

5-2017

Advertisements and Social Appeal: Reshaping of the Twentieth Century American Woman

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<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2017.HCS.ST.07>

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Tumpich, Janet L., "Advertisements and Social Appeal: Reshaping of the Twentieth Century American Woman" (2017). *Senior Theses*. 57.
<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2017.HCS.ST.07>

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Advertisements and Social Appeal:
Reshaping of the Twentieth Century American Woman
By
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A culminating thesis submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Humanities
and Cultural Studies

San Rafael, CA
May 2017

This thesis, written under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor and approved by the department chair, has been presented to and accepted by the Department of Humanities in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Humanities and Cultural Studies. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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A B S T R A C T

Americans have been exposed to products and information through various mediums of advertisements. During the early 1900s, American advertisements (ads) increasingly overwhelmed the western world and could be seen in thousands of publications. The early ads featured imagery that depicted the everyday lives of American women, men, and children with the goal of selling products and services. Since women were identified as the primary consumer of the family, product ads often featured imagery of women as homemakers and in circumstances that portrayed them as feminine, and concerned with their appearance or pleasing their man. As the century progressed, and women began to step out of the homemaker stereotype, ads began to market to the “new woman” exploiting her sexuality and an unrealistic view of beauty and body image. The ads of this era, influenced consumers by appealing to their emotions, needs and desires while reshaping the social values and self-expression of women in American society. This paper seeks to shed light on the psychology behind the development of an ad campaign and their influence upon the American consumer.

INTRODUCTION

Visuals create perceptions. Everyday, Americans are subject to an enormous variety of visuals whether in public, print, or other media forms. Individuals likely connect to a visual in different ways: in public one may take notice of another person's fashion or personal style and form a like or dislike to it, in print advertisements the visual may be accompanied by a message to influence a purchase or leave a lasting impression. The ads that Americans are subject to on a daily basis (print, television, and digital) are intended to create a connection to some aspect of a person's life. While some people may view an advertisement as entertaining or informative, others may take offense to the implied ideal or message that supports the visual. Since the early 1900s, ads have depicted the everyday lives of American women, men, and children while trying to sell the viewer on a lifestyle, a product, or a service. These early ads offered more than information and goods to the public, they contributed to the creation of a consumer society by appealing to human emotions, needs, and desires. During the twentieth century, advertising agency's creativity expanded from the simple text-based ads to art-based ads by adding illustrations, color, and eventually photos and digital photo retouching. Women have often been featured in ads with divergent product messaging that portrayed them as feminine, weak, inferior, homemakers, activists, industry workers, secretaries and/or sex symbols. *Advertisements and Social Appeal: Reshaping of the Twentieth Century American Woman* explores how twentieth century advertisements reshaped the social values, body image, and self-expression of women in American society.

Through the increase in readership, the ads that were featured in publications and various other media were reaching a mass audience and the primary consumer - women. As the female purchasing power increased, so did profits for advertising agencies. Most advertising agencies

had predominantly employed a male staff until the middle of the century, and these Advertising men (admen as they were known) would typically incorporate their own biases into the content when creating an ad campaign for a customer. Many popular ads featured imagery of women to aid in the promotion of a product and draw a viewers' attention to the visual that often included sexual connotations. From signage to commercials and digital art, the visuals that have been created by ad agencies are often difficult to understand or identify with what is actually being sold, but what is clear is that many of them objectify women.

In this three-part paper I hope to bring awareness to this era of consumerism and female exploitation in advertisements, and to highlight specific ads that contributed to America's perceptions of women. Although an enormous quantity of products and services advanced rapidly throughout the century and they helped to contribute to an easier way of life for most, women have been plagued by stigmas and unequal rights among the male-dominant society, stigmas reinforced by the very ads meant to appeal to them.

Part One includes a brief history of ads in the early years, 1900 through the 1940s, and the creative solutions that advertising agencies developed to promote a particular product. Prior to the addition of four-color printing in the 1920s, the early ads were comprised of lists of words that described a product or service. Through the addition of visuals and illustrations, an ad began to paint a picture of the ideal American lifestyle and foster the beginning of the consumer culture. Ads soon began to include a picture of a woman as the primary visual, often in conjunction with demeaning or persuasive headlines, to sell products and create brand identity. The Cereal, the Cigarettes, and the Soap ads featured in this section show how advertisers capitalized on the women of the era by highlighting their self-worth in the home, their inequality to men, and the importance of good hygiene.

Part Two highlights the changing times from 1950 through the 1970s, when more women were seeking higher education and looking to enter the job market again, while still primarily responsible for the children, the household and, of course, catering to their mate. Through the explosion of public and television ads, advertisers captured a wider audience that featured gimmicks and sales, as well as explicit ads of women in compromising positions. Advertising agencies began to employ women in editorial and creative roles. However, in this competitive arena ads continued to exploit the female image to sell everything from kitchen appliances to undergarments. The Appliance, the Slimmer Cigarette, and the Girdle ads featured in this section introduce consumers to the new woman, free of inhibitions, but not without the catchy slogans that reference the female body and lead to body-shaming.

Part Three explores a new era from 1980 through the 1990s when the shift from print to digital advertising methods exposed the public to over 3,000 ads each day. Through the advancements in computer technology, pictures became digital art and could be digitally manipulated or retouched to the liking of the adman or client. Advertisers took advantage of this technology and soon the ads for clothing, beverages, and cosmetic surgery featured photos of women with unrealistic features and dimensions. This caused an increase in hyper-sexualized advertising and social effects that can lead to the mental and physical problems faced by many women and young girls today (Kilbourne). The Sexy Product, the Cigar, and the New Body ads featured in this section identify a woman who is making decisions for herself and choosing to change her own body in order to feel beautiful.

Advertisements were instrumental in the emergence of a consumer culture, and Americans should be reminded of how the ad industry has dominated society through visuals that were a factor in reshaping the American woman's identity and value to society.

PART ONE

The Early Years

1900 through the 1940s

*Talented and observant
Brilliant compositions abound
The Western world.
Laws, choice, identity and rights
Culture and values
Inherited stuff.
— Janet Tumpich*

During the early 1900s, ads increasingly overwhelmed the Western world and could be seen in thousands of publications. As early as 1909, newspaper and magazine publications featured ads of women promoting products that were intended to project a better way of life. Some ads contained condescending text and headlines that objectified women, while other ads were strategic to help her become more desirable, but both were designed to appeal to a man's patriarchy. The inventiveness and imagination that advertising agencies applied to develop ad campaigns is explained by Stéphane Pincas and Marc Loiseau in *A History of Advertising*. They claim that agencies had "Invented a hundred and one ways of making the consumer connect with a brand – through humor or affection, prose or poetry, information or appeal" (18-9). This created a brand awareness that could influence the female consumer when making a purchase. As consumers responded to the ads that featured nearly every facet of American life, more products sold. This may have also empowered women to step away from their stereotypical roles of that era and identify with the products that would enhance their standard of living. "By reviewing such a vast landscape of consumption, we can discern how mindsets and lifestyles evolved in the course of time" (22). Risking whether an ad campaign would be a success or failure, the advertising agencies proceeded to propagandize the primary consumer at any cost.

The early ads published by Jim Heimann in *1900-1919: All-American Ads* began to glamorize products and women. As he writes:

American advertising has never been more sumptuous than during the years between 1900 and 1919, when decorative typography and ornate compositions targeted a new consumer class caught in the vortex of twentieth-century progress. ... In order to differentiate the brands and trigger their sales, new social mores (and taboos) were created that demanded lifestyle changes. (22-3).

As I identified some of the significant influences that early ads had on the American population, I noticed that women as the primary consumer were more engaged in the product message than the realization that the ads were exploiting their decision-making, appearance, and personal values. To understand some of the lifestyle changes within our culture, Bernard Bell writes in *Crowd Culture* that we should observe the indexes, “The way of life in any culture is revealed not by what is emotionally said or written about it by the boastful or by the scolding, but through examination of certain indexes. Among the ones usually relied on by social scientists as most revealing are the press (with its modern variants, radio and television)” (12). Through an increasing subscriber base, the press became a powerful source for selling products and exposing consumers to a variety of ideals that related to a woman and her perceived value in society.

James Engel, Roger Blackwell and David Kollat investigate theories and methodology of consumerism, describing how consumer behavior is driven by a multitude of institutions, such as family, religion, education, and life experiences that influence the process of consumer decision-making (181). These concepts helped to develop the creative direction of an ad campaign. Danielle Coombs and Bob Batchelor, editors of *We are What We Sell*, discuss the advertising culture prior to the 1930s and the evolution of a consumer culture that connected to a different sort of idealistic lifestyle that was likely an unattainable realization for many. “As a matter of fact, advertising created and then molded people’s basic yearning for accumulation and consumption...and validate their self-worth via the products they purchased” (xii-xiv). In the male-dominated advertising sector, marketing products that manifested the social values and self-expression of women contributed to the consumer culture.

The Cereal, the Cigarettes, and the Soap



Fig. 1: 1909 ad created for The Shredded Wheat Co. characterizes the issues of women's independence.



Fig. 2: 1928 cigarette ad for Lucky Strike promoted that smoking should be a substitute for eating sweets.



Fig. 3: 1927 ad for Proctor & Gamble Co.'s Ivory Soap implies that good hygiene leads to loveliness.

During this time, advertisers were connecting products with a certain lifestyle that women would hopefully identify with. Several domestic products became more widely available; cereal was packaged to make meals faster, cigarettes were marketed as an option to eating sweets, and cleanliness was paramount.

Typical of the ads of this era, people were used as iconic imagery in an advertising campaign. In 1909, The Shredded Wheat Company creatively promoted their cereal product with the sophisticated headline Her "Declaration of Independence" that accompanied a visual of a woman standing in front of a Liberty Bell (see fig. 1). The illustration shows a proud and strong woman flexing her ability to hold the cereal box. Although the sales message really has nothing to do with the product -- cereal -- it does imply an identity for the woman pictured in the ad along with the product's benefits. Whether the woman is a servant to her family, or manages a servant in the household, the ad clearly ignores the rights that women already had. One may perceive that

the ad was intended to mock the success of women as they continued the fight for more equality or that by having packaged cereal to serve for breakfast she could focus on herself rather than her family. Through the efforts of the Women's Suffrage Movement women's rights were changing, and in 1920 the 19th Amendment was signed into law granting women the right to vote. Finally women could be recognized as intelligent though they were still not viewed as equal to men.

Through the continued quest for equality women were challenging the legal system and advertisers capitalized on her new sense of empowerment. The Lucky Strike cigarette campaign of 1928 featured a visual of a woman smoking during a time when women were "allowed" to smoke, just not in public (see fig. 2). The ad suggests smoking cigarettes as a substitute for eating sweets, "Reach for a Lucky and not for a sweet." This strategy was used to sell more cigarettes to women while inferring a particular body image. As advertising trends began glamorizing cigarettes, this ad suggests that women avoid over-indulging in sweets to achieve a slender and graceful figure, a body type that was associated with the upper classes (Coombs 127-8). In the video *The Century of the Self*, David Lessig recounts one prominent event that occurred in 1929 when a group of rich debutants lit up cigarettes in public during the New York Easter Day Parade. Prompted by Edward Bernays, a press agent in America and nephew to Sigmund Freud, the experiment was coined "Torches of Freedom" and was intended to increase market share for the American Tobacco Company by persuading women to smoke in public. The campaign was successful in three ways: Lucky Strike became the leading national brand through increased sales, Bernays' experiment tested and proved Freud's theory of manipulation of the unconscious mind to affect the masses, and it empowered women to smoke in public. With this one stroke, Lessig suggests, "Smoking became socially acceptable with a single symbolic ad" (13:23). The underlying fact here is that Bernays was advised by AA Brille, a leading psychoanalyst in New York, who stated that, "Cigarettes were a symbol of the penis and of male

sexual power.” If Bernays “could find a way to connect cigarettes with the idea of challenging male power, Brille argued, then women would smoke because then they would have their own penises” (11:39). Through this pernicious method of mind manipulation a new form of advertisements emerged with the direct intention of creating and molding the American consumer. Women were the weapon and the target.

The Ivory soap ads of 1928 were designed for the female audience and implied that “loveliness” was something that a girl had to learn (see fig. 3). As the primary consumer, women were influenced by ads that appeared to be selling a product, but were instead exploiting female social values in ads for everything from cleaning products to soap, beauty and household products. Often characterized as submissive or fragile, the female consumer could be persuaded to worry that if she didn’t smell good or wasn’t attractive her marriage or the potential for a future mate may be in jeopardy. This type of manipulation may have contributed to the emotional and physical body image issues that many women later developed. At any cost, advertisers were perpetuating stereotypes and intentionally playing on a woman’s fear of inferiority, a fear that could be passed on to future generations. Although the Great Depression of 1929 slowed the upward trend of consumer advertising, the industry recovered and what began to emerge were ads that reflected the changing times and expanding roles of women.

Ads continued to feature iconic imagery and some had an unconventional style. The Flappers of the Roaring Twenties were shown with bound chests and short skirts; Rosie the Riveter the 1942 hero of the government ad campaign “We Can Do It!” wore a polka dot bandana and blue work shirt. Each visual contributed to reshaping the identity of woman in the golden age of advertising, an era that continued after World War II to the end of the century.

PART TWO

The Changing Times

1950 through the 1970s

*For better or for worse
Awakened liberation
Individual style.
Marketing stereotypes,
Body image and sex appeal.
How far have we come?
— Janet Tumpich*

The American economy was booming during the 1950s when consumer goods were more widely available, economic growth was on the rise, and the postwar baby boom led women away from factory jobs back into their homes to resume their occupations as housewives, consumers, and mothers. Shopping became a popular pastime, freeing middle-class women of their domestic duties for a small part of their day while they perused the items for sale or on display in store windows. Properly dressed for the occasion, it was common to see a woman in stylish attire and wearing a hat, gloves, stockings and heels to complete her look. The American woman was changing: her ideas, her style, and her values were beginning to transform from her predefined domestic role to those fashioned by admen, and to become a more modern woman. The 1950s could typically be remembered through television shows that featured a happy, white, middle-class family of four that was thankful to have an apron-wearing, sandwich-making and cookie-baking stay-at-home wife and mother who could operate the modern conveniences of the day and even drive a car. Stylish and slim, these women of television sitcoms were advertising a lifestyle that led traditional women to question their own identity and responsibility to the family and home. “Women used their attire and style to show an independence, a certain freedom in which they alone had control” (Studymoose n.pag.). Through this sense of freedom and newfound purchasing power, women were making decisions that helped to liberate them from their family obligations.

However, as women’s rights advocate and journalist Betty Friedan explores in her 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*, the feminist movement and the social changes that affected both men and women came with a price. Physical and mental issues plagued many housewives during this time, which Friedan identified as “the problem that has no name”:

If a woman had a problem in the 1950’s and 1960’s, she knew that something must be wrong with her marriage, or with herself. Other women were satisfied with their

lives, she thought. What kind of a woman was she if she did not feel this mysterious fulfillment waxing the kitchen floor? She was so ashamed to admit her dissatisfaction that she never knew how many other women shared it. (62)

Many women struggled in their roles as wives and mothers, questioning their self-worth, and unable to explain or understand why they felt so unfulfilled. They couldn't talk about it, their husbands wouldn't understand, doctors couldn't diagnose it and it was becoming a growing problem (62). Women were "selling out their intellect and their ambitions" for the life that their mothers told them they should have, a life that led many to depression and alcoholism (13). In contrast, advertisers continued to invent ads that highlighted the social aspects of a woman's lifestyle, or an illusion of it, which no doubt compounded her sense of isolation.

The 1960s brought even more social and political change for both American women and men, at home and in the workplace. More women began seeking to further their education and to establish careers while sharing in providing income for the family, and some men were now more involved in the household duties and caring for the children. Despite their growing confidence and contribution to the economy, women nevertheless had to struggle for equality, a fight that "alarmed many conservative activists, who feared that it would undermine traditional gender roles" (The 1970s). The Women's International Center states that, since 1960 more and more women with children have entered the work force, but although the Equal Pay Act had been signed into law in 1963, by 1970 women were still paid 45 percent less than men for the same jobs (WIC n.pag.).

The Appliance, the Slimmer Cigarette, and the Girdle



Fig. 4: 1970s Thermador ad selling their new product – a stacked built-in oven.



Fig. 5: 1971 Virginia Slims ad campaign sold women their own slimmer cigarette.



Fig. 6: 1967 Warner's ad defines the shape that a girl shouldn't have.

The business of advertising had advanced to new heights, from printed publications and marketing materials to television commercials; more companies wanted to advertise. At the center of this movement, ads began to eroticize women through racy visuals and sexual innuendoes. Expanding on the perceived needs and desires of women, advertisers glamorized everyday appliances, promoted slimmer cigarettes, and sold women on the need for undergarments that would reshape her body type.

Household products continued to advance in style and performance throughout the twentieth century, which helped working women save time cooking and cleaning. Ads for kitchen appliances with innovative technology were enticing the consumer's desire for modern conveniences, while simultaneously sexually objectifying women. The modern image of a liberated woman was being undermined by the adman's ideas that portrayed women as desirable objects. During the 1970s Thermador introduced a new built-in, stacked oven in an ad that featured a male and female actor having cocktails in a kitchen while the oven is shown in the

background (see fig. 4). “Stacked For Convenience” was the statement used to sell the oven and attract the consumer, but by the female actor’s sexy pose and revealing cleavage she is the main attraction, and clearly the male actor appears to be impressed. While the modern kitchen shown in the ad creates an atmosphere of entertainment, the descriptive content and photo are clearly referencing sexy to sell an oven. One of the descriptions in the ad reads, “The beauty photographed above, is a total cooking appliance strategically stacked and endowed with the most refined developments for culinary perfection.” This illustrates one of many ways that advertisers intentionally exploited the female body by using sexual innuendoes to reference a product or appliance, and this ad implies that the female *is* the appliance. The admen may have designed a product ad that appealed to women, but by including subliminal content this ad appealed to men, suggesting that he could get his woman out of the kitchen and into the bed.

The 1960s brought one famous, and successful cigarette advertising campaign targeted at women and supported the idea of being slim. “You’ve come a long way baby” was the slogan advertisers developed to sell Virginia Slims cigarettes (see fig. 5). The campaign addressed women’s liberation while suggesting that women not only needed their own cigarette, but that Virginia Slims were “slimmer than the fat cigarettes men smoke.” The reference to slim indirectly references a body type and, as previously mentioned in the early years, cigarettes could be a substitute for eating sweets. This is also about a middle-class striving to be like the wealthy, as being fat was associated with the working-class, so a rise in social status would also be alluring to men. The casually dressed, thin woman may look like she’s come a long way, but she may not be going much farther if she continues smoking. Although cigarette ads were banned from television and radio in 1971 (The 1970s) they were still prominent in printed media and outdoor advertising.

In the ad for Warner's "Concentrate girdle and Little Fibber bra" the message is clear "This is no shape for a girl." (see fig. 6). The ad content tells the consumer that for "Girls with too much bottom and too little top: Warner's® can reshape you." The pear-shaped body that was totally acceptable earlier in the century is now wrong for girls, but the woman pictured doesn't look like a girl at all. Headlines in large type send a message that is basically screaming at the viewer to *get* the message. The pear-shaped body was out, corsets were finished, and the girdle was the newest way to fix the female body by reshaping it to conform to what advertisers perceived to be the "perfect" figure: fuller on top, trim on the bottom.

As Mark Bartholomew discusses in *Advertising and Social Identity* "One effect of advertising: [is] its role in shaping our identities. Advertising can have many potential impacts, but one of the most powerful may be its influence on our sense of self" (934). Many of the ideas that admen developed were directed at men who still controlled the household budget, but the cost to the female psyche was great.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, advertising agencies took inappropriate risks to sell products, as Jean Kilbourne points out in a series of videos to create awareness about the harmful affects of advertising. In *Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising's Image of Women* Kilbourne highlights how ads distort the perceptions of female beauty creating "a toxic cultural environment, [that] surrounds us with unhealthy images and sacrifices our health and well being for the sake of profit." Ads sell more than products, they sell concepts and images that are intended to describe what a woman should be and how she should look (Kilbourne). Ads may have contributed to the belief that women needed a particular product to become confident, attractive, and sexual, but ads also allowed men to continue to control women, now more than ever, through implied expectations and psychological abuse.

PART THREE

A New Era

1980 through the 1990s

Changing values
Careers and
Gender equality.
Digitally exploited
Beauty and self-image,
Sex sells.
— *Janet Tumpich*

From 1980 through the end of the century new trends in advertising and mass marketing revolutionized communication modalities through the innovation of digital technology and advanced computers. Ads were still omnipresent in most mediums: television, radio, billboards, and publications, but toward the end of the century the Internet phenomena brought ads online to computer and cellular users. These sophisticated delivery systems allowed advertisers to reach a global mass audience faster and more frequently and, by using computer applications, ad designers could creatively integrate photo retouching to enhance a picture and create images that women and girls model themselves after everyday (Kilbourne).

As the century progressed women stepped further out of their homemaker stereotype and thus ads began marketing to the career women, while continuing to exploit their sexuality by featuring them in revealing poses with sexual connotations. Though advertisers continued to promote sex in many of the ads women were presented with a new attitude, one that showed their liberation and independence from the confines of the belief that they needed a man, or needed to please a man. Through education and intellect women were no longer conforming to tradition, they were career-minded with greater initiative. “Conformity is built into life-adjustment education in many ways. There is little or no intellectual challenge or discipline involved in merely learning to adjust” (Friedan 254). While statistics showed that “In 1985 about 53 percent of all college students were women, more than one quarter of whom were above age 29... [Women] constituted more than 45 percent of employed persons in the United States in 1989, but they had only a small share of the decision-making jobs. ... Despite their increased presence in the work force, most women still have primary responsibility for housework and family care” (WIC n.pag.). During this time, and through the variety of delivery options, ads were presenting engaging ideas and assumptions that often made references to the female self-image.

In “18 Ads That Changed How We Think About Women” Samantha Felix suggests, “The way women have been portrayed in advertising has changed the way society views women because of it. From housebound drudge to sexpot to business leader, ads are constantly arguing with us about women’s role in society” (n.pag.). Through the increased use of lifestyle imagery, advertisers were prompted to modify a picture by altering certain imperfections, changing a plump body size to thin and shapely, eliminating wrinkles and smoothing skin tones, or whitening teeth, some even added the head of a model to a different body altogether.

As Veksner illustrates, after Playboy magazine introduced erotica to the public in 1953, and the 1960s gave way to tolerating sexy ads, “Sex in advertising is more explicit than ever, and the male body is now fetishized almost as frequently as the female” (Veksner 30). Although sexy ads appeal to “both men and women, ... they also generate a higher level of negative feelings and complaints” (Veksner 30).

Apparel companies were taking risks with photography that went far beyond a retouched picture. Ads began removing descriptive content and glorifying a photo to attract a viewer to create their own fantasy or assumption of what was being advertised, while creating a connection to the visual. A visual that exploited the female body would retain the eye of a viewer and, with greater impact, reinforce an ideal that was acceptable to the public. As Internet advertising became more common, ads began popping up on Web pages and helped to expose more products to the public while strengthening a brand and reinforcing ideals of body image.

The Sexy Product, the Cigar, and the New Body



Fig. 7: 1995 ad for Versace pictures a topless female in underwear to sell jeans.

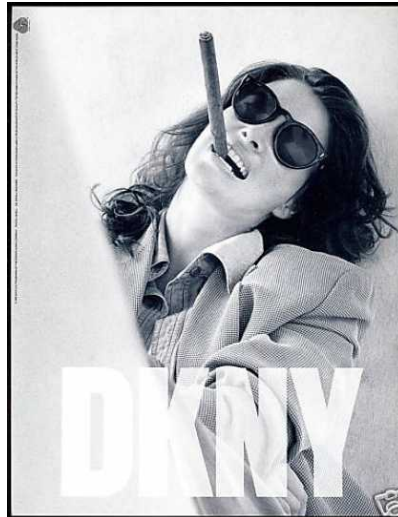


Fig. 8: 1990 DKNY ad offers the idea of female masculinity by featuring a women biting on a cigar.

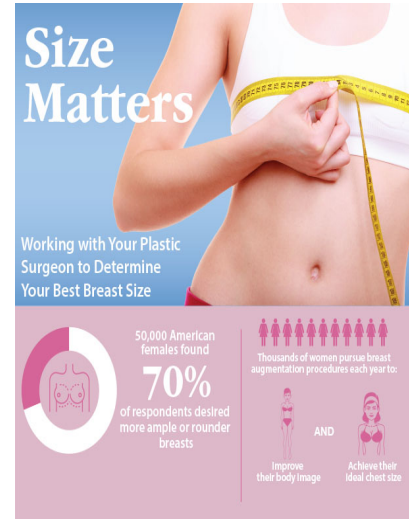


Fig. 9: Size Matters the next stage of altering your shape through plastic surgery. (Image used with permission.)

Several techniques were used to create an effective advertising campaign, but the goal of any campaign was to create a connection to the consumer and to produce profits for clients and agencies, by exploiting sexual desire and internal fears of inadequacy. For example, the apparel industry increased the association of their product name with racy or revealing imagery in an effort to stand out and be remembered in the flooded marketplace of dozens of apparel brands. As advertisers proceeded to take more clothes off the models, this showed women and girls the idea of a body that would require most to seek cosmetic surgery.

In the Versace ad for Jeans Couture, their brand is displayed in front of the eye-catching photo of a woman and man shown partially nude, and with erotic implications (see fig. 7). The thin figured female sells the consumer on the idea that she needs a thin body to become desirable and serve as an ideal fantasy for men, but in actuality Versace is selling jeans.

While some advertisers toyed with fears of sexual inadequacy, others capitalized on the image of independent woman who was challenging the masculinity of a man's world. The DKNY

clothing ad shows the cigar-toking women, wearing a power suit, with an attitude that implies “I don’t need a man” (see fig. 8). It appears that the ad may also be selling the consumer on sunglasses to hide her eyes -- the window to the soul -- a feature most used to try to allure men. However, the focus seems to be on the large, screaming DKNY brand, and a cigar that could be construed as a phallic symbol thus empowering the woman to feel more equal to a man.

While women were becoming more conscious of their appearance, ads were capitalizing on the fears of aging that caused more females to change their specific body features to aid in self-esteem and man-made perceptions of ideal beauty. “In our society, women are led to believe that their worth is connected to their bodies and what they look like and that makes women more open to advertising selling products that improve their looks and their bodies” (Coombs 137). As magazines and ads featured more naked women or their cleavage, breast augmentation was an option to become more desirable and acceptable. In the infographic developed for The Women’s Center for Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery, the message is clear “Size Matters,” so if you want to change your breast size this is the place (see fig. 9). When fitness, diet, and beauty treatments aren’t providing the desired results, the quickest and most painful method was to seek cosmetic surgery or implants; they don’t call it plastic for nothing.

Although it was common for a woman to be a robust size in the early years of the century, by the later years women had been exposed to ads that sold an idea of female beauty – a thin and curvaceous body with flawless skin. As the century wore on, men themselves were no longer immune to the challenges of body beauty or image. More nude men were featured in ads, and if they wanted to be a model or actor they too would need to invest in treatments or cosmetic procedures.

Conclusion

Throughout the twentieth century, imagery of women has been one of the main subjects in American advertisements. Ads featured pictures of women as homemakers, suffragettes, political icons, or sex objects and implied a particular identity to their life and style. In essence women that were influenced to buy a particular product to save them time and laborious tasks in the home, actually fueled the product manufacturers and advertisers to continue bringing products to market, and to the unconscious mind, that would keep her in the home. There is no reason that a domestic-enabled woman should be perceived as a devalued human in the scope of the working world, but she was in part due to the male perception that housework was only for the “weaker” sex.

During the earlier part of the century, the perceived identity of a woman was that of a homemaker whose only purpose in life was to take care of the home, have many children and understand her plight in a world where she has “earned” few equal rights or opportunities. Thus, even though her contributions required strength and stamina women were not recognized as a value to society. While many women developed a sense of pride in their efforts to maintain the home or put their family’s needs first, many felt unfulfilled and had a desire for a better life with opportunity and education. It takes a conscious effort and use of a talented brain to get up and get dressed for work everyday, whether it’s in the home or in the business world. Historically, women have operated under the watchful eyes of their mothers and grandmothers, inheriting behaviors that were difficult to change. As the influx of advertising created a consumer-culture and women found a certain power in purchasing goods, they were exposed to alternative lifestyles and ideas far different than the confines of their homes. Women have been defined as everything from incompetent to sex objects, never really earning respect for their strengths and contributions in the home or workplace. Through education and career advancement “Women

reached the peak of their labor force participation in 1999, with a rate of 60.0 percent....

Women's earnings as a proportion of men's earnings also have grown over time. In 1979, women working full time earned 62 percent of what men earned; in 2014, women's earnings were 83 percent of men's" (BLS 2015, Report 1059).

Out of all the significant events of the twentieth century, memorable advertisements are what people will associate with a time period: The Women's Suffrage Movement, The Torches of Freedom, the war time propaganda image of Rosie the Riveter boasting "You Can Do It," or "You've come a long way baby," and "We Can Do It," which later morphed into plastic surgery, psychotherapy, and health issues.

Advertising is storytelling and through looking back on the popular styles, iconic imagery, and messaging I found it to be a cultural study visually and psychologically. Through researching hundreds of ads, I didn't find any pictures of women that looked plump or had imperfect skin or makeup. Hair color, skin tone, shape and size can now be altered, fabricated, or improved to create the ideal image that advertisers perceive will attract consumers to buy a product. In addition to these ideal images, the food industry also uses altered photos, and both have contributed to eating disorders and weight problems that cause women to develop a negative body image, depression, and health problems.

Today, more men are appearing in ads and taking a similar path to that of women. The male body has been exposed and has become sexualized, exploited, retouched, and more men are concerned about body image/perfection, fashion and beauty, physical fitness, and even plastic surgery. However, as households have changed to include more male involvement, women are still in a slow uphill climb to the top jobs with equal pay. Gender roles have morphed into many different family models, from traditional -- married with children -- to single parent, same sex parents, divorced parents and other combinations. While the role of art in advertising is meant to

bridge and expand a lifestyle my hope is that advertising will change to bring more healthier and humane imagery to the future consumers.

I chose this topic to bring out an awareness of various modalities of advertising that have reshaped some of the American women's and men's values during the twentieth century in hopes of exposing past realities to future generations. Through my experience as a graphic designer and publisher, and by designing ads and marketing materials for the public, I have insight into the messaging that will sell a product or service for the good, and the methods used to create appeal and influence. While I may not agree with all of the marketing trends, I do agree that advertisers will continue to push the envelope of possibilities to design ads that attract consumers. Few changes have been made to how advertisers feature women, but with less photo retouching, and by featuring women in more gender-neutral roles, there is hope that advertisers will develop an understanding that the public isn't going to follow the fabricated ideals of the past.

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