is in
Detroit, she believes that Marty is coming to visit her.
Although he eventually arrives, Madonna is already in bed;
he has disappointed her. While waiting for Marty, Madonna
discloses that she thinks Marty is crazy, and she needs the

guard to chaperon the meeting. Thus, everything shown about Marty represents undesirable traits and characteristics.

Christopher, on the other hand, is shown as the complete opposite of Marty; he is the good brother. Because he was the art director, Christopher was on the entire tour. As a result, he appears often in the film, and when he is with Madonna, their interactions are intimate and positive. He is her confidante about Marty, he seems always to be around for Madonna, and she even compliments him about the sets when they are with their father. There are two missing components about Christopher, which also suggest Madonna's positive view of him. First, unlike Marty, Madonna never discusses any feelings she has about Christopher in the film. Second, although Christopher was on the tour and was positioned to be always around, he is always in the background in the film. In a documentary that purports to reveal everything, Christopher appears to be the only family member to whom Madonna accords privacy. The omission of Christopher's private life at all levels—a privilege that no one else had in the film—suggests Madonna's high regard for Christopher.

Madonna's relationship and interaction with both brothers suggests that she idealizes Christopher and devalues Marty. Unable to synthesize good and bad feelings about her siblings, Madonna splits her feelings about her brothers into an idealized good brother and a negative bad
brother. Madonna's interaction with her brothers shows a primary defense mechanism, where alternating, contradictory states of primitive idealization and devaluation are kept separate or split apart so that Madonna can manage the anxiety of the weak-ego organization.

Madonna's inability to synthesize good and bad feelings about her family members also is shown in her relationship with her father. In the film, Madonna idealizes her father, and he is shown as one of the few people in her life who has the power to influence her actions. Her admiration occurs when she and her fans sing happy birthday to her father on stage in Detroit and when she bows at his feet. After the show, Madonna is more afraid of the result of her actions when her father is in the audience than she is of the threat of being arrested in Toronto. In Madonna's world, her father has more power over her than the police. Although throughout the film, Madonna defends the show by invoking her right to freedom of speech and artistic integrity, with her father, she changes her defense. After her father says he could have done without some of the scenes but he knows that the scenes arearty, Madonna replies, "Dad, it doesn't have anything to do with art. . . . It's a journey, it's cathartic." Madonna's changed defense with her father is particularly significant and revealing of the power she accords her father because her staunch defense that her performances exhibit her artistic expression becomes a moot
point with her father.

Madonna's concern about her father's reaction further is exhibited in an interview about the film in which Adrian Deevoy asked Madonna how, if she is so worried about her father's reaction to her performances, she could fellate a bottle in the film. Madonna's response was that, yes, she was worried about her father, "but he wasn't in the room." Madonna's response uncovers that, although her father appears to be her highest authority, she "forgets" his authority when he is not present. In other words, his authority does not indicate a principle that transcends time, which is carried from one experience to another; rather, the principle that Madonna's father represents is only specific to his immediate presence. Thus, because Madonna is unable to see beyond herself, she is unable to hold principles that transcend time—even the objections of her all-powerful father—and, as a result, she lacks principles that transcend her immediate experience of herself, her immediate interaction with her father.

Although Madonna's father challenges and disapproves of her performances, because Madonna keeps contradictory states separate—she is unable to synthesize good and bad feelings—she is unable to acknowledge any feelings about his challenges to her performances. As a result, Madonna is able only to idealize her father instead of acknowledging

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20 Madonna, quoted in Deevoy 19.
any potential negative feelings about his challenges to her performances. Madonna's idealization of her father also is particularly intriguing given that not only was he the person who instilled and enforced Madonna's religious upbringing, but he also continues to represent Catholicism in his critique of her show. Madonna's father is a representative and representation of the religion that she violates, questions, and rejects. Madonna seems unable to recognize and connect that the laws of Catholicism that she rejects originated in the law of her father: he is the real origin for her sustained, strict Catholic upbringing. Instead of recognizing the origins of her Catholicism, Madonna splits off the negative feelings she should associate with her father and idealizes him. Again, her relationship with her father indicates her inability to synthesize any ambivalent or contradictory feelings for her father; instead, she is able only to view her father as good by idealizing him.

Mothering. Madonna's pattern of idealizing a parent also occurs in her description of her mother when she visits her mother's grave. Unlike her father, however, Madonna begins the description of her feelings about her mother by engaging in distanciation. As the scenes of Madonna's visit to her mother's grave begin, Madonna narrates the scene. Again, then, Madonna's distanciation signals her separation and distance from her own experience shown in the film.
Madonna continues to separate herself from her experience of her mother's death as she describes her memories of the death, which was the defining moment in Madonna's life.

Madonna has said in interviews that the death of her mother was the most important experience in her life—which also was the moment that "the die was cast"\(^2\) as to who she would become.\(^2\) As the single most important moment in her life, the death of Madonna's mother was pivotal in her life. How Madonna made sense of the death, then, would be pivotal to her understanding about herself and how she would develop as a person.

Madonna says that her mother's death was "all a big mystery to me, nobody really explained it..." Because no one explained the death, Madonna was left to make her own assessment of the death. For Madonna, religion did not offer any explanation. She says in the film that she understood that her mother was very religious, so as a child, she "never really understood why she was taken from us, it seemed so unfair." Moreover, because her mother was angelic and did not do anything wrong but died anyway, Madonna blamed herself by introjecting the responsibility; she says, "often times I wondered what I had done wrong."

The death of Madonna's mother and her introjection of the responsibility offer important insights into several facets

\(^2\) Madonna, quoted in Deevoy 20.

\(^2\) Deevoy 20.
of Madonna's borderline-narcissistic subjectivity.

Splitting played the primary role in how Madonna made sense of the death: unable to synthesize the experience of her angelic, religious mother's death, Madonna introjected the responsibility by holding herself responsible for the death. Madonna, however, simultaneously juxtaposed the introjection with religion: she is responsible for her mother's death because she believes that, as a devout Catholic who never had "done anything wrong," her mother should not have died. Her mother, however, did die and abandoned Madonna, which made a normal developmental fear become a real-life experience in Madonna's life.

A primary development task for infants is to recognize and synthesize the ambivalent feelings they have about the fact that caregivers are unable to give care 24 hours a day. Consequently, infants feel temporary abandonment when their caregivers are absent or unable to meet a need. Healthy infants learn to distinguish temporary abandonment from real, permanent abandonment and develop object constancy about the caregiver: the mother will return and remains good, even in her absence. Borderlines, unable to synthesize the frustration of the temporary absence of the mother or the frustration of unfulfilled needs, however, cannot distinguish between the temporary absence of a mother and her "extinction" or death. Madonna's fear of abandonment thus was realized with the actual death of her
mother. Madonna, enraged by the death of her mother but unable to attribute the death to a failure in her mother's religious beliefs, introjects the responsibility for the death.

Catholicism and Madonna, accordingly, are forever juxtaposed against one another. Madonna hates herself for "causing" the death and projects her rage at Catholicism for the real abandonment she experienced with the death of her mother. Madonna is forever split between introjecting the responsibility for the death and projecting her rage and her realized fear of abandonment onto Catholicism. Her mother's death, accordingly, is probably the primary source of her on-going war with religion. Unable to give up Catholicism because her idealized mother embraced it but also hating religion for not saving her mother, Madonna oscillates between feelings of love and hate and judgments of good and bad concerning Catholicism. The death of Madonna's mother, her primary love object, is also a primary contributing factor in Madonna's splitting and inability to synthesize good and bad objects. In other words, the actual death of her mother plays a fundamental role in Madonna's specific borderline narcissism. The death, however, occurred at the age of six, long after Madonna should have developed object constancy, the ability to synthesize good and bad objects. The issue remains, then: What evidence exists about Madonna's borderline-narcissitic structure prior to her
mother’s death?

Little explicit discussion by Madonna about her life prior to her mother’s death is available, which makes sense given her young age at her mother’s death and the fact that Madonna marks the death as the single most important factor in her own development. Three primary determinants in her life, all of which derive from Madonna’s early family life, contribute to Madonna’s specific borderline-narcissistic structure prior to the death of her mother. The first contributing factor to Madonna’s borderline structure is her family. Madonna was raised in a large, traditional, strict, Catholic family. She was the third child but was the first female child of a family of six, a birth position that is significant. Every year after Madonna was born, for three consecutive years, a new child was born. Thus, from the beginning of her life, Madonna had to compete for her parents’ attention, particularly her mother’s. Getting attention from her mother must have been very difficult for Madonna given that until her mother died, she was the primary caregiver\(^2\) of the infants and young children. Consequently, given the large size of the family and Madonna’s birth position within the family, Madonna’s normal desire and need for attention probably were frustrated.

\(^2\)By all descriptions of the family, it was traditionally divided along gender lines. Madonna’s father’s primary responsibility was to work outside the home and to serve as the disciplinarian, whereas her mother was the caregiver of the family and the caretaker of the home.
often.

Competition for attention, then, would have characterized an important norm in Madonna's family, and Madonna frequently describes her behavior as a child as centered on getting attention. Madonna says that from the time she was young, she "knew that being a girl and being charming in a feminine sort of way could get me a lot of things, and I milked it for everything I could." From a very early age, then, as a strategy to receive attention, Madonna has used femininity as a means to getting what she wants. She also claims that she would go to extremes to get attention, even hurting herself. Madonna says she would "burn my fingers deliberately, just to get attention." Thus, Madonna's birth position, combined with her use of femininity and her willingness to go to extremes for attention, suggest that Madonna exhibited the characteristics of a borderline narcissist from an early age--a deep underlying insecurity about her self-worth, manifest in a narcissistic reaction.

The second and third contributing factors to Madonna's borderline-narcissistic structure are that both her family structure and religious perspective were conducive to a

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25 Madonna, quoted in Bego 14.
borderline organization. As the patriarch of the family,\textsuperscript{26} Madonna’s father insisted that the children have a very strict Catholic upbringing, accompanied by a very structured life. At the age of five, Madonna entered a private Catholic school, a school system that is traditionally very rigid and characterized by strict codes of conduct and dress. At home, Madonna’s father believed that his children should not have very much unstructured time. Madonna says that her father "was a real disciplinarian, very strict, and you’d get up every morning and go to church before you’d go to school. You’d wear a uniform and, when we’d get home from school, we’d change our clothes and do our chores. We did our homework."\textsuperscript{27}

A rigid need for structure and control appears to have been a dominating force in Madonna’s family system. Moreover, when the rigid family system is coupled with

\textsuperscript{26}Bego suggests that, as a first-generation immigrant, Madonna’s father was not interested in blending his Italian heritage with his American life. He was not interested in the old lifestyle and, instead, only wished to assimilate his family into his new country. Although I cannot substantiate Bego’s claim with direct evidence from her father, Madonna’s father’s behavior seems to support it. He was the only one in his family who earned a college degree and the rewards and security associated with that degree, he insisted that all his children secure an education, and he moved his family to an upwardly mobile neighborhood as he gained financial success. Thus, the family’s ethnic structure and roots were permanently divided from their heritage, a strategy conducive to splitting and black-and-white thinking. See Bego 12 and the historical biography in Chapter Three of this study.

\textsuperscript{27}Madonna, quoted in Bego 18.
Catholicism—a tradition that is fundamentally split between fear and authority and the adherence to commandments that advocate love, altruism, and generosity—Madonna’s early life appears to rigidly reinforce the development of a borderline-narcissistic subjectivity. The death of Madonna’s mother and Madonna’s inability to find comfort from the family’s foundational force, Catholicism, thus are real-life events that are primary contributing components of Madonna’s particular borderline-narcissistic structure.

Madonna’s mother’s death not only serves as a significant contributing cause of Madonna’s weak ego structure, but it also serves as the source and foundation for Madonna’s views on and enactment of mothering. For Madonna, mothering entails teaching feminine traits—patience, manners, and gentleness—traits that she believes she lost with the death of her mother. In the film, Madonna says that her memories of her mother are that she was "very kind, very gentle, very feminine. . . . She seemed like an angel to me." For Madonna, the single most important moment of her mother’s death resulted in what she says is the loss of feminine traits that mothers teach their children. Madonna claims that the death "gave me a lot of what are traditionally looked upon as masculine traits in terms of my ambitiousness and my aggressiveness. Mothers, I think, teach you manners and gentleness and a certain kind of, . . . patience, which I’ve never had." As a result, Madonna
Also developed as a response to her mother’s death and her early family structure is Madonna’s drive to be the best at everything so that, as she says, "everybody was going to love me."\(^{29}\) Because Madonna believes the loss of feminine traits makes her more manly and in control of her life, she is unable to synthesize mothering/femininity and domination/masculinity. Unable to synthesize her perception of gender roles, she remains split between the dichotomy of mothering/femininity and masculinity and its characteristics of aggressiveness, control, and power.

Such a split has been suggested in the analysis of Madonna’s mothering of the tour family. In creating the tour family, she acknowledges that she is attracted to the dancers because they are emotional cripples. A deeper understanding of Madonna’s attraction to emotional cripples is now becoming more apparent: Madonna needs people to nurture whom she also can control. Thus, Madonna’s mothering oscillates between needing and fearing the tour family, between wanting closeness and wanting domination. In order to guarantee that both needs are met, Madonna picks emotional cripples—people who will participate in her oscillation because of their own instability. From the

\(^{28}\)Madonna, quoted in Deevoy 20.

\(^{29}\)Deevoy 20 and 23. Madonna says that her driving force to be the best dancer and the most famous person in the world is a direct result of her mother’s death.
beginning of the formation of the family, then, Madonna creates a family that fulfills her needs and perpetuates the gender divide she, herself, experiences.

Madonna oscillates between her need for power and control over her "children" (her male characteristics) and her belief that she also should be gentle and kind (her feminine characteristics). She is gentle and kind, for example, when she brings the dancers' biological families together and wants to meet them. She does display her control and power, however, when she "fixes" Oliver's family. Although Madonna oscillates between being kind and controlling, Madonna's mothering of the dancers most often entails the use (abuse) of power: after blaming herself for the fighting among the dancers in New York, Madonna fixes the problem by commanding that the gay dancers be nice to Oliver. With a sense of grandiosity, she tells Oliver that they are really jealous because of her--because of the report in the press that claims that Madonna and Oliver are having a sexual relationship--and that he should ignore the dancers. This statement displays both her grandiose sense of self and use of power. Similarly, she takes the dancers shopping with her in the boutiques of Europe but only so they can serve as her audience as she models. Finally, when Madonna is in bed with the male dancers, a setting that signifies intimacy and closeness, she commands behavior from the men: she tells several of the dancers to take their
clothes off; she insists that Carlton come to "Mommy"; and she tells Carlton to be quiet because she is talking and, as she says, "you know what that means." Even more revealing about Madonna's final exchange with Carlton is the fact that she demonstrates her capability to engage in some reality testing. When she tells Carlton that he should stop talking because she is talking, she indicates that she is aware that she must dominate and control the conversation—although she wants to be gentle and kind, she is unable to integrate those separate parts of herself and, thus, she talks over Carlton.

Madonna's ability to keep various parts of her subjectivity separate also permeates the view of her "private" life in the film, particularly her relationships with others. In the film, two levels of Madonna's private life are shown: her life behind the scenes at concerts—dealing with technical problems, post-concert gatherings, and pre-concert prayers—and her intimate life—her relationships with people who are friends, lovers, and/or family members and the details of her everyday life such as a doctor's visit, preparing for a date, and the visit to her mother's grave. In the scenes that document her intimate life, Madonna exhibits much about how her borderline-narcissistic subjectivity works: Madonna uses and abuses her intimate relationships to confirm her own grandiose sense of self.
Intimate Life. Madonna’s relationship with Maureen McFarland is introduced when Madonna denigrates her makeup artist, Sharon, by telling her that she was the kind of girl that she used to beat up, like the McFarland girls. Then, Madonna and Maureen McFarland—a woman like Sharon—are shown talking about their childhood relationship. By framing the exchange by devaluing McFarland, Madonna portrays herself as more valuable and successful than McFarland. In fact, the entire exchange between the two seems to confirm Madonna’s superiority over McFarland and her life. McFarland is everything Madonna is not—a mother of four children, a mother who does not appear to have control over the children when they are seen jumping wildly on the bed in her hotel room, and a woman who finds herself unexpectedly pregnant again. McFarland reveals in the film that she, too, was a dancer who toured; however, she was a topless dancer—again, a dancer unlike Madonna. Without much pushing from Madonna, McFarland not only acquiesces to Madonna’s version of their childhood sexual relations, but she also blames the disagreement on herself and her former drug problem. Finally, even after McFarland asks Madonna to be the godmother of her child, Madonna says that she will think about it, but she also wants to know if she can decide on the name of the child. Of course, the name she picks is her own. Again, McFarland acquiesces to Madonna and indicates her idealization of Madonna when she begs Madonna
to bless her child. The relationship between the two women is best described as shallow and controlled by Madonna: McFarland acquiesces to Madonna and still begs her to bless her child.

McFarland’s appearance in the film confirms two beliefs that Madonna seems to hold about herself: she is successful and powerful. Madonna’s success is suggested in her acknowledgment that McFarland used to be her valued teacher; McFarland let her "borrow her stuffed bra . . .[and] showed [her] how to use tampons." The implication is that Madonna now has surpassed McFarland in knowledge and experience. McFarland also suggests how powerful Madonna is in that she idealizes her, is swayed by Madonna’s memory, and agrees to name a child after her. In short, McFarland confirms for Madonna her grandiose sense of self and her omnipotence or power over McFarland. Although all intimate relationships must negotiate power, what is most significant about Madonna’s intimate relationship with Maureen is that there is no negotiation--Madonna dominates and controls the relationship to confirm her own grandiose, narcissistic sense of self.

Madonna’s relationship with her then-lover Warren Beatty also is shown to be about Madonna’s power and control. Particularly important to Madonna’s interaction and relationship with Beatty is the ethos that Beatty brings
to the relationship: he is a man who has never married, has a reputation for being a "womanizer," and "gets" the women he wants. He also is a man who protects his privacy and is often described as reclusive. Almost without exception, Beatty's appearances in the film or any discussion about him by Madonna violate and denigrate his ethos. After Madonna gets off the phone from yelling at him for being late to pick her up for a date, for example, she tosses aside a shirt he has given her and says, "I get what I want." After he has picked her up and Madonna and Beatty are seen walking together, Madonna is heard saying that she had a dream in which she got to meet Gorbechev before Warren Beatty and that she cannot wait until she tells him that she met Gorbechev first. Finally, backstage after a performance, Beatty is seen slouching on a couch, and Madonna commands that he come over and talk to her, which he does briefly. In these scenes, Madonna is shown controlling the relationship and, ultimately, controlling Beatty. When Madonna tosses the shirt aside, she strips away his authority to give her a gift and, instead, she suggests that he simply has met her demands. Ultimately, Beatty is simply "following orders": he is only giving her what she already

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30 Although he is married now, at the time of their relationship, Beatty was a bachelor.

31 Even Madonna confirms Beatty's privacy when she says of him in an interview, "he is very shy and private and he doesn't understand my lack of inhibition because he is the opposite of me." Madonna, quoted in Deevoy 20.
wanted in the first place, he comes to talk to her when she commands, and he does show up for the date. Madonna's desire to dominate Beatty is also exhibited when she reports that she dreamed she did something before Beatty—she met Gorbechev. For Madonna, controlling a man with the ethos of Beatty confirms her control and power in what is suggested to be her sexual relationships.\textsuperscript{32}

Beatty does challenge Madonna and the whole notion of the film during Madonna's throat examination. Beatty argues that Madonna has created an insane atmosphere by filming everything that she does for a documentary. Beatty also asks Madonna if anyone else talks about the insanity of filming everything. Madonna responds by saying that no one talks about it because they accept the filming. Beatty challenges Madonna to think about why no one is talking about it—why, perhaps, no one challenges her or tells her the truth. Madonna ends the discussion by saying that she does not want to think about his suggestion and that they should "get back to my throat." The exchange suggests that Beatty may have the potential to challenge Madonna, but,\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{32}In an interview with Carrie Fisher, Madonna says that she and Beatty never had sex. Even if they did not, they were dating and the potential sexual relationship existed. Also, part of Beatty's ethos is his sexual prowess which, again, suggests that by controlling and dominating Beatty, Madonna also would control their sexual relationship. The suggestion that Madonna controlled their sexual relationship also denigrates Beatty's ethos. See Carrie Fisher, "True Confessions: The Rolling Stone Interview with Madonna," \textit{Rolling Stone} 11 June 1991: 36.
ultimately, the film is her project, and she controls whether they will continue their discussion.

The banter between Beatty and Madonna continues, however, and suggests that Beatty is really challenging whether or not Madonna has any boundaries for the film and, ultimately, for her own sense of self. The doctor asks Madonna if she wants to talk off camera—if she wants to set a boundary of privacy for the film. Before Madonna can answer, Beatty jumps in and says, laughing, "She doesn't want to live off camera, much less talk. Why would you say something if it is off camera? What point is there of existing?" Beatty's response is particularly poignant, given his reclusiveness and need for privacy. By refusing to have the examination off camera in the film, the scene does suggest that Madonna does not exist off camera and that there is no boundary between her private and film life. The camera thus serves a primary function for Madonna, one Beatty intimates is related to Madonna’s existence. For Madonna, the need that the camera fulfills is the need to confirm that she, indeed, does exist. Where Beatty seems to hang onto the belief that Madonna has an existence off camera and that she is simply choosing not to exist off camera, everything about the movie suggests that the camera serves as the narcissistic confirmation for Madonna, through obsessive self-reference, of her existence.

Madonna's use of the process of distanciation allows
the film to become a reflection of Madonna's experiences. In doing so, the film serves as a mirror of herself, where there is no interest in external events except as they throw back a reflection on her own image. Both McFarland and Beatty, for example, serve as confirmation of Madonna's value, power, and control in her intimate relationships, a confirmation she desperately needs because she has no clear sense of self. Madonna's external interest in the dancers' biological families, ultimately, is an interest that confirms something about herself—her power. Similarly, Madonna's relationship with her makeup artist, Sharon, only confirms her superiority over her—she is the kind of "girl" she used to beat up. When Sharon reveals that she has been raped, Madonna says, narcissistically, that the rape probably happened because of her—Sharon must have told people she was on tour with Madonna. Sharon, as a victimized woman, both by rape and Madonna, confirms Madonna's power over Sharon as a major sole influence on the events of Sharon's life.

The reflections of Madonna in the mirror/film, however, are vacant because they confirm only a momentary sense of self; lacking any core or constant sense of identity, Madonna always must re-earn her sense of self. Unable to find more than momentary satisfaction in the images reflected of herself by the camera, Madonna always must confirm and reconfirm her fleeting sense of self.
Consequently, to set a boundary between being off camera and on camera would be devastating to Madonna because she would have no way to confirm her existence. If Madonna turned the camera off, she would lose her only means of confirming her existence—her self-reflection and confirmation through the camera.

Although the camera serves as the obsessive self-reference that Madonna needs in order to confirm her existence, and, as a result, the camera has almost unlimited access to Madonna's private life, there is one boundary that Madonna sets for the camera, where Madonna does talk and exist off camera: her business meetings. Within the first few minutes of the film, Madonna clearly sets limits around business when she says directly and straight to the camera, "Get out, I'm having a business meeting." Although the film shows Madonna working out technical problems in several shows, she is never shown handling any business-related issues in the film. Questions that remain unaddressed in the film are: Do the dancers get paid? When and how? Are ticket sales ever a concern? Who pays the bills at the hotels? Does Madonna ever get paid? For a documentary that reveals all, there is a noticeable silence, imposed by Madonna, on any discussion of the business behind the tour. The omission is also significant given that there is a split

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33 Of course, the dancers were paid; however, the film remains completely silent on the matter.
and distancing in the film between the reality in the film—the color segments—and the non-reality—the black-and-white segments. The reality or the materiality of the film—the concert tour that serves as the reason for the film's existence—is devoid of any exchange of money. By setting the boundary, Madonna separates and distances the exchange of money from the film.

The business meeting occurs in color but completely off screen. Thus, the materiality of the film is stripped away from the film, and Madonna's presentation of herself in the film and the black-and-white segments are stripped even more of their materiality or fullness. What is presented is a dream world, which is "magically" separated from the material world and the exchange of money. Madonna's only boundary for her existence, as depicted in the film, is her exchange power, which is not her sense of self but her source of power. By setting limits on her power source, Madonna keeps safe or protects her ability to dominate and control the world and herself. Thus, whereas the film appears to have excessive access to Madonna, the reality is that such access is fundamentally based on Madonna's desire to limit completely the access to her real power source, her exchange power in the marketplace. Madonna sets the limit in order to maintain her domination, which is the most important component of Madonna's reactive response to her borderline condition.
In only two pivotal moments in the film does Madonna appear vulnerable and unable to control the actions shown. One is when she narrates her failure to make Banderas fall in love with her; the second is the discussion of Madonna by others while she is seen in her hotel room. On the surface, both seem to indicate Madonna’s vulnerability to others’ descriptions of her life and her failure to get what she wants. Although she appears vulnerable in the two scenes, both scenes engage in a distanciation process that keeps Madonna separate from the vulnerability.

With Banderas, Madonna is ultimately in control of the scene because she separates herself from her disappointment that Banderas is married by narrating the scene. The audience watches with Madonna as she splits off that part of herself and separates from the experience. Madonna then takes back his power to disappoint her by devaluing him when she says, "I don’t think he is such a good actor after all." Madonna engages in distanciation in the discussion of her by others because the discussion is not produced in her own voice but in the voices of others. Madonna remains separate from the thoughts because they are not her thoughts. Moreover, although the content of description suggests a borderline narcissist—she is impatient, in the moment, doesn’t extend her emotion, and has a hard time connecting with others—there is nothing about Madonna’s behavior in the scene that confirms the description; Madonna is seen in a
robe, relaxing in her hotel room. Madonna keeps her
distance from the description, then, by not confirming the
description, which allows doubts about the description to
permeate the scene.

The description of Madonna provided by others suggests
a little-girl persona. Madonna turns to portraying herself
as a little girl when she is vulnerable, a choice that seems
connected to Madonna's understanding of what she lost with
her mother's death--femininity and its associated trait,
vulnerability. The strategy of little girlness is only
invoked, however, when Madonna already has separated herself
from her own vulnerability. When Madonna visits her
mother's grave, for example, and she appears vulnerable in
her actions and descriptions of her mother's death, the
lyrics, "little girl," are heard; however, the scene is
presented only after Madonna engages in distanciation
strategies with the narration. Also, when Madonna is
described by others as vulnerable and like a little girl,
her actions negate the description.

Thus, Madonna's strategy of being a little girl when
she appears vulnerable allows Madonna, the adult woman, to
deflect potential scrutiny about the little girlness because she splits off the characteristics from the adult
woman who lost the ability to be vulnerable--to be like a

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34I am indebted to Helene Shugart's suggestion that the strategy is also a means to deflect scrutiny.
girl—with the death of her mother. When examined, then, the little girl is not a reference to an adult woman's vulnerability; instead, Madonna is able only to be vulnerable by returning to a part of herself that she lost after her mother's death. In other words, Madonna, because she lost the traits of femininity and vulnerability when her mother died, is unable to be vulnerable as an adult woman. Because of Madonna's splitting between femininity and masculinity and her need to maintain distance from vulnerability, Madonna is unable to be truly vulnerable as an adult woman; instead, from a distance, she is vulnerable only when she takes on a little-girl persona.

Madonna's intimate life suggests much about how her borderline-narcissistic subjectivity works. With McFarland and Beatty, Madonna uses and abuses her intimate relationships to confirm her own grandiose sense of self. By limiting access to the materiality of her life, Madonna restricts and protects her real power source, even when she attempts to reveal herself in the documentary. Even the little-girl persona falls short of revealing any real vulnerability in Madonna's intimate life. Thus, control and power, narcissistically enacted, dominate Madonna's life and her sense of self.

Gayness/Homophobia. Although Madonna's power and control, narcissistically enacted, dominate Madonna's sense of self, she suggests in the film that her music functions
in ways other than to satisfy her own narcissistic needs. She says that she is interested in "pushing people's buttons and being provocative and being political." In the film, the two primary political issues that Madonna addresses are artistic freedom and gayness/homophobia. Each issue offers more insight into Madonna's borderline narcissism.

One way that being provocative is manifest in the movie is that all but one of Madonna's dancers are openly gay, which is explicitly acknowledged in the film. Near the end of the movie, as Madonna and the dancers are playing truth or dare, Lewis dares two of the male dancers to kiss. As they kiss, Madonna cheers and says, "This is giving me a hard on." In an interview in Vanity Fair about the kiss between the two men, Madonna says, "That's my favorite scene in the movie . . . . I love that people are going to watch and go home and talk about it all night long. I live for things like that."35 Clearly, for Madonna, this scene is supposed to generate discussion and controversy and probably will be seen as some sort of political statement.36


36 Madonna's commitment to gay and gay-related issues is unquestionable: she was one of the first public figures to address publicly the issue of AIDS and to donate money to AIDS research. During the "Blond Ambition" tour, for example, the final concert in America was an AIDS benefit in memory of Keith Harring, an openly gay male artist who died of AIDS. Also, Madonna's Like a Prayer album distributed AIDS fact sheets with each album. Finally, in an interview in US about the homophobia between Oliver and the gay dancers, one of the dancers recalled Madonna telling them
Although there is no doubt that the gay men would kiss without being commanded to do so (although perhaps in private rather than on film), because the scene is framed by the game of truth or dare, the audience is never clear if this is a true kiss (the truth) or just a put on (a dare). The political statement that is displayed through the kiss is Madonna's perspective on gay politics: the gayness is used as a means to fulfill her need to generate controversy and to show her apparent comfort with gay men, not to show the dancers' perspective on gayness. In short, Madonna narcissistically uses the gay men in the scene to disclose her views on gayness, a politics that is grounded in her self interests instead of in the politics of the real gay men.

Stripping away the power of the gay men to define their own lifestyle also occurs when Oliver discusses the other dancers. The first explicit acknowledgment of the gay men's sexuality occurs when the tour is on hold in New York. The introduction to the gay men is framed by Oliver, the only heterosexual man on the tour. Oliver reveals his discomfort with the gay men--he is concerned that Lewis shows his gayness too much and fears that the gay men want to have sexual relations with him.

that if the tension among them was not resolved, "I can have you all replaced" (quoted in Deevoy 24). The quote also adds credence to the argument that follows about Madonna's solution to the tension between heterosexuality and homosexuality; she invokes her power to fix the tension.
There are two ways that Oliver’s discussion about his experience can be interpreted: Oliver is the reasonable heterosexual voice who is concerned about the gay men’s behavior, or he is a homophobic heterosexual. Given that the scene also shows the gay men at a gay-pride march, apparently comfortable with their gayness, Oliver begins to appear homophobic. The proper interpretation of Oliver is provided by Madonna later in the film. The tension among the dancers and Oliver is ultimately resolved by Madonna, who blames the tension among the dancers on herself. She says, "I felt like a mother who deserted her kids and finds out how much trouble they had gotten into." When the tour resumes, Madonna fixes the problem among the dancers in two ways. First, she explains what she believes is the source of the tension to Oliver—Madonna herself. Madonna tells Oliver that the other dancers are jealous because he got more press than they did because of a report in a tabloid that he and Madonna were involved sexually. Madonna tells Oliver he needs to accept the fact that "queens will be on the rag" and rise above the gay men’s jealousy. When Oliver continues to be sullen, Madonna commands him to rise above the jealousy. Madonna then tells the dancers that they must be nice to Oliver because he does not have such a thick skin.

In addition to divulging Madonna’s grandiose sense of self—she is the source of the tension—the interaction
suggests how to resolve the tension when gayness and heterosexuality clash. Madonna steps in and resolves the tension by commanding that everyone be nice to one another and stop behaving badly. Once again, the framing perspective on the tension between heterosexuality and gayness privileges and reinforces heterosexuality—the source of the tension is jealousy over the reported relationship between Oliver and Madonna. Heterosexuality remains the privileged referent in the interactions because Madonna attributes the source of the tension between Oliver and the gay dancers to his access to her, as a heterosexual, that the other dancer do not have. Thus, rather than attributing the tension to differences between heterosexual and homosexual culture—violation of gender roles, power inequities, and Oliver’s position as a minority because of his heterosexuality among gays—Madonna insists that the tension is a result of the gay men’s jealousy over a potential relationship between herself and Oliver. Moreover, Madonna, as the power that fixes the tension, commands that the gay men be nice because they have thicker skins—because they are used to being in the minority in a heterosexist culture, they are better equipped to handle minority status. In contrast, Oliver’s minority status is a new experience for him and thus is more difficult for him to handle. Also, when Madonna tells Oliver that he needs to rise above the tension, she implies that rising above the
tension is easier for the heterosexual, which is true in a world that continues to privilege heterosexuality.

The patronizing heterosexual frame on gayness is also apparent when Oliver frames the discussion between Madonna and Sandra Bernhard. As the two women talk, footage of Oliver talking about Bernhard is interspersed. Although the women talk about several different issues, one topic discussed is Bernhard's relationship with another woman. Thus, when Bernhard reveals her lesbian relationship, the discussion has been framed by Oliver, whose description of Bernhard is sexual. Oliver says of Bernhard, "She's scary. She's pretty sexy. She looks like if she is having sex with someone, she would get a rope and strap you to the bed and shit." Although Oliver does not state explicitly whether he believes that Bernhard would have this kind of sexual interaction with a man or a woman, the fact that his description of her sexuality frames the discussion indicates another example of heterosexuality as a frame for gay sexuality. Also, by describing Bernhard as "scary," "sexy," and "dominant," Oliver hints that there is something about her sexuality that is frightening to a man. Once Bernhard reveals her lesbian relationship, the fear is confirmed: she rejects men. Oliver implicitly reinforces stereotypes about lesbians, stereotypes that suggest that lesbians are like men: they are domineering and aggressive.

Although Madonna does not use Bernhard's lesbianism to
confirm her own politics—the reason behind the presentation of the gay men—she does use Bernhard to confirm her own power to "out" Bernhard. One of the after-effects of Madonna and Bernard's appearance on Late Night with David Letterman is that many questions were raised about Bernhard's sexuality—questions that had plagued her throughout her career and questions that she claimed she was tired of answering. By revealing her lesbian relationship in Madonna's film, however, Bernhard confirms the rumors. And, of course, Madonna is the person who has the power to make the confirmation occur. Yet again, Madonna uses her intimate relationships to confirm her own sense of power.

The content of Madonna and Bernhard's discussion about the relationship is troubling to gay politics because it uncovers that the relationship is unhealthy. When Bernhard says that she is "like a drug addict" with the woman and that she does not particularly like her, she intimates that there is nothing healthy or positive about the relationship, implicitly extending the evaluation to lesbian relationships.

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37 After she appeared on Late Night with David Letterman, Mutso claims, Bernhard said that the press had dragged her and Madonna into a "cesspool of degradation" by labeling them lesbians. Bernhard announced, "I'm not a lesbian and I'm sick of being called one." Clearly, by the time of the movie, Bernhard either became a lesbian or was more comfortable with being public about a lesbian relationship, a change in her behavior that Madonna reveals in the film. For further discussion of Bernhard's claims about the appearance, see Michael Musto, "Immaculate Connection: Madonna and Us," Outweek 20 Mar. 1991: 41.
in general. When the only discussion of an adult lesbian interaction in the film is portrayed as negative, the audience is left with the impression that lesbian relationships are negative and unhealthy—a stereotype that permeates lesbian sexuality in a heterosexist culture. Once again, homosexuality—in this case, lesbianism—is framed by Oliver's heterosexuality and reentrenches dominate heterosexual stereotypes about lesbians.

Madonna's button-pushing politics about homosexuality continue to entrench heterosexuality and, ultimately, presents Madonna's own political solution to cultural responses to homosexuality—she is the source of the presentation, and she fixes the problems. The resolution of the tensions between heterosexuality and homosexuality in the film is not based on some abstract higher principle outside of Madonna—diversity, openness to alternative lifestyles, or the acceptance of difference, for example. Rather, the tension is resolved by Madonna—she commands the dancers to be nice, and she threatens to fire them—primarily because the tour must continue. Moreover, with Bernhard, Madonna resolves the controversy about Bernhard's sexuality. Madonna, then, serves as the narcissistic pivot of gayness and gay politics in the film.

Artistic Integrity. Madonna does continue to insist that there is a higher principle in her political life upon which she draws—her right to artistic integrity. A major
theme in the film is Madonna's defense of her artistic rights when the tour is threatened with censorship. Consequently, on several separate occasions, Madonna invokes a higher moral principle: her right, grounded in freedom of expression, as an artist to express herself through her art. In Toronto, in Italy, and to her father when he is not present at the performance, Madonna defends her performances as her right to express herself.

Madonna's defense of her show in Italy uncovers the superficiality or shallow commitment Madonna has to the principle and her own performance. When Madonna defends herself in Italy, she distances herself from the performance by claiming that she is not endorsing any particular way of life. Rather, she says she "describes one and the audience is left to make its own decisions and judgments." Her performance is divested of any political claim about how the world could or might be and is only a description of a particular life. Thus, for the audience, Madonna only defends her right to perform what she wants to perform, and audience members can make their own decisions. Madonna even says that, for her, the right to perform anything she wants is what "I consider freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought." Thus, the freedom of expression and thought, rights that are bestowed to insure the collective right of all citizens, is stripped of any commitment to the very collective protected by the rights.
Madonna's political challenge to cultural codes, then, has a certain logic: she invokes her collective right, then distances herself from the collective and her own experience so that she can simply and narcissistically perform whatever she wants to perform, without staking a ground in the potential collective politics displayed through her performance. Once again, by being unable to move past her narcissism, Madonna's politics are relentlessly self-referential and devoid of the content of any higher principle. Thus, although Madonna appears to be invoking higher moral and ethical principles of freedom of expression and speech, her defense of her artistic integrity is only for her own benefit.

The issue of censorship in Toronto also suggests the pivotal relationship that the threat of censorship plays in the performances. Madonna confirms that the threat of censorship is pivotal to the concert performance and the meaning she makes of her life when she reacts to the threat of arrest by the Toronto police. After the police have threatened to arrest her, Madonna tells the dancers that the threat creates a whole new meaning for the performance. The new meaning, however, is not about the issues Madonna raises in the performance or the struggle over what freedom of expression means; instead, for Madonna, the new meaning is whether she personally will be arrested. Moreover, when Madonna's manager, DeMann, makes a bet with the security
guards that the threat will be inspiring to Madonna, DeMann confirms what he already knows about her performances; the threat of the use of power against Madonna inspires her to rise to the occasion by enhancing her concert performance.

A second indicator that the threat of censorship is really just part of the performance is disclosed in the film by the news coverage of the Toronto incident. Although Madonna's defense of her artistic integrity is shot entirely in black and white, the only other color footage in the film besides the actual concert performance is a television station's news coverage of the controversy. Although the film could have stripped the newscast of color, it remained in color with the concert footage. The newscast thus takes on the color symbolism of the film—it is part of the reality of the concert performances in the film. Within the colorized frame, the news coverage of the censorship threat, accordingly, is also just part of the performance. Moreover, the reporter indicates that the news clip was prompted by a report from Madonna's spokespersons. By initiating the report, Madonna clearly hoped to keep the controversy alive in the media to continue fueling her performances.

The combination of Madonna's distanciation from her own performances to serve her own narcissistic ends and the revelation that the threat of censorship is just part of the concert performances suggests that Madonna's commitment to
artistic integrity is shallow. Thus, Madonna’s role as artist, through her defense of her artistic rights, only serves as another role she plays well—a narcissistic who serves her own interests.

**Truth or Dare.** Throughout most of the movie, as Madonna narcissistically films her relationships, family, and her defense of her freedom of expression, the title of the film remains a mystery. Finally, however, near the end of the film, the meaning of the title is disclosed as Madonna and the dancers play the game, truth or dare. The fact that the title, the game, is at the end of the movie problematizes the entire viewing experience prior to the game. The game raises the question of whether the film constitutes the "truth" about Madonna or is merely a prolonged "dare." In other words, has Madonna revealed herself or is she just acting in the film? Addressing the issue by exploring Madonna’s borderline-narcissistic structure suggests much about the answers to the question.

In an interview about playing the game, Madonna says that originally, only the dancers played the game, and she "was never really part of it." Madonna eventually began to play, however, and she characterized it in this way: "The idea of Truth or Dare is a joke. It’s like all those childhood games: ‘I dare you to do this.’ It’s all a

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38 Madonna, quoted in Deevoy 19.
The joke or the dare that Madonna performs in the film is to fellate a bottle, creating one of the most controversial scenes in the film. Madonna explicitly claims about the dare, "It's a joke" and cites as support her sexual performances with previous lovers who "don't tell me I give good head, believe me, because I don't give it." When probed about why she does not engage in oral sex, Madonna argues, "Who wants to choke? That's the bottom line. I contend that that's part of the whole humiliation thing of men with women. Women can never choke a guy." Of course, only Madonna and her lovers know if she is telling the truth about her sexual experiences, but the scene suggests information about Madonna's personality.

For Madonna, the dares of the game are about power: the power to push people's buttons when two gay men kiss and her fellation of a bottle, which is a joke because she herself never would submit to such humiliation. The fact that Madonna suggests in interviews that she herself never would engage in the experiences displayed in her dare suggests yet another distancing strategy in which she engages: she separates herself from her own experiences in the movie with the game that serves as the title and frame

39 Madonna, quoted in Deevoy 19.
40 Madonna, quoted in Deevoy 19.
41 Madonna, quoted in Fisher 120.
42 Madonna, quoted in Fisher 120.
for the movie. Her distancing is reinforced by her comment about the film, "I wanted people to see that my life isn't so easy, and one step further that is, the movie's not completely me. You could watch it and say, I still don't know Madonna, and good. Because you will never know the real me. Ever." She continues to need to control what is seen by suggesting that the audience never will know the real Madonna. For Madonna, the dares in the film represent her distanced power struggles—her desire to control the events of the film so that Madonna can see what is reflected back about her life—having no interest in connecting with the audience.

There is one "truth," however, in the game for Madonna. She is asked who is the love of her life, and Madonna replies, "Sean." The "truth" about Madonna and Sean Penn's love is that a primary component of their relationship was power. Madonna has suggested in interviews that she believes Penn is her equal, which is "why I married him." They are equitable in their desire for the power to control others. Madonna says about Penn, "Sean was very protective of me, . . . He was like my father in a way. He patrolled what I wore. He'd say, 'You're not wearing that dress. You can see everything in that.' But at least he was paying

43 Madonna, quoted in Hirschberg 168.
44 Madonna, quoted in Hirschberg 168.
attention to me. At least he had the balls." The "truth," then, that is displayed about Madonna's relationship with Penn is that, for her, intimate relationships are primarily power relationships: relationships with the audience that wants to know the real Madonna, with her intimates and own family, and with the families she creates.

In other words, the movie shows that Madonna has no core sense of identity and her life is an on-going struggle to maintain power and control over herself and others—to control her underlying disorganized ego structure. Consequently, for Madonna, because of her weak ego organization, every power struggle is a win-or-lose situation; every love relationship is a struggle between

45 Madonna, quoted in Hirschberg 196.

46 In talking about her relationship with Warren Beatty, Madonna said, "It's a really hard thing to accept in life that no matter what you do you can't change a person . . . . If you say, 'I don't want you looking at that woman,' they're going to do it anyway. Your want to think that if a person is in love with you, you have control over them. But you don't. And to accept that in life is next to impossible" (Madonna, quoted in Hirschberg 196). Madonna's comments are not particularly controversial in terms of the fact that power is a central issue in all intimate relationships, which must be worked out in each relationship. The problem for Madonna, however, and the reason why she is unable to move beyond anything but power struggles for control in relationships, is that she is unable to accept that she cannot control others. For Madonna, accepting that dynamic of intimate relationships is an impossible demand of life. Thus, unable to accept the give and take of power issues or to synthesize the good and bad of the power that permeates relationships, Madonna is stuck exclusively in a power struggle in her love relationships and in life.
controlling and being controlled. Moreover, because Madonna has no stable sense of self, all power struggles are narcissistically internalized to be about her: she must win all battles to secure her sense of self. The struggles, then, are about maintaining and creating order in her life. The kiss between two gay men, for example, only can be about Madonna's desire to project her politics about gayness onto the screen because she is unable to move beyond her constant need for self-reference. The full title of the film, Truth or Dare: On the Road, Behind the Scenes, and in Bed with Madonna, also takes on a fuller meaning. On the road, behind the scenes, and in bed with Madonna represent the three primary places where the audience will watch Madonna's power struggles: her struggle to control all components of the tour, on the road; the power struggles in her private life and intimate relationships, behind the scenes; and Madonna's commands to the dancers to do as she says while they are in bed with her.

The dares in the game point to the dares of Madonna's life: needing desperately to control her life, Madonna wages unending power struggles. Unable to claim her own ground on which to stand in the struggles, however, she distances herself by claiming the whole thing or any part of it is a joke. The biggest joke, then, on the audience is that it never will know if the two hours of her life presented in the film are anything but a dare. The irony,
however, is that Madonna's disorganized ego structure constantly needs management. The double irony of the game, truth or dare, is that it is framed in the movie by a performance of "Vogue," a song that is ultimately about pretending to have power by playing dress up. For the viewing audience, both the game and the film share the double irony of "Vogue": Madonna's life revolves around her pretending to have power in her relationships with others by controlling everything external to herself.

If Madonna is really out of control of the truths of her life, what or who is commanding the dares for Madonna? The highest arbitrating factor in Madonna's life is the camera. The camera resolves the power struggle for Madonna and is her controlling life force because it serves as the mirror image for herself; the camera serves as the mirror of reflection for Madonna's distanced split-off selves displayed in the film. The entire film, then, is made up of Madonna's use of the camera as a reflection for each split-off part of herself--each dare in which she engages for the camera--to confirm her existence. Thus, Madonna has no interest in presenting herself to the external world through the film; rather, she only has an interest in viewing her own reflection of herself in the film. Consequently, the title and the game of truth or dare serve as a metaphor for Madonna's relationship to the camera and her personality structure: the game, truth or dare, is performed for the
camera so that Madonna can see her own reflection thrown onto the screen. The reflection of the camera is the only way that Madonna can confirm that she exists. The key psychological component of how Madonna's borderline narcissism works, then, is Madonna's on-going struggle to control her disorganized ego in order to establish narcissistically a sense of self in each scene. Identification of the primary operation of Madonna's borderline narcissism opens the space to answer the questions specifically relevant to feminist schizoanalytic theorizing.

Conclusions

The tools of the feminist-schizoanalytic method are not necessary to reveal that Madonna is narcissistic. The tools of the method, however, provide insight into how Madonna's specific narcissism works. The central driving force of Madonna's narcissism is the underlying disorganized ego that she seeks to control. In other words, Madonna's narcissism is a reaction to the underlying borderline condition. The primary paths Madonna takes to control the disorganized ego structure are to subject herself to rigid discipline and to control and dominate others.

Madonna's actions and interaction with others in the movie confirm her need to control and dominate—whether the dancers or those in her intimate relationships. Madonna must control others in order to maintain her control of
herself. Madonna is aware, at some level, of her driving
desire to control her life, particularly through her
obsessive self-discipline of her body. In an interview,
Madonna said about herself, "My whole life is in a constant
state of disarray, and the one thing that doesn't change is
the workout." Madonna's description of her life as
disorganized is particularly interesting given that
Madonna's life is highly regimented, controlled, and
organized: every day, Madonna makes a list of whom to call
and when; she acknowledges that she has to schedule
everything, even on vacation; and she is unable to be
spontaneous. In short, there is nothing disorganized
about Madonna's life, her business, and her body; rather,
the disorganization is internal. Having no stable sense of
self, Madonna's only means of maintaining her sanity is to
control everyone and the world around her.

How Madonna's sexuality works also is exhibited in the
film. Madonna's sexuality is fueled by her desire to
control her life and others. Sexuality and sexual acts (or
her refusal to engage in certain sexual acts), because she
lacks any core identity, are premised on her need to
dominate others so that she is not dominated or humiliated.

"Madonna, quoted in Hirschberg 198. Madonna's drive and
discipline, particularly where her body is concerned, is
often noted. Madonna also said in the Vanity Fair interview
that she is aware that a "lot of people say it's really sick
and an obsession." Madonna, quoted in Hirschberg 198.

Hirschberg 198.
Both her relationship on camera with Beatty and her description of her previous relationship with Penn exemplify Madonna's need to dominate. One effect of Madonna's need to dominate and control is that she is unable to make connections with others—for schizoanalysis, the goal of part-object connection in transexuality—because she cannot move beyond her own narcissistic need to gain and maintain power. Thus, Madonna is also unable to experience the world outside herself or participate in the world without obsessive self-referentiality.

Even Madonna's apparent effort to engage in current political discourses about sexuality—gay sexuality and censorship of performances that challenge notions of sexuality—are always, ultimately, about herself. Although Madonna's defense of her right to challenge sexuality in her show illuminates her ability to draw upon the collective, common right to freedom of expression—to insure freedom for the collective against tyranny, oppression, and censorship—she does so only to further her own ends of performing whatever she wants to perform. *Truth or Dare*, then, shows that, for Madonna, sexuality is only about censorship. Instead of engaging in a collective dialogue to free sexuality from its constraints, Madonna's sexuality is a power struggle with censorship and censors. Framed by this context, Madonna's often-quoted comment, "Power is an aphrodisiac, and I'm a powerful person" takes on a
significant meaning. For Madonna, power is her only aphrodisiac, the fuel for her desire. Consequently, rather than displaying a desire fueled by excess, Madonna’s desire is fueled by power and the need to dominate and control to re-insure her power base. In terms of decoding and recoding, Madonna strips (decodes) sexuality of anything but power and recodes sexuality through winning power struggles.

Madonna’s primary strategy of engaging in power struggles is through her distanciation as a programmer of her split-off parts of herself. The essence of Madonna’s programming in the film is the process of distanciation. Madonna engages in a meta-level distancing by separating from her own experiences—her mother’s death, her disappointment with Banderas, and her own performances—in order to watch, with the audience, her own experiences. She desperately needs the distanciation process in order to confirm her existence as she watches the reflection of her selves in the film/mirror. By engaging in a programming strategy of distanciation, Madonna confirms for herself that she does exist, a confirmation she is unable to make for herself. Thus, unable to move beyond herself, for Madonna, the external world—the viewing audience of the film—is unimportant; instead, performing for the camera is the only external object that is important to Madonna so that she can confirm her existence to herself.

Finally, Madonna’s programming from a distance is also
fundamentally tied to the one real source of power and one boundary in her borderline narcissism—her power within the market. As Madonna’s career has developed, she has gained enormous power and wealth, which constitutes her real power in the market. Consequently, the one boundary that Madonna adamantly protects in the movie and her life is around business—the materiality of her existence. Within the film, the materiality of her life—the color portions of her life—are strictly off limits. Madonna’s sexuality, then, also is fueled by her desire for power in the market and, as the hallmark of her performances, Madonna’s sexuality is emptied of use value—to connect with others, to enhance intimate relationships, to fulfill erotic desire—in order to create an exchange based on power and money. Thus, as a programmer of her sexuality within the movie and her intimate relationships, Madonna uses sexuality to perpetuate her own power, to control the disorder in her life, and to provide a commodity to be exchanged for money. In other words, Madonna’s sexuality is not the enactment of n sexes—the schizoanalytic transexuality that is the on-going part-object connection without boundaries. Rather, her sexuality is constrained by the exchange of power in order to fulfill her need to control her underlying disorganized ego.

The power dynamic of Madonna’s sexuality is also connected to the split-off gender roles Madonna programs in the film—specifically to how she defines gender and the way
that she splits off femininity and masculinity. Primarily as a result of her real-life experiences with her mother’s death, Madonna is unable to synthesize masculinity and femininity. She defines masculinity as powerful and controlling and defines femininity as gentleness, patience, and nurturance. Although Madonna attempts to portray herself as being both masculine—in control of the tour, business, and her intimate relationships—and feminine—through her mothering of the dancers—she ultimately is portrayed as more masculine in the film—a characterization she herself makes of herself and attributes to the death of her mother.

Gender roles are ultimately organized around power, and in a patriarchal world, traditional masculine forms of power are privileged. Madonna’s split association between masculinity and power and femininity and lack of power, then, is not particularly surprising. Her split between the two and her inability to synthesize the two, however, are troubling for several reasons. First, because life is a power struggle for Madonna and she privileges her own masculinity, Madonna only uses femininity in the film to entrench her own power and to confirm her own beliefs about herself, a strategy that Madonna developed early in her life as a means of seeking and getting attention. The mothering of the dancers, for example, uses femininity in order to secure her own position of control over the dancers and to
fulfill her own need to nurture. Madonna, however, is constantly in control of the nurturing because she creates and sustains the family she chooses to mother. Thus, the femininity that Madonna’s structure uncovers is troubling because she models a femininity that is used exclusively as a means to perpetuate masculine power and privilege.

Also troubling is that because Madonna is unable to enact n sexes or n gender, the secondary concern about the gender roles she portrays in the film is that any potential multiplicity of gender roles enacted—a powerful woman, a powerful nurturing mother, a powerful business woman—is fundamentally premised on power relations to control, Madonna’s understanding of being masculine. Thus, although power negotiations are primary for all humans, regardless of gender, Madonna’s inability to move beyond power struggles forces her to model femininity only for the purpose of engaging in masculine power struggles. Another effect, then, of Madonna’s gender enactment is that she reentrenches patriarchal gender roles because she engages, in Deleuzian terminology, in majority politics—she has become part of the homogenous and constant system of the patriarchal ruling majority capitalists. Hence, within the film and in her own borderline-narcissistic subjectivity, Madonna may decode gender roles, but, ultimately, because she splits off gender roles and cannot move beyond power struggles, she primarily enacts and entrenches masculine power positions.
Madonna's borderline narcissism also has implications for feminist interest in Madonna and for feminist cultural politics. A primary issue debated in feminist writings about Madonna's subject position in the film is whether Madonna reveals herself in the film. Madonna's distanciation strategy to engage in power struggles suggests that the question is really a moot point for feminists. Because Madonna always maintains a distance or separation from the parts of self and power is the underlying foundation of Madonna's borderline narcissism, there is no real self underneath Madonna's narcissism. Consequently, there is no real sense of self to uncover about Madonna in the film. In other words, because of her disorganized weak-ego structure, as Madonna narcissistically programs split-off parts of herself onto the screen, she does so only to confirm her own existence; there is no self to reveal. Efforts to discern when Madonna is "putting the audience on" and when she is telling the truth are irrelevant and futile. The only self ever displayed in the film for Madonna is her need to win power struggles and entrench her power position.

As an important cultural icon who is unable to move beyond a masculine position in her power struggles, Madonna also reveals much for feminists about borderline-narcissistic subjectivity under patriarchy. Although the specific traits and characteristics of borderline narcissism are not gender specific, Madonna's borderline narcissism is
fundamentally constituted by gender under patriarchy, suggesting important insights about the evidence that the borderline pathology afflicts more women than men.

From a schizoanalytic perspective, feminism under patriarchy decodes gender positions and is always recoded by patriarchy. Gender roles, as a result, also contain the double movement of decoding and recoding. Thus, although individual women have experienced real gains in their struggle to strip femininity of its oppressiveness, the real power relations behind patriarchy under capitalism have not changed significantly. Several examples in current culture suggest how the real power relations behind patriarchy under capitalism have not changed. Although women have made many gains in the business world, they are recoded by the "glass ceiling"; women are free to be both professionals and mothers, but that freedom is recoded by the fact that women are still primarily responsible for the maintenance, substance, and nurturing of the family; and more and more women continue to slip beneath the poverty line as they take sole responsibility for raising their children. Also, although men's roles are changing—they are expected to be more sensitive and involved in their children's lives—women's new multiple roles are devoid of real power. In heterosexual, dual-career couples, for example, although often unstated, women continue to take care of the household responsibilities, and women are the ones who take the day
off for sick children, parents, or husbands.

As women's roles have changed, most women have developed confusion about who they are and what is expected of them: women must make painful decisions about careers, families, and children and they, often, live without real material rewards as a result of those choices. The confusion, then, with which most women live today takes a borderline structure, where identity and role confusion are central and the frustration of the lack of real power is constant. Capitalist patriarchy thus is able to appear to encourage multiplicity for women's gender roles without giving up the power to substantiate materially the gains that feminism has demanded. Feminism under capitalist patriarchy is also caught in the double bind that is illuminated with changing gender roles: unable to synthesize changing roles with material power, feminism under capitalism has decoded gender but continues to be trapped by the power positions of the majority capitalists.

Thus, the condition of women under capitalist patriarchy, influenced by feminism, currently encourages and seems to constitute a borderline-narcissistic structure for most individual women. Bombarded every day by media and advertising messages about the plethora of options available to women but without equitable gains in power, women under capitalist patriarchy are caught in a double bind: be all you can be without the power to be anyone. Men also are
influenced by feminism, but the command for them is: be all you can be with access to the power to be a capitalist. Thus, the fact that women under capitalist patriarchy exhibit more borderline pathology than men makes sense.

The primary problem with Madonna's modeling of a particular borderline-narcissistic structure under capitalist patriarchy is that, unlike most women in contemporary culture, Madonna has gained real access to power at the expense of femininity. As a result, unlike most women, Madonna probably could be whoever she wants, but because of her own personal psychology, she only can be engaged in on-going power struggles. Madonna, thus, is an important icon for feminism only as a model of women's borderline-narcissistic subjectivity, caught in a decoding of sexuality without real power in the marketplace.
CHAPTER VI

SEX

The third artifact utilized for analysis is Madonna's book, Sex.¹ Sex is Madonna's first literary endeavor, and it is a coffee-table book of pictures and written text that addresses one subject, sexuality. In interviews about the book, Madonna says that sexuality currently inspires her because she is interested in challenging "a society that's getting more and more repressive."² As a result, Madonna views herself as "a revolutionary";³ the content of Sex is designed to open people's minds and to "get them to see sexuality in another way. Their own and others."⁴

¹ Originally, the title of the book was going to be X, as Madonna explained: "We were gonna call it X, but then the whole Malcolm X thing started happening. At first I thought, fuck it, it's really a good symbol, and I thought of it first. But I realized it might be confusing or look like I was copying Spike [Lee]. Besides, Sex is almost as powerful; it's universal, it doesn't need translation—and it's only two more letters than X." Madonna, quoted in David Handelman, "Madonna's Head Trip," Vogue Oct. 1992: 288 & 292.

² Handelman 292.


The book was released on October 21, 1992, and was distributed through mainstream bookstores in a vacuum-packed Mylar bag that included a single-cut compact disc of the song, "Erotica." No copies of the book could be displayed outside the Mylar bag, which meant that it was designed to be bought sight unseen by readers. The package carried a label warning that Sex was for adults only; the book, then, was surrounded by enormous marketing hype prior to its release.

Because the book presents both a representation of Madonna's sexual poses and acts and a critique of sexuality, borderline narcissism is employed in this chapter from a literary/clinical and socio-cultural perspective. I assume that Sex mediates between Madonna's sexuality exhibited in the book and cultural codes about sexuality. Also, because the nature and function of Sex are closely tied to the marketing and production of the book, I assume that capitalist imperatives (current socio-cultural demands) are embedded in the book. Thus, I employ a literary/clinical perspective to diagnose Madonna's sexuality as displayed in the book, and then I situate her critique of sexuality within the capitalist imperatives that structure the book. Whereas the primary focus in Chapter Four was on Madonna's decoding and recoding of cultural codes and in Chapter Five was on Madonna's decoding and recoding associated with her own borderline-narcissistic subjectivity, this chapter
brings both together. My focus here is on the decoding and recoding associated with Madonna’s sexuality and how Madonna decodes and recodes cultural codes about sexuality. I will proceed with this analysis in three sections, beginning with a description of the book. In section two, I contextualize Sex within current approaches to psychoanalytic literary analysis and rework it from a schizoanalytic perspective to engage in a feminist-schizoanalytic reading of the book. Section three concludes the chapter and constitutes a response to the research questions that guide the study.

Description of Sex

In April of 1992, Madonna, in a joint venture with Time Warner, formed a new multimillion-dollar, multimedia company named Maverick. Although Time Warner will not confirm how much Madonna will be paid for the venture, $60 million is the figure most often cited. Time Warner also gave Madonna her own record label, also named Maverick, a music-publishing company, plans for HBO specials, TV and film divisions, and a two-book deal with Warner books. The first book from the two-book agreement was Sex, for which Madonna was paid $5 million up front.

Although the content of Sex is designed to open people’s minds, Madonna insisted that restricting access to the book, pre-publication, was critical; thus, the contents of the book were completely shrouded in secrecy and

See Leland et al.; and Orth.
Security was so important to the book that everyone involved in the production of the book was required to sign a statement of confidentiality and was forbidden even to speak about the contents of *Sex*. Several of the pictures were published before the book’s publication, however, without Madonna’s permission. When asked about the unauthorized publications, Madonna said, "They stole them . . . they got them for *free*."7

*Sex* also was embroiled in controversy prior to publishing; several printers refused to print the book on moral grounds.8 The publishing company that agreed to print *Sex* is a company located in the Midwest that refused to allow its name to be used. The company also gave its employees the option of shifting crews if they objected to the book on moral, ethical, or religious grounds.9 The company was faced with a complex task in terms of publishing technology because the book is printed in both black and white and single colors; has several different kinds of

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6 William Stacey Anderson contacted the British tabloid, *News of the World*, and offered to sell the paper a batch of pictures from the book. The price was $100,000. When Madonna found out about the deal, she threatened to sue the paper immediately, and she also faxed 17 other publications around the world with the same threat. The FBI was contacted, set up a sting operation, and arrested Anderson. His accomplice, an unknown woman who worked in the photo lab that was processing the pictures, is still missing.

7 Madonna, quoted in Handelman 292, italicized in original.

8 Orth 302.

9 Orth 302.
textured, cardboard-like paper; includes written text superimposed on photographs; is printed in five different languages; and includes an eight-page comic strip. Because of the complex technology and the high production cost, one executive at Warner claimed that "Warner must sell 400,000 copies to break even."\(^{10}\)

The combined effect of the pre-publishing hype, the printing controversy, and the secrecy and speculation about the contents of the book was so dramatic that one publisher said, "This is orchestrated as well as anything I’ve seen in my career in publishing."\(^{11}\) As a result, Sex was the biggest international launch of a book ever; 750,000 copies, 500,000 of them in America, went on sale simultaneously across the globe. In fact, many bookstores presold their shipments before they arrived, and on the first day of sales, Sex sold 150,000 copies.\(^{12}\)

Sex contains 128 pages of erotic photos, bound in a metal jacket, that depict Madonna’s sexual fantasies through written text and pictures. The book is split between black-and-white and color photos. The color pictures, however, do not contain all of the hues of the color spectrum; rather, most of the color pictures are done in one color or a shade

\(^{10}\)Mark Landler with Sandra D. Atchison, "Would You Pay $49.95 for Sex?" Business Week, 26 Oct. 1992: 42.

\(^{11}\)Landler with Atchison 42.

of color. A colored picture often has only one hue—for example, blue or green.

The book opens with a one-page introduction by Madonna to the book. She states that in a perfect world, a world without AIDS, concerns about safe sex are necessary. She claims, however, that because the book is about fantasy, which occurs in a perfect world, condoms are not utilized in the book. Thus, Madonna writes, "everything you are about to see and read is a fantasy, a dream, pretend." She disclaims any similarity between the book and real-life people and events. She ends the first page with, "Nothing in this book is true. I made it all up." Then, she introduces her alter ego, Dita, by writing, "My name is Dita. I'll be your mistress tonight." Dita is the narrator of all the written texts—narratives about sexual activity and advice about sexuality, letters to an unknown man named Johnny, and exchanges about sexuality with an unknown doctor. Madonna, however, is the person who appears in the photos. The photos have been described as presenting a pansexuality in that they depict sadomasochism; homosexuality; sexual activity with a young boy, an older man, and the suggestion of sex with a dog; autoeroticism and masturbation; voyeurism; exhibitionism; and group sexual activity.

The first theme in the book is sadomasochism and is

13Orth 206.
introduced by a two-page layout. On the left page, in black and white, is "I'll teach you how to fuck," which is accompanied on the right with a picture of Madonna in a black mask and a leather, two-piece bathing-suit-like outfit that leaves her nipples exposed. The accompanying pictures, all in black and white, are of Madonna and two lesbians, who both have their heads shaved, pierced ears and nipples, and tatoos. In the series, the women are topless or naked, and Madonna appears in either leather or a torn, nylon body suit. In one picture, Madonna, in the nylon body suit, is tied to a chair, while one woman kisses her and holds a knife to her neck and the other woman kisses her nipple. In another two-page layout, two central shots are surrounded by smaller photos. On the left side, Madonna's arms are tied together above her head. One woman stands behind her and holds her hands up, while the other woman kneels and has a knife blade between Madonna's legs. On the right side, the central picture is of Madonna's upper body, tied to a chair, with one of the women pulling Madonna's head back by her hair.

Both pictures are surrounded by different views of the scene depicted in the central pictures—Madonna with the lesbians or the two lesbians kissing one another. The

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14The women's lesbianism is confirmed in two ways. First, at the end of the series, one of women's tatoos is exposed to be a triangle, a gay-rights symbol. Also, Madonna put a call out in the New York gay clubs looking for people to appear in the book. See Orth 206.
Madonna writes, "I don't see how a guy looking at a naked girl in a magazine is degrading to women. Everyone has their sexuality. It's how you treat people in everyday life that counts, not what turns you on in your fantasy."

After a series of black-and-white photos of Madonna engaging in sadomasochism with a man, Madonna writes about what she believes is the distinction between abuse and sadomasochism. She frames the distinction by claiming that some women who are in abusive relationships are in such relationships because they like to be slapped around, although she admits that some women cannot get out of those relationships for economic reasons: "The difference between abuse and S & M is the issue of responsibility. . . . I don't even think S & M is about sex. I think it's about power, the struggle for power."

The next sexual issue Madonna addresses is sex with the young. In a two-page layout, Madonna is shown kissing a young man/boy; both of them are naked from the waist up. The accompanying text reads, "Sex with the young can be fun if you're in the mood. If you're feeling impatient or you feel like you want someone else to take charge, do not have sex with someone inexperienced." Madonna then describes an experience with a Puerto Rican teenager.

A few pages later, Madonna writes about how to seduce someone. The text is superimposed on a blue picture of a
woman, presumably Madonna, with her dress pulled up, exposing a white garter belt and white underwear. Her hand is between her legs. She writes, "The best way to seduce someone is by making yourself unavailable. . . . Be disinterested. Not too disinterested, they'll think they're barking up the wrong tree. But it is always good to play hard to get."

The one picture that suggests bestiality, shot in gray hues, show Madonna leaning over the body of a dog; the dog's head is between her legs. Madonna is dressed as a Playboy bunny--she is wearing long black gloves and a thong that has a rabbit tail. Across from the picture is Madonna in the same outfit, riding a bike, in a picture that is colored in green. On top of the picture is typed text that contains Madonna's (Dita's) exchange with an unknown doctor about a dream she has had recently. Dita tells the doctor that her sex dreams usually are lesbian sex dreams with people she knows. She tells about having a sex dream about her maid, whom she recently fired. In the dream, she is arrested in Paris for no reason, is in jail, and calls her manager and says, "You've got to get me out of here! Don't you realize this is a publicity stunt? It is only so the French can have something to write about in the newspapers for the next couple of months." Dita begins to cry and feels someone begin to massage her shoulders. As she begins to respond to the touch, she looks up and discovers that the maid is the
person massaging her shoulders. That, says Dita, is the last sex dream she remembers.

The next series in the book is a sequence of homoerotic pictures with men. The pictures are framed by Madonna's claim that she prefers gay male strip clubs because only "the guys at the gay clubs can dance and they always have really good bodies, not real beefy stupid bodies, more slim and beautiful." The accompanying pictures show Madonna, dressed in a sequined evening gown and a diamond necklace, accompanied by a man in a tuxedo; together, they watch the naked men dance. Madonna and her male companion are also seen in another picture with the gay men. This one is a collage of 35 small pictures in which Madonna and her companion are shown surrounded by the gay men. In several of the pictures in the collage, Madonna and her companion kiss as the gay men watch. Madonna's companion has money hanging out of his tuxedo breast pocket, which Madonna appears to be giving to some of the men. The homoerotic photos close with the gay men watching Madonna and her companion as they appear to begin to have sex; their reflection in a mirror is seen, where Madonna is lying on top of her companion, and he appears to be unzipping her dress.

After the homoerotic pictures, a series of photos, some

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15Handelman reveals that the man in the series with Madonna is socialite Daniel de La Falaise. See Handelman 293.
with written text, show Madonna masturbating. The sequence begins with nine shots of Madonna's naked torso surrounding the text, "my pussy has nine lives." Then, several pictures of Madonna masturbating appear.

Following the series, Madonna and an older man are shown. Madonna sits on the man's lap, wearing only socks and boxer shorts. The man is heavy, he has his hand on her breast, and his face rests on her chest. Across from the picture is typed text about having sex with men who are overweight. Madonna writes that she has had sex with a man who "wasn't grossly obese but he was pretty overweight. It was the first and last time." Later in the text, Madonna writes that people "always say that women aren't into appearance as much as men are, but it's not true. I think women are just as moved by appearance, but they are willing to accept a situation where the man is less attractive because of the who earns the bread situation." She ends her comments by writing, "But fat is a big problem for me. It sets off something in my head that says, 'overindulgent pig.'"

The next major series in the book shows Madonna in photographs with famous people. In the first cluster, Madonna is seen with fashion model Isabella Rossellini and socialite Tatiana Von Furstenberg. Rossellini wears a man's suit and a tie, with her hair slicked back. Furstenberg is naked from the waist up, while Madonna is seen either naked
or also in a man's suit. The series includes a two-page spread, shot in black and white, of all three women, with a fourth unknown woman. In several of the photos, the women kiss and hold one another. Madonna also appears in a series of shots with white rapper Vanilla Ice. In various pictures, Madonna and Vanilla Ice kiss, hug, and walk down a highway together. In the series, the pictures are black and white or tinted in single colors of green, purple, or blue.

The final series of photos with famous people shows Madonna; Black rapper Big Daddy Kane, wearing shorts; and Black model Niomi Campbell, naked. Both Kane and Campbell are seen alone with Madonna, but most of the pictures show the three of them holding each other, with Madonna "sandwiched" between Campbell and Kane. On one page, for example, Madonna is seen between them, with her head thrown back, kissing Campbell as Kane watches.

A photograph of Madonna, shot from behind her, standing in front of a window and wearing boots and a T-shirt, closes the series. The written text across from the photo is a narration of a sexual encounter between a man, Ivo, and a Cuban salesclerk in a dressing room of a Ralph Lauren clothing store. Madonna writes that as Ivo tries on clothes, the Cuban woman walks by and "leaves a trail of Georgio behind her. Cheap perfume always aroused him. He believed that cheap cologne smelled luxurious on people with dark skin." When the Cuban salesclerk returns with the
shirt he has requested, she enters the dressing room and begins to perform oral sex on him; Ivo is "transfixed by this dark-haired Lolita . . . ." Madonna writes that Ivo could tell that "she was simple and he envied her."

Sex next features a letter from Dita to a man named Johnny, one of six letters written to Johnny that appear throughout the book. Each letter is hand written and superimposed over an image of Madonna either masturbating or engaging in sexual activity with another person. In the letters, Dita chronicles her sexual relationship with both Johnny and Ingrid and Ingrid’s desire for Johnny’s friend, Ben. The first letter introduces the sexual relationship between Dita and Ingrid after Ingrid "just ate my pussy . . . ." The letter ends with Dita writing, "Hurry and come over here with some other forms of entertainment for me and the lovely Ingrid." Then she writes, "PS. [sic] are you hard yet?"

The second letter is written after a recent visit from Johnny, and Dita asks Johnny if he had fun with her and Ingrid and hopes they were not too demanding. The letter closes with, "By the way, I don’t mind sharing you with Ingrid cause I love you both and I’d rather have you eating the same pussy I do at home than eating out."

The third letter is about Dita wanting to have a birthday party for Ingrid, who is moody because she is in love with Johnny’s friend, Ben, with whom everyone falls in
love but who belongs to no one. In the fourth letter, Dita tells Johnny that she is upset because Ingrid brought a date to dinner, a male hairdresser, who Dita thinks is just a replacement for Ben; Dita does not like the hairdresser. The next letter is about Ingrid's birthday party. Dita asks Johnny if he was jealous when she and Ingrid were dancing and kissing. Dita says that, although the party was a success, she was glad when everyone left because then she and Johnny were finally alone and could have sex.

The relationships among the four people, then, have been established by the sixth and final letter. The letter begins with a different salutation; rather than "Dear Johnny," this letter is addressed to "Dear John." In it, Dita reveals that, after letting herself into his apartment, she walked in on Johnny and Ben engaging in sexual activity. She writes, "I didn't know if I was turned on or disgusted. I just knew I had to get out of there." Dita says she thinks they need some time apart to think and has not told Ingrid yet, but she suggests, "Maybe she'll feel better knowing her competition isn't another woman. As for me, I think I'm gonna be sick. Next time you want pussy, just look in the mirror."

Sex ends with a series of black-and-white exhibitionist photos. In the pictures, Madonna is shown hitchhiking naked on a highway, pumping gas in lace pants and top with her breasts exposed, and walking through traffic, in the same
outfit, on a busy street at night. The final photograph is of a chair that has a collar on it and a whip next to the legs. The accompanying text reads, "A lot of people are afraid to say what they want. That’s why they don’t get what they want." Following the written text is an eight-page comic series titled "Dita the Chelsea Girl," which tells the story of Dita having sex with her boyfriend at the Chelsea Hotel as others watch.

Analysis

To answer the research questions of the study, I will begin the analysis of the book by explaining the feminist-schizoanalytic-literary-socio-cultural approach I will employ in this chapter. I then will explore the sexuality that emerges in the book, and I will use these findings to address the research questions.

In this chapter, I bring the perspectives laid out in Chapters Four and Five together with current psychoanalytic literary approaches to analysis. Thus, because Chapter Four developed a cultural understanding of decoding and recoding and Chapter Five developed a clinical understanding of decoding and recoding, I will import those understandings without further explanation. I must address briefly, however, a literary approach to criticism before joining it with the perspectives found in the previous chapters.

Psychoanalytic literary critics employ different perspectives from psychoanalytic theorizing in criticism.
Most psychoanalytic critics, however, view texts as intertextual; reading texts is a mutually implicating transference process, where authors "not only work on texts, but texts work on readers, and this involves a complex double dialectic of two bodies inscribed in language." Integration of the transference process and the schizoanalytic notion of the mutual constitution process of production in artifacts—the contextualization of artifacts—results in a view of the literary work as intertextual. Thus, I will view the text as intertextual; I assume that Sex mediates between the sexuality of Madonna as author and cultural codes about sexuality.

Exploration of sexuality in Sex will uncover the borderline-narcissistic subjectivity displayed in the book because of the connection between sexuality and subjectivity: sexuality is the process that directs desire and fuels sexual identity, the linchpin of subjectivity. The way that gender and patriarchy are at work in the book also will be uncovered in the exploration of sexuality because, as I suggested in Chapter One, understandings about sexuality are translated into the key social forms of gender.

Elizabeth Wright, Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice (New York: Routledge, 1989) 17. Transference is the investing of persons and objects (texts) with positive and negative qualities as a result of individuals' personal experiences. Both readers and authors engage in transference; thus, literary critics view texts as mutually implicating in the transference process—what I refer to as intertextuality.
and patriarchy. Moreover, as a critique of cultural codes about sexuality, the book also contains evidences of gendered and patriarchal understandings that drive the depiction of sexuality.

A feminist-schizoanalytic-literary-socio-cultural perspective, as a result, explores the intertextual connections between the decoding and recoding associated with Madonna’s sexuality and the decoding and recoding of cultural codes about sexuality in the book. This approach is combined with an analysis of gender, which occurs through the institution of patriarchy, where decoding is associated with the freeing of gender from Oedipal codes and recoding of freed desire back into Oedipal codes. Because the book is Madonna’s critique of sexuality, the sexuality found in the book is the starting point for this analysis.

**Sexuality**

Madonna believes that *Sex* will open people’s minds about sexuality, and, in fact, the book is described as presenting pansexuality, multiple and varied representations of sexual fantasies and sexual acts. In schizoanalytic terms, the pansexuality in *Sex* appears to be revealing n sexes or n sexuality. As I suggested in Chapter One, n sexes or n sexuality is a revolutionary sexuality that is fueled by excessive desire, unconstrained by Oedipal laws and restrictions, where sexual connections occur through multiple part-objects in a transexuality. The result of
transexuality is that a woman contains "as many men as the man, and the man as many women, all capable of entering--men with women, women with men [women with women and men with men]--into relations of production of desire that overturn the statistical order of the sexes."\textsuperscript{17} In other words, if \textit{Sex} does present, in fact, \textit{n} sexuality\textsuperscript{18} or transexuality, then within the schizoanalytic paradigm, the book holds the radical, utopian sexuality that is paramount to schizoanalytic theorizing.

There is no doubt that \textit{Sex} is radical in the sense that Madonna created and published a book on sexuality that breaks boundaries and taboos--Madonna's sexuality appears to have no boundaries; homoeroticism predominates, a decoding of heterosexual privilege; and sadomasochism is brought into public. The problem with \textit{Sex}, however, is that, in the end, there is very little that is free about the book, nor is the decoded sexuality privileged or freeing. I will argue, instead, that the sexuality presented in \textit{Sex} is neither fully transsexual nor, ultimately, particularly freeing of cultural codes.

\textsuperscript{17}Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, \textit{Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia} (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1992) 296.

\textsuperscript{18}Assessing whether the sexuality portrayed is an example of \textit{n} sexuality is important, even though Madonna never has made the claim about the book, because Madonna claims that the book is revolutionary. Thus, analyzing the \textit{n} sexuality also entails assessing Madonna's and others' claims that the book presents a revolutionary sexuality.
The commercial context in which *Sex* was published provides a framework for understanding how the sexuality works in the book and the nature of Madonna's role as a sex therapist or sex revolutionary. That the book was published within the constraints of a non-utopian world, where sexuality does not exist, is not problematic. All potential revolutionary desire in the book is constrained by the current market and semiosis—the Symbolic order that drives capitalism. The revolutionary potential of a product is determined by which side of the split between decoding and recoding is privileged or serves as the foundation for the product.

In *Sex*, everything about the production process is based on restriction and scarcity. From the secrecy pacts to Madonna's outrage about the stolen copies of the pictures to the packaging, the book is completely constrained by Madonna's marketing power. Madonna's primary complaint and concern about the stolen photos also suggests the nature of scarcity that is embedded in the production process of *Sex*; her primary complaint about the photos was that her revolutionary sexuality was going to be acquired free of charge, without paying the price for the sexuality, evidenced in Madonna's statement, "they stole them, . . . they got them for free!"¹⁹ For Madonna, getting anything free is the highest crime, a principle she suggested in an

¹⁹Madonna, quoted in Handelman 292, italicized in original.
interview about the Time Warner deal, in which she discussed giving advice for free. Madonna claims that her motivation for the deal was her desire not to give further advice for free:

I found myself giving advice and helping groups get deals in other places, and I figured, I'm putting so much of my time and effort into all this, I might as well profit in some way, instead of farming them out and letting others make money.20

Thus, Madonna's anger about the bootlegged photos was not motivated by the violation of a principle such as that her art had been stolen; her outrage was motivated by money.

Of primary concern for Madonna, then, is keeping access to the sexuality in Sex completely restricted so that only paying consumers have access to it and to the revolutionary advice it provides. The foundation of the book and the project, accordingly, is not one of excess (freed desire); instead, it is founded on lack, scarcity, and restriction. Unlike Roseann Arnold, who made a conscious choice to produce her new biography through a publishing house that guaranteed easy access to the readers through low prices and a book-signing tour through shopping malls,21 Madonna insured that her product would be consumed only by the wealthy (it cost $49.95) and that the product would be

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20 Handelman 292.

bought sight unseen. The representation of Madonna's "free" sexuality in *Sex*, then, is based on scarcity and lack and guarantees a restricted viewing public. At the contextual level, the foundation of the book is not founded on excess, a requirement for the existence of n sexes, which begins to indicate that *Sex* does not reveal n sexuality.

Madonna maintains that she sees herself as a revolutionary, as a sex therapist, because she believes that she critiques repressive sexuality in the book through her presentation of her sexual fantasies. Madonna's version of therapy follows the same distanciation process found in *Truth or Dare*. The book opens with Madonna's claim that everything is a fantasy and nothing in the book is true, which separates and distances Madonna from the enactment of sexuality within the book and from sexuality outside the book. Thus, from the beginning, Madonna distances and splits off the depictions in the book and any connection that might be made to her own sexuality. Moreover, by claiming that the fantasies are not true—the source of the enactment of the sexuality—the connection between the sexuality depicted and any real, revolutionary sexuality also is split off from "true" sexual behavior outside the book.

The second level of distanciation occurs following the introduction, when the narrator, Dita, Madonna's alter ego, is introduced. Because Madonna's alter ego is the narrator
instead of Madonna, Madonna engages in a secondary
distancing when she separates herself from what is about to
be seen in the book. Madonna herself is separated from the
main character in the book, Dita; she is simply playing the
role of Dita. The problem, however, for the reader is that
the only stable image throughout the book is Madonna. Thus,
the reader is left with a permanent separation between the
sexuality enacted through Madonna’s image and the
understanding that Dita is the real narrator. Thus, as Dita
journeys through and depicts pansexuality, the continual
return to Madonna’s stable, distanced image provides no
connection for the reader of the book. The distanciation
that occurs through Dita, coupled with the first
distanciation strategy in the introduction—Madonna’s
separation from the depictions in the book from her own
sexuality—distances the reader from both the images and the
photos found in Sex.

The two levels of distanciation—the separation between
sexuality that is true of Madonna and that which is a
fantasy of hers and Madonna’s separation from both the
narrator, Dita, and her own image that appears in the book—
combine to insure that readers are doomed to fail to connect
to the sexuality in the book. The distanciation strategies
in the book, accordingly, fail to allow the connection that
is necessary for n sexuality, another reason why the book
does not present n sexuality.
The sexuality Madonna presents in *Sex* also suggests that the book does not portray n sexuality. The opening frame for reading the book is through sexuality that depicts sadomasochistic sexual acts. Madonna says that she believes that sadomasochism is not about sex but "is about power, the struggle for power." The fact that explicit power struggles frame the opening of the book is revealing. The frame suggests that a central first concern about sexuality is power, which is a fundamental issue in all sexual relationships. The difference, however, as Madonna admits, is that power is the only central issue in sadomasochism.

Although the book appears to move beyond sadomasochism, thus presenting it as only one form and one central issue of sexuality, the rest of the book continues to address and depict power struggles. Madonna advises that the best way to seduce someone is to make yourself unavailable; sex with the young can be fun if you are willing to be in charge; and the power that money holds is great enough to keep women in sexual relationships with men who are less attractive. For Madonna, the sexuality presented is about power, domination, control of the attraction of the other and the young, and the power that the exchange of money has to override sexual attraction for women. In short, underlying the themes of the book are various power struggles between and among sexual partners. As in *Truth or Dare*, Madonna projects and transfers into the book her own, on-going struggle for
control.

For the reader, the viewing experience is also an ongoing journey through each mini-battle for power. In the viewing experience, the book first relentlessly distances readers from the experiences portrayed—through the two levels of distanciation—and then moves them through variations on a relentless power struggle. The reader, unable to make any part-object connections with the sexuality portrayed because of the distanciation strategies, thus is also pushed away by the text. Instead of being invited in to make part-object connections with the sexuality, the reader is kept at a distance or pushed away by the power struggles. When the distanciation strategy is coupled with the power struggles enacted, the only response for the reader is to be pushed away from the experiences, unconnected to the text.

Although readers are kept at a distance from the book because they are led through a journey of power struggles, the reading experience can leave the reader feeling attacked. Some reviewers have suggested that the book leaves the reader feeling "beat up"—with the feeling of being relentlessly attacked. Another critic describes the reading experience as "cold and uninviting, pushing you away rather than drawing you in."22 Thus, the combined effect of the distanciation strategies with the power struggles

22Leland et al., 96.
associated with sexuality explains why the reading experience is relentlessly attacking. Unable to make part-object connections but still able to experience the power struggles depicted in the book, an experience of n sexuality is impossible for the reader, which leaves the reader feeling attacked or in battle with the book.

The battle for control and power presented also requires control of self, which is central to the bodies used to personify the sexuality portrayed. In a book that depicts sexuality through varying levels of nudity, the body images shown become important to understanding underlying beliefs about sexuality. Throughout the book, with only three possible exceptions, the only bodies shown are beautiful, lean, and tightly muscled. Both the men and women in the book have the same body type—they are lean, have slim hips, and are thin and muscular—a body type that is central to male desire and power within the patriarchal image of beauty.

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23Among the bodies shown that are not lean and slender are Titian Von Furstenburg, one of the men in the beginning of the sadomasochism series, and the older man on whose lap Madonna sits. Not only are very few bodies in the book not lean, but of those that are not, they are not fat.

24Similar to Bordo, I am arguing here, drawing on Foucault, that there is a disciplinary reality for women's bodies under patriarchy that Madonna reinforces and perpetuates in Sex. Body images of women are normalized; the requirements for a woman under patriarchy is that to be sexy, to be a sexually attractive woman, a woman must be thin, slim hipped, and lean. In other words, not every body image will do for women under patriarchy. Moreover, the normalized body image for women suggests male bodies as the referent;
The issue of control underlies the depiction of the bodies in *Sex*. The bodies embody power and control because they are a result of rigorous and sustained physical workouts. To have the kind of bodies shown requires discipline, self-control, lack of indulgence, and power over the self. Madonna’s explanation of why she believes overweight people are unattractive confirms the link made in the book between kinds of bodies shown and control. In the one written fantasy that addresses the connection between sexual attraction and bodies, Madonna reveals that she once engaged in sexual activity with a man who was overweight. The experience was unappealing to her because she believed that his overweight body indicated that he was an "overindulgent pig." In other words, for Madonna, overweight bodies are the embodiment of excess, which indicates a lack of control over self. Thus, for Madonna, overindulgent, non-thin bodies lack power and control, which at the body level suggests that the connection between physical bodies and sexuality is, again, about control and power.

Moreover, in current culture, where women’s beauty and sexuality are continually linked to thin body images,

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instead of real women’s bodies, which often are more rounded and full hipped, women are disciplined into male body images that require control, power, and, often, lack. See Susan Bordo, "'Material Girl': The Effacements of Postmodern Culture," *The Madonna Connection: Representational Politics, Subcultural Identities, and Cultural Theory*, ed. Cathy Schwichtenberg (Boulder: Westview, 1993) 265-90.
underneath the drive to be thin and lean is an issue of disciplinary cultural power: those who meet the requirements of beauty have been "normalized." Normalized body images for women under patriarchy require homogenization into the beauty image, which requires, through enslavement to the fashion industry, that women are inadequate as they are; women lack the resources for being beautiful and must acquire beauty through the products of the fashion industry. Furthermore, this normalized beauty also requires that to be powerful and sexually attractive, the woman must demonstrate leanness and scarcity at the body level. Once again, power, control, and scarcity are underneath the sexuality presented in Sex, this time through the bodies employed. This strategy again suggests that the foundation of Madonna's revolutionary sexuality is based on scarcity and lack rather than on the excess of a truly revolutionary sexuality.

Several authors have noted that the one excessive image in the book is of homosexual images.25 In terms of presentation, homosexuality does predominate in Sex. In a heterosexist world, portraying and privileging homosexuality is a potentially revolutionary strategy. The problem with Sex, however, is that although homosexual images predominate, heterosexual privilege and sexism

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25Orth 206. Leland et al. describe the book as "flaunting homoerotic imagery" (102).
continue to serve as the privileged frame of reference and desire in the homosexuality.

Throughout the book, Madonna engages in and with lesbian sexuality. In the opening images of *Sex*, Madonna is seen engaging in sexual activity with two lesbian women; Dita writes about her fantasies of women and her experiences with Ingrid; and Madonna is seen engaging in sexual activity with other women—Rossillini, Von Furstenberg, and Campbell. Thus, because Madonna also engages in heterosexuality, she connects with both lesbian sexuality and heterosexuality, a step toward n sexuality in a hetereosexist world. By enacting both lesbian and heterosexual sexuality, Madonna begins to engage in transexuality—women with women and men with women. What prevents the achievement of n sexuality in the book, however, is the way that Madonna privileges male sexuality in the book—she fails to connect with male homosexuality because she restricts gay male sexuality from her sexuality, and male heterosexual desire remains the dominant referent in the sexuality portrayed in the book.

A significant absence in the book is any connection between Madonna and gay male sexuality; Madonna is never seen engaging in any explicit sexuality with gay men in the book. Madonna is shown connecting with lesbians, but she never connects with gay men. In a transexual sexuality, Madonna should connect with all forms of sexuality, including that of gay males. The absence of any sexuality
between Madonna and gay men suggests that gay male sexuality is unreachable in a way that lesbian sexuality is not. Thus, gay male sexuality is restricted from Madonna's revolutionary sexuality.

Gay male sexuality is privileged and restricted and different from lesbian sexuality in the way that it is used for heterosexual pleasure. Although Madonna uses both gay and lesbian sexuality for heterosexual pleasure, she uses them in very different ways. In the letters to Johnny, Dita uses lesbian sexuality between herself and Ingrid as a means of enticing Johnny ("PS. [sic] are you excited yet?") and displays that Johnny has engaged in sexual acts with both women. When Madonna and her male companion voyeuristically watch the gay men at strip clubs, they do so only for their own heterosexual pleasure. In other words, both lesbian and gay sexual activity are used to fuel heterosexual desire, but unlike the lesbians, the gay men are allowed to gaze, voyeuristically, at heterosexuality—Madonna and her male companion.

Male homosexuality also is viewed as fundamentally different from lesbian sexuality in the final letter to Johnny. If all homosexuality is acceptable in Madonna's revolution, why would Dita respond to Johnny as she does? When Dita discovers that Johnny engages in homosexuality, as she does in her relationship with Ingrid, Dita becomes ill and ends her relationship with Johnny. Dita also ends the
letter by emasculating Johnny—engaging in a common practice of accusing men who engage in sexual activity with other men of being like women (effeminate)—"Next time you want pussy, just look in the mirror." Thus, lesbian sexuality is portrayed as comfortable, while gay male sexuality is distanced and revolting.

In addition, before Madonna appears with other women in lesbian sexual acts—Rossillini, Von Furstenberg, and Campbell—there is no indication if the women are lesbian or not. Prior to the introduction of male-with-male sexuality, in contrast, Madonna clearly frames the pictures with homosexuality when she writes about the gay male strip clubs. Because the gay men are seen in a gay strip club, there is no doubt that the men are gay men. The fact that the women's sexual orientation is never indicated and that the only gay men shown are acknowledged as gay, prior to viewing, suggests that there is something different between the two. When the acknowledgment before the presentation of gay male sexuality is combined with Dita's emasculation of Johnny because he engages in homosexual acts, a level of comfort with lesbian sexuality emerges that does not exist for gay male sexuality.26 The combined effect of the

26In Sex, Madonna does write that men who say that they never have fantasized about being with a man "are lying." She also writes that men who have kissed or held other men are the least offensive men with whom she has been in sexual relationships. Clearly, Madonna suggests that gay men and heterosexual men should cross boundaries. In a book where pictures dominate, however, the lack of any pictorial
restriction of gay male sexuality with the comfort with lesbian sexuality indicates that gay male sexuality is off limits in a way that lesbian sexuality is not in Madonna's sexual revolution.

In Sex, then, lesbian sexuality is less boundaried than the sexuality of gay men, suggesting a level of comfort with lesbianism that permeates current culture. Because lesbianism does not violate male gender roles and male privilege in the same way that gay men do, people are more comfortable with the idea of lesbianism than they are with male homosexuality. Moreover, in a patriarchal world, lesbian sexuality, because women in general lack the same access to power that men do, regardless of sexual orientation, is less threatening to male power. Lesbianism often is used by heterosexual men for their own pleasure; sexual activity between women is sexually arousing for them because lesbians desire what heterosexual men desire—women. Gay men, however, remain threatening to power representation of men with men is a significant absence.

Cultural comfort with lesbian sexuality, as opposed to the discomfort and fear associated with gay male sexuality, is apparent in the recent debates on gays in the military. The "shower-room defense" is often given as the reason why gays should not be allowed in the military; heterosexual men are afraid of being the object and recipient of culturally sanctioned male desire in shower rooms. Such a fear is rooted in male predatory behavior that is rewarded in heterosexual desire—men seek out and win women in heterosexual relationships. Thus, although many heterosexual women are uncomfortable with being the object of lesbian desire in the shower, lesbian "sneak attacks" in shower rooms are rarely given as a reason why lesbians
structures and males in power; thus, gay male sexuality is more powerfully threatening than lesbianism.

Sex suggests that male power and dominance continue to predominate in Madonna’s sexual revolution. Male dominance permeates the sexuality in Sex in two ways. Madonna fails to connect with male homosexuality because she restricts gay male sexuality from her sexuality, and male heterosexual desire remains the dominant referent in the sexuality portrayed in the book. The male dominance found in the book is yet another reason why Sex does not portray n sexuality.

The final reason why Sex does not portray n sexuality is the manner in which the book exoticizes the Other—in this case, both gay men and people of color. After voyeuristically watching the gay men, Madonna and her companion engage in sexual activity. Also intriguing in the portrayal of gay male sexuality in this series of photographs is that Madonna is fully clothed, the only photographs in the book in which she is. This suggests that she believes that she is outside the desire of gay men. The

should not be admitted to the military. Moreover, women’s fears about lesbianism in the military rarely are addressed because most discussions about the issue stay focused entirely on gay men in the military. The fact that lesbianism is rarely discussed is particularly ironic given that currently, lesbians are discharged from the military for homosexuality at twice the rate for gay men. This fact often is attributed to the military’s use of lesbianism as a means for discharging women because of sexism. Sex, then, also appears to be perpetuating both the cultural comfort with lesbianism that is grounded in patriarchal inequity and sexism and heterosexual male fear about homosexuality.
heterosexual frame suggests that male homosexuality is to be used—exoticized by heterosexuals—for their own pleasure.

Exoticizing the Other also occurs in the way that race is depicted in Sex. The predominant racial makeup of the book is white. There are very few people of color in the book and when they do appear, Madonna uses them to exoticize herself. When Madonna is shown with Black rapper Big Daddy Kane and Black model Naomi Campbell, the image that predominates is of Madonna sandwiched between the two—she is the center of desire—as Kane watches Madonna and Campbell kiss. The image suggests that, as the center, they both desire her; although Campbell captures her with a kiss, Kane wants Madonna, too.

The closing frame on sexuality and race in the book further suggests exoticization. Madonna narrates the story of Ivo’s desire for the Cuban Other. The Cuban woman walks by Ivo, and Madonna observes, "Cheap perfume always aroused him. He believed that cheap cologne smelled luxurious on people with dark skin." The story goes on to reveal how the Cuban Other satisfied his desire, through oral sex, without any mutual sexual satisfaction. In short, in the story, the cheap luxurious Other is sexually arousing for the dominant Ivo, who is a "non-cheap," wealthy, white man (he is shopping in a designer clothing store). Again, Madonna suggests that the Other is available to service the dominant, white, wealthy Ivo, a desire that exoticizes
racial Others in a frame of white privilege.

When the Kane and Campbell pictures, where Madonna is shown as the center of desire for both, are connected with the Ivo story, the racial exoticization is apparent. Whiteness and wealth remain the center of sexual desire, and people of color and the non-wealthy are used to service and exoticize white privilege. The exoticized desire thus is a desire that centers on power and its representations—the power that dominant whites use to fulfill their own sexual pleasure. The exoticized representation of sexuality, then, is also the final reason why Sex fails to present n sexuality.

The pansexuality portrayed in Sex does not enact a revolutionary n sexes from a schizoanalytic perspective. The sexuality enacted by Sex is rooted in the scarcity and lack that drive market capitalism in that Madonna insists that restrictions and secrecy drive the production process of the book. Sex is marked by distanciation strategies that create a viewing experience that pushes readers away from rather than into the book and depicts an on-going battle for power and control that relentlessly "beats up" the reader. The book also presents disciplined bodies that embody the foundation of scarcity and lack—bodies that depict normalized patriarchal beauty images. In addition, Sex privileges male power and perpetuates the sexism that permeates homosexuality. Finally, the book exoticizes
racial Others and inscribes white power and dominance. Having revealed the way that the sexuality works in *Sex*, I now can answer the research questions that drive the feminist-schizoanalytic method.

Conclusions

The form of sexuality displayed in *Sex* continues to exhibit a borderline-narcissistic structure. For Madonna, the distanciation strategies utilized throughout the book, coupled with the on-going power struggles, continue to reveal the structure begun in the phase-two videos of the *Immaculate Collection* and illuminated in *Truth or Dare*. Madonna’s subjectivity is founded on the principles of lack and scarcity, and her drive in life is to maintain her power base.

Throughout the book, the sexuality enacted engages in on-going power struggles not unlike those that permeate Madonna’s life experiences. As a sex therapist in *Sex*—as a cultural critic—Madonna’s goal is to decode sexuality of its repressions. The decoding, however, is founded on lack because Madonna’s primary motive is to be paid for her advice. Thus, as in phase two of the *Immaculate Collection*, the borderline-narcissistic structure found in the book is inverted. Based on Madonna’s position as a recoder, Madonna’s decoded sexuality—the pansexuality that appears to present multiplicity—only serves her own profit motive. Similar to phase two of the *Immaculate Collection*, then,
Madonna's apparent multiplicity, this time with sexuality, is displayed to be founded on scarcity and lack rather than on excess. Thus, by inverting the borderline-narcissistic structure, every purchase of the book re-insures Madonna's power position in that it constitutes paying a price for her advice and multiple sexuality.

As the exchange between Dita and the doctor reveals—an example of a psychoanalytic dream analysis—Sex is a publicity stunt to sell Madonna's sexuality. As Dita says to the doctor, "Don't you realize this is a publicity stunt? It is only so the French can have something to write about in the newspapers for the next couple of months." For Madonna, the well-orchestrated publicity about the restricted content of the book provides something to write about in the newspapers for the months preceding the actual sale of the book. Thus, buying the book, sight unseen, means buying the publicity machine as much as it means buying the contents of Sex. Buying the book also means buying the "doctor's" advice—Madonna's advice as a revolutionary sex therapist who refuses to give advice without a price.

Previous commentary that suggests that Sex is neither funny nor particularly erotic also is revealed to be connected to the kind of therapy offered in the book. Rather than inviting readers in to experience pleasure that ends with a laugh—the practical goal of successful
therapy and Madonna's professed goal—the distanciation strategies and the on-going power struggles push the reader away from the experience. The therapy of Sex thus only fuels Madonna's desire for power and control, reentrenches her power position within the market, and offers an experience that is neither pleasurable nor funny.

In Sex, the sexuality displayed suggests that the gender roles enacted continue to be permeated by sexism; this is particularly true in the representation of lesbian sexuality. Even though the lesbian sexuality depicted decodes gender roles and heterosexuality, Madonna perpetuates the sexism connected with current beliefs about homosexuality. Unable to challenge male power and male privilege in the same way that gay male sexuality does, lesbian sexuality is generally more comfortable for most people because lesbians—women—are less threatening to male power. By perpetuating these sexist beliefs, Madonna uses and reentrenches lesbian sexuality in a way that fails to challenge power structures that entrench male power.

Madonna's programming strategies with sexuality—distanciation, the use of lesbian sexuality, and the use of bodies that privilege male desire—further work to recode

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Holland argues that for psychoanalysis, "the goal of therapy is not to resign us to neuroses but to overcome them; successful therapy ends with a hearty chuckle, not a rueful sigh." See Eugene Holland, "Deleuze's Critique of Lacan: Schizoanalysis and Local Semiosis," paper presented at Faculty Seminar on Cultural Politics, Ohio State University, Spring 1989: 3.
and recontain male desire and privilege. Because the foundation of the sexuality is scarcity and lack and because male desire continues to be entrenched, Madonna reentrenches and recontains the decoded desire back into patriarchal male codes that privilege men with patriarchal power.

As a music icon newly institutionalized through the deal with Time Warner, Madonna displays in Sex evidences of the constitution process of, in the Deleuzian sense, a majority capitalist. Based on Madonna's real power in the market as an institutionalized capitalist, Madonna insisted that Sex be restricted and founded on lack so that her power structure connected to majority status—restricting access to commodities in order to fuel desire based in lack—is reentrenched.

Madonna's sex therapy, offered from the position of a dominator, displays important insights into Madonna's beliefs about the power structure she safeguards and the potential implications those beliefs have for women. For Madonna, power is uncomplicated: power and its struggles are simply about winning and reentrenching power over others. Thus, for Madonna, being powerful means taking power from those who have power.

Madonna does seem aware, at some level, that power may be a bit more complicated, especially for women, when she says that some women cannot get out of abusive relationships for economic reasons. She also writes that economic
vulnerability is a reason why women may stay in sexual relationships with men who are not attractive. The solution to unequal power dynamics for Madonna, however, returns to an uncomplicated belief that power is equally accessible to all people. The clue to Madonna’s position is suggested in her claim that the difference between sadomasochism and abuse is the issue of responsibility, that there is mutual consent. Madonna’s entire career is built on the notion that she has gained power in the market and now she, too, is a majority capitalist. Madonna’s position, then, about women’s economic vulnerability would be for women simply to become economically powerful—like herself.

Madonna’s position makes sense given the borderline-narcissistic structure found in Truth or Dare and perpetuated in Sex. Unable to synthesize good and bad and only able to engage in on-going power struggles, Madonna is incapable of synthesizing the complexity of power dynamics. To put it another way, complex understandings of power require the ability to tolerate complex thinking—to tolerate and synthesize contradictions about power—which is impossible for Madonna. Moreover, given her own black-and-white thinking and need to control her disorganized ego, a view of power as anything but the dichotomy between dominating and being dominated is too threatening for Madonna’s sense of self. Similar to my argument about Madonna’s borderline-narcissistic structure in Truth or
Dare, because Madonna has no core sense of identity, she sees intimate relationships as threatening to her fragile sense of self. She must protect herself from being dominated by dominating, as, for example, in her relationship with Beatty; Madonna must continue to advocate the position of domination to protect herself from being dominated. Without such protection, she would collapse into nothing.

As an institutionalized capitalist, the only dynamic of power that Madonna is able to recognize is the power of money: she acknowledges that women might stay in relationships because of inequity due to money, but the women are at fault for not gaining the power—the money—they need to be equal to men. Madonna, who engages in nothing but power struggles to reentrench and perpetuate her position as dominator on the market of money exchange, must perpetuate the dominator/dominated power dynamics of capitalist market exchanges in order to protect herself. Unable to recognize the complexity of the power dynamics in abusive relationships and unwilling to let go of her patriarchal power position, Madonna ends up blaming women for the violence committed against them because they have failed to gain the money they need for equity. The power dynamics, then, are simple: power is about who has money and its associated power within a market exchange.

As Madonna strips away codes about sexuality and
gender, she does so only to re-substantiate patriarchal power. Thus, for women without conferred sources of power, Madonna's sexual revolution simply pushes those women aside and outside of capitalist power positions. For feminist cultural politics, Madonna's sexuality and its power dynamics are fundamentally connected to Madonna's role as an institutionalized programmer--her meta-level strategy of capitalizing on the market to create meaning value for her commodities and herself.

Having gained enormous power in the market as an institutionalized majority capitalist, Madonna uses potentially revolutionary discourse about sexuality--her pansexuality--in order reentrench her power positions. Although Madonna's sexuality decodes heterosexual privilege, in the end, because there is no part-object connection possible, the freed desire found in Sex is recontained to perpetuate Madonna's narcissistic revolution. The sexuality presented in Sex, which appears to be n sexuality, is a market sexuality. Founded on the market imperatives of scarcity and lack, Madonna's decoded sexuality is used only to re-establish Madonna's institution--herself.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSIONS

The feminist-rhetorical-schizoanalytic perspective utilized in this study explores the borderline narcissism at work in Madonna's artifacts in two senses—both as a structural diagnosis of the culture of borderline narcissism and as a psychological diagnosis of an individual subject. Different aspects of these conceptions of borderline narcissism were revealed to be important in various of the Madonna artifacts analyzed. In Chapter Four, the analysis of *The Immaculate Collection*, I take an evolutionary and structural perspective in order to explore the borderline narcissism exhibited within the music industry and Madonna's videos. In Chapter Five, the analysis of *Truth or Dare*, I take a psychological perspective in order to uncover Madonna's own borderline narcissism. I take a literary-clinical-socio-cultural perspective in my analysis of *Sex* in Chapter Six to uncover Madonna's borderline narcissism and her critique of cultural codes about sexuality. In this chapter, I bring the separate findings together to draw conclusions about how Madonna's borderline narcissism functions across the artifacts to answer the research
questions that guide the study.

In section one, I provide a brief summary of the analyses of the artifacts. The next two sections address the two minor research questions of the study: (1) What is the decoded and recoded desire at work in Madonna artifacts? and (2) What do Madonna artifacts show about patriarchy under capitalism? In section four, I assess Madonna’s popularity with feminist scholars both to suggest why she is so popular and the implications of her popularity for feminist scholarship. The final section answers the major research question; here I seek to suggest the effects of the collaboration between feminist rhetoric and schizoanalysis.

Summary of Analyses

Immaculate Collection

My findings in the analysis of The Immaculate Collection suggest a shift in the presentation of Madonna’s sexuality within the videos. Phase-one videos take excess as the content of Madonna’s early, working-class nomad days—excess manifest in Madonna’s body, her scrambling of codes, and the insistence that the feminine also can have power. In these videos, Madonna suggests a minority becoming process that disrupts the dominant, homogeneous codes of the music industry.

The becoming process of phase one also exposes the desire at work in Madonna’s programming. Her programming in this phase appears to move toward n sexes, a revolutionary
schizophrenia, but the process is constrained by the borderline-narcissistic paths of MTV that recontain the desire into Oedipalized phallic positions. Thus, Madonna continually takes up powerful phallic positions in her enactment of her revolutionary sexuality. Although Madonna’s initial programming strategy draws on an excessive disruption of feminine gender codes, then, they are recoded by the phallic positions of power that drive MTV.

Madonna could have continued to draw on excess; she chose not to, however, and sold out her minority becoming process for a majority position based on power and scarcity. The result, as the transitional videos—Material Girl and Papa Don’t Preach—reveal, was to make her "the biggest star in the universe." This transition period moves into phase two of Madonna’s videos, a phase marked by both MTV’s and Madonna’s move toward cultural postmodern iconicity.

In phase two of her videos, when Madonna is shown as the sleek sophisticate, Madonna’s borderline-narcissistic structure is inverted. Drawing on a foundation of capitalist power, which runs on scarcity and lack, Madonna engages in gender decoding to recode her own power position within the music industry. Madonna’s programming strategy is to endow and recode more or less worthless objects with surplus value—such as creating surplus value for jeans by labeling them "designer" jeans. With this strategy, Madonna strips and then recodes valuable objects—split-off gender
roles—to insure her position of power. Consequently, her programming strategy of splitting off wealthy and multiple gender roles keeps the supply for Madonna’s commodities in constant demand and limited, which also reinsures her power because the controlling wealth behind the multiplicity is inaccessible to most people. The bottom line, then, about Madonna’s sexuality in phase two is that the constitution process—the logic of the capitalist MTV system—is the fundamental component of the shifting phases evident in Madonna’s videos. Madonna’s shift to phase-two programming strategies exposes Madonna’s cooptation to majority capitalism and her investment in perpetuating a desire based in lack to fulfill capitalist imperatives that demand new and better products/commodities.

Madonna’s programming works in phase two as a brilliant marketing strategy because the multiple gender roles in the videos are emptied of their traditional use value in order to create a pure form of exchange value for multiple mass-commodity consumption. In short, Madonna uses her position of power in the market as the foundation for her programming strategy of splitting off gender roles, which are stripped of traditional use value, to recode them with exchange value to sell and reinvent an always-changing gender image. Thus, as a programmer with power, Madonna employs multiple decoded gender images in order to perpetuate her power and to provide a commodity to be exchanged for money.
Truth or Dare

The analysis of *Truth or Dare*, in which I employ a psychological perspective to examine the profile found about Madonna's borderline-narcissistic subjectivity, suggests that Madonna controls her weak ego structure by engaging in on-going power struggles to control her life and to dominate and control others—her intimate relationships, the dancers, and the tour. For Madonna, then, power is the aphrodisiac that fuels her desire.

The power dynamic of Madonna's sexuality is connected to the split-off gender roles Madonna programs in the film—specifically, how she defines gender and the way that she splits off femininity and masculinity. Primarily as a result of her real-life experiences with her mother's death—the single most important moment in her life, according to Madonna—Madonna lost her feminine traits and took on traditionally male characteristics of ambition and aggressiveness. Although Madonna attempts to portray herself as being both masculine—in control of the tour, business, and her intimate relationships—and feminine—through her mothering of the dancers, her vulnerability, and her little girlness—ultimately, her masculine traits of power and control dominate. Madonna's mothering, for example, always returns to her desire to control and dominate others, specifically her children, the dancers. Also, Madonna's little-girl persona is only invoked when she
already has distanced herself from her own vulnerability, as when others’ descriptions of Madonna are heard in the film. The little-girl persona thus deflects potential scrutiny about Madonna’s vulnerability and allows her to maintain her control of the description.

Another result of Madonna’s weak ego structure is her inability to experience the world outside herself or to participate in the world without obsessive self-referentiality—in Truth or Dare, through the camera. In order to watch her own reflection in the mirror/camera, Madonna’s primary strategy as a programmer is to engage in a meta-level distancing by separating from her own experiences—her mother’s death, her disappointment with Banderas, and her own performances—in order to watch, with the audience, her own experiences. Madonna’s programming strategy is a strategy of desperation: the distanciation process confirms her existence as she watches the reflection of her selves in the film/mirror because she is unable to make the confirmation for herself. Because she is unable to move beyond herself, the external world—the viewing audience of the film—is unimportant for Madonna; the camera is the only external object that is important to Madonna because it allows her to confirm her existence to herself.

Although the film crew was billed as having total access to Madonna’s life during the filming process, there was one boundary on which Madonna insisted—she did not
allow the filming of her business meetings. By restricting access to her business, Madonna restricts the presentation of the materiality and power base of her life and the tour—the material reality of the tour, her financial dealings, and her success as a superstar. Madonna’s protection of the foundation of her power in the market, then, keeps Madonna’s power restricted and limited to herself and re-substantiates her control over the materiality of her life.

The key psychological component of how Madonna’s borderline narcissism works in *Truth or Dare*, then, is Madonna’s on-going struggle to control her disorganized ego. She hopes to establish narcissistically a sense of self through the camera, which is a strategy that maintains her sanity and domination of herself and others.

**Sex**

Results of the analysis of *Sex*, in which I utilize a literary-clinical-socio-cultural perspective, suggest that the sexuality displayed in Madonna’s borderline narcissism is founded on the scarcity and lack that drove the production process of the book. The book is based on Madonna’s real power in the market as a newly institutionalized capitalist, evidenced by her deal with Time Warner. Madonna insisted that the production process of *Sex* be restricted and founded on lack, a process that insures her status as a majority capitalist. Consequently, the sexuality displayed in *Sex* continues to exhibit the
narcissistic-borderline structure of a majority capitalist
found in the phase-two videos of The Immaculate Collection.

The sexuality of Sex also is marked by distanciation
strategies that create a viewing experience that pushes
readers away from rather than draws them into the book.
These distanciation strategies depict an on-going battle for
power and control that relentlessly "beats up" the reader.
The sexuality is enacted through disciplined bodies that
also embody the foundation of scarcity and lack and
perpetuate "normalized"—in the Foucauldian sense—
patriarchal beauty images. In addition, the sexuality
privileges male power and perpetuates the sexism that
permeates heterosexuality. Finally, the sexuality presented
exoticizes racial Others and inscribes white power and
dominance. Thus, throughout the book, the sexuality enacted
engages in on-going power struggles not unlike those that
permeate Madonna's life experiences in Truth or Dare.

In Sex, the sexuality presented suggests that the
gender roles enacted—specifically, the representation of
lesbian sexuality—continue to be permeated by sexism. Even
though the lesbian sexuality depicted decodes gender roles
and heterosexuality, Madonna's use of lesbian sexuality for
male pleasure and the fact that a level of comfort exists
with lesbian sexuality that does not exist with gay male
sexuality perpetuate and reinforce the sexism that drives
male power and privilege. The acceptance of lesbian
sexuality, rather than being freeing for women, demonstrates the sexism of lesbian sexuality: women have less power and thus are viewed as less threatening to cultural codes than gay males, who still have power as men. Consequently, gay men have power because they are men, whereas lesbians, because they are women, do not have the same power. As a result, attitudes toward lesbian sexuality are permeated by sexism, whereas the same attitudes are not evidenced in gay male sexuality. By perpetuating these sexist beliefs, Madonna uses and reentrenches lesbian sexuality in a manner that fails to challenge power structures that entrench male power.

As a sex therapist in Sex, Madonna's decoded sexuality—the pansexuality that appears to present multiplicity—is used only to serve her own profit motive. The result is an inverted narcissistic-borderline structure in which every purchase of Madonna's sexuality re-insures her power position as a recoder by paying a price for Madonna's advice about a decoded multiple sexuality. Thus, buying the book, sight unseen, means buying the publicity machine as much as it means buying the contents of Sex. As a result, the sexual revolution contained in Sex falls short of presenting the revolutionary sexuality. Similar to phase two of the Immaculate Collection, then, Madonna's apparent multiplicity in Sex, this time dealing explicitly with sexuality, is revealed to be founded on scarcity and
lack to fuel her own desire for power and control in the market.

This review of each artifact allows analysis of how Madonna's borderline narcissism works across the three artifacts. In addition, the research questions that drive the study also can be addressed.

Decoded and Recoded Desire in Madonna's Artifacts

The decoded and recoded desire at work in Madonna's artifacts shifts over the duration of her career from a revolutionary schizophrenic desire to a non-revolutionary desire founded on power, lack, and control. The phase-one videos of The Immaculate Collection illuminate a potentially revolutionary schizophrenic desire that is founded on the excess of Madonna's nomadic, minority life as she tried to break into the music industry. The revolutionary potential was lost in Madonna's transition to her phase-two videos because the foundation of her subjectivity also shifted from excess to lack. Madonna's desire in her phase-two videos--the desire of a majority capitalist--must institute an unsatisfiable desire that creates high demand for her products/self. Simultaneously, she must maintain the control and power to keep her commodities scarce. Thus, in phase two of The Immaculate Collection, having and maintaining her power base become of primary concern for the products Madonna creates and sells.

Once Madonna makes the move into a majority capitalist
position, she continues her primary focus on maintaining her power and control, as evidenced in both *Truth or Dare*, where Madonna's life is displayed to be an on-going power struggle to control her own weak ego and to re-insure her position of power, and *Sex*, which revolves around power and control of sexuality. Thus, similar to the phase-two videos, *Sex* and *Truth or Dare* uncover the centrality of power and control as Madonna becomes a majority capitalist.

From phase two of *The Immaculate Collection* through *Truth or Dare* and *Sex*, the desire in Madonna's inverted narcissistic-borderline subjectivity works in the following manner: Based on her position as a majority capitalist, Madonna assumes the position of a recoder who takes scarcity and lack as her founding desire, and she utilizes decoding of gender and sexuality as a means to re-substantiate her power position. The cause of the inversion is not some intentional act by Madonna; rather, the cause is Madonna's acquisition of real power in the market. Madonna's own personal need to engage in on-going power struggles--displayed in *Truth or Dare*--is exaggerated by Madonna's acquisition of the real power conferred with membership in the constant and homogeneous system of majority capitalism. Thus, the real power Madonna gains propels her away from her revolutionary schizophrenic potential. In other words, because Madonna lives in a constant struggle for self-control as a minority (an experience not unlike that of all
borderlines in current culture), when she becomes a real majority capitalist, she enters into a majority system that doubles her fear and confers a desire based on lack as the payment for membership. Ultimately, then, Madonna's cooptation by the market insidiously guarantees that Madonna is forever locked into power struggles that destroy her revolutionary potential.

Assessment of the issue of power that permeates all three artifacts suggests the full and double meaning of Madonna's claim, "Power is an aphrodisiac and I'm a powerful person." Madonna, indeed, is a powerful person within the capitalist market whose only aphrodisiac is the drive to maintain her position as a majority capitalist. The semiotic structure of capitalism that creates Madonna's potential revolutionary subjectivity also kills that revolutionary potential when Madonna acquires the privilege of a majority capitalist--her on-going power struggles are doubly exaggerated by the power dynamics inherent in the capitalist system.

Analysis of the three artifacts also exposes Madonna's primary programming with gender and sexuality. Rather than engaging in a programming that endows more or less worthless objects with surplus value, Madonna's programming strips (decodes) current forms of gender and sexuality of their cultural and material specificity in order to use both for her own power gains. Madonna's programming strategy, then,
strips both gender and sexuality of their specificity in order to endow them with market value to sell her commodities/herself.

In phase two of *The Immaculate Collection*, for example, the sophisticated, sleek programmer strips the real condition of most women in culture by presenting a plethora of wealthy gender roles and images as the commodity to be bought with each new video. Of course, the programming strategy also meets the demand to create new and better products with each video. Thus, Madonna strips gender to reinvent herself constantly to insure that she has commodities for sale. The same strategy is found in Madonna’s programming of sexuality in *Sex*. Having stripped the historical specificity of the real minority status of gays and lesbians and people of color, she uses their status to present a pansexuality for her own gain. Thus, Madonna’s programming strategy of presenting multiple gender roles and sexuality in *The Immaculate Collection* and in *Sex* is fundamentally rooted in her narcissistic desire for capitalist power—she uses both gender roles and sexuality to realize her own profit and power.

*Truth or Dare* suggests another way that Madonna uses gender for her own personal gain. The analysis of the film uncovers that Madonna’s psychological structure leaves her unable to synthesize femininity and masculinity primarily as a result of the death of her mother. Madonna thus maintains
a permanent split between a masculinity founded on having power and a femininity founded on lack of power. Because life is a power struggle for Madonna and she privileges her own masculinity, Madonna only uses femininity in the film to entrench her own power and to confirm her own beliefs about herself, a strategy she developed early in her life as a means of seeking and getting attention. Her mothering of the dancers, for example, uses femininity in order to secure her own position of control over the dancers and to fulfill her own need to nurture. Thus, Madonna manipulates femininity as a means to perpetuate what she believes is her masculine power and privilege.

When Madonna's strategy of stripping multiple gender roles and sexuality of their historical specificity is coupled with her programming strategy of using femininity for her own gain, the process by which gender and sexuality work in Madonna's artifacts is uncovered: Madonna strips sexuality, gender, and femininity of use value in order to recode all three with exchange value to sell her stardom. Decoded gender, sexuality, and femininity are privileged in order to sell them as the commodities for consumption. This double movement of decoding and recoding is found in Madonna's programming of all three: Madonna decodes gender roles, sexuality, and femininity but uses them only to re-substantiate her own power.

Patriarchy under Capitalism in Madonna's Artifacts
Patriarchy and capitalism remain intimately connected to the changing discourse about gender and sexuality, particularly as a result of feminist discourse about both. As feminist discourse has entered into the systems of power under capitalism, traditional patriarchal gender roles have been both decoded and recoded. As I emphasized in the analysis of *The Immaculate Collection* but also found in the other two artifacts, Madonna and other women have had real material gains from feminism's demands of culture: traditional gender roles are being freed (decoded) within culture. The decoding of gender roles and feminism's own discourse, however, remains constrained (recoded) by class and capitalist imperatives that link decoding of gender to consumption, thus recoding desire back into market consumption. The problem, then, that Madonna embodies and that is displayed in all three artifacts is that the double movement of feminism under capitalist patriarchy remains tied to the issue of capitalist power in the market.

As many advertisements geared specifically at women suggest, women can be powerful and free to be anyone they want to be as long as they acquire and consume specific products/commodities. For example, buy Nike products and be an athlete, buy non-stick cooking spray and be a good cook, and buy business suits and be a successful professional. This is the very position Madonna models: as a wealthy woman, she can be anyone she wants and can take on multiple
gender roles with her adoption or use of each new product. Madonna's play with gender and sexuality, then, is related fundamentally to the materiality of the power and class dynamics that constitute patriarchy under capitalism. Patriarchy under capitalism thus advocates a very specific definition of freedom for women: freedom means gaining access to the materiality of the upper class and its power. In short, what Madonna suggests is that women's lives and gender under capitalist patriarchy have been freed from traditional forms of gender (decoded) and remain restricted by classist forms of gender (recoding).

The particular form of gendered freedom found in Madonna's artifacts discloses her solution to patriarchal oppression for other women. Although she does so in a complex way, Madonna appears to model and perpetuate the "queen-bee syndrome"—if she can gain access to the power of capitalism, so, too, can other women. Because she has "made it" and gained power, Madonna can be whomever she wants to be—she can enact multiple gender roles—and so, too, can other women. The analysis of Madonna's uncomplicated understanding of power in Sex further suggests her queen-bee solution for women who are powerless: all women need to do is gain the same power she has in order to pay for their freedom and its accompanying rights to enact a multiple sexuality.

Analysis of the artifacts also suggests insight into
the connection between the higher incidence of borderline pathology in women under current forms of patriarchy. As feminist demands have created changing gender roles under patriarchy, the material power that accompanies majority status has not been stripped from those with power. As a result, most women--unlike Madonna and other individual women who have experienced real material gains that strip gender roles of some forms of their oppressiveness--have not gained access to the real power relations behind patriarchy under capitalism. The condition of women under capitalist patriarchy, influenced by feminism, currently encourages and seems to constitute a borderline-narcissistic structure for most women.

Bombarded every day by media and advertising messages about the plethora of options available to women but without corresponding and equitable gains in power, women under capitalist patriarchy are caught in a double bind: be all you can be without the power to be anyone. Men also are influenced by feminism, but the command for them is: be all you can be with access to the power to be a capitalist. Thus, the fact that women under capitalist patriarchy exhibit more borderline pathology than men makes sense.

My analysis of Madonna's artifacts suggests that although patriarchy under capitalism has adjusted to feminist demands of culture, the changing discourse about gender and sexuality remains steeped in class power and
privilege. Having gained access to the class privilege and power of capitalism, Madonna suffers from a queen-bee syndrome that does not alter current forms of patriarchy. The analysis suggests, as well, that the changing discourse about gender roles, without accompanying changes in power, may be a cause for the higher incidence of borderline pathology in women under capitalist patriarchy.

Madonna’s Popularity with Feminists

Analysis of Madonna’s artifacts also has important implications and findings about how and why Madonna is popular with feminist scholars. I suggest in Chapter One that the use of the term, popular, in this study is much richer in meaning than the claim that Madonna has a lot of fans. Rather, the term draws on the schizoanalytic sense of popular and indicates the enormous investment of human energy—desire—in Madonna as a staying and lasting phenomenon. Exploration of Madonna’s popularity entails assessing how and why Madonna is so popular with feminist scholars. In doing so, I also consider the compatibility between the findings from this study and those of other feminist scholars interested in Madonna.

Although some feminists are troubled by Madonna, for the most part, as the literature review in Chapter One shows, Madonna remains popular as a subject for analysis for feminist scholars. They offer various interpretations of what Madonna offers feminism. Fiske and Lewis argue, for
example, that Madonna offers girls and women a femininity that counters female dependence and passivity.1 Kaplan, drawing on the *Material Girl* video, and McClary, drawing on *Open Your Heart* and *Like a Prayer*, argue that Madonna challenges the binaries—male/female, high art/pop art, public/private, Self/Other, and narrative closure—that drive Western culture.2 All four, then, celebrate Madonna as a feminist role model for girls and women.

My findings in the phase-one videos are similar to Fiske and Lewis' findings: within the context of the classic ideology, Madonna does offer a powerful femininity. My findings, however, unlike those of Kaplan and McClary, suggest that Madonna's decoding of femininity entails taking up the masculine side of the binary in the phase-one videos. My findings are congruous with hooks's argument that Madonna's subversive potential is undermined by specific components of her presentation. For hooks, Madonna upstages

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racial issues by exoticizing the Other,\(^3\) a pattern I also noticed in Madonna's exoticization of the Spanish Others in La Isla Bonita; the exoticization of the Cuban woman in the Ivo story in Sex; and Madonna's exoticization and use of race to confirm her role as the white center of desire in the photos of Campbell, Kane, and herself. Thus, the findings from my analysis are contradictory: Madonna models a subversive femininity, but the exoticization found in her other work undermines her subversive feminist potential.

The feminist literature about Madonna's postmodern subjectivity and my findings have points of compatibility and incompatibility. As Kaplan suggests about Madonna's postmodern subjectivity,\(^4\) I conclude, in my analysis of Truth or Dare, that Madonna has no stable identity. My findings across artifacts, but especially in Truth or Dare, are also compatible with Primbram's argument that Madonna's simulated subjectivity allows her to seduce as she controls.\(^5\) My findings, however, are incompatible with

\(^{3}\)Bell hooks, \textit{Black Looks: Race and Representation} (Boston: South End, 1992) 161.


Morton's claim that Madonna's refusal to present a stable image in Express Yourself suggests that Madonna does not engage in power over others in the video. My findings again are contradictory: Madonna's subjectivity precludes her from having a stable identity, but this is the very reason Madonna is unable to move beyond anything but power-over relationships in which she dominates.

In the literature that assesses whether or not Madonna is a postmodern feminist heroine, all the scholars agree that Madonna presents a postmodern subjectivity. Thus, they explore the issues Madonna's postmodern subjectivity raises for feminism and evaluate whether Madonna should be viewed as a postmodern feminist heroine. I agree with Schwichtenberg that Madonna's subjectivity has no stable identity: I disagree with her claim, however, that Madonna's simulated (multiple) postmodern subjectivity can serve as a model for a feminist politics that unifies coalitionally—that partial, rather than whole, connections are possible among political groups. This claim


contradicts my findings that Madonna's subjectivity in *Truth or Dare* and sexuality in *Sex* impede the part-objection connection necessary for coalitional politics.

Mandziuk does not view Madonna as a postmodern feminist heroine. She argues that Madonna's texts exhibit postmodernism's dream of multiple selves at the cost of staking any ground or claim to collective power.8 Mandziuk's assessment is compatible with my suggestion, in the analysis of *Truth or Dare*, that Madonna's constant defense of her political right to artistic freedom draws on a collective privilege—a right grounded in a collective liberty to be free from tyranny and oppression—to serve, narcissistically, her demand that she can perform whatever she wants without investing any stake in insuring that others have the same collective right.

Bordo argues that feminist theorizing that views Madonna as a postmodern feminist heroine celebrates Madonna's ideological freedom at the expense of Madonna's material oppression, as evidenced by Madonna's lean, thin, muscular body, which is a "normalized" patriarchal body. For Bordo, this kind of postmodern theorizing leads to keeping the "body immaterial, so long as the imagination is

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free." She suggests that postmodern theorizing that does not attend to material issues is a form of theorizing that advocates ideological freedom (imaginative freedom) while completely ignoring any sense of real body politics (material freedom). Bordo's claims are compatible with my conclusions about the bodies represented in *Sex* and my findings about Madonna's continued insistence on keeping her material power base separate from her presentation of self in *Truth or Dare*.

Tetzlaff's analysis suggests that Madonna's postmodern strategy of constructing a meta-level narrative about herself—her authorship of constantly changing gender images—empties the use value of gender for exchange value. This transformation, he argues, is the result of capitalist imperatives that "have displaced many of the traditional practices and discourses of patriarchy." He suggests that the empowerment of the postmodern feminism that Madonna offers is devoid of material power and cultural historicity, making Madonna a poor postmodern feminist heroine. My findings about Madonna's programming strategy—that she

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strips gender and sexuality of their cultural and historical specificity so that she can sell both— are compatible with Tetzlaff’s suggestions.

Although my findings are generally compatible with the scholars interested in evaluating whether or not Madonna is a postmodern feminist heroine, there is one fundamental difference between our positions. My findings suggest that the basic premise of the literature—that Madonna models a postmodern subjectivity—is fundamentally flawed. If the feminist postmodern scholars take postmodern subjectivity to mean that Madonna’s subjectivity is a fully free, unboundaried subjectivity without a center or core, Madonna’s subjectivity is not postmodern. Rather, because Madonna’s majority subjectivity centers on power and lack, her subjectivity is centered on market exchange and power and is boundaried by the limits of Madonna’s business, as displayed in Truth or Dare. As I noted in the analysis of Sex, there is nothing free about Madonna’s subjectivity. Thus, the only form of postmodern subjectivity that Madonna models is a capitalist postmodern subjectivity, where the cultural codes decoded—often what people mean by postmodernism—always are recoded by the imperatives of the market.

The fact that my analysis included attention to both ideological and material dimensions of Madonna’s postmodern subjectivity may account for my different conclusion.
concerning Madonna's postmodernism. Madonna's subjectivity is seductive for feminist scholars who focus on the ideological (imaginative) understandings of postmodern subjectivity because, by appearing to enact the multiplicity of a free form of subjectivity, Madonna does enact feminism's own discourse about the freedom to choose multiple gender roles and sexuality. Madonna is doubly seductive because she presents contradictory gender and sexual roles in her presentation of self. For postmodern feminist theorists who privilege irony, multiplicity, and simulation, Madonna satisfies postmodern desire for contradiction without boundaries.

The fact that a significant amount of the feminist interest in Madonna centers on Madonna's subjectivity after she became a majority capitalist—the analyses center on Express Yourself and Truth or Dare—provides further insight into the kind of postmodern desire Madonna offers feminists. Because Madonna appears to enact a world beyond and above the "isms" of oppression—racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism—Madonna fulfills the postmodern dream for a world that is free of oppression—the same dream held by many feminists. Theorists who engage in analyses that do not direct attention to the materiality of Madonna's life easily can be seduced by a woman who appears to model a subjectivity that is beyond the world of "isms" that drive current culture. Madonna is not seductive in the same
manner for scholars who utilize material analyses in exploring Madonna's postmodern subjectivity. For material scholars—Bordo and Tetzlaff, for example—who insist on foregrounding the material issues in Madonna's subjectivity, Madonna is troubling because she incorporates a sophisticated form of the "isms" in her artifacts. Madonna enacts both a subjectivity free from the "isms" of culture and one that can be shown to be deeply embedded with them. Thus, although Madonna may fulfill a feminist desire for a free form of subjectivity, that desire also separates feminist scholars from the material issues related to Madonna's subjectivity.

Previous feminist scholars, because they employed different tools, have difficult assessing the contradictions that permeate Madonna's subjectivity. As a result, they have had to assess, ultimately, whether Madonna is revolutionary or oppressive. My analysis suggests that the way out of the double bind of whether she is or is not a feminist heroine—to move beyond getting trapped into an either/or binary position—is to start with the contradiction that undergirds the debate—that Madonna is both—and then assess how Madonna both frees and restricts cultural codes. To put it another way, the very contradiction that fuels how Madonna's popularity works for feminists also explains why Madonna is so popular with feminist scholars—Madonna's subjectivity contains both
decoding and recoding. As a result, assessing both, rather than either decoding or recoding, can open up new possibilities for feminist scholars to move beyond binary theorizing about Madonna. Consequently, because decoding and recoding can account for how Madonna decodes the ideological and recodes the material, my analysis suggests that feminist postmodern theorizing can work beyond the separation of the ideological and material and the restricting debates about whether Madonna is or is not a feminist heroine by focusing on how the contradiction works through decoding and recoding.

To assess Madonna's revolutionary potential for feminism, evaluation of which side of the split between decoding and recoding Madonna's artifacts privilege is necessary. My analysis of the artifacts discloses that Madonna's sexuality and its power dynamics are connected fundamentally to Madonna's role as an institutionalized programmer and thus privilege the power and scarcity of majority capitalism. Even though Madonna does decode cultural codes, because she privileges majority power and coopted feminist demands, the Madonna Phenomenon is dangerous for feminism. As the analysis of *Truth or Dare* and *Sex* suggest, because Madonna's revolution serves her own narcissistic needs, in the end, the kind of part-object connection that is necessary for a truly free postmodern revolution is impossible. Madonna, then, is an important
icon for feminism only as a model of women's borderline-narcissistic subjectivity—she is caught in the decoding of sexuality with real power in the marketplace. She is important to feminism because she offers profound insight into the way women's lives contain the decoding and recoding of cultural codes.

Feminist Rhetorical Theory and Schizoanalysis: The Effects of the Collaboration

Use of Madonna's artifacts for a case study has illuminated how Madonna's subjectivity works and how and why the desire at work in the Madonna phenomenon functions for feminist scholars. The findings of the case study now can be used to evaluate the effects of the collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalytic theory. Several important findings about both feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis emerge. The insight that schizoanalysis' understanding of subjectivity offers is that the current semiosis that drives culture and current forms of subjectivity is constrained by the double movement of decoding and recoding. In order to capture the complexity of current forms of subjectivity, the schizoanalytic tools of decoding and recoding provide a means of exploring both the freeing and restricting movement that occurs in both subjects and artifacts. Thus, in a complex world where any one event or person can be both freeing and constraining, decoding and recoding provide tools to explore both
processes. The most important effect that schizoanalysis offers feminists interested in subjectivity is a way out of falling into the trap of postmodern theorizing that advocates ideological freedom (imaginative freedom) while completely ignoring any sense of the material politics of current culture (material freedom).

The fundamental limitation of the critique of Oedipal subjectivity that feminist rhetorical theory corrects is that the tools provided by schizoanalysis cannot account for the central role gender plays in Madonna’s borderline-narcissistic subjectivity and in a borderline-narcissistic culture, in general. My analysis of Madonna’s artifacts shows that gender is central to understanding how Madonna’s borderline-narcissistic subjectivity works. In phase two of The Immaculate Collection, for example, Madonna uses gender roles as the commodities to be sold. In the analysis of Truth or Dare, Madonna’s real-life experience—the death of her mother—is shown to account for Madonna’s inability to synthesize gender roles, which results in Madonna’s remaining forever split between privileging masculinity over femininity. This privileging of masculinity continually is reinforced by the fact that in a patriarchal world, masculinity has more culturally conferred status and power. Finally, the exploration of Sex uncovers how Madonna utilizes sexist understandings of feminine gender roles in her presentation of sexuality.
The study also suggests that the higher incidence of borderline pathology in women is connected to gender under patriarchy. As I first suggested in the analysis of Truth or Dare, as women’s roles have changed, most women have developed confusion about who they are and what is expected of them: women must make painful decisions about careers, families, and children, and they often live without real material rewards as a result of those choices. The confusion, then, with which most women live today takes a borderline structure, where identity and role confusion are central and where the frustration of the lack of real power is constant. Capitalist patriarchy thus is able to appear to encourage multiplicity in women’s gender roles without giving up the power to substantiate materially the gains that feminism has demanded. Feminism under capitalist patriarchy also is caught in the double bind that is illuminated with changing gender roles: unable to synthesize changing roles with material power, feminism under capitalism has decoded gender but remains restricted and trapped by the power positions of the majority capitalists.

If the analysis of Madonna artifacts had proceeded without attention to how gender works in Madonna’s artifacts and subjectivity and how gender and feminist discourse continue to be restricted by patriarchy under capitalism, a fundamental component of the explanation of how borderline
narcissism works for Madonna would have been lost. Thus, an important effect of the collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalytic theory is that feminist rhetorical theory contributes insight into the centrality of how gender works within a borderline-narcissistic subjectivity and culture. Both feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis, then, contribute important insights into the study of subjectivity, and both are mutually transformed by the interaction with the other. Schizoanalysis offers a critique of Oedipal subjectivity, while feminist rhetorical theory adds the fundamental component of gender.

A primary limitation in the collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis, however, is the potential difficulty of assessing what constitutes decoding and recoding, a problem that warrants further discussion. The primary drawback with the collaboration is finding criteria for what will count as decoding and recoding because the criteria can be different for each theorist who employs the tools. As noted in Chapter One, theorists can take what they want from the conceptual tool box schizoanalysis provides, making difficult the finding of common ground about what constitutes decoding and recoding in an artifact. Fortunately, however, because schizoanalysis insists that contextualization be brought to the foreground in analysis, a means is available for developing criteria for a collective understanding of
decoding and recoding.

Contextualization demands that artifacts be viewed within the production process. Consequently, the context of each artifact can serve as the ground for developing criteria for what constitute decoding and recoding in each artifact. In this study, for example, in order to develop discernible criteria for what count as decoding and recoding in each artifact, I grounded each analysis within both current theoretical understandings about each type of artifact and the production process of each artifact. Analysis of the videos in The Immaculate Collection, for example, were contextualized both within the production process that drives MTV and Kaplan's theorizing about rock ideologies; I then laid out the criteria for decoding and recoding. Thus, decoding and recoding in the phase-one videos were framed by a classic ideology, while the decoding and recoding of phase-two videos were framed by a postmodern ideology. The same process of contextualization occurred in the other two artifacts: Truth or Dare was framed within film theory and Madonna's real-life experiences, while Sex was framed within its production process and Madonna's institutionalization with the Time Warner deal. As a result, criteria for identifying decoding and recoding were clear prior to the analysis.

With the criteria known in advance, then, various critics can assess the criteria for what has counted for the
decoding and recoding in an artifact, but the originating critic's criteria remain the primary means for entering the discussion. Thus, collective standards about what ought to count as decoding and recoding in artifacts can and should occur in schizoanalytic readings, but the springboard for analysis starts with the ideas of the critic.

The final effect that must be assessed concerning the collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis is whether the collaboration establishes transformative theorizing, a foundational concern of the study. In Chapter One, I argue that the collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis can move feminist rhetoricians beyond the perplexing double bind in which they currently find themselves, a double bind that contains two competing messages: If feminists ignore the theoretical tools of the academy, they lose powerful insights into the systems of oppression that harm women, and even when revised, the theoretical tools of the academy may camouflage feminist concerns. The collaboration between feminist rhetorical theory and schizoanalysis offers the tools to engage in a collaboration that offers a solution out of the double bind.

The effect of the collaboration between the two perspectives is transformative theorizing--stage-three feminist theorizing. The tools utilized have disrupted strategies of containment, are mutually transformative of
both perspectives, and offer the means for making new connections to end oppression. Schizoanalysis offers a critique of Oedipal subjectivity, while feminist rhetorical theory adds the fundamental component of gender. Both perspectives are mutually transformed to create new ideas that can be connected to other ideas to continue to explore and explode current forms of theoretical and cultural oppression.
APPENDIX A

DISCOGRAPHY

Albums

1. **Madonna**
   (Sire Records/1983)
   "Lucky Star"
   "Borderline"
   "Burning Up"
   "I Know It"
   "Holiday"
   "Think of Me"
   "Physical Attraction"
   "Everybody"

2. **Like A Virgin**
   (Sire Records/1984)
   "Material Girl"
   "Angel"
   "Like a Virgin"
   "Over and Over"
   "Love Don't Live Here"
   "Anymore"
   "Dress You Up"
   "Shoo-Be-Doo"
   "Pretender"
   "Stay"

3. **True Blue**
   (Sire Records/1986)
   "Papa Don't Preach"
   "Open Your Heart"

4. **You Can Dance**
   (Sire Records/1987)
   "Spotlight"
   "Holiday"
   "Everybody"
   "Physical Attraction"
   "Over and Over"
   "Into the Groove"
   "Where's the Party?"
   "Holiday" (Dubbed Version)
   "Into the Groove" (DUB Version)
   "Where's the Party?" (Dub Version)

5. **Like a Prayer**
   (Sire Records/1989)
   "Like a Prayer"
   "Express Yourself"
   "Love Song" (Duet with Prince)
   "Till Death Do Us Part"
   "Promise to Try"
   "Cherish"
   "Dear Jessie"
   "Oh Father"
   "Keep it Together"
   "Spanish Eyes"
   "Act of Contrition"

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'Most of Appendix A comes from Bego’s book. I have updated the material, however, to keep current with Madonna’s releases.'
I'm Breathless

Music from and Inspired by
the film Dick Tracy
(Sire Records/1990)
"He's a Man"
"Sooner or Later"
"Hanky Panky"
"I'm Going Bananas"
"Cry Baby"
"Something to Remember"
"Back in Business"
"More"
"What Can You Lose"
(Duet with Mandy Patinkin)
"Now I'm Following You"
(Duet with Warren Beatty)
"Now I'm Following You"
(Part II)
"Vogue"

Erotica
(Maverick/1992)
"Erotica"
"Fever"
"Bye Bye Baby"
"Deeper and Deeper"
"Where Life Begins"
"Bad Girl"
"Waiting"
"Thief of Hearts"
"Words"
"Rain"
"Why's it so Hard"
"In This Life"
"Secret Garden"
Singles
(After each title are the peak American Chart figures as per Billboard magazine.)

1. "Everybody" (#103)
2. "Burning Up/Physical Attraction (#1 Dance Chart)
   [12" single only]
3. "Holiday" (#16)
4. "Borderline" (#10)
5. "Lucky Star" (#4)
6. "Like a Virgin" (#1)
7. "Material Girl" (#2)
8. "Into the Groove" (#1 dance chart
   [12"-single only])
9. "Crazy for You" (#1)
10. "Angel" (#5)
11. "Dress You Up" (#3)
12. "Live to Tell" (#1)
13. "Papa Don’t Preach" (#1)
14. "True Blue" (#3)
15. "Open Your Heart" (#1)
16. "La Isla Bonita" (#4)
17. "Who's That Girl?" (#1)
18. "Causing a Commotion" (#2)
19. "Like a Prayer" (#1)
20. "Express Yourself" (#2)
21. "Cherish" (#2)
22. "Oh Father" (#20)
23. "Keep Together" (#8)
24. "Vogue" (#1)
25. "Hanky Panky" (#1)
26. "Justify My Love" (#1)
   (#1 dance chart [12"-single only])
27. "Rescue Me" (#9)
Filmography

1. **A Certain Sacrifice** (1985)
2. **Vision Quest** (1985)
3. **Desperately Seeking Susan** (1985)
4. **Shanghai Surprise** (1986)
7. **Dick Tracy** (1990)
8. **Truth or Dare** (1991)
9. **Shadows and Fog** (1992)
10. **A League of Their Own** (1992)

Stageography

1. The Virgin Tour, concert tour, 1985
3. **Speed-the-Plow**, play, 1988
5. Girlie Show, concert tour, 1993

Videocassette and Laser discs

1. "Madonna" (1985)
2. "Ciao Italian" (1988)
3. "Madonna Live: Blonde Ambition" (1990); laser disc only
4. "The Immaculate Collection" (1990)
5. "Justify My Love" (1990)
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