

SOCIOLOGY 2172A

Section 001 UWO / 530 BRESCIA

Advertising And Society

Compiled by:
Gale Cassidy

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Notes

Custom Course
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THE
BOOK
STORE
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WESTERN
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READING LIST for SOCIOLOGY 2172a & 2172b

Introduction

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7. Cormack, Patricia and James F. Cosgrave. 2013. 'Always Fresh, Always There: Tim Hortons and the Consumer-Citizen.' Pp. 62-93 in *Desiring Canada: CBC Contests, Hockey and Other Stately Pleasures*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
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INTRODUCTION

8

ADVERTISING IN CANADA

Russell Johnston
Brock University

Advertising is a term with many meanings. It is commonly used as a collective noun to refer to all advertisements. In communication and cultural studies, it refers to a system of communication through which goods and services are brought to the attention of the general public.

Raymond Williams (1987) argues that advertising has two phases. First, the content of advertising has insinuated itself into every medium of communication. Advertisements may be understood as one-way, mediated communication intended for mass persuasion. They manipulate the shared words, images, and symbols of a society to create a favourable impression for a product, service, or cause. For this reason, advertising has been referred to rather poetically as “salesmanship in print.” Nonetheless, the barriers to communication that separate advertiser and audience clearly distinguish it from the interpersonal communication that is necessary between sales clerk and customer.

Second, the business of advertising structures media operations in a capitalist economy. It is a common perception that the media serve the public by providing ready access to news and entertainment. In fact, the media serve advertisers first and the public second. Most media outlets face enormous production and distribution costs. The modest fees paid by the public do not cover these costs. Indeed, much radio, television, and internet content is available to the public free of charge. To finance their operations, then, media outlets depend on their ability to attract advertising revenue.

The public is still important to the revenue of media outlets. A media outlet will become financially self-sufficient or profitable only if it attracts an audience desired by advertisers (Smythe, 1981). When an advertiser selects a media outlet to carry its ads, the outlet's value is determined by the size and quality of its audience. “Quality” here is determined by demographic considerations that have an impact on purchasing decisions—things such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, and life-style choices. Ultimately, advertisers want to reach the highest number of potential consumers at the lowest possible cost.

Advertisers do not need the mass media. They can publicize themselves through event sponsorship, telemarketing, direct mail, flyers, catalogues, billboards, or their own websites. This puts pressure on the mass media to increase their value to

advertisers. Some media try to produce the largest audiences possible by appealing to all demographic categories. This is the mass market, and this is the strategy of mainstream outlets such as family newspapers and national television networks. By contrast, specialty media outlets try to produce closely defined audiences similar to the target markets of specific groups of advertisers. For example, *The Hockey News* appeals to hockey fans and attracts advertisements for sporting goods and memorabilia. Either way, whether they chase the mass market or specific target markets, every media outlet tries to produce an audience sought by advertisers. Again, this means that advertising structures media operations. The character and quality of media outlets and their content is driven by the kinds of audiences and advertisers they want to attract.

■■■■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

No one person invented advertising. Unlike film, radio, or television, there is no one person or date to mark its origins. If one accepts that town criers and shop signs are forms of advertising, then advertising is as old as civilization. Modern advertising, however, is integrated with the mass media. Its functions and practices emerged piecemeal over the last 250 years in step with new media technologies.

The first newspaper published in Canada, the *Halifax Gazette* (founded 1752), contained ads for a grocer, a job printer, and a tutor. Over the next century, newspapers across British North America were filled with ads from similar merchants, craftsmen, and professionals who used local papers to reach local audiences. The text of these ads—known as copy—was drafted in a polite style common to business cards. The ads were often set in the paper's own typeface and within traditional column widths. As a result, they could be indistinguishable from news stories. These ads were also indistinguishable from each other.

A second style appeared in the early 1800s. Some companies wanted their ads to stand out from those of their rivals, and to trumpet their goods and services from the printed page. To accomplish this, the polite invitation issued by earlier ads was replaced by the persuasive techniques of salesmanship. Copy was now infused with lavish claims, and boasts on behalf of a company's goods or services. These ads also looked different. They arrested attention with a single, unique font or a jarring variety of fonts. The copy might be enclosed in borders or accompanied by simple iconographic images (for example, the silhouette of a locomotive might illustrate a train schedule.) This style of advertisement grew in popularity as local economies grew and business rivalries intensified through the middle of the century.

1880–1920

Advertising underwent significant changes during the Industrial Revolution. In Canada, these developments led to the organization of advertising as a system of communication. The process took decades to unfold, but by 1920 there was

a common set of practices and institutions in place that continue to shape the industry today.

New manufacturing technologies introduced through the 1800s increased the productivity of Canadian industry. With increased productivity, companies expanded their sales territories beyond their local markets into distant regions. Many achieved national distribution by the 1890s. Production and distribution, however, were quite different from selling. Advertising bridged the gap between manufacturers and the public by opening a channel of communication between them. It helped that the printing trades also industrialized during this same period. New cylinder presses and improved imaging techniques allowed newspapers to produce thousands of pages of text per hour with detailed illustrations. Advertisers took advantage of both developments to promote their products (Leiss et al., 2005, 98–101).

A new kind of business emerged to connect advertisers with newspapers: the advertising agency. National advertising campaigns are challenging work. Wherever a company does business, it must identify local media outlets, assess their utility as advertising vehicles, and negotiate their rates. This is called “media buying.” When agencies first appeared, it was their only function. They completed these tasks on the advertiser’s behalf. In essence, they were and remain consultants with expertise in media, and broker deals between advertisers and media outlets to place ads before the greatest number of potential consumers at the lowest possible cost. Newspapers were the most important advertising medium in Canada until the 1950s, but magazines, catalogues, flyers, posters, transit cards, and billboards were all used as early as the 1860s.

Agencies did not flourish in Canada until the national economy expanded dramatically after 1890. The first known agency, the British American Advertising Agency of Montreal, opened in 1860 and closed soon after. More successful was the Mail Advertising Agency of Montreal, founded in 1878. Anson McKim, its manager, provided astute counsel to the clients of the *Toronto Mail* newspaper, and through his personal efforts he gradually developed confidence in the entire agency business. McKim capitalized on his reputation by opening his own agency in 1889 (Johnston, 2001).

Agencies added a second function in 1900: creative service. By that time, ads already cluttered the visual landscape of cities, and modest ads were not always noticeable. The most effective ads featured both memorable copy and imagery. Agencies supplied these flourishes to their clients’ ads by hiring professional copywriters and artists. J. J. Gibbons Ltd. (founded 1900, Toronto) was the first agency in Canada to offer both media buying and creative work. Its innovative approach prompted rival agencies to follow suit by establishing their own creative departments (Johnston, 2001).

Agencies added a third function after 1910: market research. As manufacturers expanded into new markets, their customers grew more remote. Consumer demand in a national market could be more difficult to interpret than in a local market. Manufacturers understandably became anxious, since their business decisions relied

on timely, accurate information. Market research addresses these concerns by investigating consumer behaviour. Such information provides reassurance to advertisers; the plans for new products, services, or sales territories can be informed by hard data rather than hunches. Agencies also use this information to inform their media buying and creative services (Leiss et al., 2005).

There are two strands to market research. First, demographic analysis offers an empirical, quantitative picture of consumers. Every media outlet knows the size of its audience, at least roughly. Media buyers, however, want to know how that audience is composed. Are they male or female, young or old? Where do they live? What is their disposable income? To answer such questions, periodical publishers and agencies of the 1910s adapted research techniques from the social sciences to refine the process of media buying. Second, psychological research offers a theoretical, qualitative picture of consumers. American psychologists such as W. D. Scott sought to create more potent ads by investigating the links between advertising and human cognition. In 1910, some believed that effective ads should alter the public’s purchasing habits without their knowledge, as if under hypnosis. Today, psychological research makes less sinister claims, but the intent remains the same: to tailor copy and art to the cognitive patterns of consumers. The trade magazine *Marketing* (founded 1908, Toronto) was an early champion of these new techniques. By 1920, all the leading agencies in Canada relied on market research to shape their clients’ campaigns (Johnston, 2007).

Taken together, media buying, creative services, and market research provided agencies with a unique set of skills. They also provided agencies with two significant legacies. First, the research methods adapted from the social sciences appeared to have mathematical precision, which bolstered the agents’ professional credibility. This credibility, however, was not entirely secure until George Gallup developed reliable public opinion polls in the 1930s (Robinson, 2000). Second, these skills gave shape to agency structures. Major agencies organized their operations by function and divided their core staff into four departments: account management, media research and buying, creative work, and market research. This formal structure has eroded in recent years as agencies move to client-specific teams and flexible workspaces. Nonetheless, such teams retain some element of each function.

1920–1960

After 1920, the advertising industry adapted to broadcasting. Radio became popular after 1922, and Canadian television began in 1952. Both were quickly integrated into the existing structures of advertising.

Nikola Tesla and Guglielmo Marconi did not develop radio for advertising. They wanted to compete with telegraph companies and improve the safety of ships at sea. Talented amateurs, however, became fascinated with the technology and began building sets for their own amusement. In 1919, electronics companies in Canada and the United States realized these amateurs had become a market unto themselves. By

airing free programs, electronics companies drew amateurs to their stations, publicized their products, and inadvertently began commercial broadcasting. The federal government wanted to outlaw broadcast advertising, at least initially. Events in the United States changed its mind. There, two major radio networks began soliciting ad contracts in 1926 to finance their programming. Some Americans complained, but most did not. Many listeners felt that an hour of entertainment was worth a few minutes of sales talk. Many Canadian listeners could receive American signals and they grudgingly agreed. Subsequently, Canadian broadcasters demanded similar access to advertising dollars in order to finance their own operations. The federal government acquiesced, and advertising has remained a component of broadcast financing ever since (Johnston, 1997).

Advertising agencies adapted their media buying and creative services to radio. In the periodical press, media buyers pay for space; in broadcasting, they pay for time. There are two ways to handle time. First, "sponsorship" associates an advertiser's name with an entire program. Sponsored programs generally reflect the character and status that the sponsor wants to cultivate in the public mind. For example, MacLaren Advertising (founded 1935, Toronto) developed *Hockey Night in Canada* as an advertising vehicle for Imperial Oil in the 1930s. Announcer Foster Hewitt created a family-friendly atmosphere for fans of the Maple Leafs, while the sponsor's messages portrayed Imperial as a neighbourhood retailer that families trusted with their home heating. Second, "spots" or "commercials" use a brief segment of on-air time for sales talks (usually 15 seconds to 2 minutes long). Although sponsorship was common until the 1960s, spots are now the predominant form of radio advertising.

Television continued these practices. Many radio programs and their sponsors shifted easily to television, including Imperial Oil's *Hockey Night in Canada*. The only major adaptation was the development of stage and film techniques to produce effective visuals in televised ads. Otherwise, media buyers continued to buy time as they had in radio, creative staff continued to write persuasive appeals, and market researchers continued to investigate consumer habits.

1960–2000

The functions of the industry have not changed significantly since 1960. That said, Canadians' gradual acceptance of the country's multicultural heritage altered both media buying and creative services. The change started in Quebec.

Montreal was the country's commercial centre through much of the 20th century. During that time francophones composed roughly 20 to 30 percent of the Canadian market and 80 percent of the Quebec market. Surprisingly, francophones owned and operated few agencies and had little influence within anglophone agencies. This neglect of a massive segment of Canadian society reflected poorly on the entire industry. The situation changed abruptly after 1960 when Quebec francophones demanded greater authority in all aspects of public life. Advertisers responded

with French-language campaigns distinct from their English-language campaigns, thereby creating opportunities for francophone agencies. Jacques Bouchard and his agency BCP (founded 1963, Montreal) led the way with a groundbreaking campaign for Labatt's (Elkin, 1973; Côté and Daigle, 1999). Today, agencies embrace multiculturalism and tailor ads to any demographic segment that forms a substantial market.

These changes led to an ironic twist of historical fate. Cossette Communication-Marketing (now Cossette Communication Group) was a graphic design studio founded in 1962 to serve Quebec-based clients. Ten years later, Claude Lessard transformed the studio into an agency. It found early success doing French-language creative work for anglophone agencies and Automobiles Renault. It also caught the attention of McDonald's Restaurants, which contracted the agency for one francophone region of Quebec in 1977. Cossette produced several effective campaigns for the chain and subsequently won the entire national account, in English and French, in 1991. The same strategy won several other blue-chip clients. By 2000 it was the largest agency in Canada and among the top 30 in the world (The rankings, 2006; 64th annual, 2008).

While Quebec nationalists focused on advertising content, English Canadian nationalists were concerned with media buying. As previously noted, advertisers seek to reach the greatest number of potential consumers at the lowest possible cost. Certain American media outlets are attractive because they reach more Canadians than their Canadian rivals. For example, a Detroit radio station may draw more Canadian listeners than similar stations in Windsor. If Canadian advertisers follow listeners to that station, its Canadian rivals would lose revenue and possibly close. Nationalists argue that this tendency necessarily undermines Canadian culture. The federal government agrees and regulates media buying through the *Income Tax Act* and the *Foreign Publishers Advertising Services Act*. Canadian companies may claim the full cost of advertising in Canadian media outlets as a legitimate business expense against income. By contrast, Canadian companies may claim only 50 percent of the cost of advertising placed in foreign outlets (Armstrong, 2000).

2000–present

The most significant change in advertising since 2000 is undoubtedly the explosive growth of digital marketing. In the 1990s, advertisers experimented with the internet to gauge its influence and achieved mixed results. Many companies established websites to accompany their traditional advertising. These websites often replicated the display advertising one might find in a magazine, or the functions of a mail-order catalogue. One innovation, however, was "viral marketing," which relies on peer networks to promote a product, service or website in ways that mimic word-of-mouth recommendations among family and friends. Because digital content is easily copied and shared, it can spread across the country or around the world in a matter of days. Knowing this, companies began to post entertaining content on their websites to attract surfers, and to embed clickable links to facilitate sharing. Caution, however,

TABLE 8.1 Advertising Volume in Canada by Medium (in Millions of Dollars), 1998-2010

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Television	2,330	2,370	2,450	2,553	2,593	2,826	2,963	3,013	3,240	3,299	3,393	3,108	3,390
—national & network	1,648	1,528	1,625	1,678	1,681	1,815	1,856	1,841	1,943	1,919	1,944	1,728	1,889
—local & infomercial	442	449	445	438	404	406	402	404	416	431	422	375	389
—specialty	241	304	381	438	509	607	708	768	882	948	1,026	1,001	1,112
Newspapers*	1,596	1,629	1,731	1,678	1,684	1,697	1,752	1,784	1,768	1,725	1,670	1,380	1,640
—national	—	—	—	574	576	580	599	610	605	590	571	406	736
—local	—	—	—	1,104	1,108	1,116	1,152	1,174	1,163	1,135	1,099	974	631
—inserts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	273
Radio	920	953	1,001	1,048	1,080	1,171	1,209	1,313	1,388	1,468	1,558	1,469	1,517
Consumer Magazines	451	460	514	541	558	610	647	665	682	718	692	590	606
Out-of-Home	219	243	263	281	273	284	303	344	370	422	463	416	482
Internet	25	56	110	97	176	237	364	562	1,010	1,241	1,602	1,822	2,232
Other media**	3,276	3,284	3,450	2,659	2,696	2,839	3,006	3,080	3,159	3,146	3,041	2,512	2,595
Other advertising	—	—	—	1,645	1,680	1,743	1,820	1,895	1,855	2,000	2,029	1,805	1,589
Total	8,817	8,995	9,519	10,502	10,740	11,407	12,064	12,656	13,472	14,019	14,448	13,102	14,051

* Printers' figures do not include revenue for classified advertising.

** "Other media" include direct mail, catalogues, telephone directories, and specialty magazines.

Source: Canadian Media Directors' Council (2008, 2011). *Net Advertising Volume*, p. 14 in *Media Digest* 2008/09, 2011/12. Toronto: Marketing Magazine.

was still the strongest driver of internet marketing during this time. In 1999, expenditure on internet marketing in Canada was \$56 million, barely 1 percent of total advertising expenditures (Canadian Media Directors' Council, 2008, 14).

Over the next decade, advertisers threw caution to the wind. As more Canadians connected to the internet at home, at work, and through mobile devices, advertisers followed wherever they thought they could find potential customers. By 2010, expenditure on internet advertising had grown to \$2.2 billion, or an increase of roughly 3,886 percent. It then represented 19 percent of total advertising expenditures among all mass media in Canada, a share second only to television (Canadian Media Directors' Council, 2011, 14). Table 8.1 provides a graphic illustration of the growth of digital advertising in relation to all other media. Part of this growth reflects the increasing number of companies in Canada with a Web presence, but it is also evident that companies have accepted digital marketing as a necessary component of their marketing strategies.

Internet marketing was enhanced by the development of social networking sites such as Blogger, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Social networking sites provide stable, easily navigated frameworks for internet users to post their own content and invite contributions from others. The ready availability of digital recording technology, especially cameras and mobile phones, meant that individuals could readily include sound, images, and video in their contributions. These sites epitomize Tim O'Reilly's concept of "Web 2.0," a media environment where the barrier between senders and receivers is shattered. This environment is not characterized by publishing but participation, because within it users add value to whatever content is available (O'Reilly, 2005). Any messages "published" by ad agencies and PR firms in traditional marketing campaigns always carry the stigma of self-interest; their work is designed to sell goods. By contrast, conversations among consumers appear to be trustworthy because the participants usually gain no reward. These exchanges are intended to share information although, occasionally, they can reveal some measure of personal investment in a brand that moves beyond mere purchase and consumption.

Many companies have tried to make use of these exchanges on their own websites. One Canadian company that has done so is Canadian Tire. When the retailer posts information about a product on its site, it invites customers to add their own comments about the product, and these comments remain visible for all to read. This practice can result in some surprisingly frank but helpful discussions. In a more aggressive fashion, Facebook has capitalized upon its members' activities through use of the "Like" function that allows individuals to show their appreciation for specific products, services, or companies. Facebook encourages advertisers to make use of this function in order to market themselves through its pages rather than through traditional advertising. As Facebook notes, "People treat Facebook as an authentic part of their lives, so you can be sure you are connecting with real people with real interest in your products" (Facebook, 2012). Notably, it does not have a "Dislike" function (though one was created as a Firefox add-on by developer Thomas Moquet).

■■■■ INSTITUTIONS

The advertising industry is complex. There are many players, they are highly competitive, and they operate across all media. Institutional structures bring order to this complexity. They were developed as people responded to pressures both inside and outside the industry. That these institutions are necessary and permanent suggests an important point: the issues they address are crucial to the stability of the industry's day-to-day operations (see Table 8.2).

Every sector of the industry has its own association. In each case, rival companies cooperate to promote their common interests. The Canadian Newspaper Association (CNA) is an apt example.¹ It formed in 1858 when several Ontario newspapers lobbied the federal government for lower postal rates. Over time, other issues were raised and resolved cooperatively. The appearance of agencies after 1880, for example, posed several problems for newspapers. The association's handling of these issues attracted new members, and by 1920 it represented daily newspapers across Canada. Today, its mandate is to "to speak with a unified voice when promoting newspaper interests to governments, regulators and the general public" and contribute "to the ongoing evolution of the newspaper industry by raising awareness and promoting the benefits of daily and community newspapers to advertisers, media planners, creative agencies and newspapers" (Newspapers Canada, 2012). In other words, it lobbies the government for policies favourable to newspapers and promotes newspapers as an advertising medium.

The Canadian Community Newspapers Association (CCNA) and Magazines Canada have similar mandates. Both had their origins in the CNA but broke away in 1919 over their competition for advertising dollars. Dailies and magazines competed for the same national advertising contracts; dailies and community papers competed for retail advertising. Eighty years later, however, all three types of publications once again face a common problem with the development of digital news delivery and the growth of internet advertising. Hence, there was a new impetus for publishers to cooperate. In January 2011, the CNA and CCNA agreed to share resources through a new umbrella organization called Newspapers Canada. Although both associations are still governed by their own boards, they share a single chief executive officer who is also the manager of Newspapers Canada. More importantly, the two associations now share research, marketing, and lobbying services to promote all newspapers with a single voice (Newspapers Canada, 2012). Magazines Canada continues to provide its own parallel services to the Canadian magazine industry.

After commercial broadcasting took root in Canada, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) formed to establish labour and copyright standards for broadcasting. However, it too was concerned with advertising, and it became an advocate for private-sector commercial broadcasting. By 2010, its membership embraced terrestrial radio and television stations, and cable, satellite, digital, and pay-per view channels in the private sector. That year, however, the association fractured when a dispute arose between terrestrial broadcasters and the cable and satellite companies

over a proposed CRTC regulation. The CAB has subsequently reorganized itself as an umbrella organization that maintains research and marketing services for its members, but it no longer serves as an industry lobbyist on regulatory affairs.

The Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) and Out-of-Home Marketing Association of Canada (OMAC) formed to represent the collective interests of Canadian digital media and out-of-home marketing companies, respectively. "Out-of-home marketing" refers to any public media form such as billboards, posters, transit ads, or point-of-sale devices in retail locations. Like the other associations, the IAB and OMAC perform research on the effectiveness of their members' advertising reach, support their members' efforts to attract new business, and lobby all levels of government to produce regulation amenable to their interests.

The Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA) was founded by Anson McKim and J. J. Gibbons, among others, in 1905. Newspapers and advertisers both questioned the value of agencies until 1907, when an agreement between the CNA and ICA formally recognized the value of agents as media buyers. Thereafter, newspapers agreed to accept media buying contracts from the agencies, but in exchange the agencies had to undergo credit checks to demonstrate their fiscal responsibility (Johnston, 2001). Agency accreditation remains a service of Newspapers Canada.

TABLE 8.2 Major Trade Associations Related to Advertising in Canada

Canadian Newspaper Association (CNA): founded 1858; reorganized 1919; reorganized 1996
• represents daily newspapers
Canadian Community Newspapers Association (CCNA): founded 1919
• represents weekly newspapers
Newspapers Canada: founded 2011
• provides research, marketing, and lobbying services to members of CNA and CCNA
Magazines Canada: founded 1919
• represents consumer, business, and cultural magazines
Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB): founded 1926; reorganized 2010–2011
• represents radio, television, cable, and satellite channels
Interactive Advertising Bureau of Canada (IAB): founded 1997
• represents internet publishers, advertisers, and service providers
Out-of-Home Marketing Association of Canada (OMAC): founded 2005
• represents billboard, poster, and transit placement agencies
Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA): founded 1905; reorganized 1925
• represents advertising agencies
Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS): founded 1948
• represents PR firms
Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA): founded 1916
• represents companies with nationally advertised goods and services
Canadian Marketing Association (CMA): founded 1967
• represents all sectors of the industry

This means all agencies that handle newspaper advertising in Canada must be recognized by this media association.

Advertisers formed the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) in 1916. They wanted proof that advertising actually generated sales. This demand put pressure on media outlets and agencies to produce demonstrable results from their campaigns. This remains the mandate of the association today, to help its members “in maximizing the value of their investments in all forms of marketing communications” (Association of Canadian Advertisers, 2012). The association also lobbies the government on advertising-related issues, particularly to safeguard “commercial free speech.”

The members of these sector-specific associations also belong to the broad-based Canadian Marketing Association (CMA). It is the largest association linked to advertising in Canada and provides a forum for all sectors to advance their common interests. It promotes effective marketing practices and represents the industry before government and government agencies such as the CRTC and Industry Canada.

Over the last century, these associations have met with each other to establish common standards for the industry. Their negotiations have usually focused on one of two areas: media buying or creative services. The 1907 agreement between the CNA and ICA was the first of many to regulate media buying; credit checks were designed to ensure the reliability of agencies as buyers. The development of audience measurement ensured the reliability of media outlets as sellers (see Table 8.3). Agencies and advertisers are reluctant to take media outlets at their word; they expect audience research to be verified by an independent auditor. The first such organization, the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), was founded in the United States in 1914 through the cooperation of the press, advertisers, and agencies. Canadian companies participated in its establishment, including the *Toronto Star*, Canadian Pacific Railway, and J. J. Gibbons Advertising. The bureau's audit procedures were designed by representatives from all three sectors to ensure their acceptability. A similar mechanism to measure audience size was developed for each new medium. Some, like the ABC, were created through industry cooperation; examples include the Print Measurement Bureau, the Canadian Out-of-Home Measurement Bureau, and the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement. Others were created by independent entrepreneurs; these include Canadian Facts, which developed the first radio ratings in Canada during the 1930s, and ACNielsen Inc., which developed television ratings in the 1940s and internet ratings in the 1990s (Eaman, 1994).

On the creative side is **Advertising Standards Canada (ASC)**. This nonprofit organization functions as a watchdog, monitoring the content of advertisements. Over the last 40 years, several codes have been developed to govern what advertisers may claim or depict in their ads. In each case, the code was developed voluntarily by the industry in response to public complaints or government pressure (see Table 8.4).

Voluntary participation is key. The Canadian constitution protects freedom of speech. The government and courts, however, insist that protected freedoms not

TABLE 8.3 Audience Research Agencies Operating in Canada

Audit Bureau of Circulations, founded 1914
• audits the circulation of newspapers and magazines
Canadian Circulations Audit Board (a division of BPA Worldwide), founded 1936
• audits the circulation of newspapers and magazines
NADbank, founded 1984
• audits the circulation of daily newspapers
Print Measurement Bureau, founded 1971
• audits the circulation of magazines
Canadian Out of Home Measurement Bureau, founded 1965
• audits the visibility of billboards, posters, and transit placements
Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, founded 1942
• audits the audience size of radio and television outlets
AC Nielsen Canada, founded 1944
• audits the audience size of television outlets and the use of internet sites

be abused. For example, federal hate crime legislation places restrictions on speech. Similarly, the government has placed restrictions on commercial speech with regulations governing false advertising and standards of decency. For example, until the 1940s it was illegal to discuss birth control in public; therefore, condom manufacturers could not advertise. Today, alcohol ads may not portray people drinking alcohol. Watch closely—actors may hold open bottles, raise toasts, and clink glasses, but they will never actually drink. The government argues that such regulations protect community standards, but they are driven as much by profits as morals. Individual ads making false claims or promoting controversial behaviours can affect the public's confidence in all advertising. The government tries to protect consumer confidence by discouraging those who abuse the system.

The federal government has enacted several laws regulating the content of ads. Some, such as the *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*, hold companies liable for misleading claims made about their products. Others, such as the *Trade-marks Act* and the *Copyright Act*, protect companies from rivals with unfair marketing practices. Two important laws are designed to uphold community standards. The *Broadcasting Act* empowers the CRTC to regulate the character and quantity of all advertising aired by radio, television, cable, and satellite, while the *Canada Elections Act* monitors political advertising by all groups during federal election campaigns.

Under Canada's constitution, the provinces have jurisdiction over trade and commerce. This has created 10 separate legal frameworks that affect advertising. Apart from laws governing general trade practices, there are specific laws that regulate the advertising of pharmaceuticals, alcohol, tobacco, firearms, lotteries, and consumer credit. Several provinces have regulations to prevent billboards from appearing next to major highways. Quebec also has two unique pieces of

TABLE 8.4 Selected Laws, Regulations, and Codes for Advertising in Canada

Government of Canada

- *Broadcasting Act*, 1992, c. 11
- *Canada Corporations Act*, R.S. 1970, c. C-32
- *Canada Elections Act*, 2000, c. 9
- *Consumer Packaging & Labelling Act*, R.S. 1985, c. C-38
- *Copyright Act*, R.S. 1985, c. C-42
- *Food & Drugs Act*, R.S. 1985, c. F-27
- *Foreign Publishers Advertising Services Act*, 1999, c. 23
- *Income Tax Act*, R.S. 1985, c. 1, Suppl. 5
- *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, 2000, c. 5
- *Telecommunications Act* (amendment), s. 41, 2004-05, C-37
- *Trade-marks Act*, R.S. 1985, c. T-13
- *Guidelines: Privacy and Online Behavioural Advertising* [2011]

Government of Quebec

- *Charter of the French Language*, 1977, c. 5
- Children's advertising provisions, s. 248-249 of the *Consumer Protection Act*, 1978, c. 9

Advertising Standards Canada

- *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards* [2012]

Advertising Standards Canada and Concerned Children's Advertisers

- *Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children* [2010]

Canadian Marketing Association

- *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* [2002]

regulation: guidelines governing advertising to children and the *Charter of the French Language*. The provincial government created the charter to protect and promote the French language in Quebec. Its original provisions banned the use of any language other than French on signs posted in public space, thereby affecting the content of billboards, posters, shop signs, and window displays. This provision was struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1988, which held that it violated the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, but the Quebec government invoked section 33 of the *Charter*, the "notwithstanding" clause, to override this decision and maintain the intent of the provision. Now, a second language is permitted on signs only if French appears more prominently.

Advertisers and agents resent state intervention. ASC provides a mechanism for the industry to regulate itself. Its key function is to maintain and administer the *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards*. This document, first drafted in 1963, is reviewed annually and revised as necessary. It articulates 14 principles that all advertisers should respect. Its chief concerns are the accuracy and clarity of ad copy; the handling of prices, guarantees, and testimonials; the portrayal of women and visible minorities; and the character of advertising to children. Anyone who objects to an

ad in a Canadian media outlet may lodge a complaint with ASC. In 2011, 1809 complaints were received regarding 1153 ads, the majority of which appeared on television (38 percent). ASC reviewed 109 of these ads and found that 83 ads (7 percent) violated the code (*Advertising Standards Canada*, 2012, 2-4). When this happens, the advertiser is asked to alter the ad or stop it. However, ASC has no recourse to the justice system because it is a private-sector organization. Its sanctions depend on the voluntary cooperation of advertisers, agencies, and media outlets.

The most sensitive reviews concern depiction of sexuality within the bounds of community standards. Two examples may serve as illustrations. In 2010, American Apparel hired adult film performer Faye Valentine to model a unitard. When the images were posted on the retailer's website, they quickly drew a complaint. ASC reviewed the case and noted that "when advertising undergarments, models are often featured in suggestive poses" and "that the majority of the images displayed on the advertiser's webpage did not raise an issue." The images that drew the complaint, however, "appeared to be posed in the advertisement less to demonstrate the unitard's selling features than for the stimulation and gratification of the viewer." As a result, the council ruled that the images contravened public standards (*Advertising Standards Canada*, 2010). The following year, Virgin Radio had a billboard featuring Usher and the tagline "Shirt On: OMG. Shirt Off: OMFG." Anyone familiar with the vernacular of text-messaging understood that the ad included an implicit profanity. Because the billboard appeared in public spaces and was potentially insensitive to religious beliefs, ASC ruled that this ad also offended public standards (*Advertising Standards Canada*, 2011). Both examples suggest that aspects of digital culture which are acceptable among private citizens will face scrutiny when adapted for public use by marketers. ASC hopes that its procedures continue to demonstrate the industry's willingness to monitor its own practices both in traditional and digital media.

■■■■ CURRENT ISSUES

Globalization

Advertising has long been an international industry. Consumer goods manufacturers such as Unilever and Lipton sold their wares throughout the British Empire in the 1800s and advertised accordingly. J. Walter Thompson Advertising, one of the largest American agencies throughout the 20th century, established branch offices wherever its clients sold their goods. By 1930 it was on three continents, including offices in Montreal (established 1929) and Toronto (1930). Clients appreciated that a single agency handled their campaigns worldwide. Other agencies emulated Thompson's model.

In the 1970s, the pace of international expansion intensified when a major American agency, McCann-Erickson, united with a major English agency, Lintas (Mattelart, 1991). Together they formed the Interpublic Group of Companies. The

“agency group” model is significantly different from the “international agency” model. Groups recognize that every country has its own marketing challenges created by differences in language, customs, laws, and media use. When agencies from different countries form a group, they offer both convenience and cultural credibility. Through a single company they offer international marketing support that can be implemented anywhere by a local office. In 2007, the four dominant groups were Omnicom Group and Interpublic Group of Companies, both of New York; WPP of Dublin; and Publicis Groupe SA of Paris (Johnson, 2011).

As agency groups extend their reach, they affect smaller, regional agencies. This is particularly true in Canada. The country composes only one small region in the global marketplace, and its manufacturing sector is dominated by foreign-owned companies that produce processed foods, consumer durables, and automobiles—all high-volume advertisers. When the parent companies of Canadian branch plants integrate their Canadian campaigns with their global marketing plans, accounts shift from Canadian agencies to agency groups. For example, McDonald’s transferred its media-buying account from independent Cossette to OMD Canada, a division of Omnicom, in 2004.

Few Canadian agencies compete directly with agency groups. Most either join a group or find a niche for themselves within Canada. Some of Canada’s oldest agencies took the first path. McKim joined Omnicom, MacLaren joined Interpublic, and BCP sold part of its business to Publicis. Agencies that take the second path generally provide high-quality creative services geared to Canadian audiences—something they claim that groups cannot provide. Rethink Communications (founded 1999, Vancouver) and John St (founded 2001, Toronto) have gone this route. Two notable exceptions follow a third path. Cossette has sought to expand on its own terms. In 2010 it established a new division for its business outside Canada (under the name EDC Communications). By contrast, MDC Partners (founded 1980, Toronto) is a Canadian-owned holding company that has expanded internationally by purchasing relatively small but successful agencies in foreign markets. In 2010, MDC was the tenth largest agency group in the world with more business in the United States than in Canada (Johnson, 2011).

The Death of Advertising?

Industry observers such as Sergio Zyman (2003) suggest big-budget ad campaigns are a casualty of the media-saturated 21st century. Two lines of thought inform this idea. First, the proliferation of new media outlets and audience fragmentation has advantages and disadvantages for advertisers. To remain competitive, media outlets dependent on ad revenue must increase their audience share or reduce their ad rates. This is good for advertisers. However, new media outlets typically focus on narrow target markets that may be unresponsive to traditional mass market campaigns. Advertisers and their agencies are then pressured to create unique ads for each outlet. At the same time, new marketing strategies have allowed advertisers

to abandon the traditional mass media altogether by creating their own magazines, digital content, or events. For example, Shoppers Drug Mart produces the magazine *Glow* while CIBC has linked its name to the annual Run for the Cure, a fundraiser for breast cancer research.

Second, the general public has long been cynical of advertising messages. In the past, it was possible to tune out these messages. Radio listeners changed stations, television viewers left the room, and Web surfers ignored banner advertising. Today, digital devices have provided the technology to access media content without advertising, or to eliminate advertising from the content (as with personal video recorders). Advertisers and agencies have responded by making ads more entertaining, controversial, or intrusive in order to capture our attention. Beer ads crafted for the Stanley Cup playoffs and Super Bowl illustrate this trend. Another response is to use technical innovations such as pop-up windows on the internet.

What is the alternative to traditional advertising? Some companies look to public relations and guerrilla marketing. Public relations as an industry has existed since the 1920s and has its own practitioners and institutions. The Canadian Public Relations Society, founded in 1948, serves PR firms just as the ICA serves advertising agencies. Despite their professional separation, however, the function of public relations is the same as that of advertising: to enhance the public’s appreciation for companies, their brands, and their products and services. It does this by delivering messages through channels the public generally trusts (Johansen, 2001). One such channel is news organizations. Many people may question a company’s advertising but may accept news stories covering that company’s affairs. PR firms can generate positive coverage by staging press conferences and spectacles in conjunction with corporate events. PR firms can also boost their clients by sponsoring charitable, cultural, and sports organizations. In times of crisis, it is also the PR firm’s responsibility to safeguard a client’s reputation (Ries and Ries, 2002).

Guerrilla marketing was a term conceived in the 1980s to describe street-level alternatives to traditional advertising campaigns. While traditional campaigns featured formal, planned strategies and national media exposure, guerrilla marketing tends to use unconventional channels of communication to reach local audiences (Levinson, 1985). This includes packages of coupons delivered door-to-door, “personal” telephone calls known as telemarketing, and contests. Newspapers now use telemarketing and display booths at local festivals and fairs to reach new, local subscribers. Other guerrilla tactics include events and stunts in public places. In June 2002, Nike opened a nightclub in Toronto’s Kensington Market district. This neighbourhood, a magnet for artists and students, has street credibility among those who appreciate alternative lifestyles and cultural events. The club’s exterior was not branded, but the interior design and employee uniforms were. It was hoped that unsuspecting hipsters would learn to love Nike apparel (Rumack, 2002). During the summer in 2010, McDonald’s created beach umbrellas that looked like enormous lids and straws from milk shake cups and then installed them for public use

on Toronto beaches. In each of these cases, a company sought to reach its intended market by linking the setting and the medium with the brand in a memorable way.

One other alternative has emerged to challenge traditional marketing, and that is social media. As noted earlier in this chapter, the pervasive influence of social networking sites has provided companies with a structure in which consumers promote the goods and services they like best. Although this once happened innocently through personal exchanges among family and friends interacting online, companies such as Facebook, Twitter, and Klout have found ways to commodify the experience to maximize the benefits for advertisers.

Taken together, audience fragmentation, public relations, guerrilla marketing, and social networking sites have severely challenged the traditional use of mass market advertising. Indeed, this trend has affected Canada's largest agencies. Many have stopped describing their work as advertising, and prefer the terms "marketing" or "communication" (Zyman, 2003). The public simply sees more advertising delivered through more channels than ever before.

Privacy

As noted above, advertising was not welcome on radio when commercial broadcasting began. Similar concerns have dogged the recent development of new marketing practices. Particularly troublesome is the practice of collecting and selling databases of personal information. For decades, periodical publishers have maintained the names and addresses of everyone who subscribes to their magazines. These mailing lists are valuable. In effect, they are databases of individuals who self-identify their lifestyles and spending habits through their choice of reading material. If a magazine reaches a well-defined target market, certain advertisers will want to buy space in it. Direct marketers, however, would rather send their own materials (sometimes called "junk mail") to each subscriber rather than use the magazine itself. Publishers sell their mailing lists to direct marketers for this purpose.

Many other organizations generate similar databases. Digital technologies allow data to be collected across vast networks of businesses. Most prominent is the Air Miles program operated by LoyaltyOne. The program encourages consumers to favour certain retailers, products, and services by rewarding them with points for every purchase. The points can then be used toward air travel. The Air Miles database starts with each person's name and address. It then records each person's purchases, and where, when, and how much was spent. After collating this data, LoyaltyOne can generate highly specialized databases of individuals sorted by their buying habits. For example, it could generate a list of everyone who purchases dog food. With this list, a dog food manufacturer could send a brochure and coupons to everyone on it. Alternatively, the manufacturer could send the same information by email (sometimes called spam). Either way, the manufacturer can be confident that all of the recipients are potential customers because it already knows they buy dog food. This is far more efficient than mass media advertising where 50 to 75 percent

of the audience may not even own a dog. Similar databases can be generated by every other loyalty program and credit card offered in Canada.

These practices have fostered anxiety among Canadians. Although consumers provide personal data to companies they trust, they are not willing to have those data shared with a third party. This is apparent in the disdain for junk mail, telemarketing, and spam. Data sharing is unlikely to stop, however; quite the opposite, Facebook has commodified the data its users post to the site to produce one of the most sophisticated and intensive databases ever created about human consumption practices. The estimated value of the company when its shares went public—between \$75 billion and \$100 billion—was based on its ability to collect and organize personal information for marketing purposes (Avery, 2012). Canadian users were among the first to realize the consequences of their participation, and a Toronto-based campaign encouraged users to delete their personal accounts (Lunau, 2010). More substantially, the federal Office of the Privacy Commissioner investigated Facebook in 2009 and found its data practices problematic when assessed against Canadian privacy law. Facebook subsequently made changes to its global user policies in response to the commissioner's report (Canada, Office of the Privacy Commissioner, 2009; 2011).

Google also offers services to advertisers. Through its AdWords program, Google will associate specific words or phrases with a specific advertiser's website. Then, each time a surfer enters matching words or phrases into the search engine, the search results will prioritize that advertiser's website. Google can tailor its results to the geographic location of anonymous users based upon their IP addresses and to known users through their Google log-in information. For example, a local pizza shop can have its ad prioritized for surfers in its area, while a national pizza chain can have its ad prioritized for surfers across the country. Google then bills each advertiser for every surfer who clicks through from its results page to the advertiser's website. It is Google's ability to collect, retain, and analyze data from searches and click-throughs that raises concerns for privacy advocates. Anyone who has an account with Google, and logs in before every search, will have all of his or her browsing recorded for future use. Google argues that this data is used to improve the accuracy and quality of future searches (Google, 2012). Critics counter that Google retains an unnecessarily detailed level of personal data on its clients.

Equally troubling is the idea that corporate data systems may not be secure. Information contained on electronic databases may be divulged by insiders or hacked by outsiders. In 1997, the Province of Ontario Savings Bank accidentally placed its electronic records for 50,000 customers in the public domain—including their names, addresses, phone numbers, account numbers, and social insurance numbers (Ontario, Information and Privacy Commissioner, 2000). More recently, groups such as Wikileaks and Anonymous have demonstrated their ability to obtain information from supposedly high-security organizations such as the United States military and Federal Bureau of Investigation. Such leaks undermine confidence in all electronic exchanges.

The Canadian federal government cooperated with the CMA to develop legislation governing the use of personal data for advertising and marketing. Both parties sought positive means to bolster the integrity of these databases and to diminish the public's fears. The result of their negotiations is the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (2000, c.5), commonly known as **PIPEDA**. It requires all organizations to obtain the consent of individuals before they collect, store, or distribute personal information. Organizations must also ensure their databases are secure from unauthorized use. For example, under PIPEDA all Canadian periodicals must state whether they sell their subscription lists to other organizations. If a periodical does, it must let subscribers opt out of the list. It was this law that prompted the Privacy Commissioner's investigation of Facebook.

Although the law did not originally apply to telemarketing, the CMA lobbied successfully for its inclusion. Because telecommunications are regulated by the CRTC, however, the government had to empower that agency to take action through an amendment to the *Telecommunications Act*. This passed in 2005. The CRTC then brought into service a mandatory national "do-not-call list" in 2008 that discourages telemarketers from contacting anyone whose number is registered (Canada, CRTC, 2007). The CMA now seeks controls on spam, but a disagreement between the CMA and the government over the implementation of such controls has delayed passage of the relevant legislation (Geist, 2009).

SUMMARY

Advertising in Canada has come a long way from the first newspaper ads in 1752. The creative content of advertising today is colourful and slickly produced, the tone is aggressive, and the technology is stunningly complex. Still, its purpose remains the same: to persuade the public to buy. Less obvious is the effect that advertising has upon our public debates and culture. The influence of industry lobbies such as the ICA, ACA, CPRS, and CMA affects the shape of federal and provincial law. Just as importantly, the logic of media buying affects the nature of Canadian culture as it is produced and distributed through the mass media.

QUESTIONS

1. What is advertising? Has it changed significantly with the advent of digital media?
2. Who has prompted reforms in the advertising industry, and why?
3. Is self-regulation a sound and principled way to regulate the advertising industry?
4. How does media buying affect the content of Canadian radio and television?
5. Why might some observers claim that advertising is either dead or dying? Are they correct?

NBL

NOTE

1. Many of the industry associations discussed in this chapter have changed their names since they were founded. Only their current names are used here.

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NOTES:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Advertising to Captive Audiences

It will work. I am a marketing genius.

Paris Hilton

No matter how optimistic (and opportunistic) you might be about advertising, it's possible that you have limits on where you think ads should be shown. Is a bathroom stall okay? What about the tray-tables on airplanes? What about in a jail – where someone is arrested and waiting for bail and doesn't have a lawyer? Or how about on students' exam papers? (History brought to you by Tony's Pizza!) All of these examples actually exist.

If people don't have much of a choice about seeing the advertising – if they really are a captive audience – does that make a difference to how you feel about the issue? When the airplane captain tells you to fasten your seat belt because you're about to hit turbulence and you're illogically straining your brain, looking toward the cockpit, trying to will the plane into smooth sailing skies, do you really need to see an advertisement for Advil at that moment? And, if you had seen the ad, would you be more inclined to buy a bottle once you have landed safely? The following essays argue maybe, and then again maybe not!

Advertising and Society: An Introduction, Second Edition. Edited by Carol J. Pardun.
© 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Published 2014 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Both authors discuss the validity of the concept of “captive audiences” because advertising is ubiquitous and so, in a sense, we're all captive to all advertising all the time. But, still, it seems that in certain situations the appropriateness of advertising is questionable. This issue has been debated for years in the context of school. Some estimate that about a third of middle and high school students have access to Channel One – a short news show that is geared toward teens – and, subsequently, advertising in the school. Since Channel One's introduction over 20 years ago, the concept has been embroiled in controversy – mostly because of the embedded advertising. Some research has indicated that the students watching the program in school remember the ads more than they remember the news segment. (If you're interested in learning more, check out the website at www.channelone.com.)

It's easy to say that the commercialization of schools is a bad thing, but as school budgets shrink, it might be harder to persuade a teacher. If a math teacher has a choice to pay for the paper himself or herself in order to print out an exam, or let Gatorade cover the cost, what's the harm? Maybe school buses wrapped in messages from Starbucks would provide additional funds to hire bus monitors to make a student's bus ride to school safer.

Just about every captive place where advertising occurs (or has the potential to occur) creates a controversy that eventually can be boiled down to the issue of whether the funds generated by the ad are worth the hassle (if there is one) of being exposed to the ad. Which argument wins the day? *You decide.*

Ideas to Get You Thinking . . .

- 1 Next time you go to the airport, take note of all the advertisements you see. What are the products being advertised? Do you think the advertisers have pushed the envelope too far? Why, or why not?
- 2 Think of a place that you regard as totally off-limits to advertisers (e.g., a funeral home, a church nursery). Describe the place and explain why you think it would be inappropriate. Now do some research and see if what the advertisers think. You might make a visit, talk to someone who works at the “off-limits” location, or see what you can find by doing some online research. What did you discover?
- 3 Go to a public place and set a timer (one hour would be appropriate). Make a list of all the advertising you can see without moving. What have you observed?

Other Topics to Debate

- 1 We can all agree on areas that should be totally off-limits to advertisers.
- 2 Advertising should be limited in places where a person feels stress (such as airplanes, dentist offices, and tax auditors' offices).

- 3 While advertising should not be off-limits anywhere, certain *kinds* of advertising should be (such as humorous ads in cemeteries, for example).
- 4 The only way to cut down on advertising clutter is to require advertisers to limit their advertising budgets.

If You'd Like to Know More . . .

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Why advertising is acceptable (almost) everywhere

Angeline G. Close

University of Texas, USA

Without doubt, marketing and advertising can overstep its bounds. Some bad apples can ruin the bunch; however, the majority of marketing communications do add value to peoples' lives. Advertising and marketing are increasingly out of the home (OOH) because consumers are spending less time at home. Consumers are mobile, on the go, on social media, connected, and often unwilling to take the time to slow down to absorb traditional advertising. Hence, by reaching consumers – and perhaps in the process educating or entertaining them – while they are out living life, advertisers are adapting to changes in modern consumer behavior. Event marketing and sponsorships are an example of newer forms of marketing communication that not only get this point, but embrace it. Advertisers are not holding consumers hostage; they are entertaining, educating, and providing a social backdrop to modern consumer lifestyles.

While some may argue that advertising takes advantage of unknowing, trapped consumers, I hope to convince you that advertising is a good thing. The macro effects to local and global economies alone could be enough evidence to support the value of advertising. Throughout the past century, the advertising business model has been an engine of creativity for consumers and success for business markets. Achievements in television and radio programming are mainly financed by ad revenue. The same is true for the wide variety of corporate websites, social media sites, events, consumer blogs, apps, and magazines/e-zines that circulate worldwide. In the twenty-first century, modern marketers are desperately seeking ways to seamlessly integrate advertising, events, and sponsorships into consumer lifestyles, in order to reach a fragmenting audience that is increasingly out of the home.

As an author, researcher, and marketing/advertising educator, my goal is usually to present a balanced, nonbiased view of both the pros and cons of advertising, event marketing, and their impacts on consumer behavior both online and on the ground. Thus, I appreciate the premise of this book, as the counterargument provides an important side to the acceptability of advertising – when it oversteps its bounds or ventures to “the dark side” of advertising.

Here, I provide evidence for the argument that “Advertising is acceptable – anywhere,” within the context of the United States. Advertising is beyond acceptable – it is necessary, and it enhances the business market. The most compelling argument for why advertising is necessary is its economic benefits. Advertising is a smart business component and sparks global awareness because it *promotes capitalism, enhances the economy, and provides jobs*. Aside from macro benefits, consumers can learn, laugh, and reinforce ego, status-seeking, and even extend the self (Belk and Pollay 1985).

It is imperative to note that advertising has both intended (often positive) and unintended (both positive and negative) effects on consumers and society. It is often these unintended effects or misuse of advertising that lend to advertising resistance. So we must be careful to separate the issue of advertising's acceptability from the broader market's acceptability. That is, if you believe that cigarette advertising is unacceptable, consider if the broader issue is that the product (cigarettes) or the surrounding market is what is actually resisted.

Hence, in this essay, I first discuss advertising's economic benefit, because that is the most macro benefit, and one that may trickle down to individual households and consumers. Second, I discuss advertising and its benefit to consumers. After addressing both the macro and consumer benefits, I then explain how advertising is a social backdrop. Although advertising is acceptable – it brings business, consumer, and societal benefits – advertising is, and should be, subject to consumer resistance. Thus, I note two areas of risk to the field of advertising – privacy concerns and attitudes of resistance. Some consumers resist markets or too much advertising – especially when they perceive it to be invasive or a threat to their privacy (understandably so). Thus, I add to the discussion of the counterargument (why advertising is not necessary) by including a plausible explanation of why consumers do not see its value and resist advertising in its entirety.

Advertising anywhere: Economic Benefits

Advertising and Competition

Advertising Promotes Competition

Why limit advertising opportunities to traditional media, when consumers spend and consume virtually anywhere these days thanks to technology? Advertising helps the economy by reinforcing competition. One of the beauties of capitalism is the notion that competition can drive up quality in the market. This applies to both goods and services. The competition between Coca-Cola and Pepsi is an excellent example of this. Since the 1950s, Coke and Pepsi have dominated the cola market by continuing to be in competition with each other. Since Coke and Pepsi can easily duplicate each other when it comes to packaging, placement, and even ingredients, the main focus of their differentiation in the market is their advertisements – and where they market. Pepsi started with their advertisement campaign on the “Pepsi Generation” while Coke used advertisements that claim to be superior in taste. Pepsi then responded with the “Pepsi Challenge” campaign – a guerilla marketing campaign that asked cola drinkers to take a blind taste test of Coke and Pepsi and choose which one tasted better – and so the cycle continues. Each company continues to improve its product line, packaging, and advertising because of its competition with the other (Yoffie 2007). And both companies realize the value of taking their marketing to the streets. No one was forcing consumers to take the Pepsi Challenge – it was fun, interesting, and an experience people lined up for.

Advertising and the Economy

Economic Contributions

The more places to advertise (e.g., in cabs, subways, even toilets), the better, when you consider the economic benefit. Advertising enhances the economy. Since 2000, advertising has continuously stayed at approximately 2 percent of the nation's GDP, which was approximately \$15 trillion at the time of writing (Galbi 2008; US Department of Commerce 2011). That means \$300 billion of the nation's GDP is a direct result of advertising. With this in mind, do you still find the ad in the airplane really bothersome?

Further, advertising revenues can predict economic trends. The argument is that advertising revenue increases when the US GDP increases. Although the current GDP and advertising revenue are on the rise, it is important to note that the media outlets of advertising are changing (Kantar Media 2013).

Advertising Provides Jobs

In conjunction with enhancing the economy, advertising stimulates demand and provides employment to thousands in the media, creative, and accounting fields.

Today, about 30 percent of the global job market belongs to the marketing and advertising industries (Christ 2012). This trend most likely will continue, as advertising and marketing remain popular majors. These students, like you, will help shape the future of the field as you progress in your careers.

For careers, it is crucial to understand the necessity of advertising – almost anywhere, both locally and globally, and the globalization of jobs due to virtual agencies. Virtual ad agencies are teams of industry experts that collaborate virtually, rather than having a physical bricks-and-mortars traditional ad agency with overheads (Finney and Close 2008). Virtual agencies will allow the field to provide employment regardless of physical location, thus opening up the playing field. Advertising, in sum, helps the economy by hedging capitalism and opening job markets. These benefits of ubiquitous marketing trickle down to individual households and consumers.

Advertising anywhere: Benefit to Consumers

In addition to its aforementioned macro benefits to the economy and job creation, advertising also helps us as consumers in both utilitarian and hedonic ways. It provides information to enhance our awareness of new products, services, and brands, not to mention providing us with entertainment and escape.

Advertising Is Accepted in “Captive” Spaces

Note that captive spaces do not include corporate sponsored events (these events will be addressed later). Although these audiences are also in a captive space, the audiences at these events are there for the actual event and therefore are not focused on reading text or actual advertising. In contrast, captive space advertisements appear in transit places, where people are normally waiting for or traveling to a destination.

Others may critique the field for taking advantage of consumers who are on the go – say in a cab or airplane, at an event, or waiting in line. Yet, this is just smart exposure. Advertising in captive spaces and transit media is accepted in such places as airplanes, subways, buses, and taxicabs. According to Euro RSCG 4D (a digital marketing agency), “consumers seamlessly navigate from awareness to purchase to advocacy at their (often quick) pace, and they expect their brands to do the same” (Springer 2009). Advertising in captive areas has become standard and is not only accepted by consumers, but convenient and helpful. Most recently, digital advertisements were placed in New York City's subways to keep consumers interested and to customize advertisements to the location and times of the subway (Donohue 2012). This is helpful, and the consumer can always tune it out, as some rightfully choose to do at times.

Consider these success stories of advertising in a captive area. The first example is a successful campaign from Volkswagen in a subway station. The campaign goals were to show the economic side of Volkswagen. So their agency

turned the stairs that led to a subway station into a keyboard in order to promote the use of stairs over escalators. The staged event was recorded and became extremely successful online (Taylor 2009). The campaign, referred to as "The Fun Theory," went viral and is available to watch at YouTube (Fun Theory 2009).

A second success story involves taxi advertising in general. For taxi advertising, research has found that most people see taxi advertising often or very often, and more people tend to like it than dislike it. They also help reinforce brand recall and recognition (Veloutsou and O'Donnell 2005). This includes external taxi advertising (taxi tents and autowrapping), and ads in the back of the cab for travelers to see. These work especially well for destination-related products and services. In Las Vegas, these cab ads can let tourists coming from the airport know what shows are in town, where the dinner hotspots are, and other tourist attractions. Again, the ads are not holding consumers hostage – just informing them about opportunities they may be interested in.

Advertising as Product and Brand Information

Advertising Educates

Advertising, in its informative state, can educate. Advertising "educates buyers about the quality of matches" and about "relevant technologies" that help them make informed choices about their purchases and their environment (Meurer and Stahl 1994). Further, advertising also educates the government about company products, business plans, and personnel (Meurer and Stahl 1994). In addition, advertising also can enhance brand image.

Advertising Enhances Brands

Advertising provides information, and "plays a pivotal role in increasing brand awareness as well as creating strong brand association" (Yoo et al. 2000). On being exposed to such advertising, consumers begin to learn about what they may later demand. As an example, consider the last time you saw a prescription medicine advertised. Has it ever sparked you or a loved one to seek medical attention or more information on symptoms noted in an ad? Direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising (i.e., ads for prescription-only medicines going directly to the consumer) may inform consumers of an unknown health issue. With the advent of DTC advertising, even the pharmaceutical industry plans integrated communication strategies around creating awareness of disease or health conditions. DTC advertising may raise doubt about unintended consequences (e.g., self-diagnosing, doctor-patient conflict), but these may be outweighed by its alerting someone to seek medical care for a health problem.

Of course, DTC ads often tout branded solutions. Branding is a helpful way for consumers to identify and process service and product information. Product

knowledge allows the consumer to distinguish between competing brands (Roy and Cornwell 2004). For a consumer to consider purchasing a product, he or she must possess some product knowledge – and often this stems from advertising. Advertising can activate product knowledge. Consumers interpret product information based on knowledge they activated during comprehension (Lee and Olshavsky 1994). Furthermore, advertising and coexisting product knowledge influence consumer behavior (e.g., Brucks 1985; Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Kim et al. 2008). These studies find that a consumer's level of product knowledge and involvement influences his or her information-processing (from the ad or the product experience). Consumers often evaluate the value of high-involvement products by concrete attributes that satisfy utilitarian needs (Park and Moon 2003). A basic informational ad can help communicate the attributes that satisfy the consumer's utilitarian needs.

An informational ad can also enhance consumer attitudes towards a brand. Consumer research indicates a mere exposure effect; that is, as a consumer becomes aware of a product (e.g., via advertising), his or her attitude toward that product becomes more positive (Zajonc and Markus 1982). Advertising, sponsorship, and event marketing may better equip target consumers with relevant information, feelings, and experiences that can increase their knowledge about a sponsor's brands in an experiential fashion (Pine and Gilmore 1998).

Advertising Entertains

Advertising as Entertainment

Entertainment refers to the extent that experiences (e.g., watching a sports program) are enjoyable. Entertainment is important, because a consumer's perceived entertainment level may transfer to his or her assessments of the ad or brand advertised during the program. Outside of the home, entertainment favorably influences attendee attitudes toward an event, which may transfer to the sponsor (Close et al. 2006). It is a good idea to expose consumers to ads under favorable conditions where there is enthusiasm, excitement, and enjoyment, so that arousal and awareness are heightened.

Advertising as Humor

Humor in advertising persuades consumers to have positive attitudes toward advertisements, which can often transfer to the brand (Zhang 1996). Humor in advertising also increases consumer attention and comprehension of ads (Weinberger and Gulas 1992). This belief has grown popular over the years and it may be hard to find an advertisement that does not use humor. Think of your favorite television commercial. Does it have a talking shark in a focus group? Or Betty White getting tackled? Or a baby trading stocks on his iPad? Likely, the ad that you call your favorite is memorable because of a humorous element.

Advertising anywhere as a Social Backdrop

Again, the main reasons that advertising is acceptable – almost anywhere – are that it enhances capitalism and that it informs consumers while heightening awareness. Ultimately, there is a more aesthetic reason that advertising is acceptable. Advertising is a social backdrop to our everyday lives. At the same time, advertising leverages live events in society via sponsorship investments and event marketing investments.

Advertising serves as eye candy, for brand logos and models showing the latest fashions and designers are alluring images. Perhaps the next question is to what extent these images beautify an otherwise dull space, juxtaposed against the way in which they overshadow natural beauty and produce excess waste in the environment. Advertising may bring some aesthetic value to an area, or offer a place to provide information to someone outside the home. In this way, when it is done tastefully and in accordance with industry and community standards, advertising serves as an artistic backdrop to our lives.

In modern US society, advertising is acceptable – even expected – almost anywhere. From advertising in toilets (yes, toilets), on grocery carts, or on parking spaces, advertisers are constantly thinking up new ways to reach consumers with brand messages outside of the home. Today, the sky is literally the limit for OOH advertising and continues to increase in popularity and in advertising spending.

There are few limits to where advertising is acceptable in the United States and other Westernized, brand-oriented cultures. This is partly because of advertising's emerging role as a backdrop for our society. Advertising provides art and information, and it can even spark creativity in one's mind and soul. Advertising sparks ideas and dreams, and encourages us to take the next step (e.g., toward education, learning, listening to music, computing, etc.).

Event Sponsorships

Reaching consumers through event sponsorships is an accepted means of advertising, and consumers tend to appreciate that a corporate sponsor is helping host their experience (Close et al. 2006). If a corporate sponsor is successful at pulling off a great event, then the sponsorship will most likely be accepted. These days most people expect that companies sponsor major sporting, cultural, or charitable events. They see event sponsorship as a positive because it decreases the cost to the participants (Murphy et al. 2011). Again, this is smart marketing. People who attend an event are invested in the actual event. The sponsor makes the event possible for this invested audience and, therefore, has a low risk of being perceived negatively by the audience (Close et al. 2006). For a sponsorship to be successful, the brand touch points need to be articulated throughout the entire event – and this can be virtually anywhere from a cab to the event to a mobile site to recap the event.

Whether advertising is acceptable is worthy of debate because of its evolving roles in contemporary society, culture, and interpersonal and family relationships. Advertising can reinforce socially and culturally accepted norms. Advertising sparks consumption, which is an active force in the construction of culture (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). In special events and gift markets, advertising plays an extremely important function. In the United States, gift-giving is a common ritual, accounting for much of holiday spending. Corporate America appears to play an increasing role in the consumer culture that is associated with advertised brands and fashions. Furthermore, advertising can help consumers learn about politicians (if they can see through the attack ads). Some forms of advertising, such as political advertising, are a source of resistance to consumers (Holt 2002).

Advertising Resistance and Market Resistance

Despite the macro and micro benefits of advertising, there are some unintended potential effects of advertising anywhere. While my objective here is to point out why advertising is acceptable almost anywhere, I do have some concerns regarding unethical advertising. Exploitive ads or ads that speak to vulnerable populations (e.g., children, the elderly, the poor) are the most notable. Other times, advertising is blamed for a materialistic society or even one that is too fat (as in the movie *Super Size Me* (2004)) or too thin. Of course, my premise is that responsible advertising, which abides by industry standards, is acceptable almost anywhere and is necessary in the capitalistic market system in the United States. However, resistance to advertising and marketing is a concern to the field, as the field depends on consumer attitudes and behaviors toward advertised goods and services.

Market Resistance

While advertising provides us with the many benefits mentioned earlier, some consumers resist advertising in more captive places or OOH. More specifically, resistance occurs after too much or poor advertising, because of a lack of perceived need (Rumbo 2002). This key challenge to advertising (and privacy concerns) is the notion of market resistance. I suggest that the field exacerbates the resistance by focusing on behavioral rather than attitudinal resistance. Market resistance, as I see it, entails a *behavioral opposition to stereotyped status quo behaviors and rituals*.

Voluntary Simplicity and Advertising

Sometimes consumers do not want to see ads – they want to use their time in a cab time or on a flight for some peace and quiet. Voluntary simplicity, introduced in 1936, has remained a topic of interest to advertisers (Leonard-Barton 1981; Belk 2001; Craig-Lees and Hill 2002; Shaw and Newholm 2002; Zavestoski

2002; Close and Zinkhan 2009). Voluntary simplicity manifests itself in a set of behaviors indicative of a self-sufficient, low-consumption, and economically neutral lifestyle (Leonard-Barton 1981). It entails self-determination, material simplicity, human scale, personal growth, and ecological awareness (Elgin 1981). With this trend, consumers resist the dominant markets (i.e., advertised markets) for a simpler, often more intimate solution (e.g., trading, making a product) (Close and Zinkhan 2009). Market resistance may be associated with a shift in the sphere of exchange and consumption from the traditional marketplace to the virtual marketplace and the home.

This is important to explore as it relates to advertising. It would make sense that those seeking voluntary simplicity would avoid and resist traditional advertising efforts as well as OOH or captive approaches. Traditional advertising is not acceptable to everyone; however, most consumers do not seem to mind sponsorships, promotions, or other less invasive approaches. Invasion and privacy associated with some traditional or online advertising are legitimate concerns for consumers.

Privacy Concerns and Advertising

Further, technology can fuel resistance toward advertising, as some online consumers feel that mobile advertising is too invasive and violates privacy. For instance, some free apps on Facebook and other social media sites sell information to advertisers. This is usually set out in the terms and conditions, but of course most consumers do not read these lengthy legal disclaimers. Thus online consumers are exposed to privacy issues in a previously unknown way through applications embedded with emerging marketplace technologies. Since the mobile phone network is still a relatively new advertising medium, the effects of purportedly invasive applications remains inconclusive, and more research is required (Labrecque et al. 2011; Markos et al. 2012).

Advertising as a field evolves constantly with developments in technology. This is good for the field, and eventually for consumers; however, resistant attitudes and behaviors have been noted as a result of privacy and security concerns related to Internet and mobile advertising and cyber-identity theft (Close and Zinkhan 2006). For resistance to diminish, consumer trust must be regained at the intersection of business, advertising, and technology. Changing from doing things on paper to doing them online is a huge change for businesses and consumers alike, and consumers are resistant to change. So, some may claim that advertising, or more accurately over-advertising, is not particularly necessary. As macro marketing expert W. L. Wilkie (2012) has said, "It can also overstep its bounds, but in general brings wonder and real improvements to peoples' daily lives." Hence it is important.

Advertising (almost) anywhere Is Important

In conclusion, despite resisted aspects of advertising and marketing, I reinforce the point that advertising (almost) anywhere is important, to the economy and

to you as the consumer. Meanwhile, it serves as a social backdrop that can be aesthetically pleasing and informative. If consumers resist traditional advertising because it is disruptive for programming, consider incorporating event marketing and sponsorship into a communications strategy. This is especially effective when the event attracts enthusiastic and active people in a domain that is synergistic with the sponsor (Close et al. 2006). Advertising and live event sponsorship presents a synergistic way to engage the consumer, especially when the sponsors create value for the consumer's benefit.

However, consumers can be especially sensitive to any sense of corporate invasion of privacy or security. Advertisers face key challenges regarding privacy (e.g., how to maintain security while publishing GPS-based ads) and consumers' advertising and market resistance. With advancements in technology and in the field, advertising may strengthen its status not only as an economic stimulus, but as something that helps bring live events to an audience, improves our lives, and makes us laugh – and laughter is always necessary.

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Counterargument ><

Who wants to be held captive by advertisers? Not me!

Charles Pearce

Kansas State University, USA

At the end of a short but wearying family trip, I was in a very long line going through airport security at 5.30 in the morning at the Nashville airport. The four of us – all in separate lines – got to the metal detectors, the conveyor belt, and the stern-looking uniformed staff, and I picked up one of those plastic tubs in which to empty my pockets, place my belt, my iPhone, and my shoes. It wasn't

until I had cleared the conveyer belt, the metal detector, and the body scanner and was putting things back in my pockets that I noticed the ad at the bottom of the tub. The ad was printed on the paper sanitary protection placed in every tub. Sitting down at a row of chairs to put my shoes on, I looked up, and there across the wall opposite me was a row of poster ads, aimed directly at people trying to get their shoes back on.

There were four people in our party, and no one except me remembers even seeing the ads. I remember seeing them because I was livid at having an ad forced on me in a high-stress situation when I was trying to make sure that I was reunited with my possessions and no longer had to walk through the airport in my socks. Here's the thing: I remember there being ads, *but I can't remember what they were for.*

The question being debated is whether or not it is appropriate to bombard people with advertising in environments where they don't have the freedom to ignore the advertising. Three words jump out at me from that question: "appropriate," "bombard," and "freedom."

Is it appropriate? Or, to ask it the other way around: Is it *inappropriate* to bombard people? Any measure of what is or isn't appropriate shifts and changes such that what is inappropriate at one time is, if not appropriate, acceptable at other times. This is especially true in advertising where, for instance, at one time it was considered inappropriate to use the word "period" in feminine hygiene ads, and models for underwear and foundation garments in TV ads wore them next to the skin. When it comes to showing skin and lace, advertising has long been held to a different standard than, say, the daytime television programs that carried the ads. And the debate over the appropriateness of advertising sugar-laden breakfast cereals, fast foods, and toys to children has yet to be resolved.

"Bombard" is a word that can easily be applied to all advertising. Ads are so much with us these days that, for the most part, we hardly even notice them. I've always been amused at statements by textbook writers and pundits who say that Americans are exposed to some 600, 3,000, or 10,000 (or whatever number has the most shock value) advertising messages a day. I'm amused because I don't think anyone has a way of really knowing. Try counting the ads that you see in a day, and you'll probably grow tired of the exercise after a few minutes, or simply forget. There's little doubt that advertising is pervasive, but much of it goes unseen or unregistered by people.

Clutter in advertising is not only a problem for consumers as they are bombarded with sheer tonnage of advertising; it is a huge problem for advertisers. The conventional wisdom says that the more ads an advertiser has out there, the more likely the ads will be seen by a good proportion of the target audience, at the least cost. That's the double punch of reach and frequency. But, as Advertiser A ratchets up reach and frequency in order to rise above the clutter, Advertisers B, C, and D are ratcheting up their reach and frequency to rise above the increased level of clutter, which causes Advertiser A to escalate, which leads

to more clutter. In other words, advertisers fight clutter with more advertising, which, of course, increases the clutter.

Given this barrage of advertising, people are simply awash in it and it has become background – a continuous white noise, as it were. People have learned to tune much of it out – unless, that is, it is intrusive to the degree that it stands out from the background noise of competing messages or media content.

The intrusive nature of advertising has been complained about, probably for as long as there's been advertising. Advertising interrupts our television programs – even on channels that are subscribed to, such as on cable or satellite TV. For every page of editorial material in most consumer magazines there are at least two pages of advertising. Commercial radio interrupts a steady stream of music or talk. Even music delivered through the Internet through services like Pandora, are interrupted occasionally by commercial messages – unless the listener pays to upgrade from free access to the subscription version. Highways may be less cluttered with billboards than before the Highway Beautification Act, but outdoor boards are still very much with us. Early adopters of the World Wide Web decry the day that the web went commercial, and it didn't take long before the Web was packed with ads. And so it goes. Anytime a new medium arises, advertisers are among the first to try to exploit it.

Commercial message avoidance has become routine with television viewers. The remote control was the first device that allowed viewers to conveniently skip channels when the commercials came on. Viewers used the remote to cycle through the channels during the commercial, and it became a game (at least for me) to judge how long to pause on each channel to get back to the original channel just when the program returned. With DVRs becoming more common, people find that skipping commercials is easier than ever, either by fast-forwarding, or skipping over them. Some advertisers have attempted to defeat the fast-forwarding by keeping the logo stationary on the screen through the commercial. Even if the viewer skims the commercial by fast-forwarding, at least the logo gets seen. There is some speculation that viewers' attention to skinned messages may be heightened as they watch for the commercials to end.

One key to understanding audience members' avoidance response to intrusive advertising on television is in the name of the device that they have adopted to counter it – the remote control. The operant word is "control." It is the networks and advertisers that control when commercials interrupt our television programs. People don't like intrusions, and they want control. The power of control over the media being consumed is often manifested in who controls the remote control. Many televisions these days can't even be operated without the remote, thus giving the one who controls the remote the power to control the medium. Take that, advertisers!

But we all know that this control doesn't give us the power to control all of the advertising coming at us. After a while, trying to skip the commercials becomes like work: it takes constant vigilance and ready access to the remote, so most folks give in and let the commercials simply wash over them again. Advertisers know that, and know that while consumers may be able to duck

some messages, they can't duck them all – if, that is, there are enough messages out there.

The so-called new media have become advertising-laden, as iPod and iPad apps carry ads to keep the apps low-cost or even free. When Apple launched the App Store, it announced that the apps could carry advertising, called iAds. Apple sells the ads and keeps 40 percent of the revenue, the remaining 60 percent going to the developers. At the time, Apple was looking beyond simple banners toward “totally immersive and interactive” ads within the apps.

Computer game developers include ads to generate revenue, but also because they think the ads give the games more of a sense of realism. Or, to look at it another way, advertising is so present in our world that a computer or video game wouldn't look realistic unless there are ads in the background. A new category of advertising has been created called “advergaming.” These are games that are offered free online, especially on social media sites, such as Facebook, which generally revolve around a product or service being advertised. Before one can play a popular game like “Farmville” on Facebook, for instance, the player has to agree to give up all of the information in his or her personal profile, including profile picture, gender, networks, user ID, list of friends, and any other information they have made public. Ads for products or services targeted at people with certain kinds of interests shown in their profile will soon appear on their user page.

Ads have even been placed above and inside urinals in public restrooms. Los Angeles County has proposed selling space at the public beach, such as lifeguard stands, trash cans, and volleyball nets – even allowing (paying) companies to stamp their logo in the sands. And, of course, nearly every professional sporting event is sponsored by advertising, and ads surround the fields of play – some are inserted electronically so that people watching the event at home will see ads directed at them, while the people in the stands see others.

The Internet is certainly not free of ads. Banners, interstitials, pop-ups, pop-unders, overlays, audio on web pages that starts when the page opens, adware, cookies, and so on are prevalent on the Web. Pop-up blockers come built in to most web browsers these days, but advertisers quickly found a way around that with pop-unders – ads that appear below the browser window and are seen only when the user closes the window. Banner ads are animated so that they are hard to ignore while they insistently bounce or flash or jiggle. The search engine Google makes most of its money with advertising and tracks users to check their browsing history and gather information that may be useful to advertisers.

And it wasn't long after email went public (as opposed to being channels used only by universities and government agencies) that email inboxes began filling up with unwanted email advertising, otherwise known as “spam.” Compounding people's aggravation with spam is the dubious nature of many of the products or services being offered. Almost as soon as one's spam-blocker or filter is trained to look for certain patterns of language or certain keywords, the “spammers” find other ways to sneak through.

In short, instead of trying to count all the places and ways that advertising is aimed at us, we would find it easier to think of places where ads are *not*. Few places come to mind where one is not confronted with advertising. What about churches, you ask? Some churches have found that they can offset the cost of printing the service bulletin by including “safe” and “noncontroversial” ads. What about schools? Schools have become prime targets for advertisers. Some even offer free educational programming to the schools in return for allowing advertising into the classroom. Kids are so brand-conscious that even if ads in schools were banned, logos would show up anyway on apparel, backpacks, lunch boxes, notebooks, and so on.

Universities are not above selling ad space inside student unions, on information boards, kiosks, and other high-traffic areas. Ads are sold on concert and theater programs, museum guides, and anywhere a logo or message can be printed. Sporting teams are often sponsored by athletic apparel and footwear companies, such as Nike and Reebok to the extent that many teams have agreements to use the goods of one company only. Many universities are “Coke campuses,” while others are “Pepsi campuses,” as universities enter into exclusive agreements to allow only one brand or the other to sell and vend on campus.

To ask the question again: Where can one go to completely escape advertising? The only places that come to mind are deep wilderness, or the middle of an ocean (not on a cruise ship, of course). The bombardment is so continuous and so ubiquitous that one finds it challenging, if not impossible, to imagine a world devoid of advertising. So, whether it is appropriate for advertisers to bombard people with messages is a moot point, because we're already continually being bombarded and it isn't likely to slow down, much less stop.

But what about my freedom, or lack of it, to avoid intrusive messages? Proponents of unfettered advertising will say that no one has a gun to the public's collective heads, no one is making people watch, listen to, or read ads. And, while that's true, what it ignores is the advertisers' growing adeptness at putting messages precisely where it is difficult, if not impossible, to ignore them. As we stated above, advertisers fight advertising clutter with more advertising, which leads to more clutter, which is fought with more advertising, and on it goes.

However, consumers are also becoming adept at advertising avoidance. The DVR, the remote control, the page flip, the mouse click, give consumers the freedom to duck many, if not most, ads. But, even these methods require some work by consumers and can't eliminate all advertising. Some of it is going to get through whatever barriers consumers put up. And the fact that advertising is so much with us means that it is inevitable that ads are going to reach us in environments and spaces that make avoiding them impossible.

It can be argued that most intrusive advertising is unwanted advertising; it has little or no value to the consumers who don't want it, and didn't ask for it. For instance, anyone above the age of, say, three has seen commercials for Viagra and Cialis, but only a tiny portion of the audience find those ads of any value. And the same can be said of nearly all the prescription drug advertising that

uses mass advertising to reach a small number of people. Those advertisers use a shotgun where a rifle would be more effective.

Those who don't find value in some advertisements are likely to consider the ads annoying interruptions, intrusive, and wasteful. But people who find some value in some ads don't find those ads intrusive, wasteful, or annoying. People often seek out advertising when faced with making a purchase decision that has some risk to it, when they feel that the information they possess is limited or outdated, or when new products enter the marketplace (in order to learn about them). People seek out, or are receptive to, advertising that has entertainment value.

Ads have gone viral on YouTube, leading to these ads being seen by millions of sets of eyes – eyes that *want* to see the ads. Many people watch the Super Bowl as much for the ads as for the game – especially if their team isn't one of the two playing. People like talking about ads they've encountered that they enjoy, that entertain or inform them. In short, people tend to hate advertising, but love ads.

Even ads that are enjoyed by people may work against the advertiser. The advertiser runs the risk of making the ad too entertaining, so that people remember the ad, but forget the advertiser. Or, what entertains some people – even in the target audience – may annoy others, even if they're all in the same target audience. And ads that initially entertain people may quickly wear out, once people know the premise and the punch line. No one likes to hear the same joke over and over, so even entertaining ads that run too long run the risk of wearing thin and annoying people.

Thus, my argument is that most ads, almost by definition, are intrusive. Second, ads are inescapable. And, third, while people may have some freedom to avoid ads, avoiding all of them is nearly impossible. This makes nearly all of us audiences, *captive audiences*.

It is not *inappropriate*. Out of necessity, advertisers find themselves in an environment where everyone is shouting at the same time, and the advertiser that shouts the loudest and longest just might get noticed. It could be argued that every advertising budget for nationally advertised consumer products or service could be cut in half, or more, and the cacophony may quieten down by half. But it would take every advertiser to cut their budgets simultaneously, and that is not likely ever to happen.

As a consumer, I may become *annoyed* when I am bombarded with advertising in an environment where I don't have the freedom to ignore it, but that's about the worst thing that will happen. If anything is remembered from this unpleasant encounter, it probably will be the annoyance and not the advertiser. Even if the advertiser is remembered, I have now associated a negative feeling toward the brand and may go out of my way to avoid not only future advertising for it, but the brand altogether. Finally, while it may not be *inappropriate* for these advertisers to target a captive audience, it might work, it might not work, or it just might boomerang. So, why do it?

CONSTRUCTING THE CONSUMER

3

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

What is consumer behavior?

Consumer behavior is defined as “the mental and emotional processes and the physical activities of people who purchase and use goods and services to satisfy particular needs and wants.”¹ Let’s break this down a bit. “Mental and emotional processes” means that consumer behavior—how we buy, what we buy, when we buy, and how we dispose of a product—is based on how we think and feel about it. Thoughts and feelings about a product can be manipulated through marketing techniques; that’s the whole point of this business function and it is the premise behind branding. Physical activities are the various ways that people spend their time in relationship to the market, including how we buy products; how we talk about products; and now, because of social media, when, why, and how we share product information. Understanding who people are emotionally, psychologically, and physically enables marketers to use the 4Ps to create products and promote them in ways that will most resonate with the consumer, meaning you and me. Finally, the ultimate goal here is to “satisfy needs and wants” through the purchase of

1. William O. Bearden, Thomas N. Ingram, and Raymond W. LaForge, *Marketing Principles and Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Irwin/McGraw-Hill, 1997), p. 99.

consumer goods and services. The idea that the market is the best mechanism through which to fulfill our individual needs and wants is a fundamental tenet of late capitalism and neoliberalism. This is also the basis for much advertising criticism due to three key reasons: 1) it turns happiness/fulfillment into a goal (and now happiness itself is widely marketed) rather than more socially responsible or ethical pursuits, 2) achieving this happiness is based on individual wants and needs rather than what is good for communities or the wider society, and 3) many wants, and even some needs, have been artificially produced by advertisers.

When did advertising become based in psychology?

During the age of mass media (read: TV) and mass marketing in the 1950s and 1960s, there were two competing schools of thought: one promoted a rational sell (known as the head sell or the hard sell) and the other an emotional sell (the heart, or soft, sell).

The hard sell was based on the Unique Selling Proposition (USP), a concept devised by Rosser Reeves of the Ted Bates agency. A USP defined products by a unique attribute and then proceeded to hammer that message into consumers' minds over and over *and over* again. M&M's "melts in your mouth, not in your hand" is a good example, as is Geico's "Fifteen minutes can save you 15 percent or more on car insurance." The rational sell assumes that there is something new to say and that products have significant differences they can promote. Marketers call this "new news." A hard sell works well for large companies like P&G and Unilever that spend significant sums on research and development in order to garner new ideas and products. This approach also works well when consumers are in the market for a product that will serve a specific purpose. What medicine is best for cough and flu? What car gets more gas mileage? And so on. Most products have some level of a rational sales component and some products

will continue to be best sold using this message strategy. I'm thinking here of laundry detergents that tell you how clean your clothes can get or Walmart that tells you about its low, low prices.

Far more prevalent is the soft sell, which means using emotions to induce consumer interest and attention. This method was advanced by David Ogilvy as well as Leo Burnett, both of whom were influenced by motivation research, which suggested that archetypal images would unconsciously attract consumers to brands. Pulling consumers to the brand through image and emotion is at the heart of the soft sell.² As we saw, Ogilvy did this with Dove and other brands. Leo Burnett became known for creating characters in conjunction with its clients' products—the Jolly Green Giant for Green Giant vegetables, Charlie the Tuna for Starkist, and the Marlboro Man. Tying the product to a person helps to evoke emotion. People relate to people (even animated ones) more than they can relate to a cigarette or a can of tuna. We see this idea continue today with characters like the Geico Gekko and Flo for Progressive Insurance as well as in corporate CEOs who are almost indistinguishable from the brands, like Steve Jobs and Apple. In social media, CEOs or celebrities or Vine stars or someone with lots of Facebook friends or Twitter followers are influencers, individuals who sell the brand to others. Online this is crucial because the sales pitch is one-to-one, not mass marketing. Expect to see an increasing number of "spokescreatures," animated characters like Charlie the Tuna. They provide marketers with the ability to embed their message in a character (something they cannot do with a celebrity) while maintaining control of the brand narrative.

The emotional sell gained traction through the 1960s and into the 1970s during the time of the creative revolution on

2. D.B. Holt (2002), "Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding," *Journal of Consumer Research* 29(1): 70–90.

Madison Avenue. The baby boomer population was more highly educated than previous generations, and the industry responded with more sophisticated messages using urbane humor and emotional images and promoting lifestyle benefits rather than the frankly dumbed-down ideas of the USP. Behavioral psychologists became integral to industry practices. "Advertising agencies started to talk about 'end end benefits' as opposed to just 'end benefits,' meaning the final consumer satisfaction in emotional terms rather than the physical satisfaction to be gained on the way there," according to Saatchi & Saatchi executives Pringle and Thompson.³ In order to learn what emotional benefits were most relevant to consumers, it became of paramount importance to understand who the consumers are, what concerns them most, and what will fulfill their lifestyle aspirations. McDonald's "You deserve a break today" ads from the 1970s is a good example here. Instead of touting their fries or the value of their food or even specifically telling Mom she didn't need to cook, the commercial highlights that McDonald's is a place to get away from the everyday, almost as if it was a vacation destination. With a catchy jingle sung over images of a happy family going to the restaurant are the words "You deserve a break today. So get up and get away to McDonald's." The agency used this emotional appeal because it resonated with women who were increasingly in the workplace, and finding themselves juggling jobs and kids and home. They weren't thinking about giving their kids a healthy meal or looking to get something on the go. They told the agency in focus groups that they saw McDonald's as "a break."

Evolving communications theories were also instrumental in moving advertising toward a psychological sell. Older communications theories worked under the idea that whatever message was sent to a mass audience was received

and understood verbatim by everyone in the same way. The Hypodermic Needle Theory, for example, suggested that communications worked like giving the audience a vaccination—shoot them up with the content and they will accept whatever's placed in front of them. We think this is silly now, but the idea had developed as a model to explain the success of Hitler's propaganda tactics. By the 1970s that notion had been put to rest. Rather, new communication frameworks posited that a message (TV show, movie, or advertisement) is encoded by a source, the message is sent through a communication channel, and then it is decoded on the other end by the receiver of the message. The receiver—that is, the audience—may or may not interpret the message in the same way it was encoded. This makes more sense as a working theory. The audience is not a homogeneous, indistinguishable mass, and who we are and what our life experience has been affect how we respond to advertising messages, movies, or a TV show. Knowing this, it became incumbent upon advertisers to learn who their consumers were and what drove them, not only from a demographic perspective but from a psychological one.

How do advertisers discover these consumer insights?

Have you ever watched a commercial and had thoughts like "How does Prudential know I haven't saved enough for retirement?" or "How do Nike and Under Armour understand that I like to picture myself as an Olympic sprinter when I'm running (even if I know it will never happen)?" or "Boy, Purina really gets that Oliver the cat is a family member." The advertising connects so completely with your thoughts of yourself or your emotional state that you get almost an eerie feeling that the advertiser has been peering in your window.

Well, advertisers have not been doing that, but they have been accumulating a tremendous amount of research to understand how we think about and interact with their products. Research begins with examining what is understood

3. H. Pringle and M. Thompson. *Brand Spirit: How Cause Marketing Builds Brands* (New York: John Wiley, 1999), p. 72.

about consumers through existing data, known as secondary research. Secondary research is information from outside sources, and it is helpful in getting a broad overview of what is going on in a product category. For example, a major supplier of consumer data is Nielsen, the same company that does the TV ratings. When you go to a supermarket or drugstore and your purchases are scanned, that information—scanner data—is picked up by Nielsen. Advertisers can use this information to see who their competitors are as well as which are the most popular brands in a category. So, for example, Coca-Cola would see that sales are declining. The brand manager would then look to see if people are drinking competitors' products instead, or if they are turning to alternatives, such as water, tea, or juices. Other companies that generate large-scale consumer research are Simmons and GfK MRI. These companies have been surveying American consumers for decades about product and media usage, all of which can be analyzed across demographic groups. If a company wanted to find out who eats frozen pizzas and what kind of television programming they watch, these surveys would provide those answers. It would also tell them which brands were most popular across different genders and age groups. Secondary data is a starting point to determine the target audience and to decide if there are niche targets, to identify sales trends as well as cultural trends, and to assess the competition. Information based on surveys that generate numerical outcomes is called *quantitative data*.

In addition to companies like Simmons and Nielsen that examine consumers broadly, many research companies specialize in topics such as social trends or in understanding important demographic groups that advertisers want to know about. Trend Watching (trendwatching.com) looks at consumer insights from around the world. A recent report, called *The Future of Betterment*, looks at the trends shaping health and wellness. Standing desks have become the rage, diet fads come and go, and meditation apps have become almost as ubiquitous as music apps. In and of itself, this is all noise. The underlying

insight is that people are concerned about health and fitness in a way that has not been true before. Driving this trend is a push toward self-actualization, an idealized version of self that sits atop Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Says Trend Watching, "In 2016, *consumerism* is the primary means by which people pursue that search [for self-actualization]. The brands they'll notice, engage with, love, are those that *help them be the people they want to be*."⁴ The very idea of this is horrifying and confirms this as a main point of criticism as discussed at the beginning of the chapter. However, marketers take this to heart and use it as a means to sell health and wellness to us. For example, one aspect Trend Watching notes is that while we want to be healthy, actually sticking to a healthy lifestyle is quite difficult—less than 3 percent of Americans fulfill minimum requirements for doing so. Marketers, therefore, are told to build healthy aspects into the environment, to create ambient health opportunities, so that health can occur with little effort on the part of the consumer. Starbucks teamed up with Philips to create "EnergyUp cafes" in the Netherlands where lamps that mimic natural daylight are placed in the stores. These lamps improve mood and revitalize customers after twenty minutes. Think about that; you go into Starbucks and feel better after having spent time there because of a sun lamp. Either way, you are likely to go back to the store because you want to experience that good feeling again. In another example Headspace, a meditation app company, is working with an architectural firm to create Headspace Meditation Pods to be placed in airports, schools, and parks. Waiting for a plane, why not use the time to meditate? And if you do it with your Headspace app, all the better.

Millennials are a demographic group of particular interest to advertisers, and several companies specialize in this

4. *Trendwatching* (April 2016), "The Future of Betterment." Retrieved April 30, 2016 from <http://trendwatching.com/trends/the-future-of-betterment/>.

generational cohort. The Cassandra Report has for twenty years provided marketers with insights into the millennial generation. One insight, for example, is that they are socially conscious and expect companies to demonstrate this in their brands. Thus, TOMS Shoes and Warby Parker are popular with these consumers because of their socially responsible corporate ethos to give away shoes or eyeglasses with each pair purchased. The report has now expanded to cover the emerging Gen Z, those born between 1998 and 2008 (demographic cohorts are covered in more detail below). While these are children aged 8 to 17, they have considerable influence on household purchases and therefore are of interest to marketers. Another company that focuses on millennials is Ypulse, an aggregator of research as well as a producer of demographic studies. This company provides ongoing insights into what appeals to young adults, from fast food to Coachella to the emerging trend of the return of the vinyl record. From their own studies, they have looked at social media usage among this group and found that “only 2% say they don’t use any social platform,” and they spend “11 hours and 26 minutes with smartphones daily” mostly messaging or using social media.⁵ Insights like these direct marketers’ thinking about what products to develop, what images to put into advertising, and what media to use to convey their messages.

These are just a few examples of the many places where marketers can find secondary data.⁶ Secondary research can also be found in academic journals, particularly the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Marketing*, or the *Journal of Advertising*, which contain work done by marketing professors from top business schools. Census data is an important

source for information about changing population trends. Increasingly, consulting companies are providing research white papers as a way to induce business-to-business customers. They promote these items for free as a lead generator so that they can capture emails from prospective customers.

Secondary data, particularly research from the larger companies, tends to be quantitatively based. This information is helpful for understanding broad trends and competitive information. However, in order to get more in-depth understanding about consumers, particularly consumers of individual products, marketers need to use qualitative research methods.

Qualitative research is information that cannot be quantified by numbers. You can ask people in a survey how many times a week they use a product. It is much more difficult to ask them why they picked Ben & Jerry’s over Häagen-Dazs. For those sorts of insights, companies will use focus groups. These are groups of ten to twelve people who are in the demographic range of the marketer. The group is led by a moderator who asks a series of questions that have been determined based on what the client and the account team need to know. Maybe there is another kind of ice cream that consumers have begun to discover, or the group voices concerns about health and calorie counts, or maybe they don’t like the company’s politics. The focus group is all about sussing out these types of insights. In addition to product information, focus groups are used to test advertising concepts before a commercial is produced. Participants are shown a concept statement and asked what it means to them, or they might be shown a rough version of what a commercial might look like using existing footage and a voiceover. Then they will be asked what the message conveyed. Based on the group’s responses, the final commercial can be tweaked accordingly. In-depth interviews are another form of qualitative research. These interviews can be several hours in length and are used for research into topics that are not easily discussed within a group, death and life insurance being a good example. Finally, marketers can also use observational

5. Ypulse (April 26, 2016), “5 Stats On Millennials, Teens & Social Media.” Retrieved April 26, 2016 from www.ypulse.com/post/view/5-stats-on-millennials-teens-social-media.

6. Others widely used sources include The Pew Research Center (<http://www.pewresearch.org/>), Forrester, and eMarketer. See appendix for additional resources.

research. This entails monitoring consumers within a specific environment, perhaps a mall or a restaurant. The most extreme form of this type of research is ethnographic studies, which entail observing consumers within their “natural habitat,” which is usually their home but could be at parties or the gym. Ethnographic studies differ from observational studies in that the researchers interact with the subjects. Researchers from the kids’ channel Nickelodeon have been known to move in with subjects to find out what they really buy and what media they really watch as opposed to what they say they buy and watch. A growing number of research companies specialize in marketing ethnography. These firms are able to generate rich insights into consumer behavior, such as why people select one vodka over another when purchasing for the home versus in a bar or what hinders people in motivating themselves to work out.⁷ These studies are not limited to the real world. Researchers also execute these studies online, which is known as netnography.

How do we decide what to buy?

When determining what it is we want to buy, we go through the consumer decision-making process. This entails five steps: need recognition, information gathering, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase behavior. Need recognition is realizing that our current state of being is not what we would like it to be. The need might be as simple as “I feel hungry” or it might be “I need a new computer because my old one is taking twenty minutes to load up.” Once we recognize

7. Graeme Wood (2013), “Anthropology Inc.,” *The Atlantic*. Retrieved March 20, 2013 from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/03/anthropology-inc/309218/>; Herzog Naurach (August 24, 2013), “The Adidas Method. A German Firm’s Unusual Approach to Designing its Products,” *The Economist*. Retrieved February 10, 2015 from <http://www.economist.com/news/business/21584002-german-firms-unusual-approach-designing-its-products-adidas-method>.

this need, we can go about fulfilling it. Note here that this may be a true need (I’m hungry) or a want generated by advertising (I’ve got to have the latest Frappuccino or Xbox or lipstick from Sephora). Next, we begin to look for information about products that might create equilibrium. If we are hungry, we don’t need this information-gathering step, but if we are buying a computer, we most certainly do. A snack is a low-involvement product, while a computer is a high-involvement product that requires more attention and consideration. We might look online to see reviews of possible computers, or go to a Best Buy or the Apple store and try out a few models, or ask friends about their computers. We might even look at advertising. Once we have exhausted the information search, we evaluate alternatives. Do I want something salty to eat or something sweet? Do I need a laptop or a desktop? In the latter case, am I willing to give up computing power for portability? After sorting out the options, we make our purchase. But it doesn’t end there. The last step, and what some would argue has now become the most important, is post-purchase behavior. That is, what is the company going to do to keep you as a loyal customer and what are you going to do in terms of your purchase? While in the past this might have entailed getting people to sign up for a warranty, today the goal is to get people to go online and talk about the product on social media. Online sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been increasingly important in the information-gathering step of this process, and the more people get recommendations from their friends about a product, the more likely they are to believe it is a worthy product. Today, moving from need recognition to purchase can take place in moments and all in the palm of your hand. This has been facilitated by companies being able to interact with you at multiple “touch points” throughout the process.

Parallel to the consumer’s decision making is the marketer’s sales funnel, which consists of awareness (alerting customers to a product, often through advertising), consideration (similar to evaluation of alternatives), preference

(deciding for one product over another), and action (purchase). Traditionally, the only place advertisers would be able to influence purchase decisions was at the point of awareness, and if someone was shopping in a store, preferences could be influenced by a salesperson. With online shopping, marketers can constantly put sales messages in front of us. You've probably experienced this when you put a pair of jeans into an online shopping cart and then, after you decided you didn't really need them, the jeans started following you from your computer to your phone to your iPad. Because of the ability to interact with us at multiple points throughout the decision-making process, the path to buying has become more of a spiral than a straight line. So, for example, we might be ready to buy a computer, but then we see a friend post on Facebook that she loves her new Microsoft Surface, which sends us back to the information-gathering stage and evaluating still more alternatives.

What influences our purchase choices?

Social and psychological factors affect the products we buy. Social factors may be personal factors, such as family and culture, which are demographic characteristics, or nonpersonal influences, such as time, place, or environment. Psychological factors are tied to emotions and cultural factors that are connected to psychographic characteristics.

What are demographics?

Demographics (or "demos") are statistical information about who we are such as age, income, ethnicity, education level, and gender. How old we are, what kind of work we do, our education level, our religious background, and how many children we have all factor into purchase decisions. If you work in advertising, you dress as if every day is casual Friday; on Wall Street, suits are the norm. If you have kids, backpacks, snack

packs, and school supplies are on your list. And, if you aren't Jewish, you may not have ever tried (or bought) gefilte fish.

Cultural factors come into play here as well. Some basic tenets of being an American, for example, are the idea of the pursuit of happiness, abiding individualism, and the American Dream. In addition, we all belong to subcultures, which might relate to religion or life stages or areas of interest. College students are a subculture that purchases backpacks and electronics; surfers buy board shorts and sunscreen; country-western fans buy ten-gallon hats and cowboy boots. These subcultures are what sociologists call our reference groups, and they influence our buying behavior.

What are some of the key demographic cohorts?

Generational groups have similar lifetime experiences and advertisers tap into these shared experiences in an attempt to relate a product with their target audience. Generation cohorts active today are baby boomers, Generation X, millennials (also called Gen Y and Echo Boomers), and Gen Z.

Baby boomers are people who were born between 1946 and 1964. Just after World War II, the birth rate skyrocketed; by the time it started to taper off in 1964, there were more than seventy-four million boomers representing 40 percent of the population.⁸ As this generation grew, so did the move to the suburbs. Soldiers returning after the war were supported by the G.I. Bill, which gave them access to free college and

8. Researchers put different timeframes on these generational cohorts, so reports disagree about which generation is biggest. All agree that Generation X is the smallest group, and millennials are becoming the largest population group, while boomers are declining. Some sources are claiming that Gen Z is the largest group; not yet, but this is likely to be the case within a few years. These numbers are from the U.S. Census (June 25, 2015), "Millennials Outnumber Baby Boomers and Are Far More Diverse, Census Bureau Reports." Retrieved May 2, 2016 from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>.

funding for mortgages so that living in a house was suddenly less expensive than residing in an apartment. They grew up in a time of political and social unrest. Civil rights, the women's movement, and the Vietnam War defined this generation, as does the fact that they are more educated than previous generations.

Baby boomers were the first generation to be defined as a consumer generation. They grew up with Barbie dolls and Disney's Mouseketeers, and Frisbees. They continue to be avid consumers in their fifties and sixties, but they are also still defined by their experiences. Many still see themselves as activists fighting for social change; they don't like to think of themselves as aging even while they are entering into retirement. You can see this idea in many commercials targeting this age group. Financial services and healthcare are the top categories for this group, so we see commercials for Cialis that show active couples still interested in participating in regular sexual activity, or Depends ads showing Lisa Rinna, star of *Days of Our Lives* and *Melrose Place*, looking utterly glamorous and sporting these undergarments as if they were Spanx and not adult diapers. Importantly, they do not like to think of themselves as having aged. Hallmark cards made the mistake of creating a special line of cards for baby boomers. It failed miserably because boomers didn't want to look for cards "in the old people's section." Their attention is on their children and grandchildren and staying active and healthy to enjoy their time with them. While advertisers have tended to stay away from consumers over the age of fifty, today they are beginning to notice that this group has considerable disposable income—70 percent of it, in fact. Baby boomers have an estimated spending power of \$3 trillion. Many of their favorite brands are tied to their youthful roots and ideas of individualism and breaking free from the establishment. These include brands such as Levi's, Volkswagen, and Harley Davidson. They also like brands they established relationships with in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Frye boots, Absolut vodka, and

Clairol hair color.⁹ Areas where they tend to spend are related to health and financial services, but they outspend other demographics in coffee, diet sodas, and magazines; they lead in technology adoption; and because they have time on their hands, they are the biggest consumers of media.¹⁰

Generation X is defined as those born between 1965 and 1981. They are the sandwich generation—not as interesting as the boomers and past the age when advertisers are interested in them. Also, this group is smaller (66 million) than boomers (74.9 million) and millennials (75.4 million), who in the last year have now surpassed boomers in size.¹¹ Unlike the cohorts that surround them, there are not many ways in which this group is particularly distinct, whether we are talking about politics, religious values, ethnic makeup, or economic circumstances. Cultural icons that defined this generation are MTV, AIDS, *The Simpsons*, "Space Invaders," and *The Breakfast Club*. They do tend to be more conservative (Republican) and more economically pessimistic. This is, perhaps, justified. They are the generation of the "McJob." They hit their prime earning years at the time of September 11th, which was quickly followed by the Great Recession, and many got caught in the housing bubble, buying properties when they were at the height of the market and then ending up underwater when values crashed. They grew up during a time of increasing divorce rates and many

9. CNBC (n.d.). "Favorite Brands of the Boomer Generation." Retrieved May 15, 2016 from <http://www.cnbc.com/2010/03/01/Favorite-Brands-of-the-Boomer-Generation.html?slide=10>.
10. *Huffington Post* (n.a.) (August 17, 2012), "Boomers Are 'The Most Valuable Generation' For Marketers, Nielsen Report Finds." Retrieved May 3, 2016 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/17/marketing-to-boomers-most-valuable-generation_n_1791361.html.
11. Richard Fry (April 25, 2016), "Millennials Overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation," *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved May 3, 2016 from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/>.

were "latchkey kids," which may account for their tendency to be very family oriented.¹²

As a group they have been ignored by marketers. Boomers have more disposable income. Millennials are establishing buying habits and pride themselves on being influencers. While Gen Xers are making more money than millennials, as a group they are not as important to understand, if for no other reason than simply because of their size. There are a few product categories, however, that buck this trend. Movies that harken back to their youth are a great example. Films like *Pitch Perfect* that use the current musical trends of group singing insert generationally targeted songs and movies (*Breakfast Club!*) into the film's plotline. Amazon grew its business by focusing on the core values of Gen Xers. This generation is tech savvy, pessimistic, and incredibly busy. Amazon created a site that tapped into their tech capabilities, gave them lots of information to help assuage their pessimistic tendencies, and made shopping easy, reliable, and less expensive.¹³

Millennials are those born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s.¹⁴ As a group they are disconnected from politics and religion, connected via social media, overloaded with debt, and distrustful of people, and they are postponing marriage,

according to the Pew Research Center.¹⁵ They have been widely characterized as having a prolonged adolescence, leading to feelings of entitlement, self-centered behavior, and digital addiction. An MTV study noted that their principal concerns are getting a job, graduating college, and moving out of their parents' house: not much different from previous generations. Where they diverge, however, is that they are "later to launch"—that is, they are inclined to put off adulthood (and marriage) for as long as possible. Some of this was fueled by helicopter parenting, wherein they were special, everyone got an award for sporting events whether they won or lost, and rarely did they hear the word "no."¹⁶ Societally, they grew up in a time of abundance. Yet that world was shattered by September 11th and economic recessions in 2000 and 2008. These are the "digital natives," who only know a world with on-demand technology, and they fluidly move through their online and offline lives.¹⁷

12. Jon D. Miller (Fall 2011), "Active, Balanced, and Happy," *The Generation X Report*. Retrieved May 3, 2016 from http://home.isr.umich.edu/files/2011/10/GenX_Report_Fall2011.pdf.
13. Paul Taylor and George Gao (June 5, 2014), "Generation X: America's Neglected 'Middle Child'," Pew Research Center. Retrieved May 3, 2016 from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/05/generation-x-americas-neglected-middle-child/>; McDonald Marketing (2012), "Gen X Marketing Guide." Retrieved May 15, 2016 from <https://www.independentagent.com/Resources/StaffDevelopment/Diversity/SiteAssets/DiversityTrainingSeries/training-series-materials/Gen-X%20Marketing%20Guide.pdf>.
14. There is disagreement about what dates to use to define this generation. I've seen it described as 1977–1994. Most typical, however, is early 1980s to early 2000s. No matter which way the dates are selected, however, this demographic is large and growing.

15. Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), "Millennials in Adulthood: Detached from Institutions, Networked with Friends." Retrieved September 13, 2015 from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2014/03/2014-03-07_generations-report-version-for-web.pdf.
16. Mary Burns (September 26, 2013), "The Millennial Generation at Work," lecture presented at the Kellogg Alumni Career & Professional Development.
17. There is an ongoing academic debate about whether digital technologies are improving social relations or making us more atomized and disconnected. Those believing in the positive aspects of this include Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, *Networked: The New Social Operating System* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012); danah boyd, *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); and H. Jenkins, S. Ford, and J. Green, *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2013). Less sanguine about this are Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* (New York: Penguin, 2008); Astra Taylor, *The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age* (New York: Metropolitan, 2014); Robert McChesney, *Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism Is Turning the Internet Against Democracy* (New York: The New Press, 2013); and Siva

Advertisers are interested in this group for a number of important reasons.¹⁸ First, they are young and have not established brand loyalties with many product categories. Associated with finding new brands is that the members of this generation are at the time of their lives where they are moving away from home and starting their own families—even if they are doing it at an age that is older than their parents were. This life cycle stage is one in which people tend to spend more money. They are getting married, having children, and buying or renting homes. Moving to a new address generates considerably more spending over the first six months than established homeowners spend in two years, with money being spent on furniture, cleaning supplies, and neighborhood services such as banks, hair salons, and restaurants.¹⁹ Second, millennials account for 24 percent of the US population, making them the biggest generational cohort.²⁰ Finally, they are a generation immersed in brand culture, readily interacting with brands, talking about them, and recommending them to friends both online and off.²¹ Selfies, FOMO (fear of missing

out), and crowdsourcing drive the members of this group, who pride themselves on knowing about the latest product and being able to tell others about it. Millennials are more likely than boomers to share brand preferences via social media (57 percent versus 31 percent) and they are more likely to claim that “people seek me for knowledge and brand opinion” (52 percent versus 35 percent).²² A stunning 81 percent recommend brands to people by word of mouth, according to MTV, and 74 percent believe they influence the purchase decisions of their peers, according to research from Intel.²³ And, they influence not only each other but also other generations. Baby boomers have embraced Facebook in no small part to connect with their millennial offspring; the same is true of Instagram, texting, and pretty soon Snapchat.

Members of Generation Z, the newest cohort, are beginning to garner considerable attention from advertisers. Just as marketers keyed in on millennials at a young age, this group is no different. Part of this had to do with marketers targeting younger and younger audiences. Having tapped out existing consumers, in the search for new markets advertisers look to different age groups, and kids had been an untapped market. Over the last few decades we have seen kids’ marketing explode from toys to movies to food to makeup (the last two having negative consequences such as childhood obesity and possible hormonal risks from using makeup).

Even so, marketers want to tap into this market because these youths significantly influence household purchases. One study found that these tweens and teens have at least some say

Vaidhyathan, *The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

18. Micah Solomon (December 24, 2014), “2015 is the Year of the Millennial Customer: 5 Key Traits These 80 Million Consumers Share,” *Forbes*. Retrieved March 11, 2015 from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2014/12/29/5-traits-that-define-the-80-million-millennial-customers-coming-your-way/>; Jeff Fromm, Celeste Lindell, and Lainie Decker (2011), “American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation.” Retrieved March 11, 2015 from <https://barkley.s3.amazonaws.com/barkleyus/AmericanMillennials.pdf>.
19. *Experian Marketing Services* (n.d.), “Life-Event Triggers.” Retrieved September 13, 2015 from <http://www.experian.com/marketing-services/life-event-marketing.html>.
20. U.S. Census data.
21. *MarketingCharts Staff* (September 16, 2014), “Millennials Mostly Talk About Brands Offline. Which Media Drive Their W-O-M Impressions?” Retrieved March 25, 2015 from <http://www.marketingcharts.com/traditional/millennials-mostly-talk-about-brands-offline-which-media-drive-their-w-o-m-impressions-46011/>.

22. Christine Barton, Lara Koslow, and Christine Beauchamp (January 15, 2014), “How Millennials Are Changing the Face of Marketing Forever,” *BCG Perspectives*. Retrieved March 25, 2015 from https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/marketing_center_consumer_customer_insight_how_millennials_changing_marketing_forever/.
23. Ypulse Conference (June 17, 2013), presentation by Berj Kazanjian, SVP Ad Sales, Consumer Insights, and Research, MTV; Sandra Lopez, Marketing Strategy Director for New Business, Intel.

in 93 percent of family purchases.²⁴ This can be anything from cars to computers to food choices and family vacations. It can also be media selection, a reason why movies that appeal to kids and families have done so well at the box office; Marvel films and *The Lego Movie* are good examples. Members of Gen Z also have their own money to spend—an average of \$16.90 per week, which translates into \$44 billion in the aggregate.²⁵

Simply because of their age and lack of experience, they are going to differ from other age groups. However, since millennials were previously studied, marketers are able to make generational comparisons. Notably, feelings about money and politics are very different for this group because they were raised during the Great Recession and they have never known a world without the “war on terror.” This likely accounts for the members of Gen Z being more focused on money, with 60 percent (versus 44 percent of millennials) claiming that having a lot of money is a measure of success. They have traditional ideas of ownership in terms of homes and cars, which may not bode well for the “sharing economy” in the long term. They have bought into the entrepreneurial ideology: 62 percent want to start their own companies rather than working for an established enterprise. To that end, they have begun (already!) to build their skill set, including using their free time to develop general business skills (58 percent) as well as tech-based skills, such as graphic design (51 percent), shooting and editing videos (50 percent), and creating apps (50 percent).²⁶

This factors into this group being the ultimate multitaskers, having truly grown up as digital natives. Research shows they use five screens to millennials’ two.²⁷ They communicate more with visuals than verbiage and their attention span is limited. Note, however, that current research suggests that attention spans are at eight seconds for all groups, which is less than that of a goldfish. Two other defining factors are that this group is truly multicultural and accepting of a variety of lifestyle choices, and they are protective of their privacy and prefer secrecy in their communications (Snapchat and Whisper versus Facebook).

This generation’s practicality translates into what they expect from brands. They are pragmatic, so they want narratives with realistic endings (57 percent). This search for the “real” means that members of Gen Z are big fans of YouTube, which they use more than any other type of social media (85 percent), and they prefer brands to communicate with them through this platform.²⁸ For now, there are no “Gen Z brands” other than the technologies they engage with.

Are women more important to advertisers than men?

Overall, yes.

Women are a more important demographic group because they account for \$4.3 trillion (72 percent) of US spending. Globally, that number jumps to \$20 trillion. Women still do the majority of household shopping, but they also decide on purchases such as home furnishings (94 percent), vacations (92 percent), cars (60 percent), and consumer electronics

24. EY (2015), “What If the Next Big Disruptor Isn’t a What But A Who?” Retrieved May 10, 2016 from [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-rise-of-gen-znew-challenge-for-retailers/\\$FILE/EY-rise-of-gen-znew-challenge-for-retailers.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-rise-of-gen-znew-challenge-for-retailers/$FILE/EY-rise-of-gen-znew-challenge-for-retailers.pdf).
25. Sylvan Lane (August 20, 2014), “Beyond Millennials: How to Reach Generation Z,” *Mashable*. Retrieved May 2, 2016 from <http://mashable.com/2014/08/20/generation-z-marketing/#lZ8n3ZQ1SPqQ>.
26. Deep Focus (March 30, 2015), “Deep Focus’ Cassandra Report: Gen Z Uncovers Massive Attitude Shifts Toward Money, Work and Communication Preferences.” Retrieved May 2, 2016 from <http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/deep-focus-cassandra-report-gen-z-uncovers-massive-attitude-shifts-toward-money-work-2004889.htm>.

27. Sparks and Honey (June 17, 2014), “Meet Generation Z: Forget Everything You Learned about Millennials.” Retrieved May 2, 2016 from <http://www.slideshare.net/sparksandhoney/generation-z-final-june-17/56>.
28. Deep Focus, Cassandra Report.

(51 percent).²⁹ Women account for 78 percent of consumer purchases.³⁰

Creators and advertisers of individual products, however, are only interested in reaching their particular target audience. So while women are an extremely important group and the focus of the vast majority of advertising (which makes the study of advertising and consumerism a feminist issue), for some brands like Budweiser or Axe men will be more important.

What are psychographics?

Psychographics divide consumers into groups based on their personality, values, and lifestyle rather than their age, income, and gender. The earliest framing in this way was called VALS, which segments adults into eight types based on motivations and resources, which are important determinants of what a person will choose to buy. For example, high-resourced "Achievers" are goal-oriented (achievement motivated), committed to their job and family, and particularly conscious of their peers. "Makers" (low resources and motivated by self-expression) distrust government, like the outdoors, and believe in defined gender roles. "Innovators" are people who always like to be in the know, like to experiment by trying new things, are skeptical of advertising, but have faith in science and research and development (R&D).³¹

You might be familiar with the term "early adopters." This term is usually applied to the adoption of technologies, and this group is in many ways similar to Innovators. Early adopters have to have the latest gadget or gizmo before anyone else. They like to feel like they are on the cutting edge and enjoy telling others about what they know because it feeds their sense of self as being the "go-to" person. "Alpha Moms" are a specific example of an early adopter group. According to *USA Today*, these women are "educated, tech-savvy. Type A moms with a common goal: mommy excellence. She is a multitasker. She is kidcentric. She is hands-on. She may or may not work outside the home, but at home, she views motherhood as a job that can be mastered with diligent research."³² So, an Alpha Mom might be a young millennial mom/part-time student, or a career-driven, late-in-life Gen Y mom: different demographic profiles with similar psychological motivations to purchase. Marketers tap into these moms' self-perception of being on the cutting edge, even if it only has to do with what organic foods are best or which tutor can really help their kid. Nintendo launched its Wii gaming system by promoting the product as an exercise tool and a means to bring the family together. Nintendo recruited Alpha Moms for parties and let them try the system before it was released to the public. This promotion was so successful that the Wii outsold Sony's Playstation—the industry leader—by close to 50 percent.³³ Nintendo used psychographics to launch its product while feeding its prospective consumers' motivation to be trendsetters. More important for Nintendo is that the company took advantage of the fact that Alpha Moms would want to tell others about the product. This is known as word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing. It is the most

29. Michael J. Silverstein and Kate Sayre (September 2009), "The Female Economy," *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved May 4, 2016 from <https://hbr.org/2009/09/the-female-economy>.

30. Carl Bialik (April 22, 2011), "Do Women Really Control 80% of Household Spending?" *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved May 3, 2016 from <http://blogs.wsj.com/numbers/do-women-really-control-80-of-household-spending-1054/>.

31. *Strategic Business Insights* (n.d.), "US Framework and VALS™ Types." Retrieved May 3, 2016 from <http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/ustypes.shtml>.

32. Bruce Horowitz (March 27, 2007), "Alpha Moms Leap to Top of Trendsetters; Multitasking, Tech-Savvy Women Are Expected to Be Next To Watch," *USA Today*, 1B.

33. Effie Award Entry: "Wii Want to Play" (Gold Award Winner). Retrieved February 7, 2009 from http://s3.amazonaws.com/effie_assets/2008/2331/2008_2331_pdf_1.pdf.

effective marketing there is because people trust their friends and family more than they trust advertisers. In this case, it was particularly effective because it is reported that if Alpha Moms endorse a product, they tell ten people; if they don't, they tell three hundred.³⁴

This is just one example of a psychographic group. There are many, and they can be created as primary or secondary data. Nielsen, the same research company that tracks TV, online ratings, and scanner data, has sixty-six different consumer groups based on lifestyles and purchase behavior. For example, "Money & Brains" is a psychographic group defined as people who are wealthy, urban, and aged 45 to 64 and may or may not have kids in the home. More tellingly in terms of describing who they are is the information that they shop at Banana Republic, travel for business, read the *New York Times*, and drive a Mercedes E-Class. Alternatively, "Old Milltowns" is a downscale group defined as mostly retired people of various ethnicities over the age of fifty-five. They order from JC Penney, belong to a veterans' club, read *Hunting*, watch the *Judge Joe Brown* show, and drive a Ford Focus.³⁵ Brand companies can evaluate these psychographic groups and determine which ones are most likely to relate to their product, and then they can target their message accordingly.

Bear in mind, too, that any large group can be broken down in this way. Millennials, for example, are not homogeneous even though the media talk about them as if they are. Millennial marketer Ypulse divided this generational group into five groups. Muted Millennials live at home and are risk-averse; Supremes are high social achievers, they are the best-educated of the groups, and the majority of them are influenced by word

of mouth; the Moralistic Middle group have old-fashioned values and shy away from thrills; Alt Idealists are cause-oriented and highly value individuality; and Beta Dogs are very passionate, like to network, are most open to advertising, and are driven by appearance.³⁶ Supremes and Beta Dogs are the influencers, the people whom others turn to online for ideas about products and trends.

Why do advertisers break up the population into groups?

Advertisers are not interested in getting their message in front of everyone. They want to interact with specific groups of people whom they have determined through research to be most interested in their product, and they want to develop the "right message" for this group. This is the target audience that we discussed in the first chapter.

Marketers break up the population into groups, which is known as segmentation. One way of doing that is by demographics. As we saw, our age, gender, and occupation affect our product purchases. With psychographics, marketers tap into our values, beliefs, and lifestyles. Other ways marketers break us up into segments are by behavioral characteristics and geography. Do you live in a hot or cold climate? Is it urban or rural? Economically depressed or well-to-do? These are geographic issues affecting purchase behavior.

Behavioral characteristics take into consideration a number of factors. Is this a product that is a regular purchase or only for special occasions? Are you a heavy or light user of the product? (The rule of thumb is that 20 percent of users are responsible for 80 percent of product purchases, so this information is particularly important.) Where are you on the sales funnel—are you ready to buy or still just getting to know the product? Are you a non-user, an ex-user, a prospect, or a

34. "The Powers of the Alpha Mom." May 17, 2007. *CBS News*. Retrieved June 5, 2016 from <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=2821119n>.

35. To see a full list of psychographic profiles, go to Nielsen. *MyBestSegments*. <https://segmentationsolutions.nielsen.com/mybestsegments/Default.jsp?ID=0&menuOption=home&pageName=Home>.

36. Ypulse Conference (June 17, 2013), presentation by Ali Driesman, Director of Insights & Inspiration at Ypulse.

regular user? Other factors are benefit sought (convenience or prestige), loyalty status, and marketing sensitivity (price versus quality, for example).

If we look more closely at user status, we can see how this has an impact on message strategy. Current users do not need a lot of explanation about a product, so reminder advertising such as a billboard or an online banner ad might be all that is needed. For prospects, however, advertising is a bit more convoluted. As I say to my students, the most expensive customer is a new customer. Here's why. If the product is in an existing category, the objective becomes to persuade that prospect to select your brand. Fair enough. For people who already use a competitor's product, the advertiser has to provide an incentive, such as a coupon or a free sample, to get them to switch. Unless the product is significantly superior, this strategy will have mixed results since without the incentive the product is no longer appealing. Non-users need to be convinced of not only the superiority of your brand but also the value of using the product to begin with.

Know, too, that companies use either an aggregation strategy or a segmentation strategy. An aggregation strategy addresses the market with the same message, expecting that it will appeal equally across segments. This type of strategy is used with products like ice cream or Life Savers or other low-involvement products. The Gap has also used this strategy in its campaigns using celebrities and their children to appeal to multiple generations of consumers. This is atypical. Most brands utilize a segmentation strategy where they divide the population into groups and select one or more of them to be their target audience. The examples I have been using throughout the book do this, whether we are talking about Red Bull targeting millennials or Dove targeting women or cereals targeting kids and their moms. Know, too, that target audiences can change over time. When the iPod was introduced, Apple wanted to reach early adopters and in particular young people in order to project an image of hipness. Once the product

became more mainstream, the advertising changed to show all kinds of people using the device. After all, baby boomers with money to spend could buy the product not only for themselves, but for their grandchildren. Thus the company moved from a very defined target audience to an aggregation strategy.

Is that why media are designed for different audiences?

Exactly. Advertisers want to reach certain groups of people. Media outlets need to attract advertising. Thus, cable TV networks and magazines are designed to attract the audiences that advertisers most want to reach.

What are target audiences?

The target audience is, quite simply, the people advertisers want to reach. This starts with gender. Is the company targeting men or women or both? Next is age: is the product right for adults or kids or everybody? From there, this can become more finely tuned based on an increasing number of demographic factors as well as psychographics and product usage. After they have segmented the market, they look at which segment or segments are appropriate for their brand.

In some cases, the target audience can be very similar. Axe is for men, and because of its overpowering scent, it tends to appeal to young men. Old Spice is also a male-oriented product, but the campaign "The Man You Want Your Man to Be" is targeted to women (though the ads are clever enough to appeal to men as well).

Other products can have different appeals to different people, all of which might be presented in a single advertisement. The iPad is a perfect example of this. In their commercials, Apple shows lots of different people using the product for lots of different activities. Teens might use the iPad to take pictures of watermelons being thrown from a building, and moms use the device to read with their children or find a recipe, and

grandparents use it to FaceTime with their progeny or to share pictures of their grandchildren so they can brag with other grandparents. Teens and moms and grandparents are different market segments, but as a group they make up (at least some of) the target audience for iPads. Knowing the target audience helps with not only creating the advertising, but selecting the media through which to reach them. For example, you won't find men reading *Glamour*, and paying for *Sports Illustrated* to reach women would be wasting a client's money.

Don't get confused, however. Marketers are interested in their targets and are not so concerned about what other groups might think. For example, I don't relate at all to Mountain Dew advertising, and for PepsiCo, the parent company, that's just fine. On the other hand, Banana Republic wants my business and so they promote messages of classical style and business-appropriate clothing. But don't ask my Gen Z daughter about BR. She wouldn't be caught dead in that store.

Do marketers only want to reach buyers?

No. Marketers are interested in buyers, users, prospective users, and product influencers. These are important distinctions because the buyer of the product may or may not be the user. While you pick up Grape-Nuts or granola for yourself, children can't. In this case, an advertiser might choose to target the mother or child or both. In targeting the mother, the emphasis is likely to be on the nutritional value of the cereal. Kids could care less about that, so marketers talk about taste or a toy surprise when targeting them with hopes they will nag their mother to go shopping. It is most difficult to appeal to both. This is why the "Mikey" Life cereals are still held up as one of the great ads of all time. It got kids to pay attention while letting moms know it was a nutritional cereal that kids would actually eat.

As we see in this example, kids can be influencers on household purchases, but they are not the only ones. While men typically purchase the family car, moms are significant influencers

if there are children in the home. A recent ad demonstrates this without actually showing the mother in the advertising. The commercial starts with a garage door being opened to reveal an Infiniti QX60. The man behind the wheel is expensively dressed and obviously upscale. As the car pulls out of the driveway, we see the dashboard with high-end features, and the man opens the moon roof and then tugs at the cuff of his sleeve as he moves his head in time with the music. We begin to hear the lyrics of the song that has been playing: "I'm the baddest man alive." The car comes to a halt, the man switches off the music, and a group of young girls climb into the back seat as he asks, "How was the pool?" Then an announcer comes on to say, "Built for families. Designed for drivers." The commercial communicates that the car is good for families (which mothers want) but has all the technology and performance of a high-end car (which fathers want). Another example people might remember is the Michelin tire ads that showed babies sitting on a pile of tires. This, too, was obviously meant to grab the attention of mothers, who in turn would suggest these tires to their husbands.

There are five consumer buying roles:

User: This is self-explanatory. A user is the consumer of the product, whether it is toothpaste or a download from iTunes.

Influencers: Anyone who can affect the purchase decision.

Buyers: The person who purchases the product.

Initiators: The person who recognizes the need and begins to find a solution to the unmet need.

Deciders: Whoever has the ultimate say-so when it comes to buying a product.

We can quickly see that the role someone plays in the buying decision affects how a marketer will need to address that person. If someone is all of these roles in one, that makes things a bit easier. A woman buys apparel for herself, a teen buys

his or her own soda or salty snack, and so forth. Determining how best to talk to consumers becomes more complex when there are multiple players in the mix. The buyer and user may or may not be the same person. Moms buy toys for kids. Men buy flowers for Mother's Day. Children influence a myriad of household purchases, women influence decisions on cars and healthcare, and so on. Children's cereal often uses a dual target of moms (buyers) and kids (influencers) and this can be covered in the same ad. However, if the product is a bicycle helmet, the message to the mother would be one of safety and for kids it is going to be the "cool factor," so different message strategies will have to be applied. College selection is particularly complex—the user is the student, there are multiple influencers, and the final decider could be the student or the parents, who will end up with the bill. Given these roles, the marketer must determine not only whom to focus on but what role the consumer plays and if multiple players should be targeted.

What is the ultimate goal of prying into our personal lives?

Remember, advertisers want to get the right message to the right person at the right time and place—so that person will ultimately go out and buy the product. Understanding who consumers are enables advertisers to craft a message that gets their attention. In order to insert the message in the correct media so that the target will see it, the marketer has to understand who the consumer is. This was more important when advertising was primarily bought in legacy media dependent on demographics defined by Nielsen—women 18 to 49, men 18 to 25, or kids 2 to 11, for example. Today, with online media, targeting using these demos takes a back seat to one-on-one marketing.

Psychographics had been the norm for marketers, and while it is still being used, that is changing because of the vast amounts of data available about consumers through online

tracking. Because of digital media and big data, companies now retain upwards of 1500 data points on every American.³⁷ This does not mean that research will go away. Far from it! What it does mean is that research will be more fine-tuned and more individually directed, raising serious concerns about surveillance and privacy.

37. Katy Bachman (March 25, 2014), "Confessions of a Data Broker," *Adweek*. Retrieved August 18, 2015 from <http://www.adweek.com/news/technology/confessions-data-broker-156437>.



CONSUMER CULTURE, BRANDING AND ADVERTISING

**BRANDING IS A CRITICAL COMMUNICATIVE PROCESS
IN OUR CULTURE, MEDIA AND EVERYDAY LIVES.**

- * What is branding?
- * Who builds brands?
- * How are brands embedded in culture?
- * How do brands claim to be meaningful and ethical?

In this chapter we:

- Define branding as a social process
- Consider the relationship between brands and culture
- Examine the labour of branding
- Explore the relationships between brands, social spaces and interactive media
- Consider the role of branding in the ethics and practices of everyday life.

WHAT IS A BRAND?

Brands are woven into our everyday life – inscribed on objects that we use, printed on our clothes, visible on buildings, and embedded in nearly every media text we read, watch or interact with. If brands were first found on products, packaging and advertisements, they now roam much further.

They are also much more than just symbols that convey meanings. In this chapter we will examine how branding works as a social process. That is, brands aren't just logos that suggest particular attributes. Brands are continuously created and circulated within culture. They are created out of interactions between cultural producers and consumers.

Brands and mass consumption

Brands and advertisements were crucial to the development of the culture industry. Early brands and advertisements made claims about the specific qualities of products. Typical information in advertisements included the ingredients, quality of the manufacture, the family name and place of the producers, and the applications and uses of the product. These claims all related to specific and tangible qualities in the product. It contained specific ingredients, was from a particular place and had certain uses. The brand was simply a name and logo that enabled consumers to recognize the product as having those particular qualities.

Brands became important when products started moving further and being marketed to wider audiences. Industrialization enabled the production of quantities of goods much larger than local markets required; the development of transport systems like railway enabled those goods to be transported to wider markets; and the development of media enabled messages about those products to be distributed to those larger markets. With the emergence of mass production, markets and media ordinary people began to much more regularly purchase products from producers and places they didn't know first-hand. The brand became a device for enabling relationships of recognition and trust to form over much wider distances. Brands were a way of socially facilitating the market exchanges that technologies like mass production and transport made possible. Brands also played a role in creating and stimulating desires in newly emerging markets. If industrial production and transport enabled a wider circulation of commodities, then mass media enabled the recognition and desire for those commodities. This wider circulation of commodities also brought producers into contact with each other in new ways. Producers of commodities in one area found their products competing with producers from other areas. If you were able to distribute your products nation-wide, then so were your competitors. Your product now sat alongside them in shops and in the minds of consumers. This competition brought forth the need to differentiate products from one another in terms of their qualities.

The interests of manufacturers coincided with the interests of the early mass media entrepreneurs. Manufacturers were looking for ways to make their products known and desired by the larger markets they could now reach. Early mass media entrepreneurs were looking for ways to generate revenue to support their operations. The newspaper business model was built on generating advertising revenue to support their operations. Smythe (1981) asked the question, 'What does the mass media make?' The answer that immediately comes to mind is 'content': the mass media make news stories or television programmes. Smythe though explained that the content is not the product, but rather a part of the process of producing the final product – audiences. The mass media produce and sell audiences to advertisers. More specifically, they sell audience attention. The content is a device that captures our attention, which advertisers will pay for. An important dynamic at work here is that advertisers will pay for certain *kinds* of audiences, namely middle-class consumers with disposable income.

For this reason, many critics have argued that mass media content tends to reflect middle-class life and values. This basic relationship underpinned the development of mass culture in the twentieth century, and that is why brands are so integral to an understanding of media and cultural production. As we shall argue in this chapter, changes in the way brands are made and managed are also integral to the changing functioning of media and cultural production in the twenty-first century. In this chapter then, we examine brands not just as meanings, but as processes that create and exploit audience attention and participation in ways that stimulate desires and facilitate the circulation of products.

Brands are social processes

Brands aren't contained only in their advertisements. While advertising has shifted towards making more associational claims, brands have also moved their production processes directly into the cultural spaces, practices and lifestyles that their advertisements represent. In Australia, for instance, Coca-Cola has screened summer advertisements over a number of years that depict typical Australian summer pastimes like playing beach cricket or going to music festivals. While the advertisements depict these cultural pastimes, the brand also enacts them. In the summer of 2013 they built a large beach – complete with lifeguards, sand, a pool and Coca-Cola – at sports stadiums during summer cricket matches. Images of the beach were part of the television coverage of the cricket match and circulated on social media. Brands don't just represent lifestyles in their advertisements, they also engage directly in those cultural practices. In this chapter we examine how brands stimulate identities and facilitate the circulation of their products as part of those cultural practices.

Brands are social processes. By this we mean that to understand how brands work we need to pay attention not just to texts and their meanings, but also to the social interactions between people of which those texts are a part. To understand how Coca-Cola works as a brand we need to look not just at the television advertisements, but also at the cultural practices it embeds itself within. Importantly, we need to pay attention too to the work that cultural intermediaries – like sports stars, pop musicians and other celebrities – and ordinary people do in making brand value. This can be as simple as using products as part of our everyday life. When we consume a product, wear particular fashions, or use a certain brand of phone or computer, we say something about that brand to our peers. We also say something about brands when we interact with them online, enter competitions, go to branded events, or are visible on our social media profiles consuming or using them. This view of branding draws our attention away from thinking of brands as something that professionals in advertising agencies create, and towards thinking about the work we all do in creating and circulating brands. Brands only create value when they are meaningfully incorporated into our identities and cultural worlds.

The mode of branding we examine in this chapter – one which is interactive, participatory and reflexive – is attuned to the form of global network capitalism we have discussed so far in this book. Global network capitalism thrives on serving proliferating and fragmenting niches. In this system brands need to both position themselves with different appeals to many different markets at once, and be able to rapidly adapt themselves to changing consumer identities and rituals (Harvey 1989, Lash 1990: 41). Brands are also embedded in the production and maintenance of power relationships in global network capitalism. Individuals use brands to communicate their status and social hierarchy.

Fashion, leisure activities, restaurants and holiday destinations are all communicative cultural experiences. By consuming these experiences we construct our identity and communicate it to others.

BRANDS AND CULTURE

Brands began as a device to convey the 'legitimacy, prestige, and stability of the manufacturer; to educate the consumer about the product's basic value proposition; and to instruct on the use of novel products' (Holt 2002: 80). Holt (2002) describes this mid-twentieth-century branding as 'cultural engineering'. By the mid-twentieth century, brands shifted to appeals that were only 'tenuously linked to functional benefits' of products, and spoke instead to people's ideals, aspirations and desires about the 'modern good life'. This mode of branding grew alongside the post-war middle-class boom which for the first time created 'a large non-elite class that had significant disposable income' (Holt 2002: 82), leisure time, and were moving to rapidly developing suburbs. Branding, as we know it today, is a mode of communicating with ordinary middle-class people. Branding is a set of power relationships that manages the desires, identities and practices of ordinary life. In this period brands aimed to facilitate the 'good life' of middle-class suburban homes, leisure time, television and mass consumption. This mode of branding underwent major changes with the rise of the counter-culture in the 1960s. Branding moved from facilitating a mass homogenous suburban middle-class identity to promoting 'the use of consumer goods to pursue individuated identity projects' (Holt 2002: 83). The counter-culture posed an opportunity for brands to embed themselves much more directly in the creative identity-making activities of individuals. If branding emerged as part of the effort to engineer collective identities built around the nation, in the second half of the twentieth century, branding became critical to the liberal project of shifting away from collective national identities and towards individual consumer identities. Branding became part of the social, political and cultural process of mediating desire for individual freedoms, forms of expression and ways of life.

Brands have a complex relationship with cultural and social movements. While it is tempting to consider brands as products of mass culture that co-opt organic and grassroots cultural practices, such a view misses a more complex interface between brands and culture. From the 1960s onwards three important changes began to take place in the communicative practices of brands and advertisements. Firstly, brands began to incorporate a critique of the mass consumer society into their claims. This appeared paradoxical at first, that advertisers would promote consumption via a critique of the consumer society. Secondly, advertising began to expose its own artifice. Rather than pretend their claims were sincere and motivated by their own interests, brands began to point out to consumers the constructed nature of their appeals. And thirdly, brands began to invoke the popular idea of an empowered and savvy individual consumer.

The popular view of the 1960s counter-culture portrays it as an organic social movement that rose up to challenge the conformity of the mass society and culture industry. Rock music, denim jeans, sexual freedom, drugs and radical politics were all articulated together in a social movement that claimed to press back against the sprawling suburban conformity of post-war America. This symbolic antagonism between the mainstream and the alternative has been a recurring cultural theme for each generation since. The 1990s saw the rise of 'alternative' popular and music culture that was interrelated in various ways

with the anti-globalization movement. Cultural scenes of the first decade of this century have celebrated 'indie' and 'DIY' culture often in conjunction with the participatory promise of interactive media.

Each of these movements presented itself as somehow 'real' and 'authentic' against the 'manufactured' and 'oppressive' culture of the mainstream. The counter-culture appeared to threaten the homogenous status quo of middle-American life with its radical cultural and identity politics. The alternative movement at first seemed to rage against the greed of corporate America and the cultural homogenization and labour exploitation of global capitalism (see Klein 2000). The indie and DIY aesthetic of the past decade has been connected with bespoke, handmade, local and environmentally sustainable forms of cultural production and ethical consumption (see Lewis and Potter 2011). Each of these movements positioned themselves against an imagined mainstream by articulating different identities, values and politics. Rather than present a threat to capitalism and consumption, however, each of these movements was in part created and stimulated by corporate cultural production, and proved to be a valuable resource for brands. In many cases their 'counter' and 'alternative' ideas turned out to be conventional and commercially lucrative. We often like to think of ourselves as creative and autonomous individuals rather than passive dupes of the mass society. We need to consider then how ideas and practices like the counter-culture, alternative and indie are embedded within cultural production and inform how brands work. Branding is a significant part of the media machinery that broke down old dominant identities and associated power bases, and reconstructed new ones that aligned with the power relationships, values and ways of life favoured by American global network capitalism.

The creative revolution

The 1960s saw a 'creative revolution' in the kinds of claims advertisements made (Frank 1997). Bill Bernbach at the advertising agency DDB invented 'anti-advertising: a style which harnessed public mistrust of communication' (1997: 55). In his famous campaign for Volkswagen in the 1960s Bernbach's advertisements began to both critique the mass society and call 'attention to themselves as advertisements' (1997: 65). By taking into account the critique of mass society and the public's knowledge of their constructed nature advertisements reflexively said to the audience, 'We know that you know we are trying to persuade you.' Once advertising made this move, it was no longer caught up in trying to construct and protect an idealized artifice. It was no longer hampered by the anxiety of protecting the authenticity and credibility of its claims. It was free to move into ironic, creative, savvy and associational forms of communication.

Anticipating the emergence of networked modes of production organized around creativity and cultural capital, Bernbach was at the forefront of a generation of cultural producers who recognized that organizations and societies were most productive when they encouraged freedom and critique, rather than trying to discipline and control in a hierarchical fashion. Anticipating a form of cultural production that is commonplace today, he reorganized his agency around creative teams. Bernbach propagated a narrative about advertising as a serious creative and artistic endeavour. Bernbach conspicuously constructed a theory of the meaning and value of his work. His public statements, interviews, memoirs, the organization of his agency and the advertisements he produced can all be seen as 'deep texts' (Caldwell 2008) that help us to construct a portrait of how he understood the practices and value of advertising.

Where most advertising agencies worked to standardized processes and scientific formulas and produced advertisements that sincerely represented the mass consumer society, Bernbach and his agency began to deconstruct both how advertisements were produced and the kind of appeals they made. Bernbach was the first advertiser to incorporate a critique of mass society into advertising itself. His advertisements demonstrate how advertising works not only as promotion but also as 'cultural criticism' (Frank 1997: 55). By examining Bernbach's advertisements in relation to the counter-culture, we can see that advertising didn't co-opt the counter-culture as some organic social movement. Instead, the counter-culture was 'triggered as much by developments in mass culture as changes at the grassroots. Its heroes were rock stars and rebel celebrities, millionaire performers and employees of the culture industry; its greatest moments occurred on television, on the radio, at rock concerts and in the movies' (Frank 1997: 8). The same can be said for the alternative culture of the 1990s that couldn't have exploded into a mass movement without MTV, major record labels and corporate sponsors (Klein 2000, Heath and Potter 2005). And again, the indie culture of the past decade is deeply incorporated within corporate production. Brands promote ethical consumption and bespoke products, and interactive media stimulate and profit from more diffuse and fragmented forms of DIY and user-generated production (Andrejevic 2007, Lewis and Potter 2011, Banet-Weiser 2012). Being individual, creative and different is a continuous project. Outmanoeuvring our peers in the game of life and style is hard work. It makes us productive consumers. Advertising constructs and speaks to the savvy consumer. The counter-culture wasn't a threat to consumerism, but instead a productive mechanism for continuously generating ideas and trends. Furthermore, by building self-critique into their claims advertisements could never be caught out not living up to their claims.

Accounts of how brands work need to take stock of the work consumers do in making those associations between the product and the cultural practices in their own lives. Cultural products like films, music, novels and celebrities do the 'ideological heavy lifting'. Brands then act as ideological parasites, tagging along on these cultural practices' (Holt 2006: 374). Once brands have established this connection they then expand ideological expression of those myths; they 'proselytise' them (2006: 375). Brands enhance the amplification of certain cultural practices and identities, that might reinforce broader cultural and political ideas, but they are ultimately only made meaningful and valuable from the work of consumers and cultural intermediaries.

BRAND VALUE

Branding is now 'premised upon the idea that brands will be more valuable if they are offered not as cultural blueprints but as cultural resources, as useful ingredients to produce the self as one chooses' (Holt 2002: 83). Based on the idea of offering 'cultural resources', Holt (2002) argues that brands engage in tactics such as:

- Developing ironic and reflexive personas. They distance themselves from being overtly persuasive; they encourage consumers to adapt their claims and imagery; they make fun of themselves, which protects them from critique (critique is taken into account in advance).

- Embedding in cultural spaces and practices. Brands develop relationships with art, fashion, subcultures, sport and music communities. They make themselves an invested part of those practices.
- Brands engage with us as part of everyday cultural practices. Consumers then incorporate brands into their lives, connecting them with their values, practices and identities.
- Brands engage in below-the-line activities that rely on word-of-mouth and everyday interactions between peers.

Holt (2002) suggests that these activities cause contradictions. On the one hand brands present themselves as an authentic and disinterested part of cultural life, but on the other hand we all know their commercial intentions. The result is consumers who are cynical about brands' sincerity. This can manifest itself in forms of consumer activism. When consumers pressured athletics companies like Nike over their sweatshop practices (Klein 2000) they called out the difference between Nike's 'Just Do It' manifestos and its real world exploitation of labourers. Holt (2002) also claims that brands will run out of authentic things to co-opt. Perhaps more important is not whether brands are authentic or not, but whether they attract our attention and whether we engage with them. Brands rely on our creative participation rather than our sincere belief in their claims.

Brands are social processes that rely on the participation of consumers and other cultural actors to create value. They work by 'enabling and empowering the freedom of consumers so that it is likely to evolve in particular directions' rather than impose a 'certain structure of tastes and desires' (Arvidsson 2005: 244). Brands relate to the process of constructing our individual identity. Individual freedom and expression are central to progressive and flexible forms of capitalism that emerged in the past generation. Brands become valuable through the social actions of consumers. Contemporary accounts of branding emphasize the unpredictability of contemporary consumers as they create meaning and take brands in unintended directions (Holt 2002, Arvidsson 2005, Zwick et al. 2008). This unpredictability is both a challenge to brand managers and a source of value. Brands need to cultivate and constrain consumer creativity (Foster 2008: xix).

Brands are at the centre of corporate business strategy. They are assets to be managed (Aaker 1991). Brand loyalty reduces the cost of keeping old customers and attracting new ones. They create value by facilitating a network of meanings that can be realized as economic value. Some of the ways brands facilitate value creation include:

- Brands prompt increasing sales of a product or service. For instance, marketing managers examine how brand activity corresponds with sales growth.
- Value can be accrued in the brand itself where consumers will pay a premium for products they have added value to through their own creative and communicative capacities (Zwick et al. 2008). Consumers may pay a premium for a brand they associate with their identity and values. They may be transferrable from product to product via the brand logo.
- Brand value may be registered in stock market valuations (Arvidsson 2005). In this case, the stock market values both the associations and affects that exist in consumers' minds around the brand, and its enduring capacity to act as a device to realize economic value from a market.

processes. From the mid-twentieth century, marketers developed research and analytic techniques for segmenting and targeting markets with particular messages and products. With the relationships between consumption and everyday life that developed in the post-war societies, marketing began to engage with psychological, sociological and cultural approaches. Today, branding requires an array of technical and cultural experts: economists, data experts, distribution and logistics engineers, sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists. All of these professionals design branding as an ongoing system of conceptualizing, stimulating and managing consumer demand. Within this system of branding, advertising creatives and public relations professionals play a critical role in translating brand strategies into symbols and meanings that will attract the attention and resonate with identified target audiences.

Designers

The design of products themselves and spaces of consumption have been incorporated into the process of branding. As brands have become more than just logos that are attached to products, designers have become critical to designing products that embody brand identities and creating social spaces within which brands can be created and performed by service staff, cultural intermediaries and consumers. Think for example of how critical the design of Apple devices is to the meaning, legitimacy and value of the brand. The functionality and appearance of the device communicates the principles and values of the brand.

Designers are also involved in the creation of 'servicescapes' and 'brandscaapes' (Sherry 1998, Thompson and Arsel 2004) where the brand is performed by service personnel, cultural intermediaries and consumers. Brands like Starbucks are constructed via the branded space of their chain stores. Designers create stores that not only efficiently manage the production of the product and service, but also create a cultural ambience for the brand. The Starbucks store produces both a cup of coffee and a social context within which the coffee is consumed as the customers sit, chat or use the free WiFi.

Front-line staff

In service- and experience-oriented economies the aesthetic and emotional labour of employees who interact with consumers is also important in performing the brand. In addition to making the basic product or providing the service (like making and serving the cup of coffee), they engage too in emotional, aesthetic and affective forms of labour that mediate the exchange. Retail and customer service staff are front-line embodiments of the brand (Pettinger 2004, Parmentier and Fischer 2011). Fashion chains employ staff who are good looking and have personalities that match the brand, and mandate that they wear clothes in keeping with the brand image. They are required to engage with customers in ways that perform the personality of the brand.

Cultural producers

Brands rely on cultural intermediaries like musicians, actors, celebrity chefs and fashion bloggers to create value. These cultural producers deploy their identity, and the attention they attract, to embed the brand within their lifestyle and social networks. This can be as subtle as wearing certain clothes

or using a device in public. Or it can be more detailed like direct endorsements of brands as part of their own cultural production. The celebrity chef Jamie Oliver is a personal brand in his own right; in his sponsorship deals and television programmes he cross-promotes other brands by incorporating them into his narratives about cooking good food at home. Brands increasingly engage with cultural intermediaries to produce branded content. Sainsbury's contracted Jamie Oliver to produce recipes and cooking tips using products from their store. In the fashion industry, brands increasingly cultivate relationships with leading style-bloggers who are highly influential with hipster audiences.

Consumers

Brands engage consumers in the creation and circulation of brand messages. While consumers have always added meaning to products and services by incorporating them into their everyday life, brands invest resources in engaging with consumers in cultural spaces and encouraging them to circulate content on their social media profiles.

BRANDS, SOCIAL SPACE AND PARTICIPATION

Brands engage with consumers by offering cultural resources and experiences that encourage their active participation in meaning making. Everyday life is increasingly characterized by social and cultural spaces where we are invited to interact with brands. Retail spaces like Apple and Starbucks stores are designed as branded experiences; online spaces like Facebook, and public cultural spaces like music festivals and sports events, are all places where we engage with brands within our everyday lives. Branded spaces are designed to anticipate and harness the creativity and innovation of consumers (Moor 2003: 58). Analysing a Guinness-branded music festival in Ireland, Moor (2003) explains how participants create and then embed the brand into the social enjoyment of music.

Where brands use culturally embedded strategies they rely less on telling consumers what to think or believe, and more on creating and managing social spaces where they anticipate and harness the freedom and creativity of consumers. The capacity to channel and cultivate consumer participation is greatly enhanced by a networked and interactive media system that can watch and respond to consumers in real time. While participants in interactive media and branded social spaces are free to create meanings, identities and social relations, they do that within communicative processes controlled by media organizations and brands (Andrejevic 2011: 287). The more they participate, the more their communicative and social capacities are rendered visible and appropriable by brands.

Brands at cultural events

At music festivals – like Lollapalooza and Coachella in the United States, Glastonbury and Reading in the United Kingdom, and Splendour in the Grass in Australia – the production of brands is incorporated into the enjoyment of popular music and culture. Music festivals are a productive site for brands because music fans use the festival to circulate and mediate their identity and cultural practices using smartphones and social media. Popular music plays the role of stimulating a circulation of memories,

emotions and feelings between people. Popular music is part of our practices of giving and gaining attention (Meier 2011). Festival attendees use their smartphones to create and circulate images that position them within a flow of content related to the festival. The festival offers a set of cultural resources audience members use to portray and position their identity within the network of hundreds of thousands of images, updates, likes, comments and tags generated by the thousands of festival goers. These images are part of the story they tell about themselves and their enjoyment of the festival.

Splendour in the Grass is a music and arts festival held in Australia. The festival features music performances by international acts and an extensive arts programme. Partnering alcohol brands build large themed bars where they attract festival attendees to drink, dance, socialize, take photos and circulate them online. These themed bars are woven into the festival experience. The festival assembles a productive audience, cultural resources and brand activations within a purpose-built social space. In recent years, Smimoff built a multi-level cocktail bar, Jägermeister a hunting-lodge-themed bar, and Strongbow a bar on the deck of a large antique sailing ship. The themed nature of these spaces weaves the brands into the way fans enjoy and remember the festival. For instance, sitting on the deck of the Strongbow ship, audience members could drink cider, watch the bands and imagine themselves sailing through the festival. The branded spaces contribute to feelings of wonder, fantasy and enjoyment as they drink, relax, dance and socialize. Festival goers engage with these branded spaces as part of their movement through a wonderland experience composed of affective engagement with each other, mood-altering substances, and music and arts performances.

The brand activations are part of the atmospheres and memories of the festival. Festival goers incorporate them into the flow of images they create and circulate online using their smartphones. The brands get caught up in a network of images of festival goers, musicians, artists and performances. In mediating their own identity as part of the cultural schema of the festival, consumers also create value for brands. To create an image using a smartphone, festival goers use their capacities to observe, judge and affect one another. After capturing the image they crop it and add filters that articulate its mood, and they log hashtags that position it within social networks online. They watch the flow of images they contribute to, adding information to them in the form of likes, shares and comments. These practices create valuable attention and data, which begins in the first instance with the festival goer using their creativity to capture images and circulate them through social media.

The music festival and its partnering brands create a material cultural space that brings together cultural experiences and resources that festival goers use to curate and structure as flows of images on social media. Contained within the fences of the music festival are not just performances and brand logos but a productive audience who use their smartphones to position themselves within a flow of images. The circulation of images reproduces the cultural schema of the festival and its sponsoring brands. They link together their own identities, cultural performances and brands. Brands also employ photographers who take photos of audience members and upload them to Facebook. In addition to creating themed spaces with brand logos, they also hand out branded items like sunglasses, bags, beach balls, blow-up couches, t-shirts and so on that also get captured in the thousands of images circulated by the audience at the festival. These images become micro-advertisements that connect the brand to many different identities and their online social networks.

As festival goers participate in branded spaces and use their smartphones to record those experiences on social media they craft a network of shared associations, dispositions and affects that are valuable to brands. The images have a double function:

- As content that connects together the brand, a cultural experience and their identity. The images circulate highly credible brand messages through online peer networks.
- As devices that generate data within the databases of social media. As images circulate, friends view, click, like, tag, share or comment on them. Each of these interactions generates valuable data for social media platforms and brands. Over time, brands develop profiles of the kinds of people that attend music festivals and engage with branded spaces. This enables them to design and target future engagements with cultural spaces and audiences.

Brands that create value by establishing and managing social spaces and processes appear to be able to adapt to the creative meaning-making activities of consumers. Through these spaces and activities brands create value by enabling and managing consumer participation with cultural resources and purpose-built social spaces (Holt 2002, Moor 2003, Thompson and Arsel 2004, Arvidsson 2005, Foster 2008).

Brands and mobile media devices

Within social spaces like music festivals we can see how cultural experiences, smartphones and social media are assembled in the creation of an open-ended form of branding. This mode of branding brings together 'soft', culturally embedded activities with 'hard', calculative and predictive analytics. The brand engages with the cultural experiences of consumers; this prompts them to create media content that is registered online where it generates data that is used to assemble and manage markets. Brands connect together real-world cultural spaces with the technical capacities of interactive media. This enables them to develop brands as 'devices for the reflexive organisation of a set of multi-dimensional relationships' between brands, culture and people (Lury 2009: 69). The brand is not only, or even primarily, a symbol representing a particular meaning; instead, it is a device that assembles ongoing relationships between people, places, experiences and products. The brand becomes coextensive with the social relations it stimulates and manages.

The creative participation of consumers and cultural intermediaries creates value even 'where their experimentation and innovation is "resistive in nature"' (Zwick et al. 2008: 168) because value is made via the capacity of individuals to affect one another, rather than adhere to specific meanings. Brands rely less on particular representations of authentic, cool or counter-cultural values. Instead, authenticity is grounded in the capacity of participants to animate affective connections and circuits of attention and recognition (Taylor 2007, Meier 2011). As far as the creation of brand value is concerned, authenticity is simply the capacity of popular music to establish an affective link between the brand and target market (Meier 2011: 409). The brand doesn't attempt to appropriate some particular meaning, but instead to position itself within cultural practices and circulation of affect and meaning that changes continuously.

THE MERCHANTS OF COOL AND GENERATION LIKE

The media critic and filmmaker Douglas Rushkoff has made two films about branding and promotional culture. The first film, *The Merchants of Cool* (2001), examined the emergence of 'coolhunting' as part of brands' efforts to make themselves a part of constantly-evolving frameworks of meaning. The second film, *Generador Like* (2014), examines how social media have evolved into a platform for harnessing the productive activities of fans in the publicization, promotion and branding of products.

Both films can be watched online at the PBS website (www.pbs.org). You can find links to these films and other resources about brands and culture on the *Media and Society* website study.sagepub.com/carahandlow

What is coolhunting? What are the limitations of coolhunting?

What does coolhunting tell us about the relationship between brands and culture?

How have brands adapted to social media?

Select brands that you use or are familiar with. How are they embedded within your everyday life, cultural practices and identities?

Imagine you are a brand but you cannot make advertisements or buy advertising space on television, newspapers or magazines. How would you build and manage the brand?

What kinds of information and data would you need about consumers and their lives to manage the brand?

How would you collect and analyse information about consumers to manage the brand?

What kinds of cultural intermediaries would you need to work with to promote the brand?

How do brands make use of social and mobile media to engage us in everyday life?

ETHICAL BRANDS AND EVERYDAY LIFE

In this chapter we've conceptualized brands as social processes. We've claimed that they are embedded in culture, rely on the participation of cultural intermediaries and consumers, draw on critiques of the mass society and draw attention to their own appeals. Once brands are embedded into everyday life and culture, they become part of the way we construct our everyday practices, ethics and politics. They become one of the resources we use to make our lives meaningful. Brands now make claims about their broader role in society and their environmental, ethical and political standpoints. This is just as much a deliberate commercial strategy as it is a consequence of brands' more complex engagements with culture. For brands to engage in cultural and identity-based forms of communication they inevitably end up making claims about the things people care about in their everyday lives. This sets in motion a series of consequences. As much as brands profit from their engagements with culture,

they are also accountable to them. Consumers and citizens expect them to match up to the cultural and ethical claims they make (Klein 2000, Lewis and Potter 2011, Banet-Weiser 2012). Banet-Weiser (2012) suggests that one consequence is a more ambivalent relationship between consumers and brands. On the one hand we use and engage with them every day, we find them meaningful, we agree with the ethics of some of the claims they make. On the other hand we are frequently cynical and dismissive of their sincerity, motivations and intentions.

Žižek (2010a: 53) draws our attention to the ethical claims embedded in everyday practices of consumption. He suggests that a traditional way of thinking about philanthropy and charity held that some individuals were wealthy and powerful. They used that wealth and power to donate to causes they believed were important. The powerful were patrons of causes that they either cared about or believed were important. 'In the morning', Žižek (2010b) argues, the wealthy 'grab the money, in the afternoon [they] give half the money back to charity.' In today's capitalism, however, 'When you buy something your anti-consumerist duty to do something for others is already included into it.' He offers the example of Starbucks' claim that: 'It's not just what you are buying, it's what you are buying into ... when you buy Starbucks, whether you realize it or not, you are buying something bigger than a cup of coffee. You are buying into a coffee ethics. Through our Starbucks Shared Planet program we purchase more Fair Trade coffee than any company in the world, ensuring the farmers receive a fair price for their hard work, and we invest in and improve coffee growing practices and communities around the globe'. Žižek describes this as 'cultural capitalism'. Consumption is an ethical, symbolic communicative act: 'You don't just buy a coffee; in the very consumerist act you buy your redemption from being only a consumerist.' This form of branding aligns with the progressive social-democrat values that construct 'capitalism with a human face' and position identity-based forms of consumption as acts that express the values of global network capitalism.

The ethical consumer

Writing about Fairtrade coffee shops where customers choose where the profits will be donated from each cup of coffee, Lewis and Potter (2011: 4) argue that 'Attempts by social justice-oriented businesses to reconfigure the privatized moment of spending as a communal act, thus positioning consumer choice as a site of responsibility, are increasingly commonplace in today's marketplace.' Ordinary everyday life is beset by questions and decisions that seem attached to larger ethical and political concerns. Purchasing goods and services is more than just about satisfying our demands for the necessities of life; it has become a social and political act that constitutes our identities, social worlds and power relationships. We now feel we need to mark out who we are, what we value and what kind of society we want via our consumption practices. Our everyday lives seem connected to larger 'community, national and global concerns' (Lewis and Potter 2011: 10).

The flexible and networked society of global capitalism poses new kinds of ethical questions and political possibilities. Our ethics are no longer moored in traditional communities and moral codes, but in everyday choices we make in a reflexive communicative network. Buying a coffee

or a bottle of water becomes an act that says something about the fate of natural resources and labourers in the developing world. As global network capitalism creates new kinds of connectivity, we develop new ways of understanding our place in complex networks. As much as brands make claims about their ethics, those claims make consumers aware that products don't just have particular attributes they desire – those objects themselves are part of a network of social and material relations. Our decision to purchase a coffee isn't just about the taste, but also about the ethics of its production, as well as the ambience, affects or meanings of consuming it in the store, office or as we walk through the city. In a networked consumer society, responsibility devolves to every individual in the network. Consumption becomes a symbolic communicative act marking out not just what we want, but how we understand our place in the social world, what our values are and how we want to be seen by others.

Brands stimulate and manage ethical consumption. Ethical consumption displaces collective action as a means of shaping the kind of society we want to live in in favour of individual and private choices (Potter 2011). Ethical consumption invites consumers to 'work on themselves' at the same time as they monitor corporations' values and practices (2011: 119). When we purchase a bottle of water that claims to donate money to clean water projects in the developing world we both mark out our own values and send a message to the network or market about the kinds of products we desire. We communicate our ethics via our consumption. In doing so though we also add qualities and value to brands by making them ethical and meaningful (Foster 2008, Potter 2011).

On the one hand where a bottle of water or a cup of coffee claims to us that it will contribute to clean water or sustainable production, it works as a sincere ethical claim. On the other hand, Žižek (2010a) provocatively suggests that despite the apparent sincerity of ethical consumption, we are in fact often cynics. That is, we know the bottle of water or cup of coffee won't actually fix the problems in the developing world. We aren't naïve enough to believe that disposable bottles of water and coffee cups could ever be environmentally sustainable. But these acts of consumption make us feel good. They help us build an identity that works for us, positions us in our social networks and makes life enjoyable. So we do them anyway. Regardless of whether our thoughts about ethical consumption are sincere or cynical, by participating in it we validate the idea that we must act. Brands encourage us not to think but to act. Ethical consumption is an important part of the way network capitalism functions. Ethical brands produce 'capitalism with a human face'. Žižek agrees that helping others and protecting the environment are good causes, but in appending these principles to brands we obscure how global network capitalism causes many of these problems in the first place.

The 'ethicalization' of everyday life

In the famous 'chicken' scene in *Portlandia* – a satire of hipster life in Portland, Oregon – contemporary anxieties about ethical consumption are astutely skewered. A couple ask a waiter in a restaurant about the chicken on the menu. The waiter tells them, 'The chicken is heritage breed, woodland raised chicken, that's been fed a diet of sheep's milk, soy and hazelnuts.' The diners continue to enquire about the chicken: Is it local? Is it organic? Are the hazelnuts local? How big is the area where the

chickens are able to roam free? Taking their enquiries seriously, the waiter goes away and returns with a biography of the chicken including a photo and life story. She tells them, 'The chicken you will be enjoying tonight ... his name was Colin, here are his papers.' The waiter assures them the farm does a lot to ensure the chickens are happy. The couple make further enquiries about the farm and its owners, telling the waiter, 'It tears at the core of my being someone just cashing in on a trend like organic.' The diners then ask if the restaurant will hold their seats while they go to the farm to check on the living conditions of the chicken before placing their order.

The scene is a satire of the 'ethicalization' of everyday life and the 'reflexive doubt' (Dean 2010) that characterizes ethical consumption. As much as we feel compelled to consider the ethical consequences of our everyday life and consumption, we simultaneously are unable to make any firm judgements. We are encouraged to be informed consumers, but the networked society's modes of production and communication are so complex and fragmented that we are unable to get and assess information. Faced with decisions like this we become anxious, static or cynical. This leads us to be increasingly dismissive or anxious about the consequences of our choices. Brands' ethical claims conceal their role in stimulating these anxieties as much as offering solutions to them. As much as brands' ethical claims respond to consumers' demands for more responsible forms of production, they also construct and anticipate them.

In this chapter we've examined how brands facilitate cultural and communicative practices. Branding appears to be part of the communicative logic of global network capitalism. It is a series of symbols, social spaces and processes embedded into our everyday lives, politics and culture. We live in a 'promotional culture' (Wernick 1991) that informs how we think about our lives, politics and societies. We are each engaged in the day-to-day promotional work of positioning ourselves in networks of communication and production.

BRANDS' STORIES ABOUT THEIR ETHICS AND VALUES

Apple is one of the most valuable brands in the world. It was initially built on positioning itself in relation to 'cool outsiders' who identified with progressive political and identity narratives. The Apple brand of the early 1980s positioned itself by drawing on the 'mass society critique'. The famous '1984' advertisement depicted a homogenous mass watching an anonymous figure speak at them. The imagery conjured up the mass society idea of a passive audience consuming content. A woman arrives and throws a sledgehammer through the screen, blowing it up. A voice-over tells us, 'On January 24th Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you'll see why 1984 won't be like "1984".' The advertisement promised that Apple would 'break' the dystopian mass society depicted by Orwell in his famous novel. Apple's brand narrative used the counter-culture mythology to position its

(Continued)

(Continued)

customers as creative, independent and autonomous. While everyone else was watching TV, Apple consumers were creating the future.

Apple relied on its passionate consumers to embed the brand in their cultural narratives and identities. Apple consumers presented themselves as intelligent, savvy, urban hipsters. They worked in cool creative jobs in hip cities and shared progressive cultural and political values. As much as the Apple brand was created with clever product design and advertising, it was also created by strategically managing its hip adopter-elite. Online communities and influential bloggers were part of the development of the Apple brand (see Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Over the past decade Apple has rapidly risen from a niche brand to a market leader. This has presented Apple challenges as it tries to manage an adopter-elite niche market segment alongside a mass consumer market. The Apple flagship stores have been an important part of this strategy. The stores are a material space that embody the brand for the mass market. Ordinary consumers can go to these stores to speak with Apple experts at the stores' Genius Bars. These stores are important material 'brandscape' (Thompson and Arsel 2004) where the brand is performed and materialized. Apple also uses stage-managed product launches to generate discussion among technology journalists, bloggers and adopters.

The Apple brand is not just made in its advertising and stores: the use of the products by consumers and cultural intermediaries, and the way those products are organized within an Apple ecosystem, also build the brand. The ecosystem organizes consumer interaction with the product within a network wholly owned and controlled by Apple.

In recent times, Apple has also had to contend with an identity crisis as consumers perceive a gap between the clean, innovative and ethical brand rhetoric and the production conditions in Chinese factories, and the control of innovation through its closed ecosystem, application and content stores. In these instances we can see what Banet-Weiser (2012) calls the 'ambivalent' nature of brands. On the one hand Apple connects with things we believe in, on the other hand it embodies the contradictions of the globally networked consumer society. The brand is a device for managing a globally networked information business – a way of articulating production and consumption together in profitable ways.

- Consider some of your favourite brands today. How do they both celebrate and critique the mass society?
- How is today's mass society different from the one imagined by Orwell, or the mass society of the mid-twentieth century?
- What are Apple's brand values?
- How does Apple prove or demonstrate those values?
- How do their narratives develop over time?
- Examine the ethics, responsibility and Fairtrade policies of brands that you use. You can find links to policies and other resources about ethical brands on the *Media and Society* website study.sagepub.com/carghandlow
- What claims do brands make about citizenship?
- What forms of citizenship do they offer consumers?
- How do brands make purchasing goods and services meaningful?

- What does buying an ethical brand communicate about you?
- What impact does buying an ethical brand have on our society?
- What contributions do ethical brands make to society?
- Are contemporary brands that offer us ways to convey the environmental, social and cultural causes that matter to us better than brands that simply offer us qualities within the product and service?

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we considered how brands work as a social process. Brands only become meaningful and valuable when we interact with them, incorporating them into our identities, cultural practices and social lives. While we can determine their efforts to take advantage, stimulate, amplify and even exploit particular identities and practices, we can also sense their possibilities and limitations. They don't exert control over us, but they do structure the social spaces and processes in which we relate to each other. Cohen (1963) argued that mass media don't tell us what to think, but do tell us what to think about. The interactive and participatory forms of branding we have examined here follow a similar logic: they establish the communication spaces and processes within which we construct our identities. As brands have become more open-ended and participatory processes, and as our media systems have become more interactive, brands have become more embedded in our everyday cultural practices.

Examining the contemporary processes of branding helps us to consider how the identity and communicative work of ordinary individuals is increasingly important to how media functions to create and maintain power relationships. It doesn't work only by telling ordinary people what to think and do, but by constructing their action and participation in particular contexts. Ordinary people and the way they communicate and live their lives are very important to the production of brand value. Their communicative and identity-making capacities need to be incorporated into the social process of branding. Their identities take on the features of brands, and vice versa. Banet-Weiser (2012: 43) argues that brands rely on our labour, and that labour is the capacity to produce affective relationships around brands. This makes brands flexible and ambivalent. They are not monolithic objects, but adaptive social processes.

Brands offer us opportunities and resources to express ourselves and make our identities visible to others. As we become engaged in the process of connecting self-expression to the creation of brand value, we may also become less engaged in forms of communication directed towards encountering others (Chouliaraki 2013). Brands invite us to reflect on the self rather than encounter the experience of others. As brands incorporate ethical duties and claims into the forms of participation they offer us, we use them as devices for expressing our own values. In the process, we make brands meaningful, durable and ethical parts of our cultural world, and we format our identities within the logic of brands. This neuter processes by which we might encounter others and reflect on our role in global processes of consumption (Chouliaraki 2013). In this chapter, by examining brands as a social process, we've considered how promotion and participation are practices central to the functioning of the globally networked media system.

FURTHER READING

The readings by Banet-Weiser (2012) and Holt (2002) are useful in charting the development of brands that are embedded within culture, rely on the participation of consumers, and adopt savvy and ironic dispositions. The reading by Holt (2002) in particular charts the transition from branding as a mode of 'cultural engineering' to a more open-ended and participatory process that draws on cultural life. Meier (2011) explores the connections between branding and popular music. Meier offers critical arguments that consider how authenticity functions within commercial popular culture. The readings by Banet-Weiser (2012), Chouliaraki (2010) and Lewis (2008) each examine the interrelationships between promotion and branding, culture, politics and ethics. They address themes related to ethical consumption, humanitarianism and activism within a commercial popular culture.

Banet-Weiser, S. (2012) *Authentic TM: The Politics and Ambivalence in a Brand Culture*. New York: NYU Press.

Chouliaraki, L. (2010) 'Post-humanitarianism: Humanitarian communication beyond a politics of pity', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13 (2): 107–126.

Holt, D. B. (2002) 'Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (1): 70–90.

Lewis, T. (2008) 'Transforming citizens? Green politics and ethical consumption on lifestyle television', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 22 (2): 227–240.

Meier, L. M. (2011) 'Promotional ubiquitous musics: recording artists, brands, and "rendering authenticity"', *Popular Music and Society*, 34 (4): 399–415.

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NOTES:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ADVERTISING & CULTURE

CHAPTER 9

Culture and Advertising Appeals

Three aspects of advertising style were pointed out that are each prone to influence by culture: (a) the values and motives included in the appeal, the central message; (b) the basic advertising form; and (c) the execution: the casting and activities of people, the setting, and the interrelationship. Consumers do not distinguish these elements the way advertising academics or professionals do. For consumers, it is the total picture that is important. The total picture reflects communication style and enables people to connect. Yet, for professional purposes, we have to understand the role of all elements of an advertisement to be able to analyze whether an advertisement is culture-fit. This chapter will focus on the appeals in advertising. It will discuss the *value paradox* in advertising and give examples of how cultural dimensions can be recognized in advertising appeals. A few specific appeals will be discussed, like the country-of-origin appeal and the use of humor in advertising.

Appeals in Advertising

The appeal in advertising is a comprehensive concept. The appeal includes values and motives that define the central message. Moriarty, Mitchell, and Wells¹ state that an appeal “connects with some emotion that makes the product particularly attractive or interesting, such as security, esteem, fear, sex, and sensory pleasure.” The appeal is also used to describe a general creative strategy. Emphasis on the price is an economy appeal. A status appeal is used for presenting quality, expensive products. The combination of the appeal (including motives), basic advertising form, and execution makes up advertising style.

Advertising is shaped by the culture in which it is practiced, so logically, appeals reflect the values of that culture. When the values of consumers are congruent with

the values reflected in advertising, the link to liking the ad, the brand, or the company increases, and advertising will be more effective.²

Many studies have pointed at cultural values reflected in advertising, and particularly, content analysis based studies have revealed culture-specific appeals in advertising that can be explained by the Hofstede dimensions. Although most research conducted to analyze values in advertising appeals is comparative content analysis of advertising,³ content analysis has been criticized for providing description without prescription.⁴ However, we argue that if in a country certain style elements are more common than in others, these style elements are used because they appear to be more effective.⁵

A problem of cross-cultural content analysis is the organization and logistics of a large-scale cross-country study. In particular, when using cultural variables like the Hofstede dimensions, comparison should be across more than two countries.⁶ Unfortunately, there are few large-scale cross-cultural studies, and most compare the United States with one other country. Some regions are clearly understudied, such as Africa and Latin America. Out of 36 studies found by Charg et al.,⁷ 25 studies compared only two countries, and culture as a key concept was seldom explicitly defined. In 33 studies, the United States was the point of reference, and the most used cultural dimension was Hofstede’s individualism/collectivism. In none of the studies was cultural paradox taken into account. It is not easy to recognize values in advertising as advertising appeals do not necessarily follow the norms of a culture. They may even go against them. To understand this, we first have to return to the value paradox.

The Value Paradox as an Effective Advertising Instrument

In advertising, some values can easily be recognized as a reflection of culture. Self-actualization, self-interest, and self-esteem are examples of such values. They fit individualistic cultures. Also, doing it your own way and going it alone are expressions of an individualistic culture. But belonging is also a strong value of individualistic cultures. This seems paradoxical. That is because there are often opposing elements in one value. Thus, advertising appeals or claims may represent two opposing statements about values. This is related to the desirable and the desired, the distinction between what people think ought to be desired and what people actually desire, or how people think the world ought to be versus what people want for themselves, as discussed in Chapter 3.

In advertising, the opposing values of a culture, although often paradoxical, appear to be effective because they relate to the important aspects of people’s lives. Belonging is a ubiquitous value in American advertising, particularly in the sentimental, emotional form. It is included in the concept of “homecoming.” It is not a value to use in an appeal in Japanese advertising. In individualistic cultures, the need to belong may be a reaction to extreme individualism and can be reflected in showing more family life than there may actually be. Not understanding this

paradox causes researchers to formulate wrong hypotheses or express feelings of surprise about the results of comparative studies, as Okazaki & Mueller⁸ do, writing “surprisingly, the data revealed that Japanese ads made less use of group/consensus appeals than did U.S. ads. Also unexpectedly, Japanese ads were found to make greater use of the typically Western individual independence appeal than US ads.”

The desired and the desirable are reflected in people's behavior and in how they relate to each other. Both the desired and the desirable are recognized in advertising appeals or claims, but they may be expressed in opposing ways. This makes it even more difficult to understand words and concepts that are labels of values of a culture other than one's own. An example is the concept of sharing in the English language. Superficially, this may imply a non-individualistic and/or feminine caring concept, meaning “not keeping things for oneself.” Yet in a masculine and individualistic culture, it reflects more. It reflects winning and communicating one's success and achievement to others. One shares only the positive things of oneself. One does not share failure. Facebook uses the concept of sharing in this sense, but translations into other languages do not necessarily refer to the same concept.

Generally, one has to be very cautious with such concepts as they are ambiguous, and when translated into other languages, half of the meaning may be lost. If translated, a positive meaning may also change into a negative one.

Paradoxical value statements can be recognized in three ways:

1. Statements contrary to common belief, for example, that the Japanese are individualizing whereas they actually are collectivistic. As in all increasingly wealthy societies, the Japanese are focusing more on individuality, but their behavior is collectivistic compared with Western societies. What is perceived as individualizing is changing competitive behavior.
2. Statements that seem contradictory but that may in fact be true. Seemingly opposing values of one dimension, such as “belonging” and “going it alone” coexist in an individualistic culture.
3. As paradox type 2: Values that seem to be paradoxical within one dimension but can be explained by the configuration with other dimensions. An example is simultaneous “equality” and “large wage differences,” a paradox of the configuration low power distance and masculinity.

The next sections will present some examples of paradoxes.

Equality Paradox

Equality is a strong desirable value of U.S. culture, but the actual behavior of Americans does not show so much equality. American behavior is related to fairness: the belief that people should get what they deserve if they have the capabilities and work hard. This value results in inequality: If you have worked hard, you have earned the right to be different, to earn more—sometimes excessively

more—money than others. CEOs of U.S. companies can earn 40 times as much as an ordinary production worker. The biggest increases in income inequalities have occurred in America, Britain, and New Zealand. Wage differences in most of continental Europe also changed, but to a lesser degree. In continental Europe, increased wages of top managers of large companies have caused protests, and CEOs have even been asked to lower their salaries. So equality in the United States means the poor have equal rights to become rich, and equality in a large part of Europe means the rich should be equally “poor.”

Dependence and Freedom Paradoxes

Another paradox can be found in dependence versus independence, the opposing values related to power distance and individualism. In high power distance and collectivistic cultures, children remain dependent on their parents much longer than in low power distance and individualistic cultures, where children are supposed to go their own way, be self-reliant, and make their own decisions at an early age. This is extreme in the United States. An example is an event in 1996, when a 7-year-old girl who wanted to set the record as the youngest pilot in the world crashed and died. Her mother was quoted as saying, “It was her own decision.” Independence is a widely used concept or cue in Western advertising but also in Japan. There, an appeal in advertising is independence as opposed to dependency, which is such a strong part of Japanese culture. Also, a study comparing advertising appeals in the United States and Russia found independence as an appeal both in the United States and Russia.⁹

Related to dependency are the opposing values and paradoxes of freedom. In low power distance cultures, freedom means independence. In a collectivistic culture, the opposing values are freedom and harmony. Freedom can mean disharmony, as one ought to conform to the group. Freedom versus belonging can be opposing values for feminine cultures. Because of affiliation needs in feminine cultures, belonging is an implicit value and is related to conformance, consensus. Yet in order to succeed, one wants to express oneself, be different. This goes against the norm, the desirable. Freedom reflects the desired. The freedom-belonging paradox is typical of the Scandinavian cultures and the Netherlands. The Dutch, for example, are notorious for searching for freedom in their holidays by traveling to France or Spain, but they take their own mobile homes (caravan or trailer) with them and go to a camping area where they are sure they will find their compatriots.

In a strong uncertainty avoidance culture, too much freedom may lead toward undesired chaos, which cannot be tolerated, so the opposing value is order. In strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, freedom breeds uncertainty, whereas in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, freedom breeds success. People in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures take calculated risks to avoid failure; in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, people take risks to succeed.

In sum, freedom paradoxes vary by culture. For a high power distance culture like France, it is freedom versus dependence. For a collectivistic culture like Japan,

it is freedom versus harmony. For a feminine culture like the Netherlands, it is freedom versus belonging, and for a high uncertainty avoidance culture, it is freedom versus order.

Success Paradoxes

The norm, the desirable, in short-term oriented cultures, in particular when combined with high masculinity, is that one wants to shine, to show one's success. Success is communicated, shared, and displayed because it is natural to show off. This is less the norm in long-term oriented cultures, in particular when combined with femininity. Although a universal desire is to be recognized when one achieves something, success cannot be demonstrated directly. Because showing off is against the norm, demonstrating success must be done indirectly. Whereas the British (masculine culture) can say straightforwardly that they are the best, as British Telecom does: "We have the best connections," the Dutch, Danes, and Swedes (feminine) are not likely to do so. The paradox is frequently found in appeals such as, "There is more to it than meets the eye" or "True refinement comes from within" (Volvo, Sweden). Advertising in a masculine culture says, "Show your neighbors," whereas in a feminine culture advertising will say, "Don't show your neighbors." The paradox is in an advertising claim like "Brilliant in its simpleness" (Omega watches, the Netherlands): On the one hand, one should not show off (the desirable), yet if successful, one wants to be recognized (the desired).

The Innovation and Global Paradox

Although low uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to be more innovative, appeals like new, modern, and innovative are also attractive to members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures. This is similar for international or global appeals. Members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures like to be international, global, cosmopolitan, although in reality, the local is more important. Characteristic of strong uncertainty avoidance is resistance to change, yet words like *new* are also found in high uncertainty avoidance cultures like France and Germany.¹⁹ Although the cue word *new* is much seen in advertising, actual buying behavior may not be so innovative. For individualists, new and modern means adventure; for collectivists, being modern and international reflects belonging to a greater world. Although local is the norm, global is an attractive appeal. On the one hand, the Chinese are driven by the desire for global cosmopolitanism and derive face from global brands; on the other hand, they have a countervailing desire for local goods that use Chinese appeals.

In particular in Spain, the innovation and global paradoxes are strong. The Spanish way of life as reflected in advertising is warm, caring about others, different and original, even if full of unpredictable factors. On the one hand, the Spanish feel the desire to be modern and innovative; on the other hand, the desirable is stability because of the difficulty of coping with ambiguity.

Examples of Appeals by Dimension

In this section, examples of appeals found in advertising will be described by dimension, as well as activities and interactions between people in television commercials that are often deemed to be "only executions" but that reflect basic cultural values. In this chapter, as in most of the book, the Hofstede dimensions are used because these have been applied most to advertising across cultures.

Power Distance

Status symbols are less frequently used in low power distance cultures than in high power distance cultures where prestige is an important appeal. An example is the use of certain status sports such as golf. Power claims can be verbal and direct: "Save your power for the work place" (from an advertisement for the Lexus in Singapore) or as a verbal or visual metaphor: blue blood or yachts, referring to royalty (found in advertising in Portugal, see Illustration 9.1). In the execution, power distance can be shown in the way people interrelate or by the type of people shown (older vs. younger). In high power distance cultures, the elder (grandmother, mother, or aunt) advises the younger (daughter or niece). Procter & Gamble has carefully differentiated its advertising for this cultural difference, as found in commercials for the brand ACE and washing liquid brands Dreft and Yes. In low power distance cultures, the younger advises the elder (daughter advises mother), as in P&G commercials for Yes in Sweden and Dreft in the Netherlands. A typical Japanese example of high power distance behavior is in a commercial for Shinko Sangyo, "Saideria Home," which reflects the custom that when a group of people share a car, the boss or any higher placed person must always be brought home first, even if others live closer to the road taken. In this commercial, this custom allows the whole group to admire the nice home of the boss.

Another example is a TV commercial (see Illustration 9.2) for Boss canned coffee, which reflects the *senpai-kohai* (elder-younger in work) relationship. A famous Japanese rock singer (Buckichi



Illustration 9.1 Alfa 33, Portugal



Illustration 9.2 Boss, Japan

Yazawa) plays the role of an elder (*senpai*) Japanese salaryman. It is raining when he leaves the office, and a younger colleague (*kohai*) offers to get his older colleague's car, so he will not get wet. This is a situation not found in low power distance cultures where equality values are strong.

In high power distance cultures, where elders are respected, ads also tend to refer to generations, for example, to fathers and grandfathers who also used the product or brand. This reference to generations is reflected in the advertisement for Azzaro, showing three generations (Illustration 9.3). In high power distance cultures, elder people who dress up as young ones are viewed as "not grown-up." A global advertisement for Carrera sunglasses shows what is perceived as an older man (known to Americans as the professional wrestler Terry Bollea, nicknamed "Hulk Hogan") dressed up as a young hippie. This is not a particularly attractive picture to people in high power distance cultures (Illustration 9.4). People will judge such a person as not grown up.

Independence is an appeal reflecting the desirable in low power distance cultures. In high power distance cultures, it reflects the desired. A Japanese ad for Honda uses the words in the copy, "I'm independent," in English. In high power distance cultures, children are more protected and are independent at a later age than in low power distance cultures. Showing a young child alone, struggling to enter a building with his bicycle, as in a Dutch commercial for Blue Band margarine (Illustration 9.5), is not accepted in high power distance cultures. The Dutch will see the boy as an enterprising, independent child, whereas in other cultures, he will be pitied because he is left on his own. In contrast, an Italian TV commercial for Granarolo milk shows a young (spoiled) boy in a high-status setting (country manor, servants). He doesn't want to drink milk, although the servants offer him all sorts of cookies, but when Granarolo is offered, he accepts, and everybody applauds (Illustration 9.6).



Illustration 9.3 Azzaro, International



Illustration 9.4 Carrera, International



Illustration 9.5 Blue Band, Netherlands



Illustration 9.6 Granarolo, Italy



Illustration 9.7 Lipton, Denmark

Respect or disrespect for teachers or bosses in advertising is a reflection of high or low power distance. A Danish advertisement for Lipton tea saying, "Drive your boss mad by making him drink your tea" (Illustration 9.7), should not be used in France, Spain, or Italy. Low power distance is reflected in the antiauthoritarian elements of parody and humorous advertising.

The concept of an "empowered consumer" included in a company's claim, "Judge for yourself"—or more implicitly when a company stresses its role as a facilitator instead of imposing ideas or creating a dependency relationship with the consumer—is part of low power distance cultures.

Individualism/Collectivism

As described in earlier chapters, an important difference between individualistic and collectivistic cultures is between low-context and high-context communication. In individualistic cultures, the public tends to be addressed in a direct and personalized way. Words like *you*, *we*, and *I* are frequently used. So are imperatives. U.S. examples are "You flip a switch and . . ." (Detroit Edison), "Treat yourself right" (Crystal Light), "You have a dream, make a wish . . ." (Reebok). Whereas presenters in individualistic cultures address the public directly, the purpose of using well-known presenters or endorsers in collectivistic cultures is that the audience can associate with them. In individualistic cultures, the personal pronoun *I* is frequently used, as in the global advertisement for Nike (Illustration 9.8) and in the advertisement for Lucky Strike (Illustration 9.9). The latter was used in Spain, where this approach is not very attractive. A better approach is in the advertisement for the cigarette brand L&M (Illustration 9.10), which says, "Better in companionship." A Chinese commercial for Adidas (see illustration 9.11) at the Olympics of 2008 shows a Chinese swim champion who wins being carried by the group. It says "Together in 2008. Impossible is nothing."

Low-context communication is more textual and high-context communication more visual. However, new technology has made it easier for art directors worldwide to make more visual integrated ads. Also, in a low-context culture like the United States, this has led to less copy.¹⁴



Illustration 9.8 Nike, Spain



Illustration 9.9 Lucky Strike, Spain



Illustration 9.10 L&M, Spain

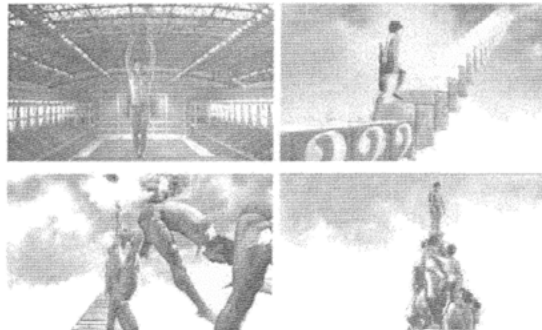


Illustration 9.11 Adidas, China

Context also plays a role in the sense that in collectivistic cultures like China, local appeals fit in advertising for local brands, whereas foreign appeals fit in advertising for global brands. To the Chinese, global brands reflect modernity, sophistication, and technology. They expect global, Western-type advertising and appeals for global brands, but advertising for their own Chinese brands must reflect Chinese values. Global brands are not supposed to use Chinese values as appeals, and non-Chinese spokespersons should not invoke Chinese values in advertising.¹¹

The difference between the independent and interdependent self has an important impact on advertising appeals. Members of individualistic and collectivistic societies will respond differently to advertisements emphasizing individualistic or collectivistic appeals. In collectivistic cultures, such as China and Korea, appeals focusing on in-group benefits, harmony, and family are more effective, whereas in individualistic cultures like the United States, advertising is more effective when it appeals to individual benefits and preferences, personal success, and independence.¹² A commercial where a man breaks out from a group and starts doing something on his own that the group hasn't thought of would be seen as positive in the individualistic cultures of the West but negative in collectivistic Asian cultures.¹⁴

Yet, paradoxically, the appeal of deviating from the group has been found in collectivistic cultures. Although the Chinese are not known for deviating from the collective norm, this may not apply to choice of commodities. The beer brand Beck's used the deviation idea by showing a field of sunflowers facing the sun. One turns to the west where a bottle of Beck's stands. Another version shows a family of crabs moving sideways in a single, tight row. One of them spots a bottle of Beck's beer in the sand and braks ranks.¹⁵ This demonstrates the paradoxical aspect of individualism-collectivism. In individualistic cultures, there is no point in a message saying you can deviate since there is no collective norm, but in collectivistic cultures it has meaning, unless it concerns more important issues than buying commodities.

Yet sharing remains an important element of collectivism. Whereas in collectivistic cultures people like to share things, in individualistic cultures, people may keep the nice things for themselves. The ice cream brand Magnum has used this approach, as illustrated in the German advertisement that says, "I share many things, but not everything" (Illustration 9.12).

Other examples are the two following appeals: "It is so good, you want to share it with others" (Hermesitas, Portugal) versus "It is so good, you want to keep it for yourself" (Evers, confectionery, Denmark).

With respect to time, individualistic cultures are monochronic and collectivistic cultures are polychronic. The clock as a symbol of efficiency will not be understood in polychronic cultures.

In collectivistic societies, people do not like being alone or eating alone whereas in individualistic societies, people may cherish their privacy. In collectivistic cultures, being alone means you have no friends, no identity. If alone, one is outside the group to which one belongs. In the United States, Levi's changed their advertising for the Hispanic market and downplayed individualism. Although in the United States the independent hipsters in Levi's TV ads had been drawing young customers, they didn't work for Levi's Hispanic customers. "Why is that guy walking down the street alone?" they asked. "Doesn't he have any friends?"¹⁶ Whereas in individualistic cultures people can enjoy a beer alone and being alone can even have a relaxing function, this is not the case in collectivistic cultures where one enjoys beer together. Images from a German TV commercial for Jever beer (Illustration 9.13) and for the Spanish Mahou (Illustration 9.14) illustrate the difference.



Illustration 9.12 Magnum, Germany



Illustration 9.13 Jever, Germany



Illustration 9.14 Mahou, Spain

Both in individualistic and collectivistic cultures, families are depicted in advertising, but advertising in individualistic cultures rarely shows multiple generations including grandparents, as in a Spanish commercial for sugar (Azucarera, Illustration 9.15). The most paradoxical phenomenon of the individualism-collectivism dimension is that showing families is as much or even more found in individualistic than in collectivistic cultures. In collectivistic cultures, advertisers may feel little need to depict families because the family is part of one's identity; it is not the desirable.

Appeals in individualistic cultures can refer explicitly to the independent self, for example, the text of a Tampax commercial: "Free yourself, to be yourself. Do what you want, wear what you want any day you want." Examples of individualistic claims are "Designed for the individual" (Mitsubishi), "Privat concert" for Privat cigarettes (Denmark), Tchibo Privat Kaffee (Germany), "In a world of conformity some things are still made for the individual" (Herblein watch), "Go your own way" (Ford



Illustration 9.15 Azucarera, Spain



Illustration 9.16 Chiyoda, International

Probe), and "It's my crazy life. Be yourself, king of your craziness" (Chrysler PT Cruiser, United Kingdom). Examples of collectivistic claims are "Prospering together" (International ad for Japanese Chiyoda Bank, Illustration 9.16), "Be part of the group" (J&B whiskey, Portugal), or showing a group of happy people with the tagline, "the best moments" (Ballerines, Spain).

Members of collectivistic cultures have a different perception of hospitality than members of individualistic cultures. In collectivistic cultures, an unexpected guest will always be served food, so there is always enough food available. A claim like the Dutch one for party snacks, saying "Duyvis, for when there is a party," is not effective for collectivistic cultures, where this sort of product should always be available, not just for a party.

As mentioned in the section on the innovation and global paradox, popular appeals in collectivistic cultures are "modern" and "international" because they appeal to the need to conform, belonging to a new and greater world. *Reader's Digest*¹⁷ publishes data on personal traits found in readership surveys. One of the traits is measured by the scale modern-traditional. The percentages of answers by people who considered themselves modern correlate with collectivism.

The importance of both context and the relationship orientation of the self in collectivistic cultures can explain how the use of celebrities in advertising varies across cultures. The configuration individualism and masculinity makes people have respect for those who stand out and are successful, which may explain why in the United States the cult of personality and obsession with celebrity and stardom is pronounced. In collectivistic cultures, however, in particular in Asia, celebrities are even more frequently used in advertising than in the United States, with South Korea leading. In his description of the celebrity phenomenon, Carolus Praet,¹⁸ a Dutch professor who teaches international marketing in Japan, provides explanations that refer to two collectivistic aspects: the relational self and context. In Japan, celebrity appearances are not limited to famous actors, singers, sports stars, or comedians. Advertising is a stage for established celebrities to capitalize on their fame, but it also is the steppingstone for models and aspiring actors toward fame.¹⁹ In Japan, the word *talent* (*arento*) is used to describe most celebrities in the entertainment world, and *star* is reserved for those who are seen to have long-lasting popularity. Many of the talents are selected on the basis of their cute looks. In the context of entertainment and advertising, this phenomenon seems not to pose problems of distinctiveness, or standing out. Whereas most Western stars are popular because of their salient physical or personal attributes, the appearances of Japanese idols are only a bit above average, so as not to alienate or offend the audience, but just enough to give their fans the sense that they too can become stars if they try hard enough. The function of such *arento* is also to give the brand "face" in the world of brands with similar product attributes. Instead of adding abstract personal characteristics to the product, it is linked to concrete persons. This is also explained as part of the creative process in which a creative team in the

advertising agency prefers to explain a proposed campaign by showing the client a popular talent around whom the campaign is to be built rather than talking about an abstract creative concept. An important difference is that in individualistic cultures, a celebrity can be linked with only one brand or company to be credible as the celebrity's unique and desirable characteristics are supposed to transfer into the brand, and brands must differentiate from other brands. In collectivistic cultures, this uniqueness is not relevant. In China, a celebrity may be associated with over 20 brands.²⁰

Considering the fact that approximately 70% of the world population is more or less collectivistic and many global advertising campaigns reflect individualistic values, it is fair to assume that much global advertising is effective only for a small part of the target. Most global ads address people in a direct way, show people alone, and refer to all sorts of individualistic claims.

Masculinity/Femininity

Winning and achievement, characteristics of masculine cultures, are frequently reflected in U.S. advertising. In particular, the combination of individualism and masculinity (the configuration of Anglo-German cultures) leads to the strong need to win, to be successful and show it, combined with the wish to dominate. Examples are "Being first," "The one and only in the world," and "Be the best." Hyperbole, persuasiveness, and comparative advertising are reflections of masculinity. A claim like "We'd like to set the record straight on who finished first in Client/Server Applications" (SAP integrated software) is typical for a masculine culture and reflects competitiveness. An advertisement for Nikon cameras says, "More winners per second" (Illustration 9.17), and a German ad for Skiny underwear says, "Simply the Best" (Illustration 9.18).

Aggressive typology and layout are another reflection of competitiveness. Dreams and great expectations are expressions of masculine cultures. Statements like "A dream come true" or "A world without limits" reflect the value "mastery," the idea that anyone can do anything as long as they try hard. This is opposed to feminine cultures, where dreams are said to be delusions. In masculine cultures, status is important for demonstrating one's success. To become Man (Woman) of the Year is the ideal for people in masculine cultures because mediocrity is the proof of failure. In Chapter 4, we showed how this was used in a commercial for Tylenol in the United States. Another reflection of masculinity, typical of American culture, is "bigness." America is a land of big egos, big cars, the Big Mac, the Quarter Pounder (or even a half pounder), and the big idea.²¹ Illustration 9.19 shows an image from a TV commercial for Taco Bell.

The configuration of individualism and masculinity explains the frequent hyperbole in American advertising with statements like "All the cosmetics in the world can't do what we can," "The only plastic



Illustration 9.17 Nikon, International



Illustration 9.18 Skiny, Germany



Illustration 9.19 Taco Bell, United States



Illustration 9.20 Norlisk, International

wrap with Reynolds strength behind it," "The greatest of ease" (for a white plastic garden chair), "You'll never find a softer toilet paper than new Northern Ultra," "The pain reliever that hospitals use most," or "The world's number one contact lens" (Acuvue).

Although both the United States and the United Kingdom score high on the masculinity index, there is a difference. The United States scores higher on uncertainty avoidance, which also influences the difference between overstatement and understatement. In the United Kingdom, one also wants to state that one has success, but this is often done "tongue in cheek."

Feminine cultures are characterized by favoring caring, softness, and the small. An international business advertisement for Russian Norlisk Mickel expresses love for the weak, showing a child in its advertising (Illustration 9.20). Instead of hyperbole, feminine cultures like understatement, as in the international advertising campaign for Carlsberg, with the tagline "Probably the best beer in the world" (Illustration 9.21). Much of Volvo advertising (Volvo is from Sweden, the most feminine culture in the world) tends to focus on safety, protecting the family. In feminine cultures, showing off is negative. The Volvo advertisement in Illustration 9.22 says, "True refinement comes from within," meaning to say you don't have to show off.

Another example of understatement was in an advertisement for the Audi 100 in the Netherlands: "You have a small house (the visual is a mansion), and a small car, but your neighbors live far enough away, they cannot see it. Moreover, the most important part cannot be seen, it is under the hood." An opposing claim was by Seat, Italy, showing the car in a garage with a glass door: "It can always be shown, it can always be seen."



Illustration 9.21 Carlsberg, International



Illustration 9.22 Volvo, International

Understatement is also recognized in a Spanish print advertisement for the Audi A4 Avant, an expensive top model of Audi, which reads as follows:

Deceive all of them, saying it's a family car. The new Audi A4 Avant. Never speak about power in public. If, one day, someone mentions something about the 5 valves per cylinder, change the topic, tell him it seems like it's going to rain. 150 hp?—You don't know anything.—Quattro-traction?—What's that? Use the interior space and the variability as a pretext. So that no one thinks that you actually love its design. While traveling with friends make them think that you are bored. Even yawn. Do it and everybody will think that the Audi A4 Avant is only a family car. After all, there are a lot who want to deceive you, saying that they drive a sports car.

This text reflects the configuration of collectivism, high power distance, femininity, and strong uncertainty avoidance. You are not allowed to talk about power in public. You just have it. To avoid confrontations, things should not be said directly. Indirectly, a number of important details are communicated about the technical aspects. It reflects modesty and harmony.

If celebrity endorsement is used in feminine cultures, well-known people and presenters tend to downplay the fact that they are well known or they are belittled or even ridiculed. In more extreme cases, the parody style will be utilized. In the Netherlands, a look-alike of Pamela Anderson was used for an optician retail chain called Hans Anders, belittling her body shape and suggesting that this is as much a prosthesis as eyeglasses are. In Spain, a retail optician chain used another "hero" of the soap *Baywatch*, running fast and bumping into a shack, for the audience to conclude that he should have worn glasses.

Strong and weak role differentiation are both reflected in advertising. An example of strong role differentiation is the claim in a Mexican ad for Jethro jeans: "Be his pin up girl" (Illustration 9.23). In Danish advertisements, men can be seen wearing aprons, as in the advertisement for Matas (Illustration 9.24).



Illustration 9.23 Jethro, Mexico



Illustration 9.24 Matas, Denmark

The Slovak Republic scores very high on the masculinity scale. In that country, a successful brand name by Danone is *Dobrá Mäma* (good mother) which typically points at the importance of the mother role. Such a brand name would not work well in cultures that score low on the scale.

Men wearing aprons and playing an active role in family life, shopping, cooking, or caring for children are seen in Spanish advertising, as illustrated in an image from a TV commercial for Gallina Blanca (Illustration 9.25) and for La Piarra, showing a father shopping with his children (Illustration 9.26). Also, in France, fathers are seen in ads with their children, as in an image from a TV commercial for Maggi (Illustration 9.27). An image from a TV commercial for Ajax in Sweden (Illustration 9.28) shows a man wiping the floor with pleasure. He swings the mop as if it is a golf club.

When in masculine cultures men play a role in the household in TV commercials, they often are depicted as the stupid guy, and the woman knows better. She will play the role of the expert and advises how to use the product. Women want to be the competent housewife and be in control of their men. In the advertisement for Triumph underwear, it is called the "control thing" (Illustration 9.29).



Illustration 9.25 Gallina Blanca, Spain



Illustration 9.26 La Piarra, Spain



Illustration 9.27 Maggi, France



Illustration 9.28 Ajax, Sweden



Illustration 9.29 Triumph, United Kingdom

The women serve the family, as in the image from an Italian TV commercial for Casa Modena (Illustration 9.30). If men do something with babies, it likely serves their own purposes. A U.S. TV commercial for Honda shows a man with a baby approaching his car. He sees a spot on it and uses the baby's nappy to clean the car (Illustration 9.31). In masculine cultures, women can be shown to be tough; in feminine cultures, men can be shown to be tender. Illustration 9.32 shows three images from a classic award-winning Japanese TV commercial for a Hitachi vacuum cleaner in which a woman fights the flies. Illustration 9.33 shows three images of a Thai award-winning TV commercial for Asia Telecom in which in an airport a father tells a bedtime story to his daughter by video phone.

Appeals of masculine cultures are more task or success oriented whereas appeals of feminine cultures will be more affiliation and relationship oriented.



Illustration 9.30 Casa Modena, Italy



Illustration 9.31 Honda, United States



Illustration 9.32 Hitachi, Japan

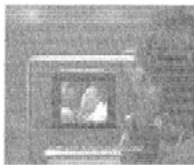
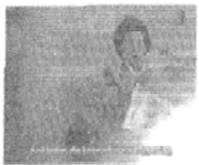


Illustration 9.33 Asia Telecom, Thailand

German commercials for detergents tend to argue the effectiveness of the detergent by showing large piles of dirty clothes or many dirty children and the result: large piles of clean clothes or many clean children in brilliant white clothes. Women are cast in the role of effective housewives. In feminine cultures, a more affiliation-oriented approach will be more successful, casting the woman in her role of effective mother who has a happy relationship with her children. Clean children are part of her relationship with them. The two are very different approaches.

In particular in business-to-business advertising in English-language business magazines, women tend to be used as decoration, resulting from the fact that much international advertising is from U.S. companies.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Strong uncertainty avoidance translates not only into the need for explanations, structure, testing, test reports, scientific proof and advice, and testimonials by experts but also into high regard for technology and design, the latter even more in the configuration with high power distance. An example is an advertisement for the Italian car brand Lancia (Illustration 9.34). Advertisements tend to be structured and detailed. An example of detailed advertisement is a Russian one for a facial cream, the name of which means something like "Purity Line" (Illustration 9.35). It includes a lot of information plus a picture of a laboratory, thus illustrating scientific proof.

An appeal frequently found in high uncertainty avoidance cultures is fear of bacteria, used for advertising detergents, household cleaning products, and hand soap, as in illustration 9.36 for Protex Brazil. The woman repeats all sorts of



Illustration 9.34 Lancia, Italy



Illustration 9.35 Purity Line, Russia



Illustration 9.36 Protex, Brazil

activities like locking doors, opening drawers, and picking up the phone, but she needs anti-bacterial Protex hand soap only once to properly clean her hands.

Purity and freshness are important appeals for food products in high uncertainty avoidance cultures. Examples of mineral water were presented in Chapter 4. In a Spanish ad for packaged gazpacho, the freshness is demonstrated by tomato pickers who enter the kitchen through the door of the refrigerator (Illustration 9.37).



Illustration 9.37 Alvalle gazpacho, Spain

In high uncertainty avoidance advertising, the competence of the manufacturer must be demonstrated. Showing how a product works, with all the technical details, is important. This is in contrast with weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, where the result is more important. Two advertisements and TV commercials for toothpaste illustrate the difference. In the advertisement for elmex and aronal (Illustration 9.38), the brands are called experts for tooth health, and the details of how the product works are illustrated. In contrast, an English advertisement for Crest focuses on the results of using the product: beauty (Illustration 9.39).

The TV commercials in illustrations 9.40 and 9.41, for Odol Med 3 (Austria) and Crest (U.S.), show a similar difference. Odol Med 3 demonstrates how the toothbrush and toothpaste work in the mouth. The Crest commercial is one of a campaign saying that you can say the most awful things if your smile is OK. The ad is about a couple that is going to be married; her husband-to-be and his lawyer, with a smile, tell her that they don't trust her.



Illustration 9.38 elmex and aronal, Germany



Illustration 9.39 Crest, United Kingdom



Illustration 9.40 Odol Med 3, Austria



Illustration 9.41 Crest, United States

Testing and test reports are favored in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, although the execution tends to be different. Favorite German expressions are "Die Besten im Testen" (The best in the test) and "Testsieger" (Test winner). The

Odol Med 3 commercial of Illustration 9.40 ends with a package shot adding that the product had very good test results. Technical explanations about the product can be very detailed for all sorts of products, be they cars, toothpaste, or shampoo.

Fear appeals are more effective in high uncertainty avoidance cultures than in low uncertainty avoidance cultures, where people are more responsive to benefits than to threats. This is of particular importance for nonprofit, health-related communication.²²

Design is a strong element of German and Italian advertising, although German advertisements also tend to focus on the technological aspect, whereas the Italians focus more on the outer appearance. The French and the Spanish are more art and fashion oriented.

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, people tend to be better groomed than in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures. In advertisements from the southern European and Germanic countries, people are significantly better dressed than in advertising from the northern European cultures. Being well groomed means matching the right colors and picking the right accessories. A Spanish advertisement for Honda illustrates this (Illustration 9.42). It suggests that people match the color of their car with their shoes, bag, sunglasses, mobile phone, and so forth. The ultimate understatement of sophistication is an Australian advertisement for Stella Artois beer (Illustration 9.43). Other examples are two breakfast situations, an Italian one for Saccottino (Illustration 9.44) where mother and father are well groomed and, in contrast, a Dutch one for Blue Band Goede Start—Good Start (of the day)—showing a father in his underwear (Illustration 9.45).

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, presenters tend to be experts, the competent professional or the competent boss—the professor or physician type—preferably wearing a white coat. In low power distance, weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, a parody of the expert is favored.



Illustration 9.42 Honda, Spain



Illustration 9.43 Stella Artois, Australia



Illustration 9.44 Saccottino, Italy



Illustration 9.45 Blue Band Goede Start, Netherlands

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, emotions can be shown, and the word *emotion* as such is attractive. An example is the payoff used for the Spanish Seat brand, “Auto emoción.”

An appeal recognized in advertising in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures is relaxation in the sense of relief from anxiety and tension. This may be expressed explicitly, whereas relief from tension is more implicit in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures.

Long-/Short-Term Orientation

The opposing values of long-term orientation are “save for tomorrow” versus “buy now, pay later.” Short-

term orientation is reflected in the sense of urgency so frequently encountered in U.S. advertising. Examples are “Hurry,” “Don’t wait,” or “Now 50% off, no money down, two full years’ free credit, it’s on now!” Another expression of short-term thinking is “instant pleasure,” as in an advertisement for Häagen-Dazs ice cream (Illustration 9.46) or living in the now and not thinking about the future, as in the advertisement for CK: “Be good, be bad, just be” (Illustration 9.47). The new data for this dimension point at an important additional aspect



Illustration 9.46 Häagen-Dazs, United Kingdom



Illustration 9.47 CK, Spain

of short-term orientation: service to others, including generosity. This can be recognized in "the big man" in African countries that score low on this dimension, who spreads resources to his family members, extended family members, and networks outside his family. This is what Oyedele and Minor²³ have observed in Nigeria and South Africa as an important theme in advertising.

Symbols of long-term orientation are thick trees or explicit referral to future generations, as depicted by the Japanese telecom company NTT DoCoMo in its international advertisement shown in Illustration 9.48. An international campaign by Korean LG also used long-term orientation symbolism, as in Illustration 9.49 that symbolizes continuity: What the old man cannot finish in his life, the baby will. The advertisement also symbolizes man in harmony with nature.

Harmony, with both nature and fellow humans, is a popular appeal in Asian advertising. It is part of an indirect approach that helps to build trust in the company. Much advertising is pure entertainment, and visuals and objects are used that please the eye, many of which relate to nature: bamboo trees, flowers, autumn leaves, or other representations of the seasons, which often have a symbolic meaning unknown to foreigners. Many Westerners do not understand the butterflies in ads for computers or other nature elements in Asian advertising. The combination of collectivism and long-term orientation demands harmony of man with nature and thus explains this advertising style, the objective of which is to please the customer, not to intrude.



Illustration 9.48 NTT DoCoMo, International



Illustration 9.49 LG, International

Consequences for Advertising Concepts

Certain configurations of dimensions have significant consequences for the effectiveness of advertising appeals. Appeals or concepts can be presented in two-dimensional maps showing culture clusters where the appeal will be more or less effective. An example is the use of status, an appeal that varies with power distance

and masculinity. Status is used to demonstrate one's social position and uphold face in high power distance cultures and to show success in masculine cultures. In feminine cultures, particularly those of low power distance (Scandinavia and the Netherlands), status needs are low. Feminine cultures are characterized by modesty and jealousy, and so the use of status will be counterproductive. Cultures that score high on both masculinity and power distance will be particularly sensitive to the status motive, and luxury brands fulfill that need. Advertising for these brands logically uses status appeals. In particular for Chinese consumers, achievement satisfies the social need for admiration from their communities; it is socially directed, and luxury brands can meet the needs of Chinese consumers to be respected by others through the actions of buying, possessing, and consuming those brands.²⁴

Figure 9.1 shows a two-dimensional map of 30 countries, with culture clusters that will be more or less sensitive to status as an appeal in advertising. In the lower left quadrant are the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, cultures in which the status appeal will not work very well or mostly in small segments of society. In the upper left quadrant is the Anglo-German cluster, where status will be most appealing if connected with success. The two right quadrants show a mixture of European, Latin American, and Asian cultures. In the lower right quadrant, status is mostly linked with social position and face. The extremes are in the upper right quadrant, where both social position and success are drivers for status brands and appeals in advertising: Mexico, Venezuela, Japan, and China are high-status cultures.

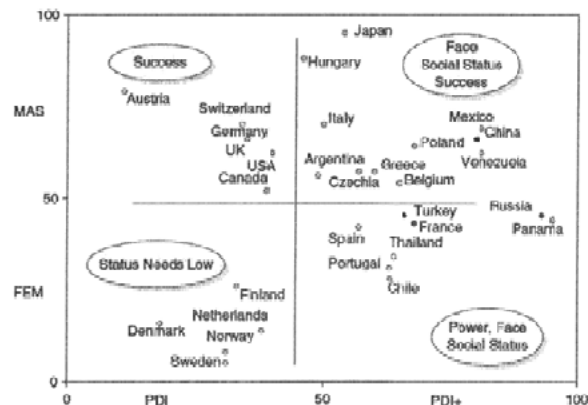


Figure 9.1 Status Needs

SOURCE: Data from Hofstede et al. (2010) (see Appendix A).

Do Great Ideas Travel?

Great ideas or concepts, if they are based on values, are ideas that touch the heart of the consumer. That type of concept tends to reflect the core values of the home country and can travel only to a limited number of other countries. The international advertising world is full of concepts that cannot travel. An example of a concept that is particularly attractive to the British is freedom of choice, a concept that is irrelevant to many other Europeans. Why wouldn't consumers in a free country have freedom of choice?

A concept that is frequently used for wireless technology, "Work where you want," is typical of individualistic cultures, where people mix work and home life more easily than in collectivistic cultures. In Chapter 8, we discussed the influence of individualism on penetration of home computers and mobile Internet. Whereas in individualistic cultures people like to move their work from the office to the home, the park, or even the beach, in collectivistic cultures, the workplace is part of one's "family," and people like to stay there with their colleagues to finish the job. So an advertisement like the one for Orange, showing individuals working in the park (Illustration 9.50) is culture-specific and cannot travel farther than northwest Europe and the Anglo-Saxon world. It shows individuals with laptops in a park saying, "Business knows no bounds."

A campaign that has been described as a successful global idea as mentioned in Chapter 2 was the "Dirt is Good" campaign for the detergent brand OMO. The idea was based on the belief that when children are developing and learning, they will sometimes get dirty. Some parents worry about this. The idea is to encourage

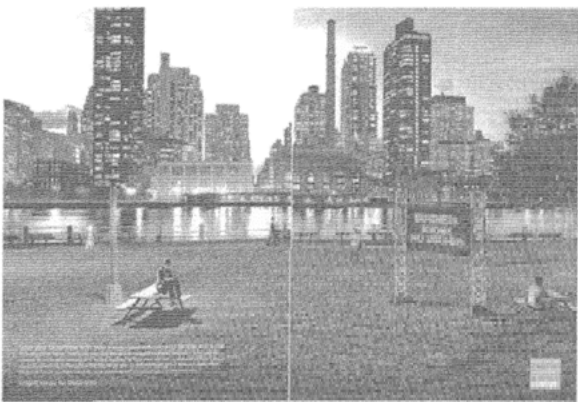


Illustration 9.50 Orange, International

parents to leave their children free to get dirty and develop as OMO takes care of the dirt.²⁵ Yet, according to Hollis, the brand promise may need to be interpreted differently according to culture and context. OMO in Asia delivers the "Dirt is Good" message in a different way than Persil in the United Kingdom does because attitudes to dirt differ. In Asia, dirt is dangerous and threatening, to be avoided. In the United Kingdom it is more an unsightly nuisance.²⁶

Sometimes a company has a great idea with a central message worldwide, but consumers decide it isn't congruent with their values, and the way they read the message changes according to their own values. For quite some time, L'Oréal has run a global advertising campaign with the central theme "Because I am worth it." But consumers in Asia read it as "Because you are worth it" because they are not willing to say "I am worth it." So the company changed it accordingly, but it became the authority of the company that speaks, not the consumer herself. So the central message had been changed.²⁷

Some great ideas that do travel are not based on values but on product attributes or benefits (see also Chapter 11). These are pieces of art that relate to the product and give a positive feeling about the product. This type of advertising is not persuasive communication, provides no information, and follows the likeability model. An example is a TV commercial for Honda, in which a 50-person choir vocalizes the experience of driving the new Honda Civic (Illustration 9.51).



Illustration 9.51 Honda, International

Such concepts can be used for well-known brands in addition to other messages or for corporate advertising. The purpose can be no more than awareness and/or building trust (see also Chapter 11).

Hollis²⁸ mentions two key measures for the ability of great ideas or exceptional ads to travel: the ability to engage the audience and establish long-term memories that are linked to the advertised brand, and, the persuasion measure that captures the immediate motivational power of the ad. However, of ads measured to be exceptional in one country, 27% performed below what is viewed

as an acceptable standard in other countries. International advertisers who have found a great idea for their own country and think they can extend it to others are advised to test their ads before running it in a new location. They shouldn't assume it is going to work the same way as it did in its country of origin.

The Country-of-Origin Appeal

An appeal that travels to a certain extent is the country-of-origin appeal (COO). The appeal is based on the combination of the product category and country of origin. Consumers are sensitive to the country of origin of products and brands. Country of origin of products or brands or foreign-sounding brand

names influence consumer perceptions.²⁹ Consumers use country of origin as stereotypical information in making evaluations of products.³⁰ Consumers who have positive or negative attitudes toward a particular country will show favorable or unfavorable responses to country-related advertisements.³¹ Attitudes toward foreign products vary by country of origin of the product. *Fashionable* for clothes will relate to French origin, whereas *quality* for cars will relate to Germany or Japan. The German automobile brand Volkswagen uses this appeal in a very simple way by using the tagline *Das Auto* in German. A clear combination like *French perfume* can be used worldwide. However, country images can change over time, and consumer attitudes can vary. The great luxury brands use Western appeals as most have a Western cultural origin which makes them particularly attractive to cultures where status appeals are important, such as in Asia. This explains why advertising for such brands in other countries is rarely adapted. This also applies to their websites.³²

Preference for products from one's own country is called *consumer nationalism* or *consumer ethnocentrism*. Consumer nationalism may be related to patriotism which is stronger in cultures that are short-term oriented.

As discussed in Chapter 2, a positive product-country match exists when a country is perceived as very strong in an area (e.g., design or technology), which is also an important feature for a product category (e.g., furniture, cars). Such product-country match is called *prototypicality*. Views of what product categories are prototypical for which countries may vary.³³

Why Humor Doesn't Travel

In some cultures, humor is a much used device in advertising, and in others it is scarce. The statement that humor doesn't travel is frequently heard. Why? Because humor is a subversive play with conventions and established ideas; it is based on breaking taboos. Comedy plays with ways of breaking the rules of convention, going against what ought to be. Because it uses cultural conventions, it can be understood only by those who share the culture. An example is a fragment in Gogol's play *The Revisor*, where the Revisor's servant is seen lying on a bed. To the Russians of Gogol's time (1836), this was very funny because servants used to sleep on the floor, and being on a bed meant being on one's master's bed, which was seen as an unheard-of liberty.³⁴ This fits Russian culture, which was and still is a country that has one of the highest scores on power distance in the world. The servant's act would have been impossible to understand by members of low power distance cultures and thus not be viewed as funny.

Culture also influences the type of humor used. Parody, for example, fits low power distance cultures because it disguises the voice of authority. Much of British humor is based on antiauthoritarianism. Weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, being able to cope with ambiguity, will use the more subtle types of humor, parody, and understatement. In strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, the more straightforward type of slapstick humor tends to be used. The admonishing humor of the

Germans has to do with their need for perfectionism, which explains their infrequent use of irony.³⁵ Much of Belgian humor is straightforward. Comparison of differences in the liking of humorous television commercials between the Netherlands and Belgium shows that explicit jokes are liked better in Belgium than in the Netherlands, which can be explained by the difference in level of uncertainty avoidance. Puns and word games are liked better in the Netherlands than in Belgium. Absurdism, parody, and satire, in particular commercials that do not take experts seriously, are less appreciated by Belgians than by the Dutch.³⁶

In studies of the use of humor in advertising, a number of different humorous devices are usually distinguished: puns or word games, understatements, jokes, the ludicrous, the "comic" (as in comic strips), comedy, slapstick, satire, parody, irony, and black humor. In contrast to the stereotype of the German lack of humor, German studies (see Hillebrand³⁷ and Merz³⁸) distinguished a similar number of types of humor with only one difference: In English/American studies, *understatement* is mentioned as a humorous device. This was not specified as a humorous device in the two German studies, which mentioned *Schadenfreude* (malicious pleasure) as a humorous device, one not mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon studies.

Weinberger and Spotts³⁹ distinguished six categories of humor in the United States and the United Kingdom: pun, understatement, joke, the ludicrous, satire, and irony. The U.S. advertising style included more of the ludicrous and the United Kingdom's more satire. This can be explained by the different scores on the uncertainty avoidance dimension. Alden, Hoyer, and Lee⁴⁰ examined the content of humorous television advertising from Korea, Germany, Thailand, and the United States and found one type of humor that worked across all compared countries: incongruity. Incongruity is the unexpected turn in a story that makes people laugh. Almost 60% of the humorous ads in all four nations contained incongruent contrasts, but there were some cultural differences. In the collectivistic cultures of Thailand and Korea, humorous appeals involved groups—three or more central characters were included—whereas in the United States and Germany, both individualistic cultures, substantially fewer ads with three or more characters were found. In the high power distance cultures (Thailand and Korea), more humorous ads featured unequal status between main characters than in the two low power distance cultures (Germany and the United States).

Using humor in advertising is a management decision. The reason it is used more in some countries than in others has to do with the cultural values of management; it does not reflect the sense of humor of advertising audiences. Humor in advertising is found particularly in cultures of low power distance and weak-to-medium uncertainty avoidance, such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands. Obviously, this configuration of dimensions makes managers willing to use humor in advertising whereas in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, management is less likely to do so.

Consumers from culturally diverse countries prefer ad appeals that fit their culture to ad appeals that don't. When crossing borders, a humorous commercial may not be understood. Failed humor is counterproductive. It not only confuses the audience but may also give offense.⁴¹

Summary

Within each culture, there are opposing, seemingly paradoxical, values. The contrast is between the desirable and the desired values of each culture. Those who do not understand the cultural value paradoxes may be tempted to think that the world's values are converging, which is not the case. Each culture has its value paradoxes, and they are different from the value paradoxes of other cultures. They can be understood through the five dimensions.

A culture's opposing values appear to be important for advertising because they are recognized as the most meaningful elements of a culture. Both the desirable and the desired values are used for developing meaningful appeals in advertising. Sometimes a desired value of one culture may seem to be similar to a desirable value of another culture.

Showing people alone in advertising in collectivistic cultures is interpreted as having no friends. It may go deeper than that: It may mean they have no identity because their identity is in the group. As more than 70% of the world's population is more or less collectivistic, advertisers would be wise to show more people in their advertisements. It doesn't hurt the members of individualistic cultures to see more people in advertising, but it is negative to show solitary people in collectivistic cultures.

Because of the domination of North American advertising, there is much more hype in international advertising than members of less masculine or collectivistic cultures appreciate. Taking into account that a large number of cultures of the European continent are more or less feminine, international advertisers focusing on Europe might consider using less hype or competitive advertising.

Finally, understanding the values of culture helps explain why humor doesn't travel: Humor uses the conventions of culture that cannot be understood by those who do not share the culture.

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IMAGE-BASED CULTURE

Advertising and Popular Culture

Sut Jhally

Because we live inside the consumer culture, and most of us have done so for most of our lives, it is sometimes difficult to locate the origins of our most cherished values and assumptions. They simply appear to be part of our natural world. It is a useful exercise, therefore, to examine how our culture has come to be defined and shaped in specific ways—to excavate the origins of our most celebrated rituals. For example, everyone in this culture knows a “diamond is forever.” It is a meaning that is almost as “natural” as the link between roses and romantic love. However, diamonds (just like roses) did not always have this meaning. Before 1938 their value derived primarily from their worth as scarce stones (with the DeBeers cartel carefully controlling the market supply). In 1938 the New York advertising agency of N. W. Ayers was hired to change public attitudes toward diamonds—to transform them from a financial investment into a *symbol* of committed and everlasting love. In 1947 an Ayers advertising copywriter came up with the slogan “a diamond is forever” and the rest, as they say, is history. As an N. W. Ayers memorandum put it in 1959: “Since 1939 an entirely new generation of young people has grown

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to marriageable age. To the new generation, a diamond ring is considered a necessity for engagement to virtually everyone.²¹

This is a fairly dramatic example of how the institutional structure of the consumer society orients the culture (and its attitudes, values, and rituals) more and more toward the world of commodities. The marketplace (and its major ideological tool, advertising) is the major structuring institution of contemporary consumer society.

This of course was not always the case. In the agrarian-based society preceding industrial society, other institutions such as family, community, ethnicity, and religion were the dominant institutional mediators and creators of the cultural forms. Their influence waned in the transition to industrial society and then consumer society. The emerging institution of the marketplace occupied the cultural terrain left void by the evacuation of these older forms. Information about products seeped into public discourse. More specifically, public discourse soon became dominated by the "discourse through and about objects."²²

At first, this discourse relied upon transmitting information about products alone, using the available means of textual communication offered by newspapers. As the possibility of more effective color illustration emerged and as magazines developed as competitors for advertising dollars, this "discourse" moved from being purely text-based. The further integration of first radio and then television into the advertising/media complex ensured that commercial communication would be characterized by the domination of *imagistic* modes of representation.

Again, because our world is so familiar, it is difficult to imagine the process through which the present conditions emerged. In this context, it is instructive to focus upon that period in our history that marks the transition point in the development of an image-saturated society—the 1920s. In that decade the advertising industry was faced with a curious problem—the need to sell increasing quantities of "nonessential"

goods in a competitive marketplace using the potentialities offered by printing and color photography. Whereas the initial period of national advertising (from approximately the 1880s to the 1920s) had focused largely in a celebratory manner on the products themselves and had used text for "reason why" advertising (even if making the most outrageous claims), the 1920s saw the progressive integration of people (via visual representation) into the messages. Interestingly, in this stage we do not see representations of "real" people in advertisements, but rather we see representations of people who "stand for" reigning social values such as family structure, status differentiation, and hierarchical authority.

While this period is instructive from the viewpoint of content, it is equally fascinating from the viewpoint of *form*; for while the possibilities of using visual imagery existed with the development of new technologies, there was no guarantee that the audience was sufficiently literate in visual imagery to properly decode the ever-more complex messages. Thus, the advertising industry had to educate as well as sell, and many of the ads of this period were a fascinating combination where the written (textual) material explained the visual material. The consumer society was literally being taught how to read the commercial messages. By the postwar period the education was complete and the function of written text moved away from explaining the visual and toward a more cryptic form where it appears as a "key" to the visual "puzzle."

In the contemporary world, messages about goods are all pervasive—advertising has increasingly filled up the spaces of our daily existence. Our media are dominated by advertising images, public space has been taken over by "information" about products, and most of our sporting and cultural events are accompanied by the name of a corporate sponsor. There is even an attempt to get television commercials into the nation's high schools under the pretense of "free" news programming. As we head toward the twenty-first century, advertising

is ubiquitous—it is the air that we breathe as we live our daily lives.

♦ Advertising and the Good Life: Image and "Reality"

I have referred to advertising as being part of "a discourse through and about objects" because it does not merely tell us about things but of how things are connected to important domains of our lives. Fundamentally, advertising talks to us as individuals and addresses us about how we can become *happy*. The answers it provides are all oriented to the marketplace, through the purchase of goods or services. To understand the system of images that constitutes advertising we need to inquire into the definition of happiness and satisfaction in contemporary social life.

Quality of life surveys that ask people what they are seeking in life—what it is that makes them happy—report quite consistent results. The conditions that people are searching for—what they perceive will make them happy—are things such as having personal autonomy and control of one's life, self-esteem, a happy family life, loving relations, a relaxed, tension-free leisure time, and good friendships. The unifying theme of this list is that these things are not fundamentally connected to goods. It is primarily "social" life and not "material" life that seems to be the locus of perceived happiness. Commodities are only *weakly* related to these sources of satisfaction.¹

A market society, however, is guided by the principle that satisfaction should be achieved via the marketplace, and through its institutions and structures it orients behavior in that direction. The data from the quality of life studies are not lost on advertisers. If goods themselves are not the locus of perceived happiness, then they need to be connected in some way with those things that are. Thus advertising promotes images of what the audience

conceives of as "the good life": Beer can be connected with anything from eroticism to male fraternity to the purity of the old West; food can be tied up with family relations or health; investment advice offers early retirements in tropical settings. The marketplace cannot directly offer the real thing, but it can offer visions of it connected with the purchase of products.

Advertising thus does not work by creating values and attitudes out of nothing but by drawing upon and rechanneling concerns that the target audience (and the culture) already shares. As one advertising executive put it: "Advertising doesn't always mirror how people are acting but how they're *dreaming*. In a sense what we're doing is wrapping up your emotions and selling them back to you." Advertising absorbs and fuses a variety of symbolic practices and discourses, it appropriates and distills from an unbounded range of cultural references. In so doing, goods are knitted into the fabric of social life and cultural significance. As such, advertising is not simple manipulation, but what ad-maker Tony Schwartz calls "participation," with the audience participating in its own manipulation.

What are the consequences of such a system of images and goods? Given that the "real" sources of satisfaction cannot be provided by the purchase of commodities (merely the "image" of that source), it should not be surprising that happiness and contentment appear illusory in contemporary society. Recent social thinkers describe the contemporary scene as a "joyless economy,"²⁴ or as reflecting the "paradox of affluence."²⁵ It is not simply a matter of being "tricked" by the false blandishments of advertising. The problem is with the institutional structure of a market society that propels definition of satisfaction through the commodity/image system. The modern context, then, provides a curious satisfaction experience—one that William Leiss describes as "an ensemble of satisfactions and dissatisfactions" in which the consumption of commodities mediated by

the image-system of advertising leads to consumer uncertainty and confusion.⁴ The image-system of the marketplace reflects our desire and dreams, yet we have only the pleasure of the images to sustain us in our actual experience with goods.

The commodity image-system thus provides a particular vision of the world—a particular mode of self-validation that is integrally connected with what one *has* rather than what one *is*—a distinction often referred to as one between “having” and “being,” with the latter now being defined through the former. As such, it constitutes a way of life that is defined and structured in quite specific political ways. Some commentators have even described advertising as part of a new *religious* system in which people construct their identities through the commodity form, and in which commodities are part of a supernatural magical world where anything is possible with the purchase of a product. The commodity as displayed in advertising plays a mixture of psychological, social, and physical roles in its relations with people. The object world interacts with the human world at the most basic and fundamental of levels, performing seemingly magical feats of enchantment and transformation, bringing instant happiness and gratification, capturing the forces of nature, and acting as a passport to hitherto untraveled domains and group relationships.⁵

In short, the advertising image-system constantly propels us toward things as means to satisfaction. In the sense that every ad says it is better to buy than not to buy, we can best regard advertising as a *propaganda* system for commodities. In the image-system as a whole, happiness lies at the end of a purchase. Moreover, this is not a minor propaganda system—it is all pervasive. It should not surprise us then to discover that the problem that it poses—how to get more things for everyone (as that is the root to happiness)—guides our political debates. The goal of *economic growth* (on which the commodity vision is based) is an unquestioned and sacred proposition of the

political culture. As the environmental costs of the strategy of unbridled economic growth become more obvious, it is clear we must, as a society, engage in debate concerning the nature of future economic growth. However, as long as the commodity image-system maintains its ubiquitous presence and influence, the possibilities of opening such a debate are remote. At the very moment we most desperately need to pose new questions within the political culture, the commodity image-system propels us with even greater certainty and persuasion along a path that, unless checked, is destined to end in disaster.

Moreover, this problem will be exponentially compounded in the twenty-first century, as more and more nations (both Third World and “presently existing socialist”) reach for the magic of the marketplace to provide the panacea for happiness. One of the most revealing images following the collapse of the Berlin Wall was the sight of thousands of East German citizens streaming into West Berlin on a Sunday (when the shops were closed) to simply stare in rapture and envy at the commodities in the windows. Transnational corporations are licking their lips at the new markets that Eastern Europe and China will provide for their products. Accompanying the products (indeed preceding them, preparing the way) will be the sophisticated messages of global advertising emerging from Madison Avenue. From a global perspective, again at the very moment that there needs to be informed debate about the direction and scope of industrial production, the commodity propaganda system is colonizing new areas and new media, and channeling debate into narrower confines.

The Spread of ♦ Image-Based Influence

While the commodity image-system is primarily about satisfaction, its influence and

effect are not limited to that alone. I want to briefly consider four other areas in the contemporary world where the commodity system has its greatest impact. The first is in the area of gender identity. Many commercial messages use images and representations of men and women as central components of their strategy to both get attention and persuade. Of course, they do not use any gender images but images drawn from a narrow and quite concentrated pool. As Erving Goffman has shown, ads draw heavily upon the domain of gender display—not the way that men and women actually behave but the ways in which we think men and women behave.⁶ It is because these conventions of gender display are so easily recognized by the audience that they figure so prominently in the image-system. Also, images having to do with gender strike at the core of individual identity; our understanding of ourselves as either male or female (socially defined within this society at this time) is central to our understanding of who we are. What better place to choose than an area of social life that can be communicated at a glance and that reaches into the core of individual identity.

However, we should not confuse these portrayals as true reflections of gender. In advertising, gender (especially for women) is defined almost exclusively along the lines of sexuality. The image-system thus distorts our perceptions and offers little that balances out the stress on sexuality. Advertisers, working within a “cluttered” environment in which there are more and more messages must have a way to break through the attendant noise. Sexuality provides a resource that can be used to get attention and communicate instantly. Within this sexuality is also a powerful component of gender that again lends itself even easier to imagistic representation.

If only one or two advertisers used this strategy, then the image-system would not have the present distorted features. The problem is that the vast majority do so. The iconography of the culture, perhaps more

than any previous society, seems to be obsessed with sexuality. The end result is that the commodity is part of an increasingly eroticized world—that we live in a culture that is more and more defined erotically through commodities.

Second, the image-system has spread its influence to the realm of electoral politics. Much has been written (mostly negatively) about the role that television advertising now plays within national electoral politics. The presidency seems most susceptible to “image-politics,” as it is the office most reliant on television advertising. The social commentary on politics from this perspective has mostly concerned the manner in which the focus has shifted from discussion of real “issues” to a focus on symbolism and emotionally based imagery.

These debates are too important and complex to be discussed in any depth here, but there is a fundamental point to be made. The evidence suggests that George Bush won the 1988 presidential race because he ran a better ad and public relations campaign. Given the incredible swings in the polls over a relatively short period of time, when media information was the only thing that voters had to go on, it seems to be a conclusion with some substance. The implications of such a conclusion, though, have not really been explored the way they should. The fact that large numbers of people are changing their minds on who to vote for after seeing a thirty-second television commercial says a great deal about the nature of the political culture. It means that politics (for a significant portion of the electorate) is largely conducted on a symbolic realm and that a notion of politics that is based upon people having a coherent and deep vision of their relationship to the social world is no longer relevant. Politics is not about issues; it is about “feeling good” or “feeling bad” about a candidate—and all it takes to change this is a thirty-second commercial.

The grammar of these images, then, clearly is different to the grammar of verbal or written language. The intrusion of the

image-system into the world of electoral politics has meant that the majority of committed voters are held ransom by those who are uncommitted (the undecided or swing votes) and that these groups are influenced differently—and have a different relationship to politics—than those who have an old style view of politics. These huge swings of opinion, based upon information provided by the image-system, suggest that the political culture is incredibly superficial and does not correspond to what we normally think of as “politics.”

Third, the commodity image-system is now implicated, due to changes in the way that toys are marketed, in the very structure and experience of children's play. With both children's television programming and commercials oriented around the sale of toys, writers such as Stephen Kline argue that the context within which kids play is now structured around marketing considerations. In consequence, “Children's imaginative play has become the target of marketing strategy, allowing marketers to define the limits of children's imaginations. . . . Play in fact has become highly ritualized—less an exploration and solidification of personal experiences and developing conceptual schema than a rearticulation of the fantasy world provided by market designers. Imaginative play has shifted one degree closer to mere imitation and assimilation.” Further, the segmentation of the child audience in terms of both age and gender has led to a situation where parents find it difficult to play with their children because they do not share the marketing fantasy world that toy advertisers have created and where there is a growing divide between boys and girls at play. “Since the marketing targets and features different emotional and narrative elements (action/conflict vs. emotional attachment and maintenance) boys and girls also experience difficulty in playing together with these toys.”⁹

Fourth, the visual image-system has colonized areas of life that were previously

largely defined (although not solely) by auditory perception and experience. The 1980s has seen a change in the way that popular music commodities (records, tapes, compact discs) are marketed, with a music video becoming an indispensable component of an overall strategy. These videos are produced as commercials for musical commodities by the advertising industry, using techniques learned from the marketing of products. Viewing these videos, there often seems to be little link between the song and the visuals. In the sense that they are commercials for records, there of course does not have to be. Video makers are in the same position as ad makers in terms of trying to get attention for their message and making it visually pleasurable. It is little wonder then that representations involving sexuality figure so prominently (as in the case of regular product advertising). The visuals are chosen for their ability to sell.

Many people report that listening to a song after watching the video strongly affects the interpretation they give to it—the visual images are replayed in the imagination. In that sense, the surrounding commodity image-system works to fix—or at least to limit—the scope of imaginative interpretation. The realm of listening becomes subordinated to the realm of seeing, to the influence of commercial images. There is also evidence suggesting that the composition of popular music is affected by the new video context. People write songs or lines with the vital marketing tool in mind.

Speed and Fragmentation: ♦ Toward a Twenty-First-Century Consciousness

In addition to issues connected with the colonization of the commodity image-system of other areas of social life (gender socialization, politics, children's play, popular cultural forms), there are also

important broader issues connected with its relation to modes of perception and forms of consciousness within contemporary society. For instance, the commodity information-system has two basic characteristics: reliance on visual modes of representation and the increasing speed and rapidity of the images that constitute it. It is this second point that I wish to focus on here (I will return to the first point at the end of the [chapter]).

The visual images that dominate public space and public discourse are, in the video age, not static. They do not stand still for us to examine and linger over. They are here for a couple of seconds and then they are gone. Television advertising is the epitome of this speed-up. There is nothing mysterious in terms of how it arose. As commercial time slots declined from sixty seconds to thirty seconds (and recently to fifteen seconds and even shorter), advertisers responded by creating a new type of advertising—what is called the “vignette approach”—in which narrative and “reason-why” advertising are subsumed under a rapid succession of lifestyle images, meticulously timed with music, that directly sell feeling and emotion rather than products. As a commercial editor puts it of this new approach: “They're a wonderful way to pack in information: all those scenes and emotions—cut, cut, cut. Also they permit you a very freestyle approach—meaning that as long as you stay true to your basic vignette theme you can usually just drop one and show in another. They're a dream to work with because the parts are sort of interchangeable.”¹⁰

The speed-up is also a response by advertisers to two other factors: the increasing “clutter” of the commercial environment and the coming of age, in terms of disposable income, of a generation that grew up on television and commercials. The need for a commercial to stand out to a visually sophisticated audience drove the image-system to a greater frenzy of concentrated shorts. Again, sexuality became a key feature of the image-system within this.

The speed-up has two consequences. First, it has the effect of drawing the viewer

into the message. One cannot watch these messages casually; they require undivided attention. Intensely pleasurable images, often sexual, are integrated into a flow of images. Watching has to be even more attentive to catch the brief shots of visual pleasure. The space “in between” the good parts can then be filled with other information, so that the commodity being advertised becomes a rich and complex sign.

Second, the speed-up has replaced narrative and rational response with images and emotional response. Speed and fragmentation are not particularly conducive to *thinking*. They induce *feeling*. The speed and fragmentation that characterize the commodity image-system may have a similar effect on the construction of consciousness. In one series of ads for MTV, a teenage boy or girl engages in a continuous monologue of events, characters, feelings, and emotions without any apparent connecting theme. As the video images mirror the fragmentation of thoughts, the ad ends with the plug: “Finally, a channel for the way you think.” The generalization of this speed/fragmentation strategy to the entire domain of image culture may in fact mean that this is the form that thought increasingly is taking at the end of the twentieth century.

Political Implications: ♦ Education in an Image-Saturated Society

There really is not much to dispute in the analysis I have offered of the history, character, and consequences the commodity image-system may have. The real question concerning these issues has to do with the political implications that one may draw from this kind of approach. Put simply: Is there a problem with this situation, and if so what precisely is it? Further, what solutions may be offered?

In a provocative recent book, Stuart Ewen offers a clear evaluation of the

contemporary image-system. He states it succinctly:

The danger is this: as the world encourages us to accept the autonomy of images, "the given facts that appear" imply that substance is unimportant, not worth pursuing. Our own experiences are of little consequence, unless they are substantiated and validated by the world of style. In the midst of such charades, the chasm between surface and reality widens; we experience a growing sense of disorientation. . . . For meaningful alternatives to come into being, however, the dominance of surface over substance must be overcome. There must be a reconciliation of surface over substance, a reinvigoration of a politics of substance.¹¹

Beneath his insightful analysis and his many examples from different domains, Ewen maintains a relatively simple division: There is a world of "substance" where real power rests and where people live their real lives (the "material" world of "essence") and there is a world of "style" and surface (the evanescent world of "appearances"). In the history of twentieth-century capitalism the world of substance has been hidden and given a false veil by the world of appearances. People have given up control of the real world and immersed themselves in the ultimately illusory world of appearances. Surface has triumphed over substance.

I am less sure than Ewen of the dichotomy that he works with—after all, appearance is the form in which essence reveals itself—but I am convinced that a modern cultural politics must be conducted on the terrain of the image-system. The question is, how is substance (reality) revealed? Given that our understanding of reality is always socially constructed (that "ideology" is present in any system or situation), visual images are the central mode through which the modern world understands itself. Images are the dominant

language of the modern world. We are stuck with them. Further, we have to acknowledge the pleasure that such images provide. This is not simply trickery or manipulation—the pleasure is substantive.

I would focus a cultural politics on two related strategies. First, the struggle to reconstruct the existence and meaning of the world of substance has to take place on the terrain of the image-system. In some progressive cultural politics the very techniques associated with the image-system are part of the problem—that is, images themselves are seen as the problem. A struggle over definitions of reality (what else is cultural politics?) needs to use other mediums of communication. I believe such a strategy surrenders the very terrain on which the most effective battles can be fought—the language of the contemporary world.¹²

The second aspect of the strategy centers less on revealing matters of substance (the underlying reality) than on opening up further the analysis of the contemporary image-system, in particular, democratizing the image-system. At present the "discourse through and about objects" is profoundly authoritarian—it reflects only a few narrow (mostly corporate) interests. The institutions of the world of substance must be engaged to open up the public discourse to new and varied (and dissenting) voices.

The other set of concerns are connected to issues of literacy in an image-saturated society. As Raymond Williams has pointed out, in the early development of capitalism workers were taught to read but not to write. The skills of reading were all that were required to follow orders and to understand the Bible. Contemporary society is in a similar position. While we can read the images quite adequately (for the purposes of their creators) we do not know how to produce them. Such skills, or knowledge of the process, must be a prerequisite for functional literacy in the contemporary world. Basic course work in photography and video production should be required in all high schools. Moreover, while messages can be read adequately,

most people do not understand *how* the language of images works. Just as knowledge of grammar is considered vital in learning foreign languages, so the grammar of images (how they work) needs to be integrated into the high school curriculum. "Visual literacy" courses should be taken right after the production courses.

Finally, information about the institutional context of the production and consumption of the image-system should be a prerequisite for literacy in the modern world. Advertisements, for example, are the only message forms that are not accompanied by credits in terms of who has produced them. In this sense, movies and television programs have a different status within the image-system in that at least some of their process of production is revealed. At minimum, we know that they are made by lots of people!

Ads, on the other hand, simply appear and disappear without any credits. A third set of courses could focus on the political economy of the media and advertising industries. Stripping away the veil of anonymity and mystery would by itself be of great value in demystifying the images that parade before our lives and through which we conceptualize the world and our role within it. As Noam Chomsky puts it (talking about the media in general) in his book *Necessary Illusions*: "Citizens of the democratic societies should undertake a course of intellectual self-defense to protect themselves from manipulation and control, and to lay the basis for meaningful democracy."¹³ Such a course of action will not be easy, for the institutional structure of the image-system will work against it. However, the invigoration of democracy depends upon the struggle being engaged.

♦ Notes

1. See Epstein (1982).
2. This is discussed more fully in Leiss, Kline, and Jhalley (1986).

3. See Hirsch (1976).
4. Scitovsky (1976).
5. Hirsch (1976).
6. Leiss (1976).
7. See Jhalley (1987) and Kavanaugh (1981).
8. Goffman (1979).
9. Kline (1989, pp. 299, 315).
10. Quoted in Arlen (1981, p. 182).
11. Ewen (1988, p. 271).
12. For more on progressive cultural politics, see Angus and Jhalley (1989, Introduction).
13. Chomsky (1989).

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NOTES:

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Chapter 6

"Always Fresh, Always There"

Tim Hortons and the Consumer-Citizen

Patricia Cormack and James F. Cosgrave

You're Home.

—Slogan found on entrances to Tim Hortons restaurants

Outside of Hockey Night in Canada and—with reverence—Don Cherry, there are few institutions or companies that have blended into the character of the nation so completely as Tim Hortons.

—Rex Murphy (2009)

The "way of life" of an ethnic group, a community, or a nation takes the form of an articulated constellation of bits of enjoyment.

—Kieran Keohane (1997)

In this chapter we consider a cultural location that makes an offering of Canadianness—Tim Hortons coffee shops. As we will discuss, Tim Hortons is a commercial enterprise operating outside of official state mandates and has positioned itself within a consumer landscape as a kind of public sphere. As Tim Hortons has increasingly marketed itself as the cultural site for the articulation of Canadian values, agents of government and state have come to use it as a legitimate place for their own public appearances. Put another way, the dynamic of the appearance/disappearance of the state and its agents into ordinary pleasures now occurs, at least in part, in the context of a commercial enterprise. It arises through the figure of the consumer-citizen.

Tim Hortons was established in 1964, with one shop in Hamilton, Ontario, selling only coffee and donuts, and has since become Canada's most successful and omnipresent purveyor of coffee, snacks, and meals, with more than 4,600 outlets nationwide. Its national competitor, Starbucks, has approximately 1,200 outlets; McDonald's has about 1,400. For three consecutive years, readers of *Canadian Business* magazine judged it

Adapted from Cormack, P., & Cosgrave, J. (2013). "Always fresh, always there": Tim Hortons and the consumer citizen. In *Desiring Canada: CBC contests, hockey violence, and other stately pleasures* (pp. 63–93). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2013.

Canada's "best managed brand" (Gray 2004, 2005, 2006). In 2010 *Advertising Age* named it one of its "World's Hottest Brands" (Kerwin, 2010). Tim Hortons made its most aggressive move on its representation of Canada and Canadianness to Canadian consumers while owned by American Wendy's International Inc. between 1995 and 2010. Since the 1990s it has expanded into the United States and parts of Europe. It plans to open more than 100 outlets in the Persian Gulf.

Other companies have used nationalism as a branding strategy in Canada—the Hudson's Bay Company, Canadian Tire, Molson, Roots. Hudson's Bay (now wholly American owned) and Canadian Tire both emphasize their Canadian stories: in the former case, as tied to British colonial expansion and as represented by the famous eighteenth-century "point" blanket; and in the case of Canadian Tire, as the story of two entrepreneurial brothers starting from a single shop and expanding into the rest of Canada. Both play on classic Canadian themes of ruggedness and endurance—themes that we will also see in our discussion of Tim Hortons. Roots began as a small shoe company established by Americans who had been inspired by their experiences at summer camp in Ontario. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, it started a craze for its sweat-shirts emblazoned with Canadian symbols—canoes, beavers, leaves. Catherine Carstairs (2006) suggests that the branding of Canada through Roots signalled a cultural shift away from economic, political, and cultural protectionism toward "a more consumer-oriented and branded" nationalism (p. 235). This "Roots nationalism" is

a consequence of Canadians' inability to create other meaningful forms of nationalism. Canada's multicultural heritage makes ethnic nationalism impossible, while the ongoing struggle with Quebec separatism and other forms of regionalism has made it difficult to create what some scholars have described as voluntary or "civic" nationalism—a common understanding of what it means to be a citizen. (p. 237)

In this chapter we argue that Tim Hortons has been the most successful and long-standing private commercial enterprise to brand itself by way of overt national identity and pride. As we will show, politicians and agents of the state make their way to Tim Hortons to present themselves to the public. No other commercial enterprise binds together the social and political roles of consumer and citizen more closely than Tim Hortons, which simultaneously offers, in Carstairs's (2006) terms, a "civic" and "commercial" nationalism. It has made a claim on what Jürgen Habermas (1989) would call the "public sphere"—that is, the site of collective debate and discussion about the common good. Of course, Tim Hortons has the advantage over other companies in that it is a coffee shop, with all the associations of community, conversation, and public commingling. As we will show, Tim Hortons has carved out this political space by aligning itself with Canada's apparent collective values.

During and after World War II there was an explosion of academic writing on commercial culture and democracy. At the same time that the Massey Commission in Canada was warning about the dangers of American mass culture, European and American cultural critics were turning their attention to the same phenomenon. Generally, they held that, by definition, mass and consumer culture undermines democratic sensibilities rooted in reason and deliberation. The exiled Frankfurt School intellectuals Theodor Adorno and

Max Horkheimer found their new American home to be a cultural wasteland in which mass-produced cultural products (such as Hollywood movies and popular music) remade audiences in their own image so that the masses came to crave the formulaic and undifferentiated products they were fed (Horkheimer & Adorno 1969). This highly influential version of the consumer-citizen dominated academic ideas of mass and consumer culture until recently. Contemporary thinkers place more agency in the hands of audiences and consumers to interpret and fashion messages and products. Feminist scholars (e.g., Joyrich, 2005) have argued that a fear of "feminization" or weakening of rational, masculine culture was at work in much of the early criticism of the mass and commercial consumer. Moreover, historians such as Elizabeth Cohen (2003) have pointed to commercial activism—boycotts, strikes, and the like—as the first avenue of enfranchisement for women and black people in America. By these accounts, commercial culture runs the gamut from threat to democracy to tool of democracy. For our purposes, however, the issue at hand is the citizen's relationship to public and collective debate around the public good. In other words, how do topics of public concern arise and become objects of common discussion by way of commercial advertising and marketing? For our purposes, the best way to frame the question of consumerism and citizenship is offered by Don Slater (2000), who discusses the topic in terms of the public sphere: "Ideas of modern consumption arise firstly in the ideal (or dystopia) of a liberal and commercial society comprising free individuals pursuing their interests through a free association in the public sphere" (p. 183). Tim Hortons makes use of this consumer-citizen who is individualized in his or her desires, but it also capitalizes on the fact that this social actor is left with little community, identity, or history. In other words, Tim Hortons offers back what private industry, and the ideology of the free enterprise, have removed from the public sphere.

Tim Hortons' status as a Canadian icon and institution has become a truism repeated endlessly by academics and journalists. Many journalistic stories feature Tim Hortons as a purveyor of national identity; others discuss Tim Hortons in terms of rituals of welcome and hospitality. As Tim Hortons represents "home," journalists can discuss strangers as initiated into Canadian life by way of their first ritualistic tasting of the food (Delaney, 2005). In a similar use of Tim Hortons to measure social space, the proximity of people to Tim Hortons has been employed at a professional health conference to define the Canadian rural: "You know that you are rural if there is no Starbucks or Second Cup. . . . You know that you are remote if there is no Tim Hortons" (Health and Health Services Research Workshop, 2002).

In advertising, Tim Hortons is even obliquely referenced by unrelated companies piggybacking on the sentiments associated with the brand. For example, a TV ad that encourages new Canadian immigrants to set up their banking needs before they arrive shows these prospective Canadians practising being "Canadian" while still in their country of origin. One scene shows a man in an obviously hot climate being pulled behind a car on skis. Another shows a man trying out Canadian vernacular speech by attempting to pronounce the phrase "double-double," a way of ordering coffee associated with Tim Hortons (CBC News, 2004) and found in the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*.

So the status of Tim Hortons as Canadian icon and institution is widely accepted. Still lacking, however, is an analysis of the means by which it has achieved this status and the broader implications of this commercialized nationalism. While many advertisers attempt to align themselves and their products with vaguely nationalist feelings,

Tim Hortons has waged a decades-long marketing campaign that touches on the most celebrated of Canadian values and that has aligned those values with celebrations of warriors, foreign diplomacy, troop life, and other rituals of state. In other words, Tim Hortons has worked to organize a particular relationship between consumer-citizen, state, politics, and pleasure.

War and Peace in a Coffee Cup

The Dominion Institute, founded in 1997, promotes and measures Canadian historical knowledge. It conducts surveys to evaluate what Canadians know (and, importantly, what they *don't* know) as measured by its "Canadian History Report Card." It also makes the case for more resources for historical education. In 2009 it merged with Historica, a similar organization dedicated to fostering Canadian identity through historical knowledge. Historica is best known for its "Heritage Minute" TV ads, which promote heroic and romantic notions of Canada's history. Katarzyna Rukszo (2008) has written that these short ads aim mainly at generating a dramatic emotional response from viewers and that they "send a uniform message: that Canadians are marked by creativity, strength, unity, and above all, tolerance" (p. 179). Rukszo also notes that the Heritage Minute ads were developed expressly to counter the effects of Quebec nationalism. Certainly, an examination of the Heritage Minute archive shows that most of these ads present a pre-Quiet Revolution Quebec.

In spite of all the organizations working to generate a historical self-awareness in Canadians, this project seems largely to have failed. Yet the *desire* to commemorate those who served in war seems strong. Perhaps the Dominion Institute has discovered that national identity or patriotism requires little historical content—that it may even *thrive* on a lack of content. After all, if war commemoration is about pride and emotion, the details of when and how Canada participated in World War I are irrelevant. As the Heritage Minute ads show, it takes only a minute to generate emotion. But that emotion does not necessarily cultivate an interest in exploring the details and ambiguities of Canadian history. In fact, while Rukszo generally supports the Historica-Dominion Institute's dedication to "citizenship and identity in Canada" (Dominion Institute, 2009), she also suggests that surveys and TV ads may be *undermining* the goals of deeper historical education.

French academic Pierre Nora (1996) has famously formulated the connection between historical knowledge and memory. Memory has traditionally been grounded in local authorities and in stories passed down through generations such that active memory and historical knowledge are one and the same thing. Nora argues that the difficulty in making people historically knowledgeable in modern society rests in part in the loss of traditions of collective memory in contemporary life, so that legitimate sources of memory come to be questioned. The wisdom of the older generation is assumed in traditional societies as much as it is obliterated in modern ones.

Nora argues that this cultural void generates a general *nostalgia* for the past without the collective and sacred rituals of memory. Modern societies, he maintains, attempt to simulate the past without the mechanisms to do so. Such sentiments of nostalgia depend on the coupling of idealized periods in the past with dissatisfaction in the present. In other words, the past is not a link to the present, but an escape from the dissatisfactions of the present. It is a play of difference rather than continuity, and it posits a fictional time

when "there is no gap between desire and its fulfillment. . . . The world is always fully and unambiguously present" (Hodgins, 2004, p. 100). Often, as is the case with Tim Hortons advertising, this dissatisfaction is rooted in a vague notion that in the "past" there was more communal unity and identification, as well as commonly understood standards and values. Hence, much of Tim Hortons' advertising—even when it involves stories set in the present—generates a longing for a lost past. This helps explain why rural communities feature prominently in their stories, the present-day rural itself being a spatial trope for the past. Similarly, while the *functioning* of Tim Hortons is altogether modern (technologies of rapid, mass production of products and services), the *presentation* of Tim Hortons (from packaging, interior design, uniforms, signage, etc.) is deeply nostalgic. But as we will show, Tim Hortons does far more than generate vague nostalgia; it has placed itself in this past, where it offers a solution to the problem of nostalgic longing.

As noted, even the language used by Tim Hortons' customers is derived from Anglo-Canadian slang. Penfold (2008) suggests that the donut is a working-class signifier of Canadian down-to-earth common sense and sincerity. In short, there is little to intimidate the customer: Tim Hortons, even in its downtown outlets in large Canadian cities, lacks "the specifically metropolitan extravagances of mannerism, caprice, and preciousness" (Simmel, 1950, p. 421). This type of branding takes on a stark anti-fashion stance, if fashion is understood as the frenzied recycling of styles and trends. As we will show, the respite from movement and whim, from this empty present, and from the endless multiplicity of modern Canadian life (including the multiplicity of multiculturalism) is a central theme in Tim Hortons ads. It also aligns with the company's theme of populism, which in turn allows politicians (especially) to use Tim Hortons to counter notions that they are part of the distant and uncaring Canadian elite.

The company's pervasive use of browns and sepia—which have never been changed—conveniently reference the era of early photographic reproduction around the turn of the twentieth century. This small semiotic coincidence has allowed Tim Hortons ads to create a sense of collective memory. Sepia toning, used mainly in portrait photography, references a specific, brief era in photographic technology, just before the explosion of endless commercial images into everyday life. As Susan Sontag (1977) wrote in her famous discussion of photography, "From the start, photographers . . . set themselves the task of recording a disappearing world" (p. 76). That Tim Hortons has succeeded in aligning itself with a romantic past—a time when even the reproduction of images was innocent—speaks volumes about how it has insinuated itself into a Canadian history in which it did not yet exist. As a conduit to the Canadian past, Tim Hortons is suggesting that it was *present* in that past (or at least, like elders in traditional societies, that it is interchangeable with ancestors who *were* present back then). This adds strong resonance to its slogan, "Always Fresh. Always There." Moreover, in a culture where memory is personalized, nostalgic, and suspicious of traditional authorities, this commercial agent is offering itself as both the site and the source of collective memory work. Canadians are being offered a version of history and memory at Tim Hortons: not only that, but Tim Hortons is *positing itself* as the new authority for the collective practice of memory over and against other sources. In this way, Tim Hortons is working both to create nostalgia and to solve the problem that nostalgia creates. These other authorities—including the Canadian federal state and its agencies—must then turn to Tim Hortons for their own legitimacy.

Over the past half-century, Tim Hortons has grown in importance as a place to remember the past and to enact the nation's present. In 2004 it became the sole distributor of the Royal Canadian Mint's Remembrance Day poppy coin. The Royal Canadian

Mint's website explained that it (along with the Royal Canadian Legion) had authorized Tim Hortons as the "exclusive distribution partner" because it was seen as "a distinctive Canadian enterprise." Clearly, the mint and Canadian veterans both agreed that Tim Hortons had a corporate image that matched the tone of war commemoration. Later that year, when US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited Canada, she was taken by Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay to a Tim Hortons, where the international press eagerly documented the two drinking Tim's coffee and played up the romantic intimacy of the pair sharing this ritual.

But the merging of the state with the cultural practice of going to Tim Hortons is not always so successful. In 2009, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty flew to London, Ontario, for a speech and a photo-op at a Tim's. The minister wanted to talk about his "belt-tightening budget" but was criticized shortly afterwards for using taxpayer money to pay for the government aircraft he had used to fly to the location (Whittington, 2010). While the juxtaposition of Flaherty's spending with his speech about cutting the budget was the obvious problem, the addition of Tim Hortons (apparently to show his sympathy for the common person) made it worse in terms of publicity. Opposition critics invoked the hypothetical pensioner who (apparently) might not even be able to afford to go to Tim Hortons yet who had to pay for Flaherty's flight.

During the 2011 federal election, all major party leaders spent significant amounts of time in Tim Hortons restaurants, even working as servers. Major news services, for example, reproduced a photo of NDP leader Jack Layton handing out coffee at a Tim Hortons drive-through window. Playing on the company's slogan, the *Vancouver Sun* declared of the candidates, "They've always got time for Tim Hortons" (Harris, 2011).

In 2006, Tim Hortons opened an outlet in Afghanistan to serve Canadian troops. Members of the Armed Forces had lobbied for this extension of Canada into foreign military posts, but the company was cautious in its approach. With the opening of the Afghanistan outlet, the chief of the defence staff, General Rick Hillier, was quoted on the Tim Hortons website:

I know I speak for all the men and women of the Canadian Forces when I say that I'm delighted to hear this news. . . . Opening a Tim Hortons to serve our troops in Afghanistan strengthens an already superb relationship between two great Canadian institutions. I would like to thank Tim Hortons for their endless support of the Canadian Forces over the years. (Tim Hortons, 2006)

Hillier's comments aligned Tim Hortons with the Canadian military in a way that suggests they are national institutions of equal weight and value and that their histories run parallel. Because his words were conveniently imprecise, this pronouncement allowed Tim Hortons to embed itself into Canadian war history, as if it were, as its slogan says, "always there." In this way, it has become a site of war commemoration. In 2010 the company CEO visited the Kandahar base. The company press release read:

Brave and selfless Canadians fighting the war in Afghanistan received a personal thank you from the President and CEO of Tim Hortons Don Schroeder this Christmas, when he travelled to the Kandahar army base over the Holidays. Schroeder was part of the Team Canada Christmas Day Tour of Canadian military bases in Kandahar, Afghanistan, led by Defence Minister Peter MacKay. (Tim Hortons, 2010)

While in Afghanistan, the Tim Hortons outlet became the central referent of Canada for journalists and Armed Forces personnel. Tim Hortons was careful in its handling of its relationship to this ongoing military conflict that was no longer simply the UN "Blue Helmet" peacekeeping action that generations of Canadians have been taught to admire. In 2009, Tim Hortons responded to a lively petition drive asking the company to develop a campaign that would invite its customers to buy a cup of coffee for a soldier. The company's response was to direct interested customers to send gift cards to troops (and to remind customers of its active support of troops, which has included sending coffee to troops who were stationed in Kuwait). The company did not take up the invitation to generate an active or overt "support the troops" campaign during the ongoing conflict. Interestingly, however, Forces personnel have taken up Tim Hortons as a signifier of their own identity (with all the heroic and patriotic resonances that decades of Tim Hortons advertising have provided). As we will see, much of the Armed Forces storytelling on websites has mimicked the style and themes found in Tim Hortons advertising (especially their "True Stories" campaign). This is not in itself surprising, for it was the troops who pushed for a Tim Hortons in Afghanistan. An outlet there, after all, would be a natural extension of their experience training at and living on Armed Forces bases—usually with a Tim Hortons nearby.

Tim Hortons advertising also commemorates Canada's peacetime past. Certainly, many companies market themselves through this sort of nostalgia, with vague references to premodern production, "homemade" products, and traditional, rural families. Others—or the same company at different moments—link themselves to nationalism by way of simple claims that they reflect national tastes or that they support national industries and workers. But Tim Hortons has been much more specific in directing nostalgia toward particular values, themes, and institutions, including even the state. Private enterprises usually try to operate as far as possible outside state regulation and supervision, so this imaginative linking of Tim Hortons to the state is unusual. At the same time, however, it shows an understanding that the Canadian imaginary is linked at least in part to manifestations of the state.

Advertising of Values

The association of Tim Hortons with Canadian themes can be traced back to its origins in the romantic life and death of its namesake. Miles Gilbert (Tim) Horton began the company with Jim Charade in 1964, opening a single donut shop in Hamilton, Ontario. In *The Donut: A Canadian History*, Steve Penfold (2008) writes that this timing could not have been better: Canada was becoming an automobile culture and was moving away from tea toward coffee drinking. But changes in transportation and taste were not the only advantages accruing to this new enterprise. As a National Hockey League (NHL) defenceman, Tim Horton possessed "all the trappings of the classic myth of white Canadian manhood" (p. 48). Penfold suggests that Tim Horton's image as a rugged yet honest hockey player supported the image of his restaurants. In the first years, the company made much of its founder's name and popularity.

In 1974, however, Tim Horton died when he lost control of his car while driving late at night between Toronto and Buffalo. While a number of things were working against Horton that night, former marketing director Ron Buist (2003) emphasizes

that his work ethic also played a part in the accident—he had just finished playing a game against Toronto and checked on the donut shop before taking to the highway (p. 67). His widow, who wanted images of her husband removed from the restaurants, inherited part of the company. With the removal of these references, the company's connection to the hockey player began to fade. Buist maintains that within 10 years the company's link with Tim Horton the man had weakened dramatically (p. 58). Still, the chain has consistently emphasized ruggedness, sport, and endurance as general themes. After his widow's death, the company revised the Tim Horton biography on its website to emphasize his hockey career, and his image has reappeared in shops, along with "Timfact" quizzes.

Tim Hortons is famous for sponsoring sports at the grassroots and amateur levels, as well as for associating itself with professional sports such as hockey and curling through its ads. The company rents arenas to offer free skating, sponsors local "Timbits" children's sports, and operates six summer camps for economically disadvantaged children. (A Timbit is a small piece of fried donut batter, but also refers to the children who participate in Tim Hortons sports.) But the company's involvement in children's sports does not stop at financial support. Many of the company's TV ads make it clear that Tim Hortons understands kids' hockey as a site where the next generation of Canadians is being socialized. Hockey has a reputation as a violent game, yet Tim Hortons ads make the arena a place of fair play, inclusion, and co-operation. One Timbits ad shows young Canadian NHL star Sidney Crosby ("Sid the Kid") in his Timbits uniform as a child. Another shows the now-grown star playing gently with young Timbits children, thereby linking Tim Hortons to the generational reproduction of hockey and hockey stars. When there was a rash of head injuries to NHL players in 2010–11, Tim Hortons responded by making it clear that their corporate image could not be associated with such violence. Tim Hortons "encourages the NHL, the teams and general managers and the NHL Players' Association to continue to work towards addressing concerns with head injuries" (CBC News, 2011). Indeed, Sid the Kid was one of the most seriously injured players during this rash of headshots: A concussion left him unable to play for months.

Co-operative and dedicated small-town individuals—players, parents, coaches, and so forth—are recurring icons connected to hockey. One of the many ads that links commitment, community, rural areas, and hockey shows a man arriving at an isolated hockey rink before dawn during the middle of winter and toiling to prepare the arena for early-morning children's hockey. This ad is beautifully filmed and simple, with steam rising off the ice and the sun breaking the darkness of the sky as the man enacts his morning ritual in solitary silence. This understated style runs parallel with the apparent humility of the man whose labour is unseen and apparently taken for granted by the eager children who will hit the ice hours later. The viewer becomes a privileged witness to a labour of love aimed at fostering the next generation of hockey players. This ad connects values (commitment, loyalty, humility) to sacred space (the arena), ritual practices, and the maintenance of community over time. It avoids cliché by showing these values and practices rather than by asserting them. And, as with so many Tim Hortons ads, the product is embedded in the story as a small but essential comfort to this man's morning. In other words, the coffee takes on a character of its own as his humble companion. The man represents the traditional notion of passing on skills and sacred practices from one generation to the next by way of their ritualized enactment.

One value repeated over decades of Tim Hortons ads is mutual community support or collectivism. Historically, grassroots collectivist sentiment became associated with state policies such as socialized medicine and social welfare. The icon of this institutionalized collectivism in state policy and apparatus is CCF/NDP politician Tommy Douglas. Although Douglas was never able to lead his party to federal victory, as the "conscience of Canada" he had a strong influence on the actions of the two federal parties that did form the government. More important to this discussion, however, is his first-place standing as "The Greatest Canadian" in CBC's audience-driven contest aired in 2004. This popular victory does not mean that Douglas would be any more likely today to win a federal election than in his own day. Opinion polls and general sentiment show a strong belief in the integrity and honesty of NDP (previously CCF) leaders relative to their more successful counterparts in other parties. This gap between respect and actual voter support seems to indicate that Canadians have high admiration for socialist politicians and their values but do not have the same confidence in their policies. This in turn strongly suggests that collectivism lives in the Canadian imagination more than in the actual realities of policy, law, and administration. Tim Hortons ads have picked up this form of collectivist longing and run with it. In Nora's (1996) terminology, while these ads may appear deeply nostalgic, they in fact offer a way to embody the connection between past and present rather than just an empty longing. As we will see, in this way they populate or fill Canadian identity and history by providing the ritual and sacred space in which to tell stories.

Another Tim Hortons TV ad links immigration, family, and hockey. The press dubbed this one "Anti-Hockey Grandpa" (Keller, 2006). The narrative involves the tension between a young boy and his father, who appear to be new immigrants from Asia. The boy wants to spend all his time playing hockey (in the street and on the ice); his father struggles to get him to study. The second part of the ad shows the father and the now-grown son watching the son's own boy play Timbits hockey in an arena. The son asks his father why he comes to watch his grandchild play when he never attended his own games. (Here the ad introduces the real pain of children's longing for attention and approval from parents.) It turns out that his father *had* attended games (takeout Tim's coffee cup in hand) but had remained hidden. Apparently, his concern to get his son to study made him feel that he could not show his pride in his son's athletic achievements. He proves his hidden support of his son by producing a faded and creased photo of his son as a boy in his hockey uniform. Clearly this story is steeped in long-standing misunderstanding and resentment, in a secret pride that cannot be revealed for decades, and in a stubborn insistence on the part of the father that his child assimilate with Canadian culture and society by studying hard. This ad is also highly romantic in that it supports the vision of immigrants as ultimately happy and successful, and the father as wise and strict. Remarkably, it also adds a complexity to the simple, official version of multiculturalism and immigration. This ad is about pain—about language, culture, and tradition being sacrificed to the need to assimilate. That the grandfather can now enjoy watching the grandson play hockey speaks to the fact that he succeeded in integrating his family into the broader culture, even at the cost of alienation from his own son. Here, caution, humility, and pride are all mixed with an immigrant's pain of watching his children inevitably become separated from their own deep cultural knowledge and traditions. Sharing their Tim Hortons coffee becomes a sad yet important connection between these two men. It is a small, intimate comfort as they watch the grandson (inevitably) play (Timbits) hockey.

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's definition of multiculturalism suggests that maintaining one's ethnic, religious, and cultural values is not at odds with "integration" with the larger, pre-existing Canadian society, as long as those values are understood as existing in the past: "Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry. . . . Through multiculturalism, Canada recognizes the potential of all Canadians, encouraging them to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010). This statement does not explain how integration can be achieved while meaningful differences in values are maintained; it does, though, assert that racism, violence, hatred, and ghettos will be the result of any resistance to the multicultural ideal. It is significant here that some Tim Hortons ads (including "Anti-Hockey Grandpa") raise themes that are rarely acknowledged in official notions of Canada. We are thinking specifically here about the theme of tension between multiculturalism and identity. The immigrant father in "Anti-Hockey Grandpa" faces the real problem of getting by in a country that is not—all sentimental protests to the contrary—organized around his background and traditions. His mantra, "study, study," signifies that for him, submission to Canada's culture, school system, and economic and linguistic practices will be essential to his son's success. The father views the pleasures of hockey as undermining the hard and painful work of making his child radically different from himself—that is, Canadian. Ultimately, though, playing hockey has allowed him and his son and grandson to assimilate into Canadian society, disrupting the official notion of Canada as a mosaic of simple differences.

Author Neil Bissoondath—himself an immigrant to Canada—has reflected on this position, which he and other new Canadians are implicitly asked to take within the rhetoric of the mosaic. The mosaic metaphor plays on the notion of distinct parts (or tiles) set side by side to create an overall pattern (a metaphor of cold difference in contrast to hot assimilation into a new whole—the "melting pot"). Multiculturalism asks immigrants—especially those who are visible in their difference from the Anglo-European norm—to do the work of signifying ethnic diversity. They introduce a difference from this norm—viz. colour and texture to the mosaic—and thereby allow white and English Canadians to feel good about their "tolerance" and to ignore the deep assimilative practices that confront immigrants. Bissoondath (1994) also argues that immigrants of colour like him are being asked to represent a harmless and frozen cultural past that can neither move forward nor challenge Canadian values—especially the value of multiculturalism. For him, "it is impossible to avoid a whiff of formaldehyde, a hint of the sterility of museum display cases. Impossible to ignore the image of colourful butterflies pinned to black velvet by careful and loving hands" (p. 42). The mosaic and multicultural rhetorics of state, then, have a number of interrelated effects: They deny the real assimilative realities of Canadian life; they require immigrants and visible ethnic, racial, and religious minorities to live as temporally frozen and harmless representations of difference; they suggest that any questioning of the multicultural ideal will result in violence and chaos; and they paper over the administrative interests at the heart of the mosaic.

In this context of official discourse, collective narrative threatens to tip over into cultural relativism: No longer will difference be brought into conversation about Canadian values; it will merely be placed (like tiles or butterflies) in juxtaposition, for all values will be officially equal to all other values, traditions, and beliefs. As the many critics of

multiculturalism suggest, this relativism cannot provide the basis for a collective identity or narrative. The Tim Hortons story of the Chinese hockey dad at least admits that his difference will be largely overcome and erased by the assimilation of his children and grandchildren. In his grudging and measured acknowledgement of the pleasure they find in hockey and its associated comradeship, he acknowledges the pleasure of assimilation and that he has learned to live with the loss it means to him. Unlike Bissoondath's butterflies, he is living in real and dynamic time, which introduces a profound distance between him and his offspring. Again, the Tim Hortons coffee shared by father and son does not signify a weepy celebration of the Canadian mosaic, or a general appreciation of the beauty of the mosaic as viewed from the outside, but rather a small and intimate comfort in the face of real and irreversible change—a change that the father encouraged through his assimilationist attitude toward his son.

Ironically, while Tim Hortons' marketing and advertising is nostalgic, its nostalgia takes advantage of the gaps, contradictions, and dissatisfactions left by official Canadian versions of the past and the present. As noted earlier, the company also makes itself a witness to these realities—war, assimilation, difference—as if it were a core institution for preserving collective history and memory. By taking this stance, it is implying that other institutions and stories may be less than satisfactory or authentic. Moreover, Tim Hortons appropriates the grounds of collective storytelling and gets its customers to become the voices of these stories. Unlike the mosaic pieces found in the official images of the citizen, the Tim Hortons stories are "hot" narratives filled with visceral joys, pains, and losses.

In the mid-1990s, Tim Hortons began making their "True Stories" TV ads, which were the precursors to the similar "Every Cup Tells a Story" campaign. In both these campaigns, Tim Hortons customers and store owners generate stories featuring the everyday lives of the storytellers. Storytelling is one of the oldest and most commonplace forms of human communication, and its significance for Canada in the mid-1990s is important (even politically disruptive). Narrative as a practice is simultaneously universal and particular—that is, narrative's forms are repeatable and often clichéd even while the content of narratives is specific (if not unique). As Tim Hortons implies, everyone can tell a story and everyone has a story. Thus, as we have seen, while Tim Hortons has made itself the site and source of much collective storytelling, these campaigns seem to shift the actual telling to the customer. Rhetorically, Tim Hortons acknowledges the voices of ordinary speakers, the implication being that they do not necessarily get the opportunity to tell their stories in their everyday experience and that the voices of ordinary people are ignored and pressed out by other voices. As we will show, Tim Hortons cleverly gets its customers to do its talking, with profound implications for storytelling's place in Canadian identity.

The very first "True Story" TV ad was remarkably quaint and banal. It told the story of an elderly woman, Lillian, who made a daily pilgrimage to her local Tim Hortons in a small Nova Scotia town. Other than the tough and determined character of Lillian herself, there wasn't much of a story here. This introductory figure did, however, set the tone for other "True Stories" to follow. Like Lillian, the subjects were rugged, self-sacrificing, and unwavering in their goals. Most of these stories featured adventure, risk, severe weather, and personal sacrifice, running from the most heroic and extreme (in the case of soldiers in war zones) to the most ordinary (lonely students

studying abroad and asking their parents to send them Tim's coffee). Keohane (1997) helps make sense of this theme of endurance within the broad Canadian narrative: "Throughout Canadian popular culture there are discourses that celebrate an enjoyment of endurance . . . skating, cross-country skiing, canoeing, camping, trekking. . . . The heroic endurance/enjoyment of the voyageurs is recreated in the contemporary practice of endurance driving" (p. 35). Keohane seems to have a point when he links Canadians' heroism with their capacity to endure the harshness of their environment. Take, for example, this passage from Roy MacGregor's *Canadians: A Portrait of a Country and Its People* (2007), which establishes the character of two young Indigenous leaders: "One winter in the late 1960s the group ran into a blizzard driving home from the University of Brandon. . . . Cars and trucks were in ditches. The others wanted to quit, but Mercredi and Harper refused and took turns running out in front of the headlights so that the driver could stay on the pavement" (p. 212). In this narrative, the "stubbornness" that these men showed by running down a highway in a blizzard for 30 kilometres (against the efforts of the police and other drivers to stop them) sets them up to become political leaders in the future.

While lacking the same drama, the "True Story" of Jean and Doug Thornton (from *Tim's Times*, May 17, 2004) worked from similar themes. This story involved the elderly couple's drive across the country from Alberta to Newfoundland. In the story, they planned their journey around stops at Tim Hortons, explaining that they warmed up and studied their maps at Tim's outlets. This trip took seven weeks and covered almost 18,000 kilometres. As Keohane discusses, driving as "endurance" or sheer distance seems to be integral to this type of pleasure. In the photo that accompanied this story, the Thorntons held up a sign announcing the number of kilometres covered rather than any souvenirs. Tim Hortons shops offered them support on their travels, providing warmth, comfort, and even the opportunity to reorient themselves spatially on their maps. Space itself was measured and navigated in terms of proximity to the next Tim's. When the couple returned home they contacted the coffee chain to tell their story. It was a Tim Hortons story through and through. Their story, in turn, allowed the company to show itself as connecting the geographically and culturally diverse parts of the country into a whole.

A similar ad featured two pairs of travellers—an older couple in an RV and two young men in an older-model car. Both couples planned to drive across Canada from coast to coast, stopping "only at Tim Hortons." As they drove in opposite directions they eventually crossed paths, with the young man politely waving the older woman ahead of him as they drove into a Tim Hortons. The irony built into this story was that both pairs had declared they were probably the first ever to make this Tim Hortons journey. And both couples marked off that journey by locating Tim Hortons outlets on the map of Canada and by counting the number of Tim Hortons they visited. This ad was explicit in its promise to provide comfort and geographic orientation from coast to coast. In another ad, a man saw a "Roll Up the Rim to Win" takeout cup on the ground and bent over to pick it up. The wind took the cup and the man chased it. When he picked it up, he realized that he had traversed the width of the country from east coast to west coast. In all these travel ads, Tim Hortons both celebrates and mitigates the huge distance between coasts.

During the 2010 Winter Olympics (hosted by Canada), Tim Hortons repeatedly ran a TV ad that depicted the reunion of a husband (evidenced by his wedding band) with his

wife and children. According to a *Globe and Mail* reporter, that ad “played like a modern Canadian heritage vignette” (Houpt, 2010). From their appearance, the family seemed to be immigrating to Canada from an African country (during the winter, of course). Just before the wife arrived, the husband bought a Tim Hortons coffee at the airport. At the moment they were tearfully reunited (with the husband biting the back of his hand in an effort to retain his composure), he gave her the coffee, saying, “Welcome to Canada.” The wife took the cup but seemed to miss its significance (she had not yet been socialized into Canadian culture); instead, she fixed her attention on the winter garb her husband had brought for her. The implications of moving to Canada became apparent to her as she examined the bulky parkas.

Two things are noteworthy about this ad. First, Tim Hortons was taking the risk of positing itself as the iconic and ritualistic signifier of Canada. Second, media coverage of this ad (as so often happens, this Tim’s ad was the subject of intense media scrutiny) focused on the claim that it was based on a true story. This media coverage, however, missed almost everything that was significant about the ad. Claiming that this African family did not exist completely overlooked the fact that the general narrative of separation and reunion is a universal Canadian story (including the Indigenous story). The ad was communicating that universal reality when a young woman (of a different ethnic appearance) looked over at the scene and smiled. She was a passing stranger, yet she immediately recognized what was going on, and she appreciated its profound emotional significance. Moreover, the media’s focus on veracity overlooked the real social and political statement this ad was making, which was Tim Hortons’ claim to be the primary and essential signifier of Canada. This family’s reunion was bittersweet because they had left Africa behind and were entering Canada as strangers. This idea was emphasized as the family walked out of the airport and was assaulted by snow and wind. The significance of the coffee as comfort could now begin to take hold for them.

In November 2008, Tim Hortons launched an interactive website, “Every Cup Tells a Story.” In less than two years the website received more than 5,000 stories (as well as comments on and rankings of the postings). The company stated that it had launched the website in part to funnel the letters and photos being sent to them (Tim Hortons, 2008). In keeping with the “True Stories” campaign, “Every Cup Tells a Story” encouraged customers to locate meaning in every activity associated with Tim Hortons. More important, it encouraged them to link Tim Hortons to everyday activities, from the most mundane to the most vital. The campaign took advantage of communication technologies that allowed customers to send photos and narratives directly to Tim Hortons. Many photos included babies and animals with Tim Hortons cups, brides and grooms drinking Tim Hortons in their wedding attire, marriage proposals, soldiers and tourists in foreign countries, new mothers in hospital beds, and people engaging in a host of community, sports, and family activities. Almost all the photographers were careful to capture the Tim Hortons cup in their frame (which itself says interesting things about the rituals of photography, memory, and commercialism). This product placement in the everyday experiences of Canadians was a testament to the place that Tim Hortons occupies in the Canadian consciousness. The accompanying stories also featured the cup of coffee (sometimes other beverages) as central to the activity discussed. One such story was told by a husband, who explained that being present for his wife’s Caesarian section was traumatic until he saw a nurse with a cup of Tim Hortons

coffee. According to his account, the sight of the cup calmed him immediately: “That cup of coffee was a touch-point,” he wrote, “a known, good thing in a room of the unknown” (Tim Hortons 2009).

Many of the stories that invoked fear and risk—including those of sending loved ones into military action or serious medical procedures—suggested that consuming Tim Hortons products in the final moments of separation served as a kind of good luck charm. Other stories directly embraced death and mourning. For example, one customer told about the death of her husband and featured a photo of her young daughter at Tim Hortons. The writer explained that she now had little time to spend with her daughter because she had to work long hours, but that their Saturday morning trips to Tim Hortons were a comfort. It would be hard to imagine this story being turned into a “True Stories” commercial, for such commercials require careful scripting, direction, and design. When stories come “directly” from customers, the risk to Tim Hortons is minimized. “Every Cup” stories seem more neutral than “True Stories.” Why run these personal stories through the Tim Hortons website? Apparently, the company’s products and institutional status provide meaning to customers’ lives, not just the opportunity to communicate with others.

The “True Stories”/“Every Cup” campaigns are clichéd and mundane; their appeal lies in their familiarity. In a sense, all childbirth and wedding stories share the same range of emotions. They are rites of passage that deserve telling by virtue of the teller’s having survived to tell the story. Like all narratives, these are stories of endurance and survival. Hence, old Lillian from the first “True Story” is the archetype of the *storyteller*, not of the hill climber. It is, however, interesting that so many Canadians would turn to Tim Hortons to satisfy their need to tell their stories. What has happened to other outlets for personal and collective narrative? As we have discussed, Tim Hortons has taken decades to situate itself as the place to tell stories. Tim Hortons has been able to occupy a cultural space left open by Canada’s official storytellers (agents of statist nation-building policies). It has then played up the social and emotional importance of storytelling at its grassroots and intergenerational levels. It has worked pain, fear, and ambivalence into these stories, but also collective national pride.

Conclusion

One might argue that the ability of Tim Hortons to become a site of national narrative and political enactment speaks to this country’s ongoing crisis of identity. After all, what kind of community turns to a coffee shop for meaning? While this “crisis” talk has become an industry and a site of pleasure in itself, there must be more at work here than the futile effort to fill up the bottomless hole of national identity. Keohane hints at an answer in the passage that we used to open this chapter: “The ‘way of life’ of an ethnic group, a community, or a nation takes the form of an articulated constellation of bits of enjoyment.”

We have seen that their marketing strategies boldly offer up collective values that resonate with and against more official notions of Canada. They offer a complexity and texture to the national experience that customers are able to recognize and enjoy. This, however, raises the question of why so many agents of state and government have aligned themselves with the company if their message is ambiguous and painful, pro- and anti-official.

One answer is simply that of populism. Regardless of the ambiguities surrounding national identity, Tim Hortons has succeeded in representing the Canadian every-person. Politicians in countries like Canada struggle to show themselves as non-elitist and in touch with the concerns of ordinary citizens. This certainly seems true when one observes their eagerness to align themselves with the coffee chain during election campaigns. But there is another, more important answer—agents of state and government may recognize a cultural merging of citizen and consumer.

At the same time as the consumer has become the citizen at Tim Hortons, the citizen has become the consumer in the hands of political marketing strategists. This involves more than selling a party and its policies to the electorate. Analysts of political marketing make the case that marketing should be distinguished from the older strategy of selling: "In politics, as in business, marketing is what happens when the product shapes itself around the consumers' demands—often before it even hits the sales floor or the ad campaign. It's the attempt to give the people what they want, sometimes before they know they want it" (Delacourt & Marland, 2009, p. 47). Political parties and their candidates now approach the citizen by way of the most sophisticated of marketing strategies, even locating their constituents through their consumer practices. In some cases, this marketing orientation lasts beyond the election to become the foundation of governance itself. Richard Nimjean (2006) contends that Canada has become a "brand state" in that political parties offer packaged images of Canada for both international and domestic consumption. In terms of the latter, national pride and apparent national values are played up toward particular political ends. The editors of *Political Marketing in Canada* ask whether the frequent indications by opinion polls that Canadians distrust the political elite and suffer from a political "malaise" may be tied to this conflation of politics with marketing (Marland, Giasson, & Lees-Marshment, 2012). Political scientist Reg Whitaker (2001) contends that this marketing orientation toward the "needs and wants" of citizens undermines politics as the deliberative and careful consideration of party policy. For Whitaker, what once involved party loyalty and membership within a broad ideological commitment has now become simply the attempt to satisfy, and cultivate, the immediate and capricious desires and sentiments of the electorate.

This conflation of consumer and citizen helps explain why Tim Hortons could become a type of public sphere for the enactment of political life. Tim Hortons is not just a site for the enactment of Canadian politics; it is also the *model* for it. Hannah Arendt's (1958) and Jürgen Habermas's (1989) comments on public life and the public sphere are relevant here. For this seepage of personal desires into the public world threatens to allow private need to become confused with its opposite—the public good. This line between private and public, for Arendt, must be guarded in any democratic society because private life and public life serve diverse ends. Public life becomes degraded, semi-human, when it is deprived of the conflict and challenge of public debate during which one must stake a position and defend it openly and coherently. Habermas's version of the public sphere is less antagonistic than Arendt's, but he similarly argues that issues of common good must arise within an ideal speech environment in which citizens can debate and decide issues of common good, outside both state and commercial interests. Clearly, the rise of the consumer-citizen has implications beyond the effects it has on politicians and their party machines. As we have seen, consumption can become the focus of governance and state authority.

Review Questions

1. Explain why the concept of the "consumer-citizen" is useful to appreciate the significance of Tim Hortons in the Canadian public sphere.
2. Compare specific instances when Canadian politicians or political candidates have used Tim Hortons for promotional purposes. Explain why so many agents of Canadian government have appeared at or aligned themselves with Tim Hortons.
3. Identify several ways in which Tim Hortons as a brand links itself to a "romantic" past. Explain how smaller details of branding, such as colour choices, contribute to nostalgia.
4. Summarize how Tim Hortons uses values of multiculturalism and immigration in its advertising.
5. Describe how the "True Stories" advertisements and the "Every Cup Tells a Story" campaign function to construct a Canadian identity through storytelling and narrative.

Activity

Search for recent examples of Tim Hortons advertisements. Analyze how these advertisements offer a glimpse into Canadian history or Canadian life. What collective memories do they bring up? What stories do they tell? How might these stories be linked to themes of Canadian identity and specific values, ranging from sports to multiculturalism?

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Chapter 8

Sport, Beer Advertising, and Corporate Nationalism in Canada

Molson's Articulation of National and Masculine Identity to Consumer Citizenship

Steven Jackson

According to Trentmann (2007), "While even a generation ago, consumption and citizenship tended to be located in opposing spheres of private and public... they are today increasingly recognized as porous, indeed overlapping domains" (p. 147). Consequently, emerging consumerist lifestyles are creating new types and processes of identity formation that transcend more traditional forms that were often defined by geographic location, occupation, or social class. With specific reference to national identities, a key driving force in the transformation of citizens into consumers has been the unprecedented growth and power of multinational or transnational corporations engaging in what is referred to as *corporate nationalism*—a process whereby they seek to "capitalize upon the nation as a source of collective identification and differentiation" (Silk, Andrews, & Cole, 2005, p. 7). This is often achieved through a carefully orchestrated practice whereby corporations use the currency of "the nation," that is, its symbols, images, stereotypes, collective identities, and memories, as part of their overall branding strategy (Jackson, 2004). To this extent, advertising and marketing play a key role in producing and representing particular visions of the nation that link brands and commodities with aspects of contemporary social life, ultimately influencing individual and group identity formation.

This chapter examines one global commodity (beer) as it is located within one particular national context (Canada) through one particular brand (Molson) in order to explore how the process of corporate nationalism engages with and shapes other identities, including masculinity. The links between these elements of culture are so powerful, intimately interrelated, and culturally entrenched that they have been described as forming a "holy trinity" (Wenner & Jackson, 2009). As such, the holy trinity has the potential to offer us unique insights into the nature of the contemporary consumer-citizen. This point has become particularly evident in the context of professional and corporatized sport, where various organizations have become dependent on breweries that serve as team owners and investors, direct team sponsors, or sponsors via the purchase of various forms of advertising time and space (Collins & Vamplew, 2002). Historically, the basis of the relationship between beer and masculinity (and sport, as it is also argued herein) was structured

around and through assumptions about what men do, where they do it, when they do it, why they do it, and with whom they do it (Strate, 1992). With reference to this analysis, I assert that sport and beer are consumed by male audiences sharing the experience of watching male athletes perform hypermasculine activities as a means of confirming and defining their own maleness. What has received less attention, however, is the link between the holy trinity (sport, beer, and masculinity) and national identity and citizenship. Specifically, there is a lack of research focusing on the way in which particular sporting nationalisms are linked to dominant forms of masculinity and, conversely, how various forms of masculinity are articulated to national citizenship in and through the production, representation, and consumption of beer. In particular, Canadian beer advertising provides an ideal site of analysis because of the intense pressure on breweries and their allied advertising agencies to continually accommodate and nurture new, often marginalized target markets. Adding to their challenge is the need to develop these new markets while simultaneously maintaining and reaffirming a dominant form of masculinity that is steeped in nationalism and displayed through a nostalgic lens, all within the context of a highly competitive marketplace.

Overall, this chapter examines Molson Canadian advertising campaigns, their links with the holy trinity and corporate nationalism, and the implications for citizenship and gender relations, including the potential for new emergent forms of global hegemonic masculinity. Specifically, this chapter explores (1) the nature and significance of corporate nationalism within the context of globalization; (2) the nature and significance of the "holy trinity" of sport, beer, and masculinity; (3) several case studies of notable Molson Canadian beer advertising campaigns that, collectively, illustrate how they operate as a manual of both masculine and national citizenship in Canada; and (4) the implications of corporate nationalism and the holy trinity for understanding the reproduction of masculinity in an increasingly global world.

Globalization and Corporate Nationalism

Globalization is both a process and a concept that permeates contemporary political, economic, cultural, technological, and intellectual life (Appadurai, 1990; Hirst & Thompson, 1999; Robertson, 1992). To date, most concerns about globalization have focused on the impact of global processes and commodities on local cultures. In particular, critics have scrutinized global or transnational corporations and their impact on local (including national) cultures and the potential threat they pose with respect to creating a homogeneous, often characterized as "Americanized," lifestyle (Bell, 1996; Ritzer, 2010). Notably, despite all the concerns raised, there has been limited empirical work that actually examines the complexity of what has been referred to as the global-local nexus—that is, where the global meets the local.

Although it is manifested in many ways, corporate nationalism can be viewed as the process by which corporations (both national and transnational) use "the nation" and its symbolic value for commercial interests (Jackson, 2004; Scherer & Jackson, 2010; Silk et al., 2005). As such, the nation, including national images, themes, symbols, and memory, becomes part of a larger representational strategy to appeal to citizens and consumers. As Gruneau and Whitson (1993) note, "What is crucial to the success of such 'representational' projects is the linking of national symbols and myths of national character with the ordinary lives of people and with widely shared popular experiences" (p. 251).

Adapted from Jackson, S. (2014). Globalization, corporate nationalism and masculinity in Canada: Sport, Molson beer advertising and consumer citizenship. *Sport in Society* 17(7), 901–16.

Sport is one of those key representational projects given that, compared to other cultural practices (art, literature, dance, etc.), it "continues to play a greater role in the maintenance of distinctive national identities" (Bairner, 2001, p. 175). Indeed, the wide range of international sporting spectacles, including the Olympics, FIFA World Cup, Rugby World Cup, and other mega events, highlight the enduring centrality of sport to national identity. Yet these global sport events do not exist in isolation: They are part of a much broader system variously described as the "sports/media complex" (Jhally, 1989) or the "media sports cultural complex" (Maguire, 1993; Rowe, 1999). This powerful alliance of integrated global media entities has commodified sport by linking entertainment spectacles with fans/consumers through new communication technologies, corporate sponsorship, and advertising (Goldlust, 1987; Horne, 2006; Jackson, 2013).

Arguably, advertising, as both an industry and a form of culture, is at the forefront of globalization, a key vehicle in linking corporate brands with consumers (Cronin, 2000, 2004; Goldman, 1992; Goldman & Papson, 1996, 2011; Nixon, 2003). Furthermore, advertising naturalizes the process by which consumers and citizens are conceptualized as one and the same thing. Thus, advertising becomes a key site through which the process and consequences of corporate nationalism can be examined. Here we explore how corporate nationalism is produced and represented within the national context of Canada and in relation to one of its most successful beer companies and brands, Molson. Before outlining the case study of Molson advertising, however, it is important to provide some background on the significance of the "holy trinity" with respect to beer advertising and its links to national and masculine identity.

The Holy Trinity: Sport, Beer, and Masculinity

The holy trinity offers a unique framework within which to examine corporate nationalism given the historically strong cultural and naturalized links between sport, beer, masculinity, and national identity (Allain, 2008, 2011; Bairner, 2001; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Wenner & Jackson, 2009; Whitson & Gruneau, 2006). Historically, sport has been celebrated as a man's world based largely on its links with the military and nationhood (Burstyn, 1999). However, amidst a wide range of social changes and the advancement of women's rights over the past century, including access to education, employment, and the political sphere, there has been a gradual shift in societal gender power relations. Notably, despite the fact that men continue to dominate political, economic, and cultural life, we have witnessed a popularized discourse alleging a crisis of masculinity (Atkinson, 2011; Edwards, 2006; Messner, 1992). In response to the crisis a range of male-centred cultural institutions and practices, including the YMCA, the Boy Scouts, pro-men's groups, and sport have emerged at particular historical junctures (Messner, 1992). Indeed, sport has been identified as one of the last frontiers of masculinity given that it (1) provides the opportunity to perform sanctioned physical aggression; (2) provides a context for the demonstration of courage, commitment, and sacrifice; (3) helps reaffirm historical links with war and the military; (4) offers an exclusive space for men away from work and family; (5) provides a context where groups of men can engage in regular body contact without the fear of being labelled gay; and to this we can add (6) offers a legitimated, often corporate-sponsored, setting for the consumption of alcohol and, in particular, beer (Gee & Jackson, 2017). These factors reinforce the centrality of sport in the holy trinity,

a historically based, unique configuration of social institutions, practices, identities, and power relations that collectively form part of "a remarkably resilient bastion of hegemonic masculinity" (Sabo & Jansen, 1998, p. 211). What role, then, does the production, representation, and consumption of beer play in articulating the holy trinity and corporate nationalism? To begin to address this question and its wider cultural implications, it is necessary to outline the social significance of beer and its symbolic representation via advertising and promotional culture.

Interestingly, despite its ubiquity, the real power of beer (its production, representation, and consumption) may lie in its taken-for-granted nature. Arguably, it is this "naturalness" that enables beer to be articulated with a range of other powerful social institutions, commodities, and social relations, thus reinforcing its elevated position. For example, consider Scott's (2001) perspective on the cultural representation and commodification of beer:

We respond to beer in distinct ways because of its presentation in culture. From the moment of first visual exposure and physical experimentation through years of consumption, the way we think about beer is determined by where and how we see, buy, and use it. Undoubtedly, cultural conditions and accepted conventions determine where and how we drink. But who sets these conditions and conventions, and how? For most of us, they just seem *natural*. (emphasis added; pp. 60–1)

Here, Scott (2001) confirms the taken-for-granted social position of beer in society as well as the key role the media and advertising play in promoting it. Extending this, Willson (2005) highlights the role of drinking as part of the everyday life of nations:

Drinking is a historical and contemporary process of identity formation, maintenance and reproduction and transformation. Its importance to scholars of national identity and ethnicity is not principally in its role in grand state policies and the loftier ideals of the nation (although there too alcohol has played a role). Rather, drinking is the stuff of everyday life, quotidian culture which at the end of the day may be as important to the lifeblood of the nation as are its origin myths, heroes and grand narratives. (p. 12)

British Marxist Raymond Williams used beer to argue that we "are not materialist enough." Williams (1980) suggested that if we took commodities for their material properties alone, "beer would be enough for us, without the additional promise that in drinking it we show ourselves to be manly, young in heart, or neighbourly" (p. 185). Paradoxically, while a simple liquid made of water, hops, barley, and a few other ingredients has managed to occupy such a powerful economic and cultural position. It has received scant scholarly attention (Cody & Jackson, 2016; Palmer, 2011; Wenner & Jackson, 2009). Yet the sheer economics of the industry point to the commodity's importance. For example, in the United States, the alcohol industry spent \$8.2 billion to air approximately 2.6 million television commercials between 2001 and 2009, constituting a 27 per cent rise in expenditure over this period and leading to a 30 per cent increase in alcohol ad exposure. Furthermore, highlighting both the significance of sport and its highly gendered consumer base, it is worth noting that almost three-fifths of television spending is typically allocated to sports

programming (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2009). Overall, this confirms the observation that

sport offers a unique avenue for the drinks industry to reach its most lucrative target audience of males aged between 16 and 35. The increasingly global nature of sports brands, whether belonging to competitions or clubs, makes them even more attractive to an industry which itself is consolidating across national boundaries into "super-breweries." (Collins & Vamplew, 2002, pp. 123–4)

This quote reveals the more contemporary configuration and manifestation of the holy trinity by emphasizing the relationship between media, advertising, sport, and male consumers. How and why, then, do advertisers seek to reach men through beer advertising, and what are the possible consequences for society, gender relations, and contemporary forms of citizenship?

Strate (1992) identified five basic questions that can guide explorations of what it means to be a man in contemporary society: (1) What kinds of things do men do? (2) What kinds of settings do men prefer? (3) How do men relate to each other? (4) How do boys become men? (5) How do men relate to women? Further, Strate asserts that beer advertisements provide valuable insights into these questions given that "no other industry's commercials focus so exclusively and so exhaustively on images of the man's man" (p. 78). To this end, Strate suggests that the power and pervasiveness of beer advertisements are such that they serve as a virtual "manual on masculinity":

The manifest function of beer advertising is to promote a particular brand, but collectively the commercials provide a clear and consistent image of the masculine role; in a sense, they constitute a guide for becoming a man, a rulebook for appropriate male behavior, in short, a manual on masculinity. (p. 78)

Yet, beer is not just a commodity that is symbolically used and consumed to perform and confirm masculinity. Rather, its extensive promotional representations through advertising also serve as both mirrors and systems of surveillance where men evaluate themselves and other men. At this point we examine one particular beer brand, Molson Canadian, as the quintessential example of the articulation between the holy trinity and corporate nationalism in Canada. Specifically, the following sections explore how Molson has endeavoured to link beer consumption with both national and masculine identities in Canada, and highlight the increasingly intertwined spheres of consumption and citizenship.

Molson Beer Advertisements: Manuals on Masculinity for Canadian Males

Founded in 1786, Molson is the oldest brewery in North America and, after merging with Coors (from the United States) in 2005, is now part of one of the world's largest super-breweries. Through careful management of the family-owned trademark, including links with a wide range of sport leagues, teams, venues, and events, Molson emerged as "one of the few brands in Canada with the heritage and ubiquity needed to become an

icon" (Molson Canadian, 2001). Yet Molson's success was not easy and the company has always faced stiff competition.

Molson's "The Rant" Campaign

In the mid-1990s Molson was facing a loss of market share to its number-one rival in Canada, Labatt. In response, Molson undertook what is best described as a brand soul search, carefully reviewing its position through a range of market research techniques including surveys, qualitative observation, and focus groups. Notably, as much as Molson was interested in how consumers perceived their brand they also wanted to gain insight into what young people, and young men in particular, felt about Canada, nationalism, and national identity. With the market research completed on March 26, 2000, Molson purchased a single television advertising spot during the Academy Awards. The ad, titled "The Rant," quickly became an advertising phenomenon both within and outside Canada, capturing the national imagination. Of particular note with respect to this analysis is the fact that sport played a key role in the campaign during the spring of 2000. Although Labatt Breweries held the sponsorship rights to one of the longest running and highest rating sporting programs on television, *Hockey Night in Canada*, Molson strategically maintained team sponsorships with all six of the existing Canadian franchises of the National Hockey League (NHL) and was thus able to gain brand exposure via signage and other promotions. Perhaps most significant was the live performance of Joe Canadian (played by actor Jeff Douglas) who performed "The Rant" live at NHL games in both Toronto and Ottawa during the playoffs. Although the "The Rant" campaign has been described and analyzed by others (Jackson & Ponir, 2001; MacGregor, 2003; Manning, 2000), I include it here because it serves as an important point of departure for understanding subsequent Molson advertising campaigns.

I am not a lumberjack or a fur trader. I don't live in an igloo or eat blubber or own a dogsled. And I don't know Jimmy, Sally or Susie from Canada, although I'm certain they're really, really nice. I have a Prime Minister, not a President. I speak English and French, not American. I pronounce it about, not "aboot." I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack. I believe in peacekeeping not policing, diversity not assimilation, that the beaver is a truly proud and noble animal. A toque is a hat, a chesterfield is a couch, and it is pronounced "Zed," not "Zee," "Zed." Canada is the second largest land mass, the first nation of hockey and the best part of North America. My name is Joe, and I AM CANADIAN! Thank you. (quoted in Garfield, 2000)

Drawing upon a wide range of stereotypes, the commercial is a humble salute to many self-proclaimed positive features of being Canadian: friendly, polite, bilingual, multicultural, champions at ice hockey, and advocates of peace. Of equal importance, the entire advertisement is an illustration of how identity is defined out of difference, in this case by differentiating Canada from its southern neighbour, the United States (Jackson, 1998). The advertisement was widely celebrated both for its humour and its ability to capture the essence of Canadian identity. Just under a decade after "The Rant," Molson launched a multiplatform campaign titled "The Code" that mirrored, in many ways, various aspects

of the previous advertising campaign. The next section focuses on "The Code" and its role in articulating sport, beer, masculinity, and national identity in Canada.

Molson's "The Code" Campaign

In 2008, Molson built upon its earlier success by further linking its Canadian beer brand with national identity through a series of advertisements referred to as "The Code." Similar to "The Rant," "The Code" campaign draws upon a range of Canadian stereotypes, involves a bit of national self-mocking, and is overwhelmingly male dominated. The focus on men and masculinity in "The Code" campaign, however, is much more explicit than any previous examples from Molson. Specifically, "The Code" campaign directly links the Molson brand to both masculinity and nationalism. Throughout the campaign, this occurs rather effortlessly given that it makes repeated references to the sport of ice hockey—a gendered cultural institution and practice in Canada that conspicuously articulates nationalism and masculinity (Allain, 2008, 2011; Gee, 2009; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Whitson & Gruneau, 2006).

In total, Molson produced four television advertisements for "The Code" campaign series, and these were strategically released to air during the 2008 NHL playoffs. The appeal to men is fully acknowledged by Molson brand director Michael Shekter: "The strategy for [Molson] Canadian has not changed in years. The purpose of these ads is to reflect the role that Molson Canadian plays in the Canadian beer environment. It stands up for what it means to be a Canadian guy" (Lloyd, 2008).

In each advertisement, the audience hears dramatic music and a strong, serious, deep male voiceover accompanied by a series of fast-paced images corresponding to the dialogue. The narrative of the first of the four advertisements is provided below. To achieve consistency of brand communication, the ads all begin with "There is an unwritten code in Canada," and they all end with "This is our beer, Molson Canadian."

There's an unwritten code in Canada. If you live by it, chances are: You've left your coat on some pile, and knew it wouldn't get stolen. You've never made a move on your buddy's girlfriend. You know that on a road trip the strongest bladder determines the pit stops. You've kept all your hockey trophies. You've replaced someone's pint if you've knocked theirs over. If your buddy's in trouble, you've got his back. You've clapped for a dancer even though she shouldn't be a dancer. You've used a blowtorch to curve your stick. You've used your arm as an ice-scraper, and you've grown a beard in the post-season. This is our beer, Molson Canadian. ("The Code 1")

Throughout the series of four ads, numerous nationalistic signifiers are used to communicate the rules or "codes" of Canadian masculinity, including Canadian politeness and demonstrations of male strength and courage. Furthermore, there are two key signifiers of masculinity central to each advertisement: men's relationships with women and men's dedication to sport. Here, women occupy marginal, sexually themed positions as strippers; desperate, amorous girlfriends; and prospective one night stands. Yet these sexist representations are strategically mixed with humour or stereotyped Canadian courtesy and politeness to neutralize any insult or offence that might be taken. References to sport are evident throughout the series, not only with respect to the NHL playoffs but

also in regard to the meaning of hockey to Canadian males. The ad used iconic signifiers of Canadian hockey, including long-standing traditions such as growing a beard during the playoffs, using a blowtorch to curve one's hockey stick, driving long distances just to play a game, or the nonchalant parading of real or metaphorical badges of competition, such as keeping old hockey trophies and proudly displaying a hockey scar.

Reminiscent of Strate's (1992) manual on masculinity, "The Code" offers a catalogue of defining characteristics and guidelines for Canadian men. However, the opening catchphrase, "There's an unwritten code in Canada," suggests these rules are not formal and explicit; rather, there is a subtle expectation that they are known. To this extent, the codes infer hegemony, whereby they form part of a widely accepted common sense for many Canadian males. As Williams (2009) notes, "Because the code is unwritten, and hence lost, the advertisement goes on to list not what the code states, but what the effects of following it look like; this allows you to know you're doing your job as a Canadian man without memorizing a bunch of rules and stuff." According to Aaron Starkman, creative director at Zig Advertising, the agency credited with developing the campaign, "We wanted to continue to exemplify the values of the young Canadian guy in a heroic way. . . . This year's commercials are more honed in on beer occasions" (Lloyd, 2008). Thus, according to this cultural intermediary, the campaign was not simply about representing both masculinity and national identity but celebrating and articulating them with particular "beer moments," which are often highly gendered or exclusive male spaces and zones. And, in light of various discussions and debates about a contemporary crisis of masculinity (Atkinson, 2011; Clare, 2000; Edwards, 2006), these exclusive male spaces and zones serve as the means to enable the construction, negotiation, and even the evaluation of masculinities (West, 2001).

In a more recent rejuvenation of the previous "I Am Canadian" campaigns, Molson launched "The Beer Fridge" promotional initiative in 2013. Developed by its new advertising agency Rethink, Molson set up red branded fridges throughout Europe (later expanding to other geographic regions), inviting Canadians travelling abroad to insert their passports to open the fridge to get a free beer (in subsequent campaigns the fridge asked passers-by to say "I am Canadian" or to sing the national anthem to gain entry). The initiative was an immediate success, and Molson further capitalized by developing multiplatform Internet and television ads with one screening during the 2013 NHL Stanley Cup playoffs. In its own way, this promotional campaign clearly articulates the holy trinity, corporate nationalism, and consumer citizenship whereby Canadians are asked to provide proof of citizenship (a passport) to consume the Molson brand. Since 2013, Molson has continued to develop campaigns that articulate Canadian nationalism, masculinity, and the national game of ice hockey, including their highly successful #AnythingForHockey initiative.

#AnythingForHockey Campaign

Unveiled for the 2013–14 hockey season, Molson's #AnythingForHockey campaign was a response to the 2012 NHL lockout and intended to rejuvenate fan interest in the game and the brand. Through a range of social media platforms, including the Molson website, Facebook, and Twitter, the brand invited fans to show how much they loved hockey by demonstrating the extreme lengths they would go to celebrate the game. Advertising agency Rethink also developed #AnythingForHockey, which debuted on CBC's *Hockey Night in Canada* during a game between the Toronto Maple Leafs and Montreal Canadiens in October 2013. A 30-second spot titled "The Hockey Sacrifice" launched the campaign

and featured a man who voluntarily allows his family heirloom grandfather clock to be put into a wood chipper in exchange for tickets to an NHL game. The ad ends with a text trailer that reads "Tell us what you'd do for hockey" and invites the audience to share their ideas using the hashtag #AnythingForHockey. According to Chris Blackburn, senior marketing manager for Molson Canadian in Toronto, "Hockey represents an extremely important pillar of our strategy for the brand" (Powell, 2013). Thus, it was no surprise that as part of the campaign Molson Coors also introduced NHL-themed Canadian and Coors Light cans, further articulating the brand with both ice hockey and Canadian identity.

Since 2013–14, the #AnythingForHockey campaign has expanded and fans have been encouraged and rewarded for submitting stories, photos, and videos explaining what they would do for hockey. Among the thousands of postings on the Molson website (www.molsoncanadian.ca/anythingforhockey) are examples of fans who got married at hockey games, displayed selfies of themselves drinking cans of Molson Canadian, and people overcoming serious injuries or medical conditions to attend games. In this way Canadians, through new forms of social media, become both producers and consumers of both self- and national identity specifically through the Molson brand and its sponsorship of hockey. One particular part of the campaign was "Hockey Heaven," where winning stories were rewarded with a helicopter flight to play on a remote and specially designed rink in the mountains. In one touching story, which was the basis of a Molson commercial that aired during the 2015 World Junior Ice Hockey Championship, Vitaly Lanochkin surprises his father, Andrei, with a trip where the two skate upon pristine ice on glacial Shamrock Lake in the Purcell Mountain range just outside of the Canadian Rockies. During the ad Vitaly tells the story of how his Russian-born father, who became the Estonian national team coach, decided to move to Canada for a better life for his family. We witness their close friendship, complete with sharing alone time on the ice. The commercial ends with a helicopter delivering a red-and-white fridge full of Molson Canadian beer. This storyline allowed Molson to tell a heart-warming story about the special bond between a father and son through their mutual love of hockey. And beyond this, Molson is able to represent Canada's multicultural identity and align it with both the national game and the brand. Yet the ad raises a number of questions. For example, to what extent is #AnythingForHockey really about men doing anything for hockey—is this inclusive of all men and, if not, which men? Furthermore, inasmuch as this ad is about men doing anything for hockey, what is the message to girls and women?

Extending the #AnythingForHockey campaign, in 2016 Molson developed an idea to show how seriously Canadians take hockey. The result was a rooftop ice rink on a 32-storey building located at 120 Adelaide Street West in downtown Toronto. According to Molson Canadian marketing manager Duncan Fraser,

We can't be a company or brand that just says we're irrationally obsessed for anything about hockey; we need to prove that we are too. That's where the rink on the mountains came from. We loved it and we thought it was such a successful campaign, but we thought the biggest miss for us was the fact that people weren't going to be able to access it. That drove us to where we are today. (Rosen, 2016)

Molson, in conjunction with its advertising agency Rethink and media production company Rodeo FX, created the "New Heights" campaign that not only featured television commercials and a social media platform but, like previous #AnythingForHockey initiatives,

included a contest where consumers had a chance to win ice time to skate on the unique rink.

Collectively, Molson's "I Am Canadian" campaigns (including "The Rant," "The Code," and "The Beer Fridge") and their later #AnythingForHockey ads can be viewed as producing and representing particular hegemonic codes or guidelines of masculine nationalisms and national masculinisms (Jackson, 2014) intended exclusively for Canadian males. This is carefully and creatively achieved through a range of images, narratives, and stereotypes that articulate the holy trinity (sport, beer, and masculinity) with a particular expression of nationalism that embodies certain expectations of citizenship.

More recently, as part of Canada's 150th birthday celebrations, Molson once again seized the opportunity to articulate its brand with notions of Canadian identity. Notably, through its #ATasteOfWhoWeAre campaign, Molson offers one of its most explicit links between consumption of its beer and Canadian character and identity through the use of words like "taste" and phrases like "who we are." Launched in May 2017, the campaign was inspired by founder John Molson, who in 1782 was quoted as saying "we are all members of a larger community, which depends on everyone playing their part." Linking the company's past and present, seventh-generation family member and chair of Molson Coors, Geoff Molson, fronts a television advertisement inviting people to nominate Canadians who both inspire and represent the nation's character defined according to the five C's: Connection, Class, Celebration, Commitment, and Contribution. The top 150 nominees receive a specially designed red Molson beer fridge and the opportunity to be featured in corporate promotional campaigns. Although aspects of both sport and masculinity feature in a number of the storylines of nominees, the campaign is much broader. According to Molson marketing director Chris Blackburn,

Today, we as Canadians represent a diversity that is being recognized globally like never before. . . . It is our unique strength of character that makes us stand apart, and Molson Canadian wants to celebrate special individuals across this great country during this milestone year by giving them a memorable reward from Canada's beer. (Molson Coors Canada, 2017)

Thus, celebrating Canada's diversity appears to be a key theme. Whether or not there was less focus on sport, and ice hockey in particular, given that the campaign was launched in May and summer was on its way is not clear. What is clear is that Molson's #ATasteOfWhoWeAre campaign is the latest in a long-standing series of campaigns that articulate the brand, consumption, and particular signifiers of Canadian identity.

Corporate Nationalism and Global Hegemonic Masculinity

Clearly, the phenomenon of corporate nationalism that we are referring to is not limited to one brand of beer, Molson, and one national context, Canada. Thus, a further important and immediate question is whether or not the articulation of the holy trinity and national identity is operating within other national contexts around the globe. Even a cursory review of the consolidation and globalization of the brewing industry reveals that an increasing number of similarly themed promotional campaigns have been used in other

beer markets. This leads to a second question: What are the implications of the synergies operating between the global brewing industry, global media conglomerates, major sport organizations, and, perhaps equally significant, global advertising agencies with respect to the construction of local, regional, national, and international masculinities? Consider Messerschmidt's (2008) comments about the relationship between local, regional, and global contexts and how masculinity operates within these spaces:

Local hegemonic masculinities are constructed in the arenas of face-to-face interaction of families, organizations, and immediate communities; regional hegemonic masculinities are constructed at the society-wide level of the nation-state; and global hegemonic masculinities are constructed in such international arenas as geopolitics and trans-national business and media. (p. 106)

In essence, Messerschmidt raises the idea of a global masculinity. This is not necessarily a new idea, but within the context of global consumer capitalism's impact on local cultures and lived experiences the implications are enormous. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explain, "Global institutions pressure regional and local gender orders; while regional gender orders provide cultural materials adopted or reworked in global arenas and provide models of masculinity that may be important in local gender dynamics" (p. 849). While many may wonder why scholars should be interested in something as trivial as beer advertising, hopefully this chapter demonstrates that the answer lies within the powerful and complex links between the global beer industry, global sport, and global advertising industries: in effect, a globalizing holy trinity that is articulated through corporate nationalism.

Conclusion

The holy trinity and its particular nation-based manifestations offer—for a number of reasons—a unique site through which the complexities and contradictions of contemporary identity formation can be explored. First, both masculinity and national identity have been commodified; that is, while they operate as subjectivities that we embody, they are increasingly available through various forms of consumption, thus confirming the articulation of the citizen-consumer. With respect to the commodification of masculinity, Holt and Thompson's (2004) compensatory consumption thesis asserts that "Men use the plasticity of consumer identity construction to forge atavistic masculine identities based upon an imagined life of self-reliant, pre-modern men who lived outside the confines of cities, families, and work bureaucracies" (p. 426). As such, further explorations of the nature and motivation of men seeking to find or express their masculinity (and nationalism) through consumption is warranted.

Second, within the context of globalization, all identities (including national and masculine) are being reconceptualized in response to an emerging set of shifting power relations. In turn, this has sparked calls for a reconceptualization of Connell's (1987) original notion of hegemonic masculinity, which has been widely critiqued for a range of reasons (Demetriou, 2001; Moller, 2007), including its implicit advocacy for a homogeneous, globally standard form of manhood. However, if the production, representation, and consumption of global commodities such as sport and beer are increasingly being controlled by a powerful group of corporations and their attendant promotional agencies, the

possibility of, and the potential for, a form of transnational masculinity might be envisaged. Indeed, this particular form of masculinity may find its roots in the very structures, policies, and strategies that underpin macrolevel organizations, including state organizations and also global corporations and their advertising agencies. For example, Connell (2001) uses the term "transnational business masculinity" to refer to "the hegemonic form of masculinity in the current world gender order . . . associated with those who control its dominant institutions: the business executives who operate in global markets, and the political executives who interact (and in many contexts merge) with them" (p. 369). According to Connell (2001), it is the symbolic power of masculinity, including its link with sport, that makes it an appealing and powerful vehicle within promotional culture:

Transnational business masculinity does not require a powerful physique, since the patriarchal dividend on which it rests is accumulated by impersonal, institutional means. But corporations increasingly use images of the exemplary bodies of elite sportsmen as a marketing tool (as seen in the exceptional growth of corporate "sponsorship" of sport in the last generation), and indirectly as a means of legitimization for the whole global gender order. (pp. 53–4)

Thus, while there are ongoing challenges to various gender orders, particular forms of dominant (hegemonic) masculinity are being reinvented, reinserted, and reproduced through transnational corporations that use the promotional technologies at their disposal to articulate masculine nationalism and masculine nationalisms with the holy trinity. For example, consider that in 2016 Anheuser-Busch InBev beer corporation was involved in a \$100 billion-plus takeover of rival SABMiller, the biggest corporate acquisition in the history of the industry, "ushering in a new world order for the beer industry" (Mickle, 2016). The transaction made AB InBev the largest beer corporation in the world, nearly twice the size of its nearest rival, Heineken. Notably, for the takeover to gain regulatory approval AB InBev had to sell SABMiller's 58 per cent stake in MillerCoors to Molson Coors Brewing Company with the \$12 billion acquisition making Molson Coors, the world's third most-profitable brewer (Mickle, 2016). The result of these types of corporate mergers and acquisitions is that a larger percentage of global beer brands are controlled by fewer, more consolidated and influential interests. However, from another perspective there are other far-ranging social and political implications with respect to how these global corporations are able to articulate their diverse range of brands to local markets and how these may play a role in constructing our various identities and transforming us from citizens into consumers.

Review Questions

1. Identify and explain the social significance of the "holy trinity."
2. Explain why sport is considered by some to be one of the final frontiers of masculinity.
3. Describe how the specific Molson advertising campaigns discussed in this chapter construct both the stereotypical Canadian and stereotypical male consumer.
4. Explain how the global beer industry could influence both national and masculine identity.

Activity

Watch professional sports programming, either on television or online. Identify and describe any beer advertisements or sponsorships. Explain how they engage with themes of corporate nationalism or offer "manuals on masculinity."

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HOW ADVERTISING APPEALS

Chapter 2

What Is Sex in Advertising? Perspectives From Consumer Behavior and Social Science Research

Tom Reichert
University of Alabama

While speaking to a group of advertising executives in 1968, Thomas Shepard, publisher of *Look* magazine, went on record as saying that the days of scantily clad models in advertising were numbered. He foretold of a day in the not-so-distant future when advertisers would resort to putting clothing on models to grab consumer attention, instead of taking it off ("Nudity is Ad Fad," 1968). Shepard was referring to advertising's reflection of the sexual revolution in the mid- to late-1960s, but by most indications his prediction was in the wrong direction. A recent *Adweek* poll revealed that more than 70% of respondents think there is too much sexual imagery in advertising (Dolliver, 1999), and advertising analyses suggest ads are more sexual than ever before (Lin, 1998; Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, & Zavolna, 1999; Soley & Reid, 1988).

Although Shepard was referring to nudity, he was probably aware that other forms of sexual information are woven into ads. For example, a recent Revelstoke whiskey ad depicts a man getting a lap dance in a gentlemen's club. Women in Clairol Herbal Essences commercials exclaim "Yes! Yes! Yes!" as they wash their hair in service station restrooms and airplane lavatories. And print ads for Christian Dior feature female models in unmistakably sexual embraces. These ads are all examples of sex in advertising, but they involve more than just scantily clad models. Because sexual content can vary in form and meaning, it is important to provide an overview of re-

curing representations of sex in advertising. As such, this chapter reviews sex in advertising research with the purpose of identifying common types of sexual information.

The lion's share of academic research pertaining to sex in advertising exists in the consumer behavior domain. Advertising and marketing researchers have studied this topic since the 1960s, and it is easy to understand why. Their investigations are concerned with understanding consumer responses to sexually oriented marketing communications in an effort to increase the practicality of effects.

Most studies examine the effects of sexual ads from the information processing (McGuire, 1968, 1972) and hierarchy of effects perspectives (Barry, 1987; Stewart, Pechmann, Ratneshwar, Stroud, & Bryant, 1985). These approaches assume persuasion occurs in a linear manner. Information must first be noticed and encoded before receivers become receptive to it, yield to it, and ultimately act in accordance with the recommendation. Important dependent variables include attention, cognition, recognition, recall, and purchase intention. Brand-name recall, unaided memory of the brand name, is an important outcome in this research because it assesses whether brand information is encoded or not. For example, Reid and Soley (1983) examined the effect of decorative female models on ad attention and message processing. In a seminal study, Steadman (1969) examined the impact of nude women in magazine ads on brand-name recall. The results of these studies (for review, see Belch, Belch, & Villarreal, 1987; Percy & Rossiter, 1992; Reichert, in press) lend tentative support to the generalization that attention and processing resources are directed toward the sexual information in ads, resulting in fewer resources available to process brand information.

Recently, researchers have examined the impact of emotion (affect and arousal) evoked by sexual information on evaluations of the ad and the brand (Jones, Stanaland, & Gelb, 1998; LaTour, 1990; LaTour & Henthorne, 1993). Investigations of emotional effects center on the concept of attitude-toward-the-ad (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Muehling & McCann, 1993). Findings from these studies suggest that the relationship between evaluations and sexual imagery are complex and depend on several contextual and individual difference variables. For example, evaluations can be influenced by sex of the respondent, sex of the model/actor (LaTour, 1990), level of explicitness (LaTour & Henthorne, 1994), and relevance to the brand (Peterson & Kerin, 1977; Simpson, Horton, & Brown, 1996). The processing approaches were the first to be used to understand how sex influences advertising effectiveness. As a result, most of what is known about sex appeals is limited to processing effects, with attitude research providing additional insight. To fully understand the effects of sexual information in ads, however, it is important to consider the types of sexual content that have been tested.

WHAT IS SEX IN ADVERTISING?

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart stated that, at least for him, pornography was easy to identify: "I know it when I see it" (*Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 1964, p. 804). When conceptualizing sex in advertising, it is important to move beyond individual-level interpretations to conceptions that are more useful. Fortunately, there are types of stimuli that groups of people predictably recognize and consider as sex in advertising.

As a basic working definition, an instance of sex in advertising can be thought of as a sexual appeal. By its very nature, advertising is an applied form of persuasion that attempts to inform, position, convince, reinforce, differentiate, and ultimately sell products and services. As such, sexual appeals are persuasive appeals that contain sexual information integrated within the overall message (Reichert, Heckler, & Jackson, 2001). Sexual information, defined by Harris (1994) as "any representation that portrays or implies sexual interest, behavior, or motivation" (p. 206), is often integrated within the advertisement as images, verbal elements, or both. For example, ads can contain images of attractive people clothed in revealing or tight-fitting clothing, or contain verbal elements such as double-entendres and sexually suggestive words and phrases. Often, both elements coalesce to create sexual meaning in ads.

Aside from simply containing sexual content, sexual information in ads can be integrated within the message to greater or lesser degrees. For example, some ads contain images of blatant nudity or models engaged in erotic liaisons. On the other hand, some ads contain only a hint of sexual suggestion, perhaps a subtle innuendo or play on words. In many cases, people consider images of fully clothed, physically attractive women and men to be sexually attractive, and thus, a subtle instance of sex in advertising.

What follows is a review of common types of sexual stimuli researched in advertising, and to a lesser degree, mass communication research. The following categories also provide a framework for conceptions of sex in advertising as they are presented in the chapters contained in this book (see Table 2.1).

Types of Sexual Information in Advertising

Nudity. It almost goes without saying that people, and revealing displays of their bodies, constitute an essential source of sexual information. In a recent study, participants were asked to think of a sexual ad, and then to identify the characteristics of that ad that made it sexual to them (Reichert & Ramirez, 2000). Without exception, physical aspects of the people in ads—physiques and revealing clothing—were mentioned most often. Common responses referred to chiseled chests, short skirts, tight

TABLE 2.1
Types of Sexual Content Identified in Advertising Research.

Type	Description
Nudity/Dress	Amount and style of clothing worn by models. Examples include revealing displays of the body, ranging from tight-fitting clothing, to underwear and lingerie, to nudity.
Sexual Behavior	Individual and interpersonal sexual behavior. Includes flirting, eye contact, posturing, and movement (body language, nonverbal and verbal communication). Sexual interaction between two or more people typically includes hugging, kissing, voyeurism, and more intimate forms of sexual behavior.
Physical Attractiveness	General level of model's physical beauty. Often incorporates facial beauty, complexion, hair, and physique.
Sexual Referents	Allusions and references to objects and events that have sexual meaning by means of double entendre and innuendo. Also includes facilitating factors that enhance or contribute to sexual meaning, such as setting, music, lighting, design elements, camera techniques, and editing.
Sexual Embeds	Content interpreted as sexual at the subconscious level. Includes words like sex, nonsexual perceptible objects that can connote sexual body parts and sexual actions, and small images of genitalia, body parts, and people.

tops, muscular arms, breasts, bikinis, bare midriffs, and lingerie (see Fig. 2.1). Given that other forms of sexual content (e.g., erotica and pornography in magazines, romance novels, videos; Brown & Bryant, 1989) depict people, typically in various stages of undress, it is reasonable to assume that models in various stages of undress represent a fundamental type of sex in advertising.

Indeed, nearly all sex in advertising studies have examined levels of nudity as a form of sexual content. For example, advertising content analyses have assessed nudity and body display in magazine ads and commercials (Lin, 1998; Soley & Reid, 1988). Similarly, nudity has been assessed in main-

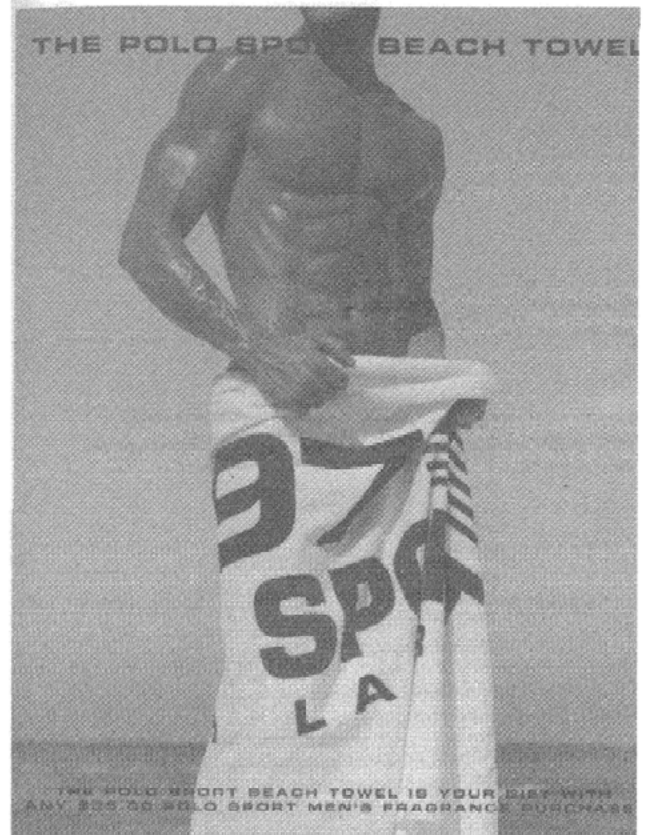


Fig. 2.1. Revealing displays of the body are considered sexual by most people.

stream mass communication analyses of primetime television programming (Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991), music videos (Seidman, 1992), film (Dempsey & Reichert, 2000; Greenberg et al., 1993), and network promotional messages (Walker, 2000).

The term *nudity* does not imply that models are completely unclothed. In this research, the term generally refers to the amount and style of clothing worn by models. In a typical study, images of female models in progressive stages of undress (e.g., suggestive, partially revealing, and nude; Soley & Reid, 1988) are integrated into ads representing different levels of nudity. Suggestive dress is often represented by open blouses with partially exposed cleavage, tight-fitting clothing that accentuates the body, and mini-skirts. Partially clad models wear underwear or bathing suits. Nudity ranges from implications that models are not wearing clothing to full-frontal nudity. Because complete nudity is extremely rare in mainstream advertising, nudity is often represented by side and back shots of the model, tub and shower scenes, and in some cases, frontal nudity from the waist up (see Fig. 2.2).

Experimental studies test the effects of nudity levels on advertising processes and outcomes. Investigators compare responses to ads with sexually dressed models to ads with either demurely dressed models or no model at all (i.e., pastoral scenes; for example, see LaTour, 1990). Common dependent variables include attention, attitude-toward-the-ad, cognitions about the ad and/or brand, and ad/brand recognition and recall (Alexander & Judd, 1978; Belch, Holgerson, Belch, & Koppman, 1981; Jones et al., 1998; Judd & Alexander, 1983; LaTour, 1990; LaTour & Henthorne, 1993; Peterson & Kerin, 1977; Sciglimpaglia, Belch, & Cain, 1978; Severn, Belch, & Belch, 1990; P. Simpson et al., 1996; Steadman, 1969). Consequently, most of what is known about the effects of sexual ads pertains to the effects of people (i.e., women) in various stages of undress.

An assumption in these studies is that sex is synonymous with nudity, and that risqué clothing, or lack thereof, is the primary determinant of sexual response. In actuality, other aspects of partially clothed models (e.g., physical attractiveness, facial expression, eye contact with viewer) also contribute to sexual perceptions. Researchers assume that a linear relationship exists between progressive levels of undress and sexual arousal (e.g., the less clothing someone is wearing, the sexier he/she is). Although true in most cases, there are situations in which nude models are not sexually appealing, while fully clothed models are. Revealing displays of the body are an important component of sexual interest and sexual attraction, but limiting sex in advertising to nudity neglects other, often more important determinants of sexual attraction such as behavior, physical interaction, and sexual contexts.

Sexual Behavior. Pornography can be defined as "the visual (and sometimes aural) representation of living, moving bodies engaged in explicit ... sex acts" (Williams, 1989, p. 30). Although sexual content in mainstream advertising omits the sex act, it does include sexually provocative

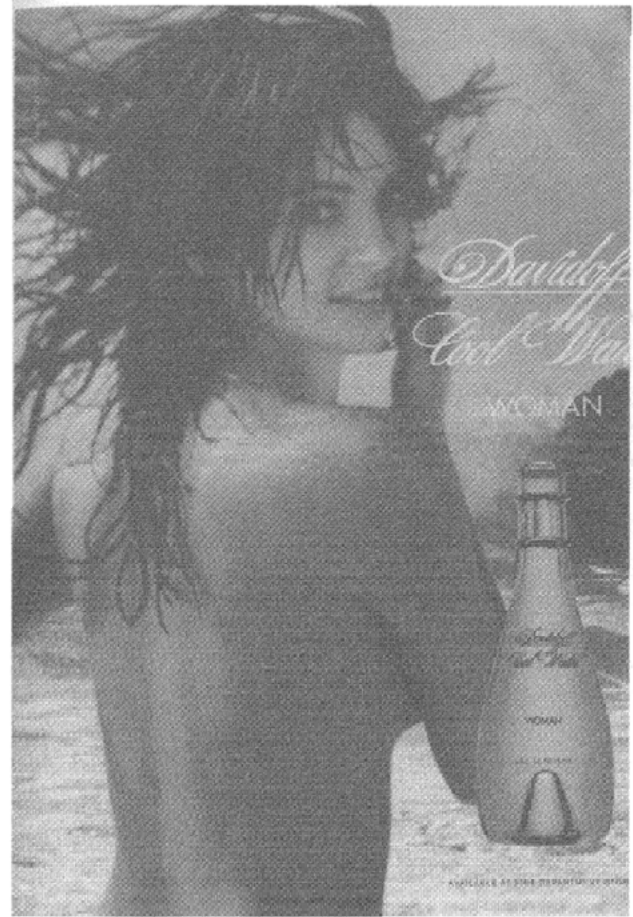


Fig. 2.2. Full nudity in advertising is often represented by implied nudity or side shots.

behavioral displays. Models are filmed and photographed in enticing poses and positions—sometimes with other models, sometimes alone. In an analysis of magazine ads from 1993, more than half of ads that contained both men and women portrayed the couples engaging in sexual contact (Reichert et al., 1999).

Sexual behavior can be woven into ads in two ways, as individual behavior or interpersonal interaction. Models behave sexually in ads by making eye contact with the viewer, flirting, and moving provocatively. In these ways, models can communicate sexual interest with the viewer or simply attempt to elicit sexual arousal. In the Reichert and Ramirez (2000) study, sexual behavior was mentioned by about 40% of respondents. Respondents referred to the model's behavior (e.g., pose, walk, hip movement), the model's demeanor (e.g., sultry), and the model's words and tone of voice. Behavioral characteristics of models in sexual ads are similar to those of people enacting flirting behavior (Simpson, Gangestad, & Nations, 1996), including eye contact, open postures, bedroom eyes, and inviting smiles. For example, the model in the Pepe Jeans magazine ad in Fig. 2.3 communicates sexual interest with her pose, facial expression, and eye contact with the viewer. Similarly, the model in the *Maxim* promotional ad is physically attractive, but it is her expression that is designed to elicit a sexual response (see Fig. 2.4).

Audiovisual characteristics of television commercials can accentuate sexual behavior by showing models moving and talking seductively. Bello, Pitts, and Etzel (1983) analyzed the effects of a commercial containing sexual behavior when they compared the communication effectiveness of the infamous Calvin Klein jeans commercial featuring Brooke Shields to a less provocative version of the commercial. In the ad, Shields sits on the floor in an open position while the camera pans slowly from her foot to her body. Shields looks at the camera and says, "Do you know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing." Double entendre and other sexual elements were certainly at play, but Shields' body positioning and vocalics contributed to the construction of sexiness in the ad. Lin (1998) attempted to capture sexual behavior in commercials by creating a simple coding protocol that measured sexual appeal in primetime commercials. The coding scheme assessed the model's persona as conveyed by verbal and nonverbal behavior.

A second form of behavior in sexual ads involves two models—sometimes more—shown engaging in sexual contact. The degree of explicitness and progressiveness of the encounter can vary from portrayals of voyeurism, to simple displays of affection, to inferred intercourse (see Fig. 2.5). In advertising, Soley and Kurzbard (1986) used a four-level ordinal scale to analyze physical contact between models. Any time a heterosexual couple appeared in an ad, physical contact was coded as not touching, displaying

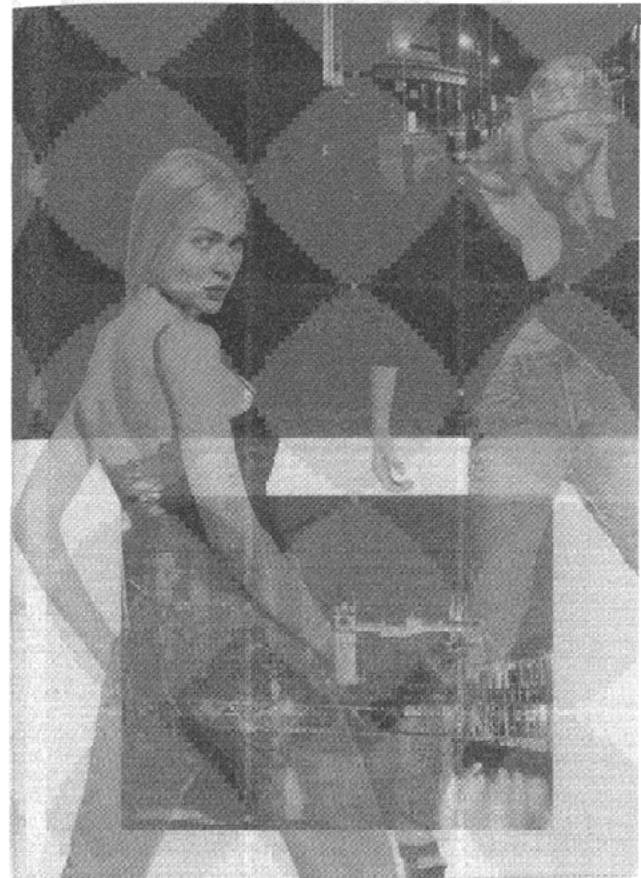


Fig. 2.3. The woman in the Pepe Jeans ad communicates sexual interest with her facial expressions and behavior.



Fig. 2.4. The female model's facial expression and mussed hair in the Maxim promotional ad contribute to viewers' sexual perceptions.



Fig. 2.5. Models engaging in sexual behavior (together) is another form of sex in advertising.

simple contact (e.g., holding hands), more intimate contact (e.g., kissing, embracing, playful wrestling), or depictions of intercourse (e.g., implied, suggestion of). For example, the couple in the Durex condom ad would be categorized at the most intimate level.

The effects of suggestive behavior have been tested several ways. For example, Belch et al. (1981) and Sciglimpaglia et al. (1978) tested responses to images of heterosexual couples in various degrees of physical contact. Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson (2001) tested ad pairs for 13 social marketing topics containing images of sexual or nonsexual depictions of couples. Similarly, LaTour and Henthorne (1994) compared two print ads with images of couples at two different stages of sexual interaction. In the moderately sexual ad, the heterosexual couple was holding hands, whereas the couple in the highly sexual ad was positioned in a sexually suggestive embrace with the woman's naked breasts and abdomen covered by the man's arm as they kissed passionately. In addition, Severn et al. (1990) compared two visuals for Fox sports shoes. Consider the researchers' description of one of the visuals

The ... advertisement showed a side profile of two adults from the chest down—one male and one female—completely nude except for the advertised sports shoes and matching socks. The models were shown in a position clearly suggesting sexual intercourse. (pp. 16–17)

Sexual behavior is a central variable in analyses of sexual media content. In television programming, behavior is analyzed by explicitness and arrayed according to levels of sexual intimacy (e.g., hugging, kissing, petting, oral sex, intercourse; Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991), as well as categories of implied and explicit sexual behavior: rape, homosexual acts, intercourse, prostitution, petting, and miscellaneous (Greenberg, Graef, Fernandez-Collado, Korzeny, & Atkin, 1980). Intercourse (implied and references to) and petting are reflective of advertising content.

Physical Attractiveness. According to psychologist David Buss (1994), physical attractiveness among humans is a trait that is central for predicting interpersonal attraction and mate selection. In his cross-cultural study, Buss argued that features of physical appearance, including facial beauty and complexion, play a central role in sexual interest and desire. There is little doubt a link exists between physical attractiveness and sexual interest. For this reason, physically attractive models in advertising can be—and often are—considered examples of sex in advertising.

In marketing and advertising studies, physical attractiveness is often operationalized by having members of the respondent pool rate photographs of people (e.g., Baker & Churchill, 1977; Caballero, Lumpkin, & Madden, 1989; Caballero & Pride, 1984). Determination of attractiveness levels (high, moderate, low) is made by comparing mean ratings. As Joseph (1982) pointed out, there is little discussion of what constitutes physical attractiveness in the photos, but most likely it is linked to facial features. More recent studies, however, ask respondents to consider the model's hair, face,

complexion, eye contact, dress, physique, and behavior when rating attractiveness (Brumbaugh, 1993; Englis, Solomon, & Ashmore, 1994).

Work by Solomon and colleagues has identified types of physical beauty represented by female models in advertising. For example, Solomon, Ashmore, and Longo (1992) differentiated between six types of physical attractiveness: classic beauty, cuteness, sex kitten, sensuality, girl-next-door, and trendy. In a related study, it was determined that viewers are able to differentiate between sexual, cute, and trendy images of female physical attractiveness (Ashmore, Solomon, & Longo, 1996). These studies suggest that physical attractiveness is not one-dimensional, and research that simply compares general levels of attractiveness neglects factors such as inferred personality attributes about the models that can affect responses (Brumbaugh, 1993).

Agreement is mixed regarding how physical attractiveness works in advertising. Advertising researchers agree that attractive models draw attention to ads (Joseph, 1982). Researchers also agree that physical attractiveness can influence evaluations of ads (Baker & Churchill, 1977), but contributes little or no effect on behavior and purchase intention (Caballero et al., 1989). There is weak evidence that purchase behavior is higher when ads contain images of physically attractive people, but only for romantically linked products such as fragrances (Baker & Churchill, 1977). It has also been argued that attractive models serve as implicit arguments for the brand: Good-looking people use the brand, so the brand will make you better looking (Kahle & Homer, 1985). The effect of physical attractiveness may be greater for low-risk purchases or when consumers have limited ability, motivation, or opportunity to process marketing communication.

Joseph (1982) argued that research should differentiate between models who are pleasing in appearance and models who are sexy. Work on beauty types may provide information in that area, as it is obvious that not all attractive models elicit a sexual response. As an integral component of interpersonal attraction, physical attractiveness is an important ingredient in representations of sex in advertising.

Sexual Referents. Images and words that subtly refer to sex or that trigger sexual thoughts can also be considered examples of sex in advertising. These suggestive images are less tangible and are more oblique than graphic depictions of nudity or erotic behavior. Researchers have referred to sexual referents as "implicit" (Bello et al., 1983), because references to sex are implied or subtle (e.g., innuendo, double entendre).

In advertising, sexual referents can be defined as message elements (visual or verbal) that serve to elicit or educe sexual thoughts. Although this definition can encompass any type of sexual information, it is meant to refer to instances of sexual innuendo and allusion. Sexual content takes form in

the viewer's mind not in the ad. For example, Belch et al. (1981) quoted Freud when defining sexually suggestive content as "a command or piece of information that triggers or arouses an idea in a person's mind" (as cited in Belch et al., p. 424). Similarly, Richmond and Hartman (1982) labeled referents as *fantasy*, and defined it as "an appeal that links the product to imaginative wish fulfillment, implicitly promising fantasy gratification of sexual motives" (Tinkham & Reid, 1988, p. 118). The example was an ad for J&B Scotch featuring a close-up image of a smiling woman looking up and off the page with a man's hand on either side of her face. The caption read, "Whatever you've got going ... keep it going with J&B."

Sexual referents are different from other forms of sexual information because they depend on the receiver to interpret the message in the intended way. In this manner, referents work at a cognitive level by having viewers generate sexual thoughts, as opposed to making the sexual information explicit. Consider the sexual innuendo in the E-greetings ad in Fig. 2.6. The e-mail message has sexual meaning when accompanied by images that serve to trigger sexual thoughts. The ad supplies symbols that only have sexual meaning within the context of the message, and viewers have to put the pieces together by thinking about the connection between the message and the objects in the image. Sexual cognitions are a form of sexual response (Fisher, 1986), and in this context serve to stimulate cognitions instead of using graphic images that evoke visceral responses.

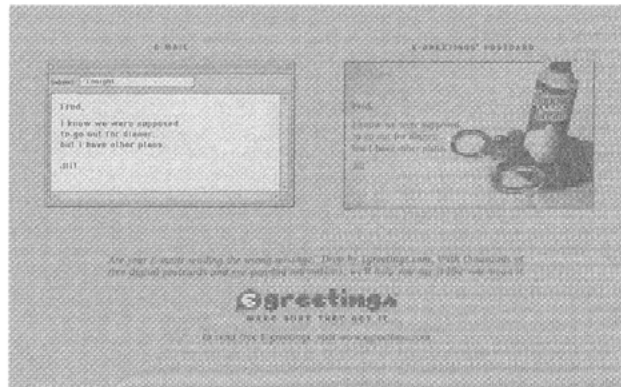


Fig. 2.6. The email message has additional meaning when accompanied by visual props.

Somewhat related to referents, elements of the ad apart from models can contribute to sexual meaning. The way commercials are filmed, along with design elements, camera effects, music, and lighting, can contribute to the construction of sexual meaning. In the Reichert and Ramirez (2000) study, 25% of respondents identified things about the ad other than models that contributed to sexual perceptions. For example, where the commercial was filmed (bedroom, exotic local) played a role in making an ad sexy. Often, these factors were mentioned in conjunction with *references* to physical aspects of models and their behavior. In this way, referents and objects other than the model serve to facilitate and enhance sexual interpretations.

Sexual Embeds. Although sex in advertising is a controversial topic in and of itself (see Gould, 1994), nothing in this area raises more debate than the supposed use of sexual embeds. Often referred to as subliminal advertising, *sexual embeds* are defined as referents or forms of sexual representation designed to be perceived subconsciously (Theus, 1994). Common types of embeds include: the word *sex*; objects that are shaped or positioned like genitalia and sexual acts; and small, hidden images of naked people, body parts, and genitalia. Sexual embeds are integrated into images by ad creators and are intended to go undetected by those viewing the ad. The use of embeds in advertising was popularized by Key in the 1970s and 1980s with the publication of his books *Subliminal Seduction* (1973) and *The Clam-Plate Orgy* (1986). Controversy pertains to the existence and supposed effects of sexual embeds.

Sexual embeds represent a type of sex in advertising because they consist of sexual information—albeit small and imperceptible. One class of sexual embed refers to sexual symbolism, which includes representations of objects that connote either genitalia or sexual acts (for review, see Ruth, Mosatche, & Kramer, 1989; Theus, 1994). For example, a receiver could subconsciously interpret an image of a cylindrical cologne bottle positioned at a 45-degree angle as an erect penis. Similarly, the image of a key inserted into a lock could represent intercourse. Consider the Baileys ad in Fig. 2.7. An advocate of embeds might argue that the positioning of the woman's finger in her open mouth would register as fellatio in the viewer's subconscious.

A second type of sexual embed is often characterized by hidden sexual images and words (for review, see Rosen & Singh, 1992). For example, these embeds are often represented by words and images of people and body parts (i.e., genitalia, breasts). The difference between the two types of embeds is that one consists of readily perceptible images of nonsexual objects, whereas the other consists of imperceptible sexual words and images. Both are similar because sexual content is perceived below conscious detection, and both are explained by the same operating premise. As embeds trigger unconscious recognition, they stimulate sexual arousal and motivation. Ultimately, ob-

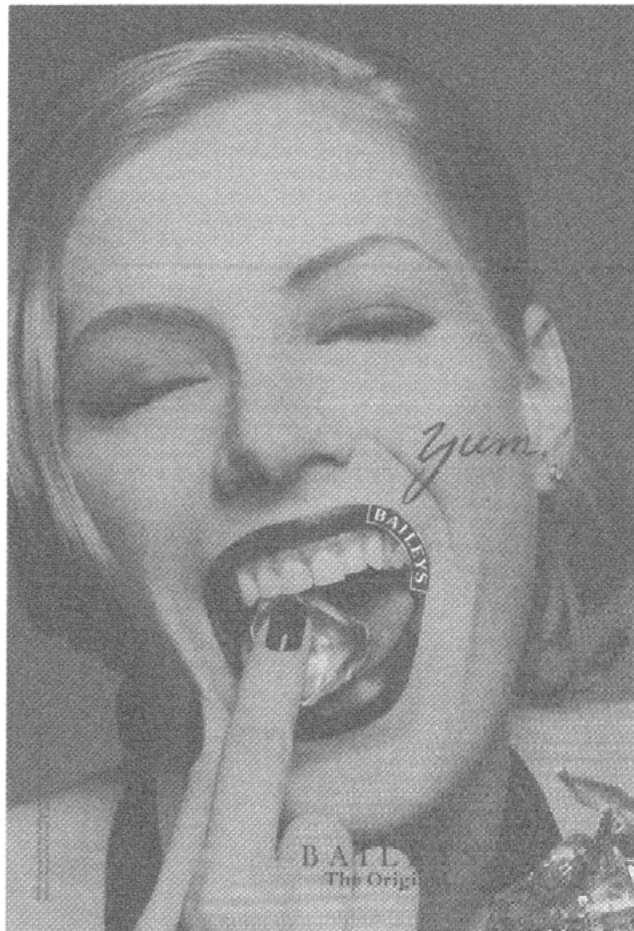


Fig. 2.7. Sexual embed advocates might argue the image in the Baileys' ad subconsciously represents fellatio.

servers are motivated toward goal-directed behavior (e.g., movement toward the stimulus). When embeds are consciously detected their power diminishes because viewers' defense mechanisms are stimulated.

The following two studies exemplify the controversy over embed effects. In one study, Ruth et al. (1989) examined the effect of images connoting genitalia in liquor ads on purchase intention. Using Freudian symbolism theory as a framework, the researchers hypothesized that embeds trigger unconscious recognition and motivation toward the stimulus (purchase intention). The results were such that respondents reported more intention to buy the advertised liquor after viewing ads with embeds (i.e., genital symbolism) compared to ads without embeds. Although the study involved a comparison of seven similar (i.e., type of liquor) pairs of ads (with embed/without), the commercially produced ads used in the study varied in ways other than the variable of interest, thereby weakening support for the findings.

Efforts at tightly controlled studies typically yield no effects. For example, Rosen and Singh (1992) assessed the impact of three types of embeds (sex, death, and nudity) in ads for two products (cologne and liquor). The embeds were small (the word *sex*, the word *death* with skulls, and a naked woman with phallic symbols), and integrated within the ads to inhibit detection. The researchers found no effects for either type of embed on any processing or outcome variable.

These two studies represent the dilemma with regard to influence of sexual embeds. Although Rosen and Singh's (1992) study was carefully controlled, it lacked realism. On the other hand, the findings of the other investigation were open to alternative explanations. Many researchers and advertising professionals consider embeds to be a hoax because controlled research has not substantiated their effects, and they doubt that media professionals intentionally use embeds. A comprehensive study combining the best of both approaches (e.g., replicated message design, Jackson, O'Keefe, & Brashers, 1992) is warranted, and might provide definitive results. At this point, however, interested readers are encouraged to review work in sexual embed research to reach their own conclusions.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A number of opportunities exist to extend what is known about the effects of sexual information in advertising. Research that can unify the sometimes idiosyncratic findings pertaining to sexual appeals would be especially useful. Following are considerations and suggestions for rethinking ways to conceptualize and test sex effects, as well as specific research concerns that can strengthen conclusions and generalizations.

Sexual Explicitness and Intensity

Despite efforts to identify and test different types of sexual information, past research has frequently intermingled the types of sexual content when assessing sexual meaning in advertising. Physically attractive models in ads can be, and often are, explicitly dressed and move or speak seductively. Similarly, ads can contain images of relatively demure models with headlines or body copy that allude to sexual behavior. In reality, variations of these images, as well as combinations of types of sexual information, are infinite. As such, attempts to isolate and test specific types of sexual content offer conclusions that not only are confusing, but so narrowly focused as to be unrepresentative of real-world content effects.

One way to address both the range and blending of sexual content in advertising is to array representations according to explicitness and intensity. Both dimensions could range from low to high, and sexual content that varies along each dimension could be located relative to other types of sexual information. Such an approach would be helpful because it is likely that two different content types (e.g., physical attractiveness and suggestive clothing) evoke similar levels of sexual response. Researchers have been combining types of sexual content all along. For example, it is likely that the female model in LaTour's (1990) investigation of nudity was also physically attractive. Similarly, Englis et al. (1994) determination of physical attractiveness types was based on behavior, physique, facial expression, and clothing—in addition to ratings of beauty. Arraying sexual content along dimensions might allow future research to make generalizations about sex in advertising that are more robust.

Explicitness of the appeal refers to the graphic nature of the sexual information in the ad. Images featuring nude models and intimate sexual behavior would represent high explicitness, whereas subtle innuendo and demurely dressed models would be characterized as implicit. For example, the Durex condom ad in Fig. 2.5 contains a highly explicit image. On the other hand, the message and images in the ad for *E-greelings* (Fig. 2.6) are implicit because the sexual reference is inferred by the viewer.

Sexual content can also vary in degree of intensity. For example, two unclothed models can easily represent different levels of intensity. A model portrayed in an "in-your-face" posture is likely to represent high sexual intensity, whereas another model, perhaps in a classic pose, might represent low intensity. Burgoon (1989, p. 151) defined intensity as "the degree to which a persuasive message deviates from neutrality." Although Burgoon was writing about language and verbal variables, he argued that sexual metaphors can be manipulated within sentences to represent different variations in language intensity. Similarly, sexual imagery can be represented in a manner that varies in terms of how sexually charged the information is.

For example, Grazer and Keesling (1995) tested sexual ad appeals that represented high, moderate, and low levels of sexual intensity. Similarly, LaTour and Henthorne (1994) examined responses to two ads representing either moderate or high sexual content. The ads differed in regard to explicitness and intensity levels.

In the case of sexual information, appeals that represent high intensity and explicitness could be described as graphic, leaving little to the imagination, and visually characterized by nude or scantily clad people. As such, ads that stoutly sexualize or emphasize physical, behavioral, or relational aspects of models are likely to represent high-intensity appeals in this quadrant. Similarly, images of models engaged in simulated sex acts exemplify powerful images. High-intensity verbal appeals that make very straightforward or egregious references to sex would be located at this level as well.

On the other hand, sexual information low on both dimensions is subtle and implicit. Sexual appeals in this quadrant are manifested in visuals that are less obtrusive and more veiled than more explicit forms. For instance, images might consist of couples that are playful and flirtatious instead of engaged in a passionate embrace. The same would be true for verbal appeals. Subtle innuendos and double-entendres are more ambiguous with regard to sexual meaning and more apt to be implied.

Explicitness and intensity are important to consider because they may correspond with the type of responses people have to sexual information and how those responses influence processing. Appeals that represent high intensity and explicitness are likely to be visual in nature and apt to evoke emotionally charged reactions. On the other hand, information represented as low on both dimensions is less apt to elicit strong reactions and may depend on the viewer to think about the implied sexual message. In addition, highly intense messages are more likely to be offensive, whereas low-intensity messages will elicit less intense reactions.

In addition, the type of sexual content in the ad may influence distraction. Sex research has shown that arousal can be inhibited if respondents are given distractive tasks while listening to erotic stories or being asked to imagine erotic imagery (Przybyla & Byrne, 1984). On the other hand, distractive tasks had no effect if respondents were viewing erotic images. When considering sex in advertising, explicit sexual information affects people at a visceral level, and should be able to be processed instantaneously with little opportunity for distraction. Alternately, more creative approaches involving sex that invite the viewer to piece together the story (implicit/low-intensity appeals) may be affected by normal ad viewing distractions such as flipping pages, driving, or conversing. Assessing explicitness and intensity provides a Gestalt approach to testing sexual information that may be more informative than testing isolated types of sexual content.

Sexual Brand Benefits

Most research questions have sought to determine how sexual information influences processing and emotional responses. More interesting, there is little discussion of one of the primary reasons sexual appeals are used in ads—as a benefit or outcome of using the brand. Many sexual appeals argue that sex-related benefits accrue to brand users. Past research assumes that sexual elements in ads are creative execution devices that only serve to grab attention. In actuality, sexual information is incorporated into ads to demonstrate that brands can make consumers more sexually attractive and more sexually active. In this way, sexual models and sexual scenes are arguments for buying the brand, while also serving as attention-getting devices. To neglect the former prevents us from fully knowing *how* sexual appeals operate in advertising.

In their exploratory study, Richmond and Hartman (1982; see also, Tinkham & Reid, 1988) identified a type of sexual ad that featured brand promises linked to sexual wish fulfillment. The sexual ad attempted to position the product, with either implicit or explicit reasons, for buying the brand. Work by Lambiase and Reichert (in press) revealed three promises common in sexual advertising appeals: (a) sexual attractiveness for the consumer, (b) likely engagement in sexual behavior (and more enjoyment from these encounters), and (c) feelings of being sexy or sensual (sex-esteem). In these types of ads, there is a quid-pro-quo promise: “Buy this product, use it as directed, and you’ll end up in a situation like the one pictured in this ad.”

Consider the argument made in the Jovan Musk ad in Fig. 2.8. The headline reads, “What attracts? This is what attracts.” When combined with the visual image of a couple engaged in sexual behavior, the argument is that wearing Jovan Musk will either make you more attractive to the opposite sex, or that you are more likely to increase your opportunities for being in a similar situation as the one depicted in the ad. As such, the utility of the brand is that it enhances sexual prowess. To fully understand how sexual appeals operate to stimulate transactions, it’s imperative to consider the promises and pledges made by advertisers for brands. Research that demonstrates the effectiveness of sex-related benefits in advertising will provide important insight into understanding how sex works in advertising.

Other Considerations

Despite the number of studies that have investigated the effects of sex in advertising, most have only assessed male responses to female sexual imagery (i.e., scantily clad women). Although there are exceptions, it is important for future studies to assess women’s responses to sexual content



Fig. 2.8. Sex in advertising often offers sexual benefits as an outcome of buying and using the brand. Consider the brand promise made in the Jovan fragrance ad.

in advertising. One reason for the emphasis on male response is that historically, images of women represent most sexual information in advertising. Times are changing, however, as research shows that beefcake imagery is on the rise (Kervin, 1990). Although some male images are directed toward men, for the same reasons decorative female images are directed to women, sexualized male images are appearing in media directed toward women. Because men and women may respond to these images differently (men to female images, and women to male images), it is important to provide a better understanding of women's responses to sexual advertising content.

Another limitation of sex in advertising research is the difference between naturalistic and forced exposure to advertising. Most of what is known about sexual ad appeals is derived from testing respondents in lab settings after one exposure to the ad. Unfortunately, the practice of carefully controlled scientific research does not always simulate naturalistic viewing experiences. As a result, a credibility gap exists between academic research conclusions and what resonates as meaningful for advertising professionals. For example, Courtney and Whipple's (1983) review of the sexual appeal literature led them to recommend that "advertisers would be well advised to ... avoid overtly seductive, nude, or partially clad models" (p. 118). There is little evidence to suggest that advertisers paid heed to Courtney and Whipple's caveat. In fact, some major brands have successfully positioned themselves by relying exclusively on images of scantily clad models. Similarly, although it is generally regarded that sexual appeals distract viewers from processing brand information, in real-life situations, consumers view ads many times, affording them the opportunity to learn information about the brand over time. Naturalistic research is expensive and difficult to implement, but unless research can approximate naturalistic exposure to advertising, the credibility gap with ad professionals will continue.

An additional challenge for sexual appeal research is its dependence on inadequate message designs. Most sex-effects studies utilize single-message designs—designs that compare one message category to another using only a single ad to represent each condition. For example, a single-message design might attempt to test the effect of nudity by comparing two images of the same model portrayed as nude and fully dressed. Although models and meaning in ads vary in an infinite number of ways, generalizations are often made about the effectiveness of nudity based on the one comparison. A number of communication researchers have argued that the use of single concrete messages to represent abstract message categories fails to offer the type of generalizations researchers seek to make (Jackson 1992; Jackson, O'Keefe, & Brashers 1995). Even carefully controlled, single-message designs fail to guard against rival hypotheses by not representing the variation inherent in messages. Interested researchers

are encouraged to review the arguments for replicated message designs when testing sexual ad effects (see Jackson, 1992).

Last, an opportunity exists to make use of persuasion and marketing theory to understand how sexual information operates in advertising. At an advertising conference in late 1970s, Wilson and Moore (1979) argued that theoretical development was needed in this area: "Little thought seems to have been given to those theoretical concepts which may be useful in understanding the effectiveness of sexually oriented ads" (p. 55). Although investigations in this area utilize information processing and attitude-toward-the-ad concepts, there are other approaches that have proved useful for explaining effects.

Interested researchers could apply concepts related to emotion-evoking message research to better understand the effects of sex in advertising. Recent work in communication and persuasion research pertaining to emotional content in messages is promising (Dillard & Meijnders, 2002; Dillard & Wilson, 1993). Messages that evoke emotional reactions can influence persuasion in several predictable ways. Because sexual responses to sexual information are often characterized as consisting of affect and arousal, appeals containing sexual information appear to be central to that type of research. In addition, process theories such as the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* can provide additional insight. It is possible that sexual information can serve as both peripheral cues and central arguments. For example, sexual content could serve as a peripheral cue in low-involvement situations, having little effect in high-involvement situations. On the other hand, sexual information may serve as an argument for using the brand if it is analyzed in terms of sexual promises and benefits. As such, sex could influence persuasion through central-route processing by serving as a compelling reason for buying and using the brand. An enterprising researcher could contribute to the body of sexual appeal research by applying persuasion theory to advance meaningful generalizations regarding the effects of sex in advertising.

CONCLUSION

Despite Shepard's prognostication in 1968, there is little doubt that nude models and other forms of sexual advertising content are here to stay. Sexual appeals that feature a range of sexual information (nudity, behavior, referents, and physical attractiveness) are commonplace and used to promote an increasingly wider range of mainstream products and services. Advertisers not only use sexual appeals to attract attention to their ads, but to position their brands as sexual, and to suggest that sex-related benefits can accrue to the brand purchasers. Future research that takes a more

unifying view of sex in advertising, while employing research strategies that consider naturalistic viewing and natural message variation, is likely to extend past research by further illuminating how sexual appeals affect advertising responses. Findings of such research will be meaningful to professionals, as well as to researchers.

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NOTES:

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Beyond Subliminal

The Pervasiveness of Persuasion

All that I desire to point out is the general principle that Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life.

—Oscar Wilde

Persuasive communication exists in all areas in our society. Have you ever tried to talk a professor into giving you a better grade, tried to avoid getting a traffic ticket, or negotiated with a vendor at a yard sale? These are all examples of persuasive communication: You are advocating your own admittedly biased point of view to convince someone to change his or her mind.

In Chapter 2, the difference between persuasion and manipulation was discussed. We hope we made clear that advertising is persuasive. Still, as advertisers, we need to acknowledge that persuasive communication can have a strong influence in our society. In addition, we must acknowledge that the messages we create are biased and that we are advocates for our clients.

Given this advocacy position, the role of persuasive communication in our society is important to consider. We must recognize that some people may be uncomfortable with persuasive communication, so we must acknowledge and evaluate their suggestions on how to use persuasive communications ethically.

PERSUASIVE CONTENT AND SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES

Most advertising messages are a mix of informational and persuasive content. The persuasive aspect of such messages comes in two forms. First, the advertiser chooses specific attributes of each product or service for inclusion in the message. Often, such selected attributes are those that will be important or meaningful to consumers. Second, the message

may indicate how consumers will think or feel once they have decided to purchase or use the product. Consumers make the decision about what to buy based on how the product or service, as described, will address their own needs and wants. Advertising that does not present such a point of view would be ineffectual, then, and truly wasteful of both the advertiser's and the consumer's time and money (Nicosia, 1974).

It is commonly acknowledged by most that consumers recognize that traditional commercials, such as those we see on television and hear on the radio every day, are advocacies for products and services. Today, however, critics are increasingly concerned about the types of persuasive messages that "slip in under the radar"—that is, those that consumers do not register as being traditional advertisements. Instead, persuasive messages can be presented in ways that have been described as "sneaky" or "subliminal."

Some people believe that advertising works subliminally; that is, advertising places a message under an individual's margin of consciousness. In turn, messages can create some level of anxiety that can be relieved only by purchasing a product or service to address the anxiety. This product or service is presumably one we would not normally buy (Twitchell, 1996). As we discussed in Chapter 2, the myth of subliminal advertising has been in existence since the 1950s and persists to this day.

Have you ever looked for sexual imagery in an alcohol ad featuring a photograph of ice cubes? This idea originated with the best-known proponent of subliminal advertising, Wilson Key. Key wrote a series of books that suggested that advertising agencies, specifically art directors, embed advertising with symbols that represent sexual and death-related imagery to create feelings of anxiousness, which leads to increased drinking. Somewhat in response, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created a policy in 1974 that stated that if TV stations knowingly ran subliminal advertising, they could be found in violation of the public trust and risked having their licenses revoked (Teinowitz, 2000). However, even this action did little to diminish the public's perceptions that subliminal advertising does exist. Furthermore, even the denial of professionals may not reduce the public's view that subliminal advertising exists. A recent study of advertising professionals found that 95% of respondents denied use or knowledge of use of subliminal advertising in the profession (Rogers & Seiler, 1994). Indeed, most respondents said that they did not use it because there was no evidence that it worked (Rogers & Seiler, 1994).

Active and Passive Consumers Revisited

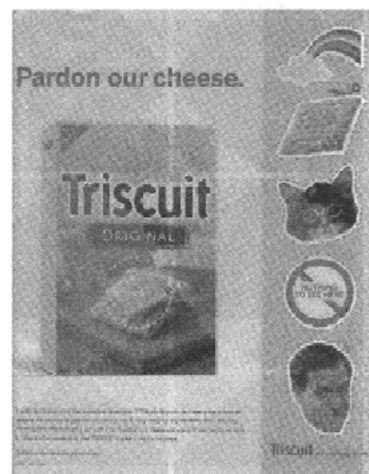
Why does this fascination with subliminal advertising continue? There are several reasons. First, many critics still believe in the idea of the passive consumer. As discussed earlier, passive consumers believe that they are powerless against advertising. The term *subliminal*, literally meaning "beneath the surface," supports this idea of a lack of control among passive consumers. To put it simply, if we do not know an advertising message is there, we cannot know how to avoid it or make it go away. Additionally, the phenomenon known as the *third-person effect* may come into play. The third-person effect states that although individuals believe that they are active consumers and processors of information, they will say they know others who have been affected by the subliminal strength of advertising.

Active consumers would not be susceptible to subliminal advertising because, by nature, they are actively involved with absorbing the information that they see and hear in advertisements. In addition, it is contradictory to suggest that individuals can perceive anything presented below their threshold of perception: They can either consciously perceive messages or they cannot (Vanden Bergh & Katz, 1999).

Broyles (2006) suggests that people often use the term *subliminal* to mean *subtle*, particularly in regard to studies that report on the "new subliminal advertising." This phrase is used to describe tactics that subtly target a niche market without alienating mainstream audiences (Kanner, 2000). Examples include brands placing a rifle in the background of an advertisement to appeal to National Rifle Association supporters or a rainbow appearing in an unnatural setting (see Figure 5.1) to appeal to gays and lesbians. Broyles argues that these tactics are not subliminal since the tactic is actually perceived by the consumer.

Another misinterpretation of subliminal advertising is a persuasive message that appears in a place where we do not expect to see one. A message that does not have the traditional context of a television or magazine advertisement may be more persuasive than the norm.

Figure 5.1 Calculated or coincidence? This Triscuit ad features a rainbow, which may serve as a subtle signal to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) audiences that this is a cracker for them. Triscuit's parent company, Kraft Foods, has been recognized for their commitment to diversity and inclusion.



Furthermore, the environment in which the message appears can enhance its persuasiveness. One specific area that is of concern to many is the idea of product placement.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Product placement is defined as a paid product message aimed at influencing a movie or other media audience through the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into the medium's content (Balasubramanian, 1994). In a way, product placement is a hybrid of advertising and publicity because it involves using movies or other media content to incorporate brands in return for money or some other promotional consideration (Gould, Gupta, & Graner-Krauter, 2000). Advertising agencies are often involved in placing clients' products in television shows and feature films. Other times, a specialist firm acts as a liaison between agency and studio and obtains scripts far in advance so the advertiser can evaluate a range of potential product placements (Balasubramanian, 1994).

Product placement in films and television programs is a new spin on an old technique. In the early days of television, brand names were in the program title (e.g., the *Texaco Star Theatre*). There has always been a tradition of sponsored content: Shakespeare's sonnets were written for hire, and James Bond novels mentioned brand names of cars (Campbell, 2001). While the use of products in the title of programs has never been a concern to the FCC, the commission discouraged program tie-ins through product placement before the 1960s. The networks themselves voluntarily adopted standards that kept brand name products out of TV shows in a 1960 amendment to the Communications Act (Balasubramanian, 1994). These standards were relaxed in the 1980s. Today, paid product placement appears in all manner of media, including films, television, novels, and more. Product placement is seen by many advertisers as a targeted and cost-effective way to reach consumers (Wells, 2001), and it is allowed in most parts of the world with few exceptions. The United Kingdom lifted its ban on product placement in 2010, Poland is considering a ban, and in Germany, product placement is allowed but must be clearly identified as such.

Product Placement in Film

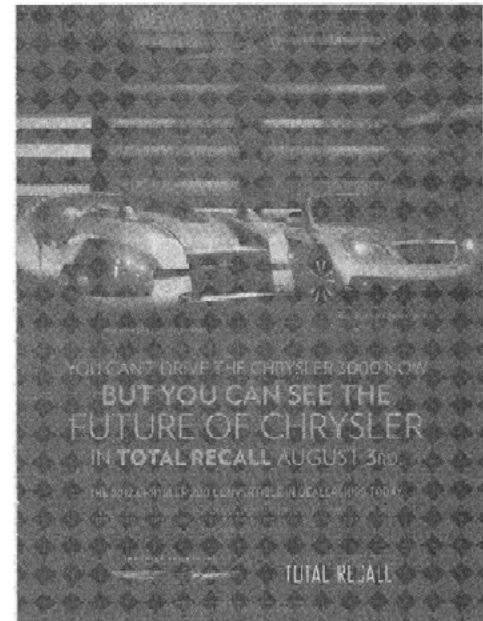
Ever since a little alien had a snack of Reese's Pieces, the level of product placement in movies has been increasing. Movies are expensive to make, and there is no guarantee that box-office receipts will make a profit for the film studio or even recoup the costs of making the film. Once the movie is made, additional funds are needed to promote the film: Movie marketing costs sometimes equal the cost of the film, and product placement subsidizes these costs (Balasubramanian, 1994). Today, about 15% of revenue from feature films is generated from product placement (Twitchell, 1996). Some recent examples of film product placement include the following:

- Characters in *The Avengers* drive roadsters from Nissan.
- The award-winning movie *The Help* features characters bonding over Coca-Cola. Additionally, Crisco is referred to as "the most important invention since they put mayonnaise in a jar."

- *The Lincoln Lawyer* carried the brand name of a car in its title.
- *The Social Network* is arguably a 120-minute-long commercial for Facebook.
- The film remake of *Total Recall* featured a "2084" Chrysler 3000; print ads promoting the film and the car encouraged customers to see the new 200 convertible at their dealers. (Figure 5.2)

Product placement is not limited to films produced in Hollywood. A Chinese film, *I Know a Woman's Heart*, is the story of a Chinese advertising executive, and it uses Italian sport brand Lotto as a plot device. Abe Sauer (2011) found that nearly every third scene in *I Know a Woman's Heart* features either a MacBook, iMac, or iPhone. For example, one

Figure 5.2 Chrysler ad promoted the 2012 Chrysler 200 and the film *Total Recall*.



character, a sage, elderly Chinese gentleman, listens to an iPod. Shortly after the movie was released, China became Apple's second largest market, accounting for close to 15% of all sales (up from 2% in 2009). In February 2012, Apple CFO Peter Openheimer said these numbers were "just scratching the surface" in the Chinese market. As a result, we can expect to see a growth in product placement in films produced outside the Hollywood system.

Product Placement in Television

Television product placement runs the gamut from characters in sitcoms using products (one classic example is Jerry Seinfeld and Pez) to storylines and even entire shows built around advertisers. Here are some examples of recent product placements on television:

- The office superstore Staples sponsored an entire episode of *The Office*, where the obnoxious character Dwight went to work there after being fired from Dunder Mifflin.
- In an episode of the ABC show *Modern Family*, the geeky dad Phil receives an iPad the day it was released, which was on his birthday. The character said, "It's like God and Steve Jobs got together to say 'We love you, Phil!'" The product was integrated in the plot as it was mentioned in different contexts.
- The "frosty beer" from Holland, Heineken, was featured in the hit show *Mad Men*, set in the 1960s. The show has also featured brands from the 1960s that are familiar to today's viewers, including Kodak, Jaguar, and Noxema.
- Reality programming is made for product placement. Judges on the popular competition show *American Idol* drink out of Coke glasses, and the waiting room is decorated in Coca-Cola red. *Survivor* contestants phone home on Verizon phones. *Top Chef* contestants drive to the grocery store in Toyotas and cook on branded appliances with branded cookware.

Product Placement in Other Content

Product placement does not stop with traditional media content. Today, we are seeing product placements in many different places. Here are some recent examples:

- Books can be branded. In 2001, Italian Jeweler Bulgari commissioned best-selling writer Fay Weldon to write a novel in which their product was prominently featured. Originally, the novel entitled *The Bulgari Connection* was produced as a party favor (Campbell, 2001). Many kids books are also branded: for example, the *Oreo Cookie Counting Book* features Oreos on every page.
- NBC television has a deal with ad agency conglomerate OmniComm to place OmniComm client's brands into digital content on programs on the NBC website.

• Video games often contain product placement. For example, Pizza Hut has pop-up banners exhorting players to order pizza online while they're playing *EverQuest 2*.

• In a bit of a reverse product placement, Air New Zealand introduced two "Hobbit" planes to coincide with the release of the Peter Jackson version of *The Hobbit*. The planes act as a flying billboard for the movie (which was filmed in New Zealand), and the safety videos will also be Hobbit-themed. Air New Zealand similarly promoted each of the *Lord of the Rings* films with painted planes.

• Recording artists sing about products in their songs. The artist Pink sings about Mercedes Benz, LFO about Abercrombie and Fitch, and Pergie about Dolce and Gabbana. A duet between Flo Rida and T-Pain focused on Zoosk Girl, referring to the online website. Product placement also shows up in music videos: the online dating site Plenty Of Fish was seen in a Lady Gaga and Beyonce's video for the song "Telephone," Pitbull's video for "Give Me Everything" features a lengthy shot of Kodak's Times Square electronic billboard, and Pitbull raps the camera company's name in the beginning of the song. OK Go's music video of their song "This Too Shall Pass" was sponsored by State Farm Insurance, which received a brief credit at the end of the video.

Advertising and Editorials

The use of advertorial sections has been increasing. These features, combining editorial content and advertising, have been accused of badly blurring the lines between the advertising and editorial functions in both magazines and newspapers (Cameron & Ju-Pak, 2000). The growth in the number of advertorials is tied to the increasingly competitive markets that newspapers and magazines face. Advertorials are a way to generate revenue from new advertisers by providing editorial content that is complementary to their advertising message. Newspapers, for example, will often produce special sections on fashion or home improvement that feature a range of advertorials, and the types of magazine advertorials are limitless.

Advertorials are problematic for some because of the intentional blurring of the advertising and editorial lines (Singer, 1991). Sometimes these sections are clearly labeled as advertorials (see Figure 5.3), but other times, they are not. Although the American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME) encourages magazines to label advertorials as such, there is no specific regulation that compels print media to do so. Readers may misinterpret advertorials as editorial content, which may create higher credibility for the message. The message changes from "advocacy" to "news." However, advertorials can confuse readers about the origins of the information they provide and could compromise editorial credibility. Others suggest that advertorials, specifically unlabeled ones, cause information pollution at best and are potentially deceptive at worst (Cameron & Ju-Pak, 2000).

Figure 5.3 This advertorial appeared in *Oprah Magazine*, featuring a graduate of an online university that is profiled at Oprah's website.



INTENDED EFFECTS

Like any decision involving a persuasive message, there are clear effects intended by the message in the medium selected as well as unintended effects or repercussions to the message that may or may not have been anticipated before the message aired. There are several intended effects to product placement.

Brands Are Exposed to Viewers

Given the growth in usage of DVRs, it is easier than ever for media users to skip through the commercials that run in television programming. Additionally, new forms of media channels such as cable on demand and online streaming often provide content with

minimal or no commercial interruptions. Thus, placing products in programs makes up for the lost exposure from traditional advertisements.

The Von Restorff Effect

The Von Restorff effect suggests that any technique that increases the novelty of particular products or leads them to be unexpected enhances the recall of those products (Balasubramanian, 1994). Therefore, placing a familiar brand in an unexpected context will have positive effects in terms of product awareness and recall. People recognize and/or recall brands promoted in movies, and some researchers have found that prominent product placements perform better than television ads in creating brand recall among consumers (Gould et al., 2000).

Advertising on tissue packs has been used in Japan since the late 1960s. Ads are on the outside of the pack, which are distributed for free, often outside of rapid transit stations. Consumers report that they freely accept and pay attention to the ads on the packaging, often because they use the tissues multiple times. Is this crossing the line?

Increased Authenticity of the Content

Product placement increases the realism and authenticity of the story being told (Bamberger, Kim, & Mavric, 2000; Bannan, 2002). In pre-product placement days, TV shows might have a character drinking out of a silver can labeled soda, and such images do not ring true with viewers. It is much more realistic to have the soda can labeled with the name of an actual beverage and enhance the viewing experience for all involved. In addition, there is some advantage to blending products into the story line; the persuasive message does not interrupt the flow of the story, and consumers may get less annoyed at interruptions. Research has shown that of all consumers in the world, U.S. consumers are more accepting of and likely to purchase products shown in movies than consumers in other countries (Gould et al., 2000).

Indirect Product Endorsement

Products seen in TV programs and films receive an indirect endorsement from the characters that use the product on the screen. For example, Tom Cruise wore Ray-Ban sunglasses in the films *Risky Business* and *Top Gun*, and he has been continually associated with the brand for many years. Such an endorsement has several benefits. It can reinforce positive feelings among users as to why they bought and use the product ("I wear the same sunglasses that Tom Cruise wears!"). Additionally, the endorsement may influence non-users to think about purchasing the product ("I can be like Tom Cruise, at least in terms of the sunglasses I wear!"). Finally, the image of the endorser can be transferred to the product and to the user's self-perception.

Developmental Support

Product placement allows for revenue streams that may permit more films, books, and websites to be developed and supported. Author Fay Weldon believes that sponsorships similar to hers (for the book *The Bulgari Connection*) could help struggling writers earn a decent living so they can spend more time working on their craft.

UNINTENDED EFFECTS

Every planned action, or effect, tends to result in unintended effects. Advertisers do not intend advertising messages to be harmful because that would not be in the best interest of the brand. Any mass-mediated message that relies on interpretation of meaning by consumers has the potential to generate unintended effects. As an advertiser, it is important to try to anticipate unintended effects, assess the impact of such effects, and examine how to minimize these effects if necessary. Some of the unintended effects for product placement that have been identified are outlined next.

Content May Be Compromised

Increased involvement by advertisers in all type of content may lead to the content being controlled solely by the products and their producers (Wells, 2001). This may affect the content in several ways. First, creativity could be stifled because product producers will have definite ideas of how their products should and should not be used in TV, films, and the like (Campbell, 2001). For example, Bulgari might not have wanted their jewels to be used as a murder weapon or worn by drug dealers (Bruno, 2001). This concern is strengthened by observations that the individuals on the advertising side who deal with product placement tend to be media buyers and planners, persons not particularly trained in program decision making (Wells, 2001).

Blurring of Advertising and Editorial Messages

Product placement represents the continued blurring of entertainment and selling (Rothenberg, 2001). The interests and opinions of target audiences of media content become less important. Viewers, listeners, and readers have been "relegated to the back seat while advertisers call the shots" ("Runner's Test," 2001, p. 20). There is an associated concern with books and other types of previously nonsponsored content now becoming crassly commercial, which can ultimately destroy the credibility of such content. If all stories become sales stories, then it is possible that the rich array of storytelling around the world will be diminished.

Controversial Products Circumvent Advertising Restrictions and Bans

Placement of certain types of products, such as cigarettes, in mediated content is seen as a way to circumvent other media bans that exist for the product (Gould et al., 2000).

Products placed in adult-oriented films and programs can be viewed by inappropriate audiences to which they are not directed. For example, underage viewers can see products like alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, and guns. Furthermore, the context of the message is also a concern; and some feature films have presented smokers as powerful and successful people, which is problematic for opponents of smoking. The American Lung Association and the Canadian Cancer Society say that there should be a new movie rating system that includes tobacco use in the calculation to reduce the number of young people exposed to such messages (Wake, 2002).

For example, films such as *Avatar* and *Men in Black II* feature product placement from Marlboro. The activist group Smoke Free Movies, which aims to sharply reduce the film industry's usefulness to Big Tobacco's marketing efforts, refers to the effects of product placement as dramatizing smoking and glamorizing the Marlboro brand by associating it with a star like Sissy Spacek.

Lack of Disclosure Is Problematic

The FCC has sponsorship rules that must be considered during the placement of products in television programs. Specifically, programs must include an announcement stating clearly which sponsors paid for products that are featured prominently in the programs. Products that are furnished as "backdrops" for scenes do not have to be disclosed (Avery & Ferraro, 2000). Recently, legal scholars have been debating whether product placements fall under commercial speech regulations. If the courts rule that product placement messages have limited protections, then placement of some products (e.g., cigarettes, alcoholic beverages) in some programs may not be possible.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we examined the phenomenon of subliminal advertising and provided evidence to dispel myths that exist to this day about such advertising techniques. We then discussed product placement in television, film, and other mass-mediated content and provided ways for advertisers to examine such choices.

The next section of the book will examine people in advertising—specifically, portrayals of different types of people (men and women, minorities and majorities, elders and children) and the content of advertising messages to these different groups. We will continue to identify intended and unintended effects of such portrayals and messages, as well as provide concepts advertisers should consider in decision making.

KEY TERMS

Disclosure	71	Subliminal advertising	62	Von Restorff effect	69
Product placement	64	Third-person effect	63		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Societal concerns with subliminal advertising seem to resurface every 20 years or so. Why do you think this cycle exists?
2. Is product placement subliminal, subtle, or something else entirely?
3. Have you seen evidence of the third-person effect recently? In what way?
4. Does product placement make you feel differently about the programs you watch that include product placement?
5. Is product placement in songs different from placement in television programs? Do you think one is more effective than the other?

GREEN PRODUCT PLACEMENT

An agency known as Green Product Placement is a New York-based company that works on behalf of brands that are "green" or "sustainable." According to their website, Green Product Placement is "committed to using the marketing platform of media product placement to promote products with a green, ethical, social enterprising, and local entrepreneurial agenda," in the company's own words. Accordingly, it works to ensure that the products of its clients get seen and used as an integral part of the production design in a film, television program, or Web series. Green Product Placement aims to keep its own business operations as sustainable as possible as well, including using carbon neutral Web hosting, a virtually paperless office, and minimal travel, it says.

There's no doubt that today's consumers are increasingly concerned about the environment. When purchasing products and services, in fact, roughly 50% look for labels regarding energy efficiency, are more likely to purchase the products and services of environmentally conscious companies, and are more loyal to these companies than other shoppers are.

1. Visit the company's website (www.greenproductplacement.com). Are you familiar with any of their clients? Do you think their clients' profile can be raised by participating in product placement?
2. Is the mission of Green Product Placement different than the mission of other firms that help brands achieve placement in mediated content?
3. What type of content might you expect to see these products placed in?
4. Does this type of company affect how you feel about product placement? In what ways?

FURTHER READING

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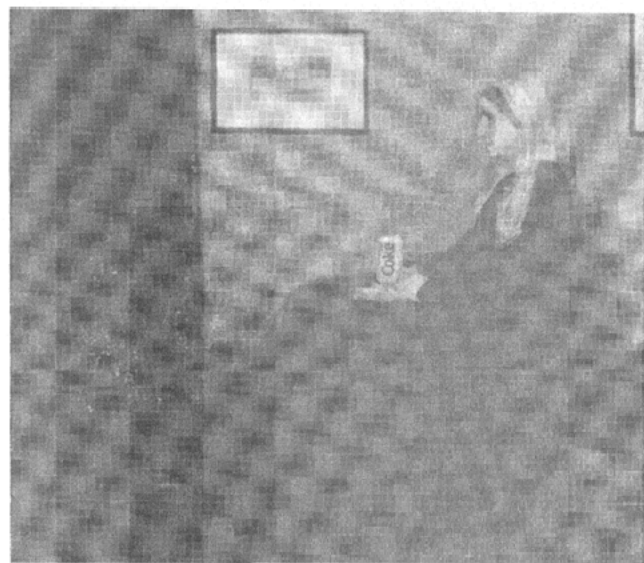
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7

Advertising and Product Placement

And Now, the Star of the Show!



When we talk about "product placements," we usually mean brand-named items (including products, packaging, signs, and corporate names) that are intentionally placed in movies and on television programs. In recent years the product placement "controversy" has increased in advertising circles. Yet the phenomenon is not new. Thinking back to the early days of television,

advertisers sponsored entire programs, infusing their brand's name throughout the program. Kraft Television Theatre, General Electric College Bowl, and Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom are only three well-known examples from the past.

Researchers D'Astous and Chartier (2000) list three reasons why advertisers might want to place their products in movies. First, watching a movie involves high attention, so the assumption is that some of that "super" attention might fall on the product. Second, movies can produce large audiences. Even if the movie isn't a box-office blockbuster, after international sales and rentals, lots of people potentially may see the product placement. With shrinking television audiences, this is becoming even more important. Third, the "natural" placement may make audience members less irritated than they sometimes are with in-your-face advertising. And a happy viewer is potentially a happy customer.

Even though there are stunning examples of tremendous products placed in movies, many of the products that we see in movies today are not even "placed." Instead, they're merely used in the movie at the discretion of the director for creative realism or some other reason. Still, the phenomenon is growing and, most likely, here to stay. In January 2005, for example, the phrase "product placement" was mentioned in the American press over 500 times (Sauer, 2005).

While some people have argued that using product placements is a form of "stealth" advertising ("slipped into" the movie so no one realizes it might be an ad) and, in turn, is unethical, others champion the approach as innovative and effective. Sometimes there is a quirky use of a name-brand product that creates almost a cult following. For example, the aliens in *Roswell* liked to sprinkle Tabasco sauce on everything. So when the WB threatened to cancel the show after the first season (1999–2000), bottles of Tabasco started showing up at the studio offices. Some reports stated that over 6,000 bottles were sent to the studio. (The campaign "Roswell Is Hot" was successful for awhile, but the quirky alien/romance show was cancelled after three seasons.) Other examples of products that, in essence, became the "hero," such as Wilson the volleyball in the movie *Castaway* or AOL's email service in *You've Got Mail*, demonstrate all the positive reasons why advertisers may be interested in getting their products a starring role in a movie or television show.

But how do you tell when the placement goes too far? Laura Petrecca wrote an article for *USA Today* (October 10, 2006) in which she questions where the ubiquity of the advertising will end. She points out that, in the 1970s, the average city dweller was exposed to 500 to 2,000 ads per day. But now that number is more like 3,000 to 5,000. This advertising clutter forces advertisers to look for creative ways to get their products noticed. That's why we see

promotions in the bottom of the trays where we put our stuff when going through a security check to board an airplane, on the doors of bathroom stalls, and on shopping carts for our perusal while we check out advertised products in the grocery store. Product placement may seem fairly innocuous after being assaulted by overt advertising all day, every day. The more viewers move toward "on demand" media consumption (watching when you want), the more "traditional" commercials are in danger – and the more advertisers will look for ways to incorporate their products into movies, TV shows, music, etc.

According to Petrecca, \$941 million was spent in 2005 to integrate products into television shows. Clearly this phenomenon will only increase – both for television and movies. In 2007, VW reportedly spent \$40 million on product placement (High, 2007) and marketing tie-ins for its 2008 Touareg 2 car, which is the vehicle Matt Damon uses in *The Bourne Ultimatum*. Using footage from the movie, the creative team was able to create a commercial featuring the car before the public saw the movie. So rather than stealth advertising, the advertiser is trying to ensure that the movie audience will not only pay attention to the car, rather than just to Jason Bourne's wild chase-scene antics, but be *looking for* the car. Is that manipulative – or great advertising strategy?

Whether you think product placement is a good idea or not, advertising agencies have had to struggle with how to figure out adequate payment. Some have moved toward a "time on screen" approach or a "product prominence" approach, and others have tried to develop a form of gross rating points for quantifying a branded placement in order to run comparisons for different media platforms. But even with these approaches, most agree that it is difficult to control product placements in movies (and more recently on television, in video games, and even in mass-market paperback books) – let alone understand the impact that they may have. Whether or not media planners understand how to "count" product placements, it is clear that they are trying. For example, in early 2004 Nielsen documented that *American Idol* showed 3,300 instances of product placements (Gibson, 2004).

As using product placement as an effective strategy for media planning becomes more pervasive, it is inevitable that people will start to question the ethics of the practice – seeing it either as a form of privacy invasion ("I paid to see the movie once, why do I have to pay again by watching the ads in the movies?") or from a pragmatic perspective. What happens when a client purchases a placement and doesn't get the box-office numbers – or the scene gets cut because of the creative director's prerogative? What happens if the new television show flops after just a few episodes? What is the media planner going to do if a big part of the advertising strategy revolved around that television show?

Why Are Product Placements Potentially So Important?

As Charles Lubbers and Kathy McKee both mention, product placement as an advertising strategy will only become more important as Tivos and other kinds of digital recorders become more prevalent. As it becomes easier for consumers to skip commercials, advertisers will become even more creative at ways to make sure the message slips in. With estimates of nearly three-quarters (72.3 percent) of television audiences now skipping commercials (Romano, 2003) advertisers need to find a way to get their messages across – otherwise, they may withdraw from television all together. At first you might think this is a good idea, but who is going to pay for television if the advertiser won't?

As Lubbers and McKee point out, product placements are here to stay. But are they unethical? *You decide.*

Ideas to get you thinking . . .

- 1 Watch a favorite television show. Look carefully and see if you can find any branded products. How many did you find? Do you think the products are there because of the advertiser asked for them to be there?
- 2 Rent a movie with a friend and watch it for the action. After the movie, ask your friend to write down all the branded products he or she can remember. Now go back and watch the movie again, noting every time you see a product placement. Did your friend catch most of them? If not, why not? Based on this "experiment," do you think these product placements were a good idea?

If you'd like to read more . . .

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Argument

Product placement makes a lot of sense in today's media environment

Charles Lubbers

Recent articles within the popular and trade press offer insight into the state of product placement in the United States media but also present challenges to the legitimacy of product placement as a beneficial form of advertising. There is no form of advertising currently practiced in the United States that is free of negative aspects. However, individuals who do not believe in the use of product placement are ignoring all the positive arguments for the tactic. In this essay I will briefly describe the three major reasons I believe that product placement is an important option for advertisers: its increasing popularity; its historical foundations; and its many benefits for advertisers.

Extent of Use/Importance

A 2005 PQ Media report estimated that the product placement business is worth \$4.2 billion annually. While the product placement business is clearly a small percentage of the traditional advertising market of between \$250 and \$300 billion in the same year, the renewed interest makes it an important area for discussion (Edwards, 2005).

In addition to the overall growth in product placement revenues, recent years have seen some examples of multi-million-dollar product placement deals. For example, Coca-Cola is reported to have paid a little less than \$10 million to get their logo and products prominently featured on Fox Television's hit, *American Idol* (Edwards, 2005). However, the multi-million-dollar deals aren't limited to television. One-quarter of the production cost of \$100 million for the 2002 movie *Minority Report* was covered by corporations, such as Lexus, the Gap and American Express, who wanted to have their products featured in the film (Weaver, 2002).

Another sign of the growing importance of product placements is that Nielsen Media Research now tracks product placement in network

television shows during primetime. One report found that, in the fall 2005 season up to November 27, the 10 primetime network television shows with the most brand identification showed 9,019 brands. This was up from 5,821 the year before (Edwards, 2005). Nielsen Media Research also reported that the total media placements in 2005 were up 30 percent from 2004, with the greatest number of product placements in reality programs (Friedman, 2006b).

History

With all the recent "buzz" about the use of product placement and the recent growth in the percentage of advertising revenues placed in the area, it would seem that this is a new phenomenon. However, product placement has been around for a long time. It appears that the recent growth in its use is part of the reason for the current concern.

In the early days of both radio and television, programs were sponsored by businesses that had a great deal of control over the content, and it was very likely that their products would be woven into the storylines of the show. This relationship existed from the early days of radio in the 1920s and continued until the 1950s. The quiz show scandals of the late 1950s were the final blow that led to the demise of advertiser-sponsored programs (Turner, 2004). However, what disappeared was the sole-sponsored television program where the advertiser could exercise undue influence on the content of the program. Sponsorship and the placement of products continued over the years, and has experienced a great deal of growth in recent years. The following section outlines some of the major benefits for product placement, thus providing the reasons for its continued survival.

Benefits to Advertisers

One of the key rules underlining the effective use of product placements is that the products must be skillfully woven into the storyline. Clearly the placement of a product simply to generate revenue is likely to distract the audience. In fact, the movies *Wayne's World* (1992) and *Return of the Killer Tomatoes* (1988) both featured comedic sections poking fun at movies attempting to integrate unnecessary products into the storyline. Thus, the benefits discussed below are predicated on the correct use of the product

placement, just as one wouldn't expect a poorly developed newspaper advertisement to be effective.

1 Compensate for advertising skipping technologies found in DVRs

In 2002 Bruce Redditt, executive vice-president at Omnicom group, noted that new technologies, such as the DVR, had allowed consumers to have "more control over their own programming, content and time" (Kim, 2002b). While less than 1 million homes had such recorders in 2002, those numbers have continued to grow. The ability of the consumer to "skip" advertisements poses great concerns for traditional media buyers. Placing products and services into the storyline of the entertainment offers a way around the technological advances.

The technological advances have forced advertisers to place more of the money in their marketing mix into options other than traditional 30-second advertisements. Chunovic (2003) noted that the new options include product placement, show ownership, interstitial content, and sponsorships.

2 Deliver message when many of the receivers' filters are off

Product placement also allows the advertiser the opportunity to deliver messages to consumers when their guard is down. Most consumers are inherently skeptical of advertising claims, but those natural filters are generally off (or at least lower) when watching entertainment programming. This is one reason why product placement is so effective, but it also explains some of the concerns consumers have about the practice.

3 Allow the development of a brand image

Many marketing campaigns are designed to "brand" a product or service. The branded product has two dimensions: the actual characteristics of the product as well as the emotional or affective characteristics the consumer associates with the product. Placing a product in an entertainment program may make it much easier for the advertiser to develop those affective dimensions. For example, a drink manufacturer may have a line of teas that is widely consumed in age groups over 40. By having those drinks consumed by younger actors in shows that draw a younger audience, the manufacturer may change the emotional dimension of the brand, even though the actual product has not been altered.

4 Less obtrusive for the viewer

One consistent complaint of media consumers is that advertisements are obtrusive and have a negative impact on the viewer's enjoyment of the entertainment programming. The integration of product placement allows for advertising revenue to be generated without the annoying breaks in the programming. Evan Fleischer, co-founder of a non-traditional marketing agency, said that product placements are less obtrusive for viewers, allowing the brand message to reach consumers in their daily lives without seeming like a hard sell (Gaffney, 2003).

5 More realistic

One of the least mentioned advantages of product placement is that it can actually create a more realistic viewing situation. Efforts to remove real products from a television show or movie can create an artificial environment that is less appealing to the audience. In short, efforts to remove brands from the scene may create such an artificial environment that is actually distracting to the viewer.

6 Use in media other than television and feature films

Product placement has been traditionally associated with television and feature films. However, one of the advantages of this form of marketing is that it can be placed in a wide variety of entertainment media, even media where traditional advertising doesn't exist.

Music and music videos. In 2002 it was widely reported that the Island Def Jam Music Group was wooing potential advertisers to line up product placement deals. In fact, Kim (2002a) reported that most of the major record companies had established departments to pursue deals with advertisers. Much of the interest in incorporating product plugs into music lyrics was developed by the rap artist Busta Rhymes' successful songs featuring Courvoisier. However, product placement in videos has been more difficult for record labels. Leeds (2003) reports how music companies are using several tactics to bypass MTV's prohibition of advertising in videos. Leeds notes that rapper Ms. Jade's 2003 video for "Ching Ching" prominently features two Hummer H2s, for which the Hummer manufacturer, General Motors, paid \$300,000. In an age when music

sales are declining, product placement in music lyrics and videos offers advertisers another outlet for reaching consumers while providing an additional revenue stream for music companies.

- *Books.* There are examples of product placement in books, as a way of increasing interest in a brand. Rothenberg (2001) noted that Beth Ann Herman's 1989 book *Power City* contained "plugs for a Beverly Hills Maserati dealership in return for a \$15,000 book party." An even more definitive example was the 2001 book by Fay Weldon, *The Bulgari Connection*, which was commissioned by Bulgari.
- *Video games – both console and internet-based.* Have you played any video games recently? If so, you've probably noticed that advertisements are now being inserted into the story lines of the more sophisticated games. Each download of play of a game allows the advertiser to bring new messages to the consumer. Change the setting for the game, and you can bring in a new set of advertisers. After all, if upscale products can be successfully placed in James Bond movies, why not the James Bond games?
- *Made-for-the-web movies.* Use of the internet for entertainment delivery will only increase. Already the consumer can download, view or play, selected films, music, and games. However, in 2001, BMW began releasing a series of eight made-for-the-web movies under the heading *The Hire*. These movies not only featured BMW vehicles performing amazing feats, but helped the company get rid of the 1980s view of the BMW as a status symbol for yuppies (Vagnoni, 2001).
- *Board games.* The release of the board game "It's Only Money" in 1989 exposed players to product placement from a variety of organizations, including Harrah's casino (Rothenberg, 2001).

7 Use in traditional media of television and film, but in new ways

Product placement has been associated with television and film for decades. While the use in these media is not new, there are at least two newer trends for the use of product placement in new ways.

- *Vintage product placement in movies.* Movies set in historical periods have always strived to create an environment that accurately reflects the surroundings at that time. A more recent development is the effort to integrate historically accurate product placements into feature films. This technique can be particularly effective because the viewer is even less

likely to expect vintage product placement. An example of this trend was ESPN's television movie, *The Junction Boys*. The movie featured vintage Dr. Pepper and General Motors automobiles that would have been prominent during the movies' profile of the 1954 Texas A&M football team (Friedman and Chura, 2002).

Digital insertion of product images into first runs and reruns. Friedman (2006a) reported that Marathon Ventures has negotiated deals with CBS and Fox to use technology to "virtually place products on the sets of dramas and comedies." The products were not originally in the scene, but are added through the use of computer technology. Friedman goes on to note that with virtual placement advertisers can make decisions quickly. He also notes that different products can be inserted each time the show is broadcast. In fact, Goetzl reported in 2001 that Turner Broadcasting System had reached a deal allowing it to digitally insert products into the reruns of *Law and Order* that would be run on TNT. While no specifics were reported in the deal there was some speculation that insertion opportunities would include branding the soda machine in the police station or the detectives' coffee cups.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with the right product or service, product placement may be an exceptional way to increase brand awareness and to create intention to purchase. Despite the recent controversy related to its use, product placement has been practiced in the United States for quite some time. The early practitioners realized what I hope you have come to understand, that product placement can be an effective promotional tactic. However, in the end it's the audience that will ultimately decide the fate of product placement. As long as audiences find the insertion of products into the storyline acceptable the practice will continue. However, at the point that placements are rejected by audiences because of overuse or use of a product that is too contrived, audience members will vote with their remote (Meskauskas, 2004).

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Counterargument

More than entertainment: product placement in American media channels

Kathy Brittain McKee

"And the Oscar for best supporting performance by a product, good or service this year goes to . . ."

Unrealistic? Perhaps. But considering the economic value of product placement within films – worth some \$1.26 billion and growing by about 11 percent each year (Graser, 2005) – and the prominence afforded some of the brands featured in contemporary films, such recognition may be warranted. Again, while perhaps far-fetched, perhaps an equal argument might be made for awarding an Emmy, a Tony, or a Grammy for branding, too. One study cited in Graser (2005) argues that TV placement already outpaces that in films, and placement in other media is escalating. This text describes the growth of placement, not only within films and television, but its recent use in plays, recordings, magazines, novels, video games, and even in cyberworlds such as *Second Life*.

Obviously, the use of paid and bartered placement is a boon for producers seeking production support. But consumers and parents may have reasons for complaint and caution. Media audiences should be wary of such arrangements for at least three reasons:

- 1 Reluctant or naive audiences who do not anticipate receiving commercial messages cannot avoid those embedded in the entertainment content itself.
- 2 Such placements may elude regulation of the advertising of products deemed harmful or dangerous for some audiences.
- 3 Overt and blatant placements alter the creativity of narratives and characterizations.

No-Choice Advertising

If there's one thing that may safely be argued about American media audiences it's that they want choice, and increasingly technology offers such

choice. Personal recording devices, from the iPod to TiVos, allow audiences to choose what they will watch or listen to and when they will watch or listen to it. They also may allow audience members to choose to be exposed to commercial messages or not. Zipping or zapping through television commercials or arriving late enough at the movie theater to avoid the opening five to 15 minutes of commercials gives audience members an opportunity to say no. But when the brand messages are within the script or lyric, or the product itself is a game or film character, they are unavoidable. From the subtle branding found in signage shown in a film to the overt placement when the product itself advances the plot, audiences cannot escape exposure.

Perhaps most adults are savvy or cynical enough to note and discount the persuasive impact of such branding. However, choosing exposure to entertainment typically means that audiences are in a positive, receptive mode when they likely expect to be able to suspend critical consumptive judgment. Viewers have chosen a film or a television program deliberately, seeking whatever gratifications present – and then are called to simultaneously suspend disbelief in order to immerse themselves in the involving or amusing narrative while also critically noting (and perhaps discounting) the depiction and association of the products featured within that narrative.

Such a process is certainly difficult for adults, but more challenging for children who have not yet developed sufficient media literacy to be able to decode traditional advertising, let alone branding that avoids the traditional signals of a "commercial message." The cross-promotions that often accompany film and television placement that lead to the toys within the children's meals at fast-food chains or the clothing or furnishings in their bedrooms create a seamless stream of branding that deepens its persuasive impact. Such would require a high degree of media sophistication for children to be able to discern and critically judge the worthiness of the product itself. Groups such as the National Advertising Division of the Council of Better Business Bureaus have indicated they will review product placements on children's television (Edwards, 2005).

Even more troubling may be the explosion of advertisements within video or online games where the ads may be either static or subject to dynamic placements that may change as the games are played (Gierlsbeck, 2007). Some reports estimate that the "in-game" placement may grow to become a \$3 billion industry by 2011 (Bulik, 2007). While the video game itself is rated to indicate the maturity needed to view its content, there is no such rating of the amount of commercial content included.

Subtle Dangers

Such a concern is magnified when the product depicted in programming may be deemed hazardous. Products that may not be legally advertised to children, for example, may find a place within film content. The number of film characters who smoke and discuss specific brands, for example, has prompted consumer advocacy groups to argue for increased regulation (Lipman, 1989). Glamorizing alcohol use or smoking without the accompanying warning labels required in traditional advertising offers marketers a different route to reach and to persuade audience members.

Perhaps a greater danger lies in the cultural impact arising from unceasing commercialization in every venue. Imagine if Dickens were writing today: Would Oliver's plaintive request for more porridge now be branded – "More Pickwick Porridge, please?" The Warhol soup can may have been more prophetic than was realized. When virtually every cultural vehicle – from films to plays to recording to television programming – carries overt commercial imprimaturs, it contributes to a pervasive hegemony of materialism that not only overrides artistic or aesthetic values but also reduces the audience to a commodity to be bought and sold again and again. Kretchmer (2004) has noted the advent of what she calls "advertising," which she describes as "entertainment content that mimics traditional media forms but is created solely as a vehicle to promote specific advertisers" (2004: 39). Put more simply, overt placements can turn art simply into another commodity bought and sold for profit.

Restructured Creativity

Consumers have accepted the use of branding to establish characterization; we know the stereotypes of a "Marlboro man," the "Pepsi generation" and a "NASCAR dad." Writers have used products as specific props within novels and scripts for years as one way of quickly signaling insights about settings, characters, and eras. Contemporary placement often goes beyond such characterizations, however. The posed product pitching captured with *The Truman Show* should be just that – a parody of commercialization, not what we routinely experience when we watch a film or TV program or listen to hip-hop. Numerous case studies in academic journals, trade journals, and newspapers point to the editorial decisions of producers,

directors, singers, playwrights, and novelists apparently made to afford the brand its negotiated positions, and a few lawsuits illustrate what may happen when the director or producer does not follow through on the agreed product depiction (see e.g. Nitins, 2005). Obviously, some of these decisions get publicized, so that audience members and critics are aware of the push to please the sponsor. But many such decisions may be made throughout a project, from the initial idea for a project as a product vehicle to post-production edits that insert or delete brands from scenes. The impact of such overt commercial consideration on originality and creativity may be impossible to measure – but it is certainly possible to observe it on screen.

Is all product placement bad for consumers? Obviously not. Some branding is amusing, some creative, some arousing. But consumers should be aware and wary of the phenomenon – and perhaps mindful that when they pay \$8 for their next movie ticket or go online to play the latest "Halo" game, they may be getting more than just entertainment.

Do we really want to hear: "The Oscar for best leading role in a film by a product, good or service goes to . . .?"

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Stereotyping in Advertising

Stereotypes in Advertising

*We don't have milk cows. People
have so many stereotypes of
people from where I come from –
Oklahoma. We don't ride around
in covered wagons, either.*

Carrie Underwood

There's an automobile television commercial that has been running incessantly on the TV programs I like to watch. In it, there is a back-in-the-home 20-something kid complaining about his clueless parents. The parents, meanwhile, are out having a blast – either riding mountain bikes across treacherous terrains or gathering with hip friends to take in an outdoor concert of an equally hip band. These commercials annoy me to no end. It might be because I don't like how the advertiser is using an "anti-stereotype" in what, to me, seems like a stereotypical way. Or perhaps, I'm annoyed with the portrayal of these clueless "adult children." (Move out of the house right now!)

While I find this advertising campaign irksome, I have to admit that it does touch a nerve. First, I'm the target market of the campaign. (I'm in the same age group as the hip parents.) And, second, the car actually sounds like it might be

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a good one for me. So, maybe this is an example of a commercial that is full of stereotypes used in a very effective way.

It's easy to make a list of stereotypes we see in advertising. In fact, I'm not sure I can recall an advertisement that *doesn't* use stereotypes! While it may be easy to say stereotyping is wrong, when an advertiser has 15 or 30 seconds to tell a story, it's more challenging to explain the importance of eating oatmeal to control cholesterol if the viewer can't quickly see that the person on screen obviously needs the product! And, really, aren't some stereotypes just another way to good-naturedly poke fun at others – and ourselves?

Even if we think stereotypes are expected – even necessary – in advertising, the issue is only going to continue being controversial. Here's why.

First, our society is becoming more segmented, so even if stereotypes are indeed helpful, as Margaret Morrison argues, it is becoming more difficult to create a meaningful stereotype that the audience can resonate with right away. For example, consider the aging population. There are currently more than 40 million Americans who are over 50 years old. Where a generation ago, “over 50” might have meant middle age – or even “over the hill” – being 50+ today is more complicated. Yes, many people in their fifties are indeed grandparents, but some are also new parents themselves. Some are competitive athletes, some are on the “most beautiful people” list, some are college students, and some are Florida retirees, spending their days on the golf courses around the state.

Second, it is harder than ever to get a viewer's attention when it comes to commercials. Now that digital video recorders and other technologies are common, advertisers have to be more daring, more targeted, more “in your face” to get your attention for even a few seconds. It could be that the days of gentle stereotyping are over! If an advertiser is too subtle, the message is most likely to get lost.

Third, in this media-saturated world, consumers have become more sophisticated about what the media can (and can't) do. Many look suspiciously at the message advertisers provide. So if it's not authentic, the consumer may very well ignore the message. If an advertiser doesn't use a stereotype, there is probably just as much chance that audience members will criticize the advertiser for being “too real” (i.e., the company is trying too hard) and thus the advertiser ends up being criticized as much as (or more than) if it had just gone ahead and used the stereotype.

So, what's the right way to handle stereotypes in advertising? Do we get offended if we're made fun of by way of stereotypes? Or do we decide that it's a technique to quickly grab our attention and then let us choose what to make of the message? Are all stereotypes bad? Or can a “good stereotype” (hardworking, patriotic blue-collar employee, for example) benefit the demographic that is getting praised?

Finally, we need to wrestle with the issue of why stereotypes in advertising may be an ethical issue in the first place. How important is it for us to get the whole picture before we make a judgment about a person? Does it matter if we judge fictional people (characters in advertising) quickly? Some people might

argue that if we don't see a person accurately – even in an advertisement – then we are setting ourselves up to treating “real” people too simplistically; and therefore not ethically. Or, as Jane Marcellus mentions in her essay, when we believe stereotypes, we begin to expect that people will act in a certain way, which may be short-sighted and ignores the complexity of the person. Other people would say a stereotype is only an entrance into a person's life – not a definition of it. These are tough questions. What ethical role – if any – do stereotypes have in advertising? *You decide.*

Ideas to Get You Thinking . . .

- 1 Make a list of all the stereotypes you can think of. Start with the most obvious (housewife, football player, grandmother, etc.). Then write a one-word description of the label. Now see if a classmate or friend can match the descriptions with the stereotypes. How many did they get right? What did you learn?
- 2 Watch your favorite television program. List every kind of stereotype that you come across in the show. Be as specific as possible. Do you think these stereotypes are necessary? Why, or why not?
- 3 Flip through a magazine. Every time you come across a stereotype, make a note of it. Are there certain groups that come up more than others? Which ones?
- 4 Tape one of your favorite television programs (or access it online or through YouTube). You will most likely need to view it more than once. Make a list of all the commercials you see during the show. List all the main characters in the commercials and indicate whether you think the characters are portrayed in stereotypical ways. What did you discover?

Other Topics to Debate

- 1 Only negative stereotypes are really negative.
- 2 Stereotypes in the media outside of advertising are bad because those vehicles have plenty of time to develop the characters. However, because advertisers have just a few seconds to make a point, it's a necessary mechanism.
- 3 Stereotypes that mock successful individuals (such as doctors) are perfectly acceptable.

If You'd Like to Know More . . .

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Argument

What's the harm in advertising stereotypes?

Jane Marcellus

Middle Tennessee State University, USA

In the November 2011 issue of *Esquire* magazine, a foldout poster of Rihanna shows the performer lying on her side, wearing nothing but what looks like strategically draped seaweed. On the flip side is a color photograph of the 2012 Shelby GT500 Mustang. Both the poster and the ad follow a lengthy profile of Rihanna, who was named *Esquire's* "Sexiest Woman Alive" in a contest sponsored by Ford.

Immediately following the poster, a Ford ad proclaims that "How you hang this poster says a lot about you." It offers three choices. Choosing the "Sexiest Woman Alive" side shows that "You're a red-blooded American male." Choosing the Mustang side also shows that "You're a red-blooded American male." Hanging the poster on a plate-glass window, so both sides can be seen reveals that "You're a genius."

There are a number of criticisms about this spread. It blurs the line between editorial copy and advertising and suggests that a woman and an automobile are equal in value. Just as troubling, however, is the suggestion that if a man does *not* select the car, the woman, or both, his masculinity – and his

Americanism – will be in question. The ad degrades women, but it *stereotypes* both women and men, reducing them, as British cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall observes, "to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature" (1997: 257).

Stereotypes in advertising are unacceptable. They are *limiting*, often demeaning, and simply not necessary to sell products. In fact, ad stereotypes are so troubling that, in 2008, the European Parliament voted 504–110 to adopt a non-binding report aimed at convincing the ad industry not to use them. Focused primarily on gender stereotypes, the report states that ad stereotypes can "strait-jacket women, men, girls and boys by restricting individuals to predetermined and artificial roles that are often *degrading*, humiliating and dumbed-down for both sexes" (Carvajal 2008).

Understanding the problem with stereotypes is easier if you understand that the word "stereotype" comes from early printing, where it had to do with using a metal plate to produce the same image over and over. Nowadays, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it refers to an "oversimplified idea" that is used, like those metal plates, over and over again. Media scholar Kim Sheehan (2004) likens the concept to modern-day photocopying. The word "cliché" has similar roots. Unoriginal ideas multiplied without thought, stereotypes limit our ability to see people, things, and ideas in nuanced ways. As Walter Lippmann (1922) writes in his classic work *Public opinion*, stereotypes are "pictures in our heads" (1922: 81) that construct the way we see the world around us before we have a chance to look for ourselves:

For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture. (Lippmann 1922: 81)

Media ethicist Thomas Eivins calls stereotypes a "Platonic shadow-show put on by our own culture – a figment of reality at best" (2009: 206). Limiting our ability to see would be bad enough, but as Hall observes, stereotyping often occurs where one group is more powerful than another. Difference is emphasized as the less powerful group becomes "the Other" (1997: 258) and social dominance is maintained. In the Ford ad from *Esquire*, the dominant group is the "red-blooded American male" who sees both cars and women as interchangeable. Measured against one another in a contest, women are disempowered, but male readers who do not wish to disempower them are also, implicitly, "the other" – unmasculine and un-American.

Of course, stereotypes are often justified as the fastest way to communicate in the blink of time that an advertiser has to capture audience attention. Certainly, they leave lasting impressions. We are all familiar with the "choosy moms" who select a certain brand of peanut butter or women who debate the best way to mop their floors, clean their bathrooms, or get the stains out of their rowdy

little boys' clothes. It seems dads rarely worry about such things, and girls are never rowdy. Instead, at very young ages, girls are found in fashion magazines like *Teen Vogue* and *Cosmo Girl*. Ultra-skinny, with flawless skin, they tout everything from mascara to jeans. Such images are perfect illustrations of Laura Mulvey's point that the "male gaze" constructs women as sexual objects in an "erotic spectacle" (2006 [1975]: 346). In other words, the way men see women determines their value, so women evaluate themselves according to how they think men will evaluate them. Both sexes are encouraged to see women as objects, and anything else is unnatural in this system of mutually reinforcing stereotypes.

One might argue that there is nothing wrong with having a clean house, playing outside in the dirt, or wearing nice clothes and makeup. But many ads present people in what cultural historian Roland Marchand calls "social tableaux" (1985: 165), a strategy that emerged in the 1920s. Many tableaux suggest there is no *other* way to see moms, little boys, or teen girls. As Bivins says, stereotypes "present only a single cultural picture, and reinforce certain cultural expectations" (2009: 207). "How many believe that the Irish are heavy drinkers, that Mexicans are lazy, that blondes are dumb, that white men can't jump?" he asks (208). Although many people know such egregious stereotypes are wrong, other stereotypes – subtle but just as powerful – tell us that men are slob, single people are desperate to mate, and anything fleshier than "sixpack abs" is obese.

Both Sheehan (2004) and Bivins (2009) cite two media theories to help explain why stereotypes are so powerful. *Cultivation theory*, developed by George Gerbner (1973) holds that the media (particularly television) have such power over the way we see the world that, as Denis McQuail writes, it "gradually leads to the adoption of beliefs about the nature of the social world which conform to the stereotyped, distorted and very selective view of reality" (2005: 497). For example, those who see a lot of ads where only women scrub bathrooms and men objectify women begin to believe that these are natural behaviors for real people. *Media expectancy theory*, similarly, holds that over time we not only believe that certain behaviors are normal but we expect all people in that group to conform to them. As Sheehan argues, expectancy theory suggests that "the use of stereotypes hinders one's view of any individual as a complete person" (2004: 83). An example is Richard Dyer's list of common gay and lesbian stereotypes – "the butch dyke and the camp queen, the lesbian vampire and the sadistic queer, the predatory schoolmistress and the neurotic faggot" (2006 [1984]: 353). He notes that even some gay people in the past believed they were true, perpetuating self-oppression. Similarly, Bivins says, "If you are a young woman and you consistently see women portrayed as air-headed 'shopaholics,' you may, over time, begin to adopt that cliché as an actual way of life" (2009: 208).

It is important to remember that not all stereotypes are communicated visually; accents also stereotype. "Who would think that a German car company could break ground in Spartanburg, Carolina and call it home?" asks the announcer in a BMW commercial, his speech heavy with "good old boy" South-

ern inflections. The voiceover continues as images of working-class people in a diner and football players on a field are interspersed with visuals of the factory (which makes luxury cars). Similarly, a series of BP ads that appeared in the wake of the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill used announcers with Southern accents as part of the company's crisis management. In both, the "folks like us" attitude and Southern dialect are clearly intended to convey "Americanness" and to ward off the perceived threat of large foreign corporations. Yet when there is no foreign "other," regional accents can be negative. As linguist Dennis B. Preston notes,

Just as US popular culture has kept alive the barefoot, moonshine-making and drinking, intermarrying, racist Southerner, so has it continued to contribute to the perception of the brash, boorish, criminal, violent New Yorker. Small wonder that the varieties of English associated with these areas have these characteristics attributed to them. (Preston n.d.)

British accents also convey stereotypes about social class and education. The little green gecko who sells GEICO car insurance actually speaks with a Cockney accent from East London – the one-time poor, working-class area immortalized in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*. Although the gecko's charm appeals to many, it may offend those sensitive to defining "Englishness" in a way that both capitalizes on but ignores the cultural complexity of an area known for overcrowding, poverty, and crime, but which is today a rich hodgepodge of ethnicities. To those who understand the regional nuances of British culture, "English" is no more defined by the Cockney accent than it is by the stuffy upper-class accent of the stereotypical English butler. Out of place in America (and on a Southwestern lizard), the gecko's accent may not amuse viewers sensitive to its cultural implications. After all, how would people in the United States (particularly in the South) feel if a "redneck" accent were used in British ads for British products?

But maybe you're still not convinced.

Sometimes, it helps to take a step back in time and gain a historical perspective. Let's consider the African American woman featured in a bathtub cleaner ad that aired regularly in 2006. Did she just happen to be black? Or did she have what Raymond Williams calls "cultural ancestors" (1961: 53), whose presence in media of the past make her presence in media now seem natural?

Go to the store (or maybe to your kitchen cabinet) and look at the image of the black woman on Aunt Jemima pancake mix. She has the bright smile, neat white collar, and pearl earrings that any professional woman today would be proud to wear to an executive job. But she used to look quite different. From the 1890s, when the product was introduced, until the mid twentieth century, she was an overweight black woman with a rag around her head – the typical mammy from the antebellum South. In fact, the first model for Aunt Jemima actually *was* a 59-year-old former slave named Nancy Green (Advertising Age, n.d.). In a 1919 ad from *Ladies' Home Journal*, Aunt Jemima was called, paradoxically, "the

cook whose cabin became more famous than Uncle Tom's" – a reference to Harriet Beecher Stowe's antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Back in those unapologetically racist times, the black "mammy" who spoke in dialect was common in ads for household products. The woman in a 1928 ad for an insecticide called Flit declares, "Dat little easy contraption do de wuk of six of dem giggling house gals in de old days" – referring to slave times. A 1931 ad in *Forbes* magazine urges businessmen to use "Clarinda" (another mammy with a rag on her head) along with the new imaging process of rotogravure to sell their products. "Fresh, savory, delightful – ten thousand such words would not tell the sales story of freshness as vividly and dramatically as the camera and Clarinda tell it here," claims this ad, which features Chase and Sanborn coffee as an example of what "Clarinda" could sell. The popularity of such images changed only when people became more sensitive to racism. Have they gone away completely? If you think so, then why does it seem natural in American culture for bathroom cleaner (or, in another ad that aired in the early 2000s, medicine for constipation) to be sold by plump black women with "down home" plainspokenness, even if they do not wear rags around their heads? Who are their cultural ancestors?

Other groups are also stereotyped. As Debra Merskin argues, "Trade characters such as Aunt Jemima (pancake mix), Uncle Rastus (Cream of Wheat), and Uncle Ben (rice) are visual reminders of the subservient occupational positions to which Blacks often have been relegated" (2001: 160). In the same way, "Crazy Horse Malt Liquor, Red Chief Sugar, and Sue Bee Honey similarly remind us of an oppressive past" (160) for Native Americans. Today's images of Native Americans are heir to such stereotypes, for they draw on ideas of "Indianness" that many people learned as children. In the case of African Americans, the cultural purpose of many stereotypes was originally to help "make Whites feel more comfortable with, and less guilty about, maintenance of distinctions on the basis of race well after Reconstruction" (Merskin 2001: 160). Their daily use had the effect of "constantly and subtly reinforcing stereotypical beliefs" (160). The same can be said for any other group that is made "other."

For advertising students seeking alternatives, it is useful to remember Dyer's distinction between *stereotypes* and *social types*, which "are open-ended, more provisional, more flexible," creating "the sense of freedom, choice, self-definition" (1984: 355). Social typing suggests that there are many ways to see oneself as a man or woman, mom or dad, girl or boy. In contrast, stereotypes are designed to limit and exclude those who do not fit narrow ideas of normalcy. "You appear to choose your social type in some measure, whereas you are condemned to a stereotype" (Dyer 1984: 355). Dyer argues that "righteous dismissal does not make stereotypes go away" (353) and calls for better understanding of how stereotypes function in society. Sheehan (2004) argues that stereotypes are mitigated by factors such as valence (emotional significance) and frequency, and whether the stereotypes are positive or negative. However, it is important to remember that these may vary with audiences, as we saw with the GEICO gecko example.

Advertising creates an imaginary world that teaches us how to see the real world – and how to see ourselves. As Anthony J. Cortese writes, ads "seem to seep quietly into the back room of our consciousness," where they "try to tell us who we are and who we should be" (1999: 12). For this reason, stereotypes have no place in advertising. They harm us all by diminishing our ability to see and to be seen as the thinking, feeling, unique individuals we are. If, as Lippmann (1922) says, we define first, then see, we don't really see at all. Because ads have so much social power, those who create them have a responsibility to do so in a way that does not reinforce unequal power structures. The ability to do that is one indication, in the twenty-first century, of a truly creative, responsible advertising professional.

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Counterargument > <

Stereotypes are a necessary and appropriate strategy for advertising

Margaret Morrison

University of Tennessee, USA

You come across a lot of estimates of how many advertisements the average person sees every day. J. Walker Smith, principal with the Futures Company, former president of Yankelovich, a prominent market research firm, and writer of one of the essays in Chapter 3, says that we've gone from being exposed to about 500 ads daily in the 1970s to as many as 5,000 today (Johnson 2009). Obviously we can't possibly pay attention to all those ads. And advertisers have only seconds to capture the attention of consumers. To do so they use a variety of techniques designed to catch consumers' attention. They place their ads in the media vehicles that their target markets use (i.e., Gatorade on ESPN.com or Wells Fargo in the *Wall Street Journal*). They make their ads as relevant to the target as possible (for instance, a lot of college-age men like beer and women and that's why you often see very attractive women in beer commercials). They'll use things like catchy headlines, popular music, quick edits, and metaphorical devices, all with the goal of catching your attention.

And they often use stereotypes.

Yes, stereotypes. And most advertising would be a failure without them.

So what is a stereotype? Let's start at the beginning. "Stereotype" is derived from the Greek ("stereos" or solid) and Romance languages and originally referred to a method of printing from a plate. The meaning of the word has changed over time. Today we use "stereotype" to refer to an oversimplified idea about a group based on some preconceived assumptions.

We use stereotypes to help make sense of all aspects of our lives. Think of them as shorthand for living. For example, belongings like cowboy boots or flag pins communicate to others something about the individuals to whom they belong (we might be quick to stereotype the former as a fan of country music and the latter as an extremely patriotic person) (Cheryan et al. 2009). Given the complex nature of our world – all the information you are exposed to every day, all the stimuli present in your environment, and the myriad things you encounter

every day like countless advertising messages – you can begin to see how stereotypes may be vital to help you understand the world.

So stereotypes have been around as long as humans and are useful in helping us organize our thoughts.

There are many theories about how the brain processes knowledge, including advertising. One of these – schema theory – is particularly useful in understanding how stereotypes work. A schema is a cognitive framework or concept that helps organize and interpret information. Schemas can be useful because they allow us to take shortcuts in interpreting a vast amount of information (like the amount of advertising to which we're exposed). However, these mental frameworks can also cause us to ignore pertinent information in favor of information that confirms our pre-existing beliefs and ideas. For instance,

prejudice is an example of a schema that prevents people from seeing the world as it really is and inhibits them from taking in new information. By holding certain beliefs about a particular group of people, this existing schema may cause people to interpret situations incorrectly. When an event happens that challenges these existing beliefs, people may come up with alternative explanations that uphold and support their existing schema instead of adapting or changing their beliefs. (Cherry, n.d.)

Because we tend to gravitate toward mental images that reinforce what we already know about the world, schemas contribute to stereotypes and make it difficult for us to be receptive to or to retain new information that does not conform to what we already believe. Incorrect pre-existing information about other groups is hard to correct because it is reinforced through the use of stereotypes. As such, we develop ideas about people who are different (in psychology these are known as "out-groups") that become intractable. That's the main reason why the word "stereotype" often conjures up all sorts of negative associations. White people don't have rhythm. African Americans are good at basketball. All Asians know kung fu. Middle Easterners hate America. Germans are cold and rigid. These are some common and enduring negative stereotypes about racial groups. And such examples abound. But stereotypes can just as often be positive. Mothers are loving and nurturing human beings. Children are born innocent. Best friends are loyal and would give you the shirt off their backs. Your dog loves you no matter what you do. Hard work seldom goes unnoticed. All of these are stereotypical ideas with positive connotations.

Stereotypes simplify reality and advertisers use them to make an impression on you. And it makes sense. Think about television. Advertisers have approximately 30 seconds to explain their products to you. Some of these products might be quite complex (think of technological things like computers, or high-priced luxury vehicles with a myriad options), so explaining them in such a short time frame is a challenge. Short cuts are needed and that's where stereotypes are useful. If an advertiser can give you a cue via a stereotype, that makes for an efficient message. For instance, classical music used in a luxury car advertisement, combined with actors wearing expensive clothing, signals that the car is prestigious. You expect that rich people dress well and that they drive nice cars.

Similarly, inner city youth and rap music in an ad for a clothing brand tells you that the brand has "street cred" and is hip. And advertisers hope these qualities will be associated with their product; they use very specific tactics to create a brand with a personality that is attractive to the target market.

Common Stereotypes in Advertising

The United States is a large and complex country, comprising an almost infinite number of different groups. And, similarly, an almost infinite number of stereotypes. Below, we discuss some common ones found in advertising.

- *Children:* In children's advertising, boys are often portrayed as rough or aggressive. They are more likely to be seen in sporting or athletic roles or in positions of power. They are presented as more independent than girls. Girls, on the other hand, are portrayed as more dainty or feminine. They are often shown playing house or cooking and they play with dolls (boys, on the other hand, play with action figures). They like the color pink. They are more concerned than boys with being popular and beautiful. If a girl is shown in an advertisement with a boy, she is often smaller and gazes up at the boy or is portrayed as in some way subordinate to him (Browne 1998).
- *Shallow or incompetent men:* A fixture of many beer commercials, young men are often portrayed playing childish pranks on each other. They are old enough to drink alcohol, but their mental development seems to have regressed. They will drop their friends in a heartbeat if a pretty blond pays them the slightest bit of attention. Incompetent males are also often shown in advertising. Who hasn't seen an ad in which a bewildered husband is outfoxed by his smarter spouse? Males are often portrayed as bumbler around the home, incapable of performing even the easiest of household tasks (that is, unless they have the advertised product).
- *Senior citizens:* Older consumers are often portrayed in advertisements as infirm and doddering. They are shown as out of touch with reality and may be unattractive.
- *Females:* Apparently, men don't do the laundry, as virtually every advertisement for laundry detergent features a woman. Even though the majority of women work outside the home, they are still depicted as being in charge of all household chores. They are also more likely than men to be shown as responsible for food selection and meal preparation in the home (unless it is barbecuing, which is almost exclusively the domain of men).
- *Race:* Advertising can perpetuate racial stereotypes that have lasted for generations. Native Americans have been portrayed in advertising as wild, primitive, and uncivilized. Or as noble or peaceful people who live in harmony with nature. African Americans are often shown to be great athletes and superb singers and dancers. African American women are sometimes portrayed as angry and loud. When Asians appear in advertising, they are typi-

cally presented as technical experts or otherwise intellectually gifted. They appear in ads for business-oriented or technical products. They are seldom shown in a domestic setting. Hispanics are often portrayed as lively and fun-loving, or violent (but great lovers). When whites are portrayed in advertisements with those of another race, they are perceived to be in charge and typically pictured in the forefront of the ad. Additionally the majority of ads for luxury goods feature white people, thus creating a stereotype of privilege.

So obviously, stereotypes are pervasive in advertising. Why should you care? Stereotypes create expectations that members of a group will act a certain way. And if all you have to go on is a stereotype, then members of the group *become* the stereotype in your mind. Think, for example, of a teenager growing up in a tiny town. This person has never met an Asian person. But, he thinks they're probably all really smart because they program computers, or at least that's the message that advertisers have been sending him. Imagine his surprise when an Asian student transfers to his school and turns out to be a mediocre student except in the area of art, at which he excels. To take this further, think about the pressures that the Asian student himself encounters owing to stereotypes. All around, he sees signals (stereotypes) that Asians are exceptionally smart and technologically savvy. He feels like a misfit with his dream of being an artist.

The Right Way to Use Stereotypes

We've discussed what stereotypes are, and why they are vital to advertising. We've also discussed some of the negative things associated with them. At this point it's relevant to ask: Can stereotypes be used responsibly? If so, how?

I believe they can. But first, it's necessary to distinguish between good and bad uses of stereotypes. Stereotypes can be functional when they are accepted as a natural process to guide expectations. Stereotypes become dysfunctional when they are used to judge an individual incorrectly (Mooij 2005). Advertising messages are typically short and thus they depend on stereotypes to attract attention and generate awareness, but they can also result in harm. Let's look at an example. Elderly people have been stereotyped as feeble and senile. In reality, many are physically fit and as sharp as tacks. But let's say that you are an insurance provider looking at an application for supplemental insurance and all you have to go by is a piece of paper that says the person applying is 80 years old. A dysfunctional stereotype might lead you to deny the applicant, causing harm to him or her.

The best thing for an advertiser to do is to use stereotypes in functional ways. This is particularly effective in these times of niche marketing, as functional stereotypes can be used to make advertising that is relevant to target segments. For example, after 9/11, many negative stereotypes of Middle Easterners emerged. When you see stories about Muslims, they are often accompanied by

images of stern-looking men with turbans and beards. If we were advertising a product to a Muslim, we might create a functional stereotype that shows a Muslim man laughing with his little daughter or enjoying a happy feast with his family. This new stereotype, seen often enough, might replace the older one.

Concept or copytesting your ad with members of the target audience also helps avoid dysfunctional stereotypes. In such cases, members are shown several concepts or rough advertisements and asked such questions as: What was the main thing the concept/advertisement was saying? Were there any other ideas in the concept/ad? Discovering in advance that you are sending a wrong or unintended message can help avoid a disaster for both you and your client.

If you're planning to work in advertising, stereotypes will become vital to you because they are vital to advertising. The key is to use them in a manner that is respectful and does not perpetuate negative ideas about a group.

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CHAPTER 6

Advertising Choices

Influences of Stereotypes and Taste

I am sure I can't define good taste any more successfully than our highest courts can. Indeed, when one goes to the theatre or to the movies, he must wonder if there are any bounds at all. Compared to that, advertising language has almost the moral purity of a Gregorian Chant.

—A. J. Seaman

Much of the actual “work” of advertising and advertising agencies involves choices: choices regarding whom to target, which media to purchase, or whether the magazine advertisement will be single page or a spread. To create an advertisement, advertising professionals make dozens of choices. All these choices made during the development of an advertising campaign help in the creation of the meanings of the advertisement. Thus, all choices can be important, and all choices can potentially have societal effects that go beyond the goal of the advertising message itself.

In this chapter, we discuss two specific choices that advertising agency strategists, art directors, and copywriters make during the development of advertising campaigns, and we examine how advertising professionals select specific imagery and messages that can shape societal beliefs. First, we investigate the role of stereotypes in advertising messages and in society. Second, we examine how some agency personnel choose to “push the envelope” in terms of propriety by selecting messages and imagery that may be perceived by some as inappropriate and in poor taste. We look at how questions of taste are viewed by the public and can be addressed by advertisers.

STEREOTYPES IN ADVERTISING

The term *stereotype* originated as a printing term: A stereotype was originally a metal printing plate that was cast from a mold of a raised printing surface. It is much closer to what

we think of as a photocopy today. In that way, then, the term *stereotype* is value free: It denotes neither a positive nor a negative characteristic. Today, we define stereotypes as one group's generalized and widely accepted beliefs about the personal attributes of members of another group. The essence of a stereotype is the perception that every person who belongs to the group is a generic exemplum of a type rather than a unique individual (Taylor & Stern, 1997, p. 48).

We use the term *stereotype* today in a descriptive way that may have either positive or negative connotations (Taylor & Stern, 1997). These connotations derive from the quantitative and qualitative components of each specific stereotype. The quantitative aspect comes into play when we consider that most stereotypes originate because some proportion of a specific population is reflected in the stereotype. For example, take the following two statements:

1. Children love to play with toys.
2. Women love to shop.

If we think of the definition of a stereotype given earlier, we see that both statements could be defined as stereotypes. However, individuals would rarely describe the first statement as a stereotype but more as a statement of fact. The second statement might be seen as a stereotype because it treats all women as a generic exemplum of a type (shoppers). The problem, though, is that the second statement is not completely true. You have probably met at least one woman who does not like to shop. In fact, we could probably state that both statements are false because there may be a child somewhere that does not love to play with toys. To state the phrases correctly, we would have to say that *most* children love to play with toys or *some* women love to shop. As we quantitatively assess the proportion of the population that meets the statement, we can judge the quantitative component of the stereotype. By not including some indication of the size of the specific group, then, the statement suggests stereotypical behavior.

The qualitative aspect involves the context under which the statement is made. The term *stereotype* has a negative connotation today. If we are celebrating the freedom and carefree nature of childhood, we see the first statement positively and may not think of it as a stereotype. If we are suggesting that shopping is a wasteful and unproductive activity, we might see the second statement about women as stereotypical. When we see the characterization in a negative context, the stereotype takes on an unfavorable nature. When a characterization is used in a positive context, we may not always see it as a stereotype (Dobzynski, 2000).

We can better evaluate the quantitative and qualitative aspects of stereotypes in the advertising context and the roles of stereotypes in society by thinking about stereotypes from three different perspectives:

1. The range of stereotypes presented in advertising messages
2. The valence of stereotypes presented for a specific group
3. The frequency of the portrayals of each stereotype

We will discuss each of these individually.

Range of Stereotypes

If you watch television for half an hour, you will be able to develop a list of what you would consider stereotypes in both the programming content and the content of commercials. For example, a recent six-commercial block on a single television program presented the following stereotypes: the supermom, the computer geek, the trendy youth, the good dad, the dumb blonde, and the frat boy. It is likely that these descriptors have painted an image in your mind of the specific people in the advertisements and may even suggest the types of products that were advertised in the commercials featuring the characters.

Why do advertisements use so many stereotypes? Advertisements present brief dramatic stories with a message (i.e., a selling message) in a very short time period. For example, television commercials take place in 30 seconds, and most print advertisements fit into a single page of a magazine. Since stereotypes are considered the “coin of the realm of the dramatic arts” (Lerner, 2001, p. 16), using stereotypes in advertising messages quickly sets the stage for the messages. Stereotypes convey characters and images quickly and clearly.

Although the term stereotype has a negative connotation today, some stereotypes present positive images of a specific group of individuals, whereas other stereotypes present negative images. We will discuss some of these images in the upcoming chapters. At its best, advertising presents a range of images of one group of people. Therefore, people viewing the commercials do not think of individuals in that group as being one-dimensional but rather see individuals in the group as all being alike. For example, women between the ages of 20 and 30 are seen frequently in advertisements for a range of products and services. A variety of portrayals of this group are seen: executive, mom, student, artist, and so on.

Women over age 40, though, are seen much less frequently in commercials. When they appear, older women are often portrayed as suffering from medical problems. Although some older women do fit this category, many others do not. Since a limited range of portrayals of older women is presented, we do not get a true picture of older women in society from advertising messages.

Valence of Portrayals

Valence refers to the emotional significance of any given portrayal. In state it another way, we often connect positive or negative values to stereotypes. We choose the value depending on the context in which the specific stereotype appears and given the other types of images we see. For example, when you look at the advertisements in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, who do you think the woman is? Both headlines spell it out: these are moms. These images appearing in a magazine like *Good Housekeeping* are likely to be perceived positively by the magazine's readers because many readers can personally relate to the image of the mom as nurturer. When the stereotyped attributes are positive, they can make a very quick linkage between an emotion (the pride of being a good mom) and an action (packing a healthy lunch with Tum-E Yummies or taking Nyquil). Thus, advertisements suggest behaviors for people who see themselves as emulating the stereotype (Lerner, 2001).

When we think of stereotypes as negative, we are thinking about the context, or the qualitative aspect. Many believe that stereotypes are problematic because they have the

Figure 6.1 The mom buying Tum-E Yummies “earned big points toward Mom of the year.”



ability to reduce people or objects to classes based on inferences that are made from an individual or social context (Vanden Bergh & Katz, 1999, p. 67). For example, if a working woman picks up *Good Housekeeping* in the dentist's waiting room and sees a number of “good mom” portrayals in the advertisements, she may think that society believes her place is in the home, not in the office. She may feel that society chastises her for breaking with tradition by working full time, or she may feel guilty for not being as good a mom as the ad suggests she could be. In this way, the portrayal may be negative.

Frequency of Portrayals

The idea or concept of a range of portrayals is very important to consider when contemplating stereotypes. A single advertisement or any onetime portrayal of a group will not create a stereotype. The continued reinforcement of information about a group develops the

Figure 6.2 Mom takes Nyquil so she can "dress-up Mommy."



stereotype. In post-World War II America, for example, the majority of adult women were homemakers. In a 30-year period, though, the number of working women increased to 50% of all adult women. As women accepted and reveled in their new roles outside the home, advertising continued to portray women as homemakers and rarely recognized that women had roles other than the traditional role at home. Advertising messages continue to portray women in this homemaker role, even when statistics prove the quantitative aspect of the stereotype to be untrue. Such portrayals continue toirk many women to this day.

If we see a range of portrayals for a single group, and we are consistently exposed to a range of portrayals, stereotyping is generally not a problem. It is when we see a single portrayal consistently, to the exclusion of other images, that the stereotype moves to an exemplum—that is, a single-faceted representation of a group. An incessant recurrence of a single depiction throughout mass media content, coupled with the paucity of compensating images, marks the depiction as a stereotype. Seeing one single, consistent portrayal of

a group of people can affect how we perceive all members of the stereotyped group, either while we are creating advertising messages or when we encounter members of the group in the real world.

Let us consider the "good mom" stereotype again. In terms of the frequency of the portrayal, we would ask how often we see the "good mom" stereotype relative to other depictions of women in advertisements. If the only image we see is the "good mom" stereotype, we may come to think that women should only be found in the home. This could have the effect of limiting the roles of women in society.

As illustrated earlier, the individual most powerfully affected by a stereotype is the person targeted by the stereotype. Studies have shown that if you have knowledge of how others stereotype people who are part of your own demographic group, you will start acting that way. An experiment exposed selected groups of individuals to stereotypical imagery about their groups (e.g., blonde women are stupid, elders are forgetful) and then had them perform a series of intellectual and physical tasks. Those exposed to stereotypical images of their groups did worse on the tasks than those who were not exposed to the stereotypes (Begeley, 2000). This study suggests that if no one reminds you of a stereotype about your specific group, you will not be affected by the stereotype.

The real power of stereotypes is their ability to change the behavior of the person holding the stereotype. Begeley illustrates this with an observation about women. He suggests that one stereotype of women shows them strongly affected by premenstrual syndrome (PMS), a hormonal fluctuation that naturally occurs during a woman's monthly cycle. Begeley (2000) writes, "if you think women are ninny's ruled by hormonal swings, you don't name them CEO" (p. 67).

HOW STEREOTYPES WORK

How do stereotypes work in our society in general? Three specific theories help to describe the process by which stereotypes create imagery among groups of people.

Cultivation Theory

How have stereotypes become so powerful? George Gerbner's *Cultivation Theory* attempts to describe the power of media in our culture. Media are

the most ubiquitous wholesalers of social roles in industrial societies. Mass media form the common mainstream of contemporary culture. They present a steady, repetitive and compelling system of images and messages. . . . This unprecedented condition has a profound effect on the way we are socialized into our roles. (Gerbner, 1993, p. 25)

The two main concepts within this theory are *mainstreaming* and *resonance*. *Mainstreaming*, according to Rosenberry and Vicker (2009), describes how people from different social groups will come together to share a common perception as a result of their

exposure to television. This idea suggests that viewing of media messages of all types, including advertising, can be a great equalizer of opinions and perceptions across vastly different social groups. Resonance, according to Rosenberry and Vicker (2009), describes how some images can have a greater impact for people whose real life reflects that which is shown in the media. This means that if the messages the media are showing happen to reflect what certain groups think is true, they are going to be more affected by them than those whose lives are drastically different.

Specifically with regard to imagery on television, Gerbner suggests that there is a pattern of setting, casting, social typing, actions, and related outcomes that cuts across most program types and defines the world of television (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1986, p. 19). The medium of television is seen as one of the strongest cultivation agents in society. Perse suggests that television creates an idea of mainstream life that homogenizes the outlooks and social reality beliefs of viewers in a direction consistent with television context. What we see on television, then, becomes a strong part in our worldview. Television can do this because it is consistent in its deviation from reality (Perse & Ferguson, 1994). For example, people who watch a lot of television are more likely than others to express sex-stereotyped beliefs such as men are breadwinners and women are nurturers. This is because television consistently provides such stereotypical images to its viewers (Perse & Ferguson, 1994).

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory suggests that everyone strives to belong to a group, and once an individual belongs to a group, he or she sees that group as the "in-group" and other groups at the "out-groups." Tajfel and Turner (1979) proposed that there are three mental processes involved in evaluating others as "us" or "them" (i.e., "in-group" and "out-group." Individuals first categorize people using social categories that divide people by things like race, occupation, nationality, and religion. It also recognizes that, for better or worse, individuals relate certain types of behavior to each category. Individuals then engage in a process called social identification, where individuals adopt the identity of the group with which they identify. If a student changes his or her major from biology to theater, it is likely that this student will begin to act in the ways he or she believes theater act (and conform to the norms of the group). One's self-esteem will become bound up with group membership. Finally, individuals engage in social comparison where we compare our own group (what we consider the in-group to other groups (or what we consider the out-group). If self-esteem is to be maintained, our group needs to compare favorably with other groups. This is critical to understanding prejudice, because once two groups identify themselves as rivals, they are forced to compete in order for the members to maintain their self-esteem.

Expectancy Theory

Recall that we earlier suggested that one power of a stereotype is that it makes someone act differently. This is captured in **Expectancy Theory**, which suggests that advertising portrayals build or reinforce expectations and influence social reality. If advertising stereotypes specific groups of people in certain ways, persons in the group will start to act that

way because it is expected of them. You could take this to the next step and say that if we present a stereotype (e.g., good mom) and associate a product with it (e.g., Jif peanut butter), we can make a somewhat effortless connection and a meaningful advertising promise: If a woman wants to be a good mom, she will buy Jif peanut butter.

If expectancy theory is valid, then the use of stereotypes hinders one's view of any individual as a complete person. The mass media's use of stereotypes suggests that the mass media will rarely portray men and women (or African Americans, Caucasians, or Hispanics) as complete people with full and meaningful lives (Lerner, 2001). The "good mom" stereotype, for example, suggests that women have a very specific purpose in their lives focused on the home and the family. In reality, a good mom may also be running a Fortune 500 company while keeping children healthy. However, the time and space limitations of advertising do not allow this complete representation to be provided in a single message.

Obviously, such stereotypes can affect how each of us feels about ourselves: whether we are doing what is right, whether we will be accepted by others, and whether we are fulfilling the roles expected of us in society. Expectancy theory also suggests that we develop a worldview of different groups of people who are not like us (whether they are younger or older, a different gender or a different race, or simply living in a different part of the country) through the images we see in the media, including advertising. Depending on our lifestyles and how much media we are exposed to, we may see a wide range of images of different groups of people or a very limited range of portrayals of the group.

How Stereotypes Affect Advertising Messages

Do stereotypes work in advertising? The answer is, it depends. If people in the target audience relate positively to a stereotypical portrayal, the portrayal may help sell the product. If people in the target audience create opinions about groups of people other than the group that they are in, and these opinions put the stereotyped group into a negative light, a stereotyped portrayal could be problematic. Although we can all recognize stereotypes that are blatantly offensive, how we view other portrayals depends on the taste and sensitivity of members of the target audience. For example, many advertisements targeted to women portray husbands and fathers as incompetent around the home. Women may laugh at these portrayals, but men viewing the same commercials may be less amused.

A type of advertising called **recursive advertising** turns stereotypes on their ears. Athletic shoe manufacturer Keobok's campaign for its women's product line features women watching a televised football game while a man cleans up after them. In another spot, a group of men entertain during a women's basketball game time out. These ads are meant to poke fun at other advertisers' use of stereotypes or marketing techniques (Vogele, 2002). While the spot makes fun of traditional female/male roles, we must ask whether such advertising really does anything to change them. Does this type of advertising merely promote the traditional stereotypes that currently exist? Is it, as Keobok suggests, really a woman's world?

In the next several chapters, we will discuss portrayals of men and women, minorities, children, and elders in advertising. At the end of each chapter, we will provide ways for you to think about portrayals as you develop advertising campaigns both in school and in the future. From this chapter, though, you should be able to tell that as an advertiser, you will probably not be able to avoid using stereotyping, but you should be sure that you present

a range of images in your body of work. Throughout the chapters ahead, we will continually admonish you not to take the easy way out. Rather, think about unique and interesting images of all types of people that will resonate with individuals in your target audience. Take women out of the kitchen, strip men of their pinstripe suits, and try to present imagery that is more complex in the ads you create. One way to do this is by recursive advertising, and another way is to get outside and look at the huge variety of people on the street during any given day. Understand more about the complexities of these individuals and use that knowledge to create better advertising that resonates with target audiences.

Of course, advertisers are always concerned with breaking through the clutter. Certainly, recursive advertising gets attention if for no other reason than it causes us to reevaluate the stereotypical ideas that we each have in our minds and memories. Advertising, as you know, is challenged to be fresh, to be exciting, and to attract attention, as well as to convince fickle media audiences not to turn the page or change the channel. This leads to all kinds of techniques that some may find problematic, particularly with regard to taste and advertising.

SENSITIVITY, TASTE, AND ADVERTISING

Advertisers have an obligation to be aware that many consumers may find the use of certain stereotypes questionable and possibly even offensive. This use of stereotyped images edges onto the slippery slope of sensitivity and taste in advertising messages. In general, advertisers need to routinely examine and evaluate imagery and language that they use to determine how consumers are affected by the messages, both in terms of the meaning consumers derive from the messages and the overall appropriateness of the strategic approach. In particular, any messages that may cross the fuzzy boundaries of good taste should be closely evaluated.

How do we know when this boundary is crossed? Bob Garfield, a popular writer at the trade magazine *Advertising Age*, wrote that "there is nothing crass about commercialism; there are only times when commercialism seems crass. This is why there are no billboards in cemeteries" (Garfield, 2001a, p. 29). Images that are shocking, disrespectful, or out-and-out disgusting must be evaluated within the context of where they will appear, in terms of both the advertising channel and the market. The sensibilities of the target audience who will see the message must also be considered. This recognizes that a message that is completely appropriate to one target audience (e.g., men aged 18 to 34) may be inappropriate for another (e.g., women aged 65 and older).

The challenge to any discussion of sensitivity and taste is that each individual has his or her own ideas of what constitutes "good" and "bad" taste. If you ask any number of different individuals what they consider tasteful or distasteful, you are likely to get unique answers from each of them. Van Babel (2001) suggests that advertising mirrors a culture, and thus, it should reflect the dominant tone of a culture. When cultural icons include such controversial individuals as Eminem and Tom Green, the dominant tone can become quite crude (Van Babel, 2001).

This is not to say that certain individuals and groups do not try to quantify good and bad taste. The *Wall Street Journal* once attempted to draft guidelines for journal advertisers that would describe the types of imagery that cross the line of decency and taste. In addition, it

considered creating a review board to screen submitted advertising to see if advertisements met the guidelines. Many organizations, including the Association of American Advertising Agencies (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation (AAF), the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), the Magazine Publishers of America (MPA), and the Newspaper Association of America (NAA), all agreed that the *Wall Street Journal's* plans were not feasible. This decision was based on the perception that decency and taste are more a matter of individual choice than industry policy (Elliot, 2001).

The growth of social media allows consumers to publicly state which ads are offensive and which are not; marketers who keep track on these conversations have to make some hard decisions based on these conversations. In an interview for the *Advertising and Society Review*, the president and CEO of the National Advertising Review Council, said,

Social media has really expanded the impact of offending a substantial group of consumers. One recent ad, I think it was a Super Bowl ad, involved a humorous take on a machine committing suicide. There was an immediate outcry about the ad. I think that the ad only ran one or two times and was then pulled, even though the company had spent a substantial amount of money producing the ad. That kind of buzz was not one any company wanted. There have been multiple examples of that. I'm sure if you did a Google search of Ad Age, you'd find five or ten instances every year where the advertiser goes over the line and they hear back from the public very loudly and very quickly. (Peeler and Scott, 2012)

Advertising tends to be the first medium to jump on national trends (Valenti, 2001). It is one way that advertisers can find ways to push the envelope and break through the clutter. Given this, how can advertisers make good decisions and wise choices about taste in terms of imagery, depictions, stereotypes, and the like? Keith Reinhard, chief executive officer of DDB Needham Worldwide, gave a speech at a meeting of advertising agencies that provided ideas for agency personnel to consider with regard to taste. Specifically, Reinhard (2001) suggested that advertisers consider issues of intent, relevance, context, and pride.

Intent

First, Reinhard (2001) suggested that advertisers ask themselves about the intent of each advertisement. Specifically, advertisers should determine what the advertisement is designed to do. Most advertisements are designed to sell products, build brands, and communicate other types of information. Other advertisements, however, may have a purpose not directly related to the product but may be designed to shock people, to win an award, or to create a controversy. This latter group of advertisements may be stepping on the boundaries of bad taste.

Fashion brands often look for shock value in advertising to make them seem cutting edge. For example, an ad for Bulgari (Figure 6.3) featured actress Julianne Moore in the nude, Bulgari handbags and jewelry, and baby icons. The ad ran in numerous international fashion magazines, yet it was banned from being displayed as an outdoor poster in St. Mark's Square in Venice, Italy. The mayor of Venice, Giorgio Orson, called the image too sexy and inappropriate for St. Mark's Square. The president of the Venice Foundation added, "I take account of the fact

Figure 6.3 Bulgari's ad with Julianne Moore was appropriate for fashion magazines, but not for an outdoor board.



that Venice is part of the real world . . . but we cannot accept these Hollywood-style images. There are intelligent sponsors, and we need to come up with advertising that suits Venice, not Times Square ("Venice Bans 'Risqué' Handbag Billboard," 2010).

Relevance

The relevance question asks how the advertising content is related to the product and to the target. A relevant ad is placed appropriately for its target; an irrelevant ad is not and may be problematic. For example, an ad for Antonio Federici ice cream that ran in several British ads featured a pregnant nun about to indulge in ice cream while in a church (Figure 6.4). The tagline reads, "Immaculately conceived-ice cream is our religion." The ad was banned on the eve of the Pope's visit to Britain in 2010, amid worries over its appropriateness relative to the timing of the placement and amid worries of a perceived decline in moral values in the United Kingdom. The British Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) said in its ruling,

We considered the use of a nun pregnant through immaculate conception was likely to be seen as a distortion and mockery of the beliefs of Roman Catholics. We

Figure 6.4 Antonio Federici's Ice Cream ad was banned prior to the Pope's visit to the United Kingdom.



concluded that to use such an image in a lighthearted way to advertise ice cream was likely to cause serious offence to readers, particularly those who practised the Roman Catholic faith (BBC, 2010).

The ASA in the United Kingdom also banned an ad for Samsung phones that featured a cartoon character of a winking Jesus giving a thumbs-up to the headline, which read "Miraculous Deals on Samsung Galaxy Android Phones." Given that the ad ran during the Easter holiday, consumers complained that the ads mocked religion ("Winking Jesus Phone Advert," 2011).

Context

Questions of context consider not only what is said in the message but also where the message will appear. The Bulgari advertisements discussed earlier were seen as questionable

to present in an outdoor setting, such as a billboard or a taxi top. Another example was an unfortunate billboard placement for the television show *The Walking Dead* (Figure 6.5), which features a storyline about zombies. The billboard was placed next door to a funeral home in the United Kingdom. Both the cable system airing the program and the agency placing the ad apologized for the placement.

Pride

Questions of pride evaluate an individual's own personal feelings about the message that he or she has created. At the micro level, an individual working at an agency needs to ask himself or herself, Would I be proud to sign my name to the ad? To tell people I did the ad? How would I feel about showing an ad to my parents or grandparents? At the meso level, agencies need to question how far they are willing to go to bat for the ad. Your conviction to the message is essential for the message to be made. As an advertiser, you need to take responsibility for your choices.

CHOICES IN ADVERTISING

When advertisers make choices in questionable taste, the messages may (and often do) succeed in creating awareness, generating attention, and gaining publicity for their clients. However, the reason that these messages succeed is not because they are so highly creative

Figure 6.5 This billboard ad for the *Walking Dead* was thoughtlessly posted.



© North News

but rather because most other advertising messages play by the rules in terms of taste and decency. If every advertiser employed crude innuendo and used imagery in questionable taste, taking the "high road" would be seen as an innovative way to approach an advertising problem (Fletcher, 2001).

The great advertising copywriter Bill Bernbach once said, "all of us who professionally use the mass media are the shapers of society. We can vulgarize society. We can brutalize it. Or we can help lift it onto a higher level" (Van Bakel, 2001, p. 4). Keith Reinhard (2000) echoes these sentiments when he says that advertising should not only be informative and/or entertaining, but it should also remind people of ways to make their lives better. This may cause advertising agencies to make some tough choices; however, to echo Bernbach, "a principle isn't a principle until it costs you money" (Reinhard, 2000).

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we discussed in general terms concerns about stereotyping and taste in advertising messages. We provided ways to think about the effects of such messages on consumers. In the next four chapters, we will examine imagery in advertising directed to and featuring men and women, ethnic groups, elders, and children. Refer back to this chapter when analyzing the arguments and the advertisements presented in later chapters to better understand these issues as they are presented.

KEY TERMS

Cultivation Theory	76	Recursive advertising	81	Stereotype	74
Expectancy Theory	80	Social Identity		Valence	76
Mainstreaming	79	Theory	80		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ad agency people often hear from consumers who don't like a certain ad. What should the response be? How does one know if a criticism is a valid criticism? Does a negative comment on social media hold a different amount of weight than a negative letter?
2. Watch an hour of television and identify what types of stereotypes you see in commercials. How problematic do you find stereotypical portrayal? Is your reference group (i.e., college students) portrayed in an appropriate way?
3. Are all stereotypes problematic, or are certain stereotypes ok?
4. Have you experienced mainstreaming as defined by cultivation theory? In what context?

CASE STUDY

ASPIRATIONAL MESSAGES IN CHINA

In China, the Beijing Administration for Industry and Commerce has now given companies issued legislation that marketers must remove words such as *luxury*, *royal*, *supreme*, and *high class* from billboards, or face a fine of about \$4,000. Its rationale was that such aspirational advertisements help to create a politically "unhealthy" climate and are too ostentatious. Also, such messages are a reminder to the city's more downtrodden residents of the growing gap between rich and poor.

1. Would such legislation be appropriate in the United States? Why or why not?
2. China's wealth gap is a serious threat to the country, according to the government, which recorded last year that the average income in a Chinese city is now three times that of a person living in the countryside. Does that provide sufficient rationale for the legislation?
3. What might some marketers do in the face of such legislation?

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ADVERTISING & GENDER

Gender and Advertising

How Gender Shapes Meaning

The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, "It's a girl."

—Shirley Chisholm

Men are dogs and women are cats. Women are from Venus and men are from Mars. Writers, filmmakers, psychologists, and advertisers all have used the idea that men and women are different to develop stories, create conflict, and provide persuasive imagery. Not only do advertisers view men and women differently, but men and women also bring different perspectives to advertising. Thus, we can assume that men and women create different meanings from the advertisements they see. Gender roles in our society have changed dramatically since the 1950s, and portrayals of men and women in advertising have been researched since nearly the same time. Researchers have consistently sought to evaluate these roles to examine whether advertising has kept up with societal changes. In this chapter, we examine the different ways men and women view advertising and messages, as well as some of the ways that advertising portrays gender roles today.

The last several decades have seen changes in the role of women in society, both as those who earn money and those who spend money. In 1940, women comprised about 20% of the workforce in the United States, while today that percentage reaches 50% (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000). In addition, the family structure in the United States has changed: smaller proportions of two-parent families and larger numbers of single parents were characteristic of the family structure toward the end of the 20th century (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000), and that trend continues today.

Internationally, the story is similar. It is estimated that worldwide about 70% of all working-age women now work outside of the home (Witel-Daugenti, 2011). Women make up the majority of professional workers in many countries, even in the Mediterranean, where women have traditionally held more manual jobs. In Spain, for example, the proportion of young women in the labor force has now reached American levels.

In addition to their changing roles in the labor force and in the family, women have also increased their power as consumers. Today, women wield incredible buying power: They purchase or influence the purchase of 85% of all consumer goods, including 91% of all new homes and 65% of all cars ("Marketing to Women Quick Facts," 2011). In the United States, women start 70% of new businesses. A study by Continuum (2011) found that women control 65% of global spending, a total of about \$20 trillion. By 2014, the World Bank predicts that the global income of women will grow by more than \$5 trillion (Wallace, 2011). Around the world, women are delaying marriage to increase their educational and career opportunities.

GENDER AND INFORMATION PROCESSING

As discussed in Chapter 2, advertisers provide messages and leave the meaning up to consumers to develop. Advertisers are interested in similarities and differences in how men and women receive and evaluate information. One difference involves the actual creation of meaning from a given advertisement. Men look directly at the primary message of a given advertisement (e.g., "buy this beer"). Women not only evaluate the primary message, but they also pick up multiple clues from the message and weave together threads to intuit and infer the inner meaning of the message (e.g., "buy this beer and you will be popular and trendy") (Popcorn & Marigold, 2000).

Once the meaning from an advertisement has been determined, men and women differ in how that meaning is used. These different decision-making processes are related to whether the process is linear or more nonlinear in nature. Men process messages and make decisions more quickly than women do, perhaps because men focus on the primary message of a given advertisement and take in little other information during the process. This is due to the observation that men have a linear thinking and reasoning style, and men tend to have a more task-oriented focus than women have. Women, on the other hand, process the information in an advertisement quickly and from many levels and sources, including music, visuals, voice-over, and text. Women also tend to evaluate and weigh the various sources to process the message and determine what steps to take next. Women's reasoning processes are less task-oriented and more compartmentalized than men's are. Women's decision-making processes are characterized as being incremental reasoning processes, where each piece of information builds on the previous information that is taken in. This nonlinear approach to reasoning allows women to think in terms of interrelated factors, not straight lines. The observation that women evaluate multiple sources supports this reasoning style (Fisher, 1999).

Women and men respond to entirely different stimuli when viewing and evaluating advertising messages (Popcorn & Marigold, 2000). Men respond positively to male imagery, and women respond positively to female imagery. This is why you rarely see hunters in advertisements for products directed to women or bubble baths in advertisements for products directed to men. Interestingly though, women will use products and respond positively to imagery that they perceive as masculine, although men do not respond positively to images or products that they perceive as feminine. Women and men also respond

differently to the same stimulus, such as athletic imagery: Women rarely think of themselves as athletes unless they are playing a professional sport, whereas men have images of themselves as athletes even if they do not play professionally (Wong, 2001). Therefore, an image of an athlete, regardless of gender, is likely to generate different responses from both men and women.

New types of research that involves neuroscanning techniques have shown that women and men use different parts of their brains when processing information. Women's processing is focused in the frontal lobes, where the brain also processes multitasking. Men's processing is distributed throughout the brain (Hotchkiss, 2008).

GENDER AND STEREOTYPES

Given that men and women differ in many ways, it should not be surprising that advertisements portray men and women differently. These different portrayals result in intended and unintended effects, which we discuss later in this chapter.

When looking at portrayals and imagery of men and women, it is important to examine a body of advertisements, not just one or two specific advertisements that have imagery that may be stereotypical or in other ways problematic. Stereotypes are created by the continual, extended exposure of consumers to patterns of imagery. It is also important to remember that, as discussed in Chapter 6, there are valid reasons that advertisers use stereotypes. In this chapter, we examine role portrayals of both men and women and provide numerous ads to illustrate our points. Please keep in mind that when examples of advertisements are included, they were selected as representative of advertising trends that appear in society, not just as a "sore thumb" or an aberration from typical messages seen in advertising today.

Role Portrayals

Men and women today lead highly complex lives with multiple societal roles. Men and women are parents, businesspeople, corporate board members, friends, siblings, volunteers, and more. This differs from the *Leave It to Beaver* society of the 1950s, where societal roles were much more specific: Men were the breadwinners, and women were the homemakers. Today, though, society still clings to some of the values of the 1950s. Almost half of working mothers say they spend more time each day parenting than on their careers (compared to 19% of working fathers). On average, moms spend 3 hours more per day than dads do on parenting tasks (iTech, 2011). Indeed, advertising has firmly held on to this traditional portrayal of women as homemakers and uses this imagery to promote all types of products from household goods to computers and automobiles.

The website World Savvy Monitor (2011) cites an UNESCO report on the global status of women that suggests that, globally, media portrays women in one of four ways: "the glamorous sex kitten, the sainted mother, the devious witch, or the hardface corporate and political climber." The study also argued that most heroes and protagonists on television are men, and men's sports are far more visible than women's sports, which is potentially damaging to women's self-esteem.

Today, advertising portrayals vary based on the medium in which they appear and, for broadcast media, the times of day when the advertisement is appearing. During the workday, for example, the primary TV audiences are retired persons and women with children. During daytime programming, most of the women in commercials are shown in traditional homemaker roles (the woman pictured in the Carnation ad in Figure 7.1 is lovingly watching her son drink his breakfast). Men are rarely seen in the commercials as husbands, professionals, or spokespeople. During prime-time television, when the TV audience is more balanced, women are shown more often in positions of authority and in settings away from the home. Thus, during prime-time television, portrayals of men and women are more equitable (Craig, 1992). For example, the individuals enjoying a drink in the Hilton Garden Inn ad (Figure 7.2) are all business people: there appear to be no power dynamics evident, and so the portrayal could be considered equitable.

Internationally, advertising still conforms to traditional gender portrayals. A meta-analysis of advertising globally (Paek, Nelson, & Viella, 2011) found that women are much more likely to be pictured as dependent in advertising, and much more likely to be pictured at home than males.

Figure 7.1 A traditional mom in a Carnation Breakfast Essentials ad.



Notably, advertising in China shows equitable portrayals to some degree, as women were shown as workers rather than homemakers, contrasting with women in ads in other Asian cultures such as South Korean and Thai ads. Ads in China reflect cultural changes from the communist era, where the communist-led government in China made an effort to expand women's roles outside the family to become economically productive. Additionally, aspects of the Cultural Revolution minimized visual differences between men and women by requiring that everyone wore generic worker clothes or "Mao suits." Both these situations may influence portrayals of women in advertising in China today.

Today, we are seeing an increase in portrayals of women and men in ways that neither conform to nor conflict with stereotypical understanding. Several societal changes may have contributed to the growth of such portrayals. First, there are a substantial number of women holding positions at a range of media organizations. Many of these women are working professionally to present a more realistic view of women in the media. Advertisements today are also starting to portray more nontraditional images of

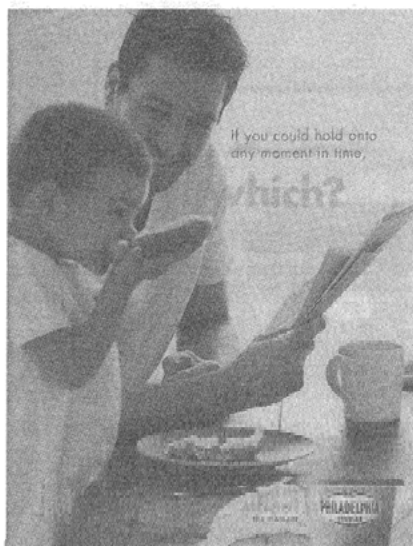
Figure 7.2 An equitable portrayal of men and women in an ad for Hilton Garden Inn.



men. For example, advertisers such as JC Penney and Philadelphia Cream Cheese have shown men taking care of children and doing housework (Figure 7.3). Some countries, such as Malta, have created guidelines on gender equity and portrayals in the media. Malta's guidelines read that "men and women should both be seen as making decisions to support the family and with regard to household tasks and home management" (Aquilina, 2007).

However, not all of these portrayals can be considered equality portrayals. Some advertisements present images of fathers who are "childish but lovable goofballs" (Crain, 2001) and irresponsible fathers and lazy foolish husbands (Sacks & Smaglick, 2008). As an advertising trend, this could be problematic if such images are not balanced with other images of men that show them as confident and capable in traditional homemaking situations. A study done by ad agency Leo Burnett in 2005 found that 80% of men believed media portrayals of men are inaccurate (Sacks & Smaglick, 2008).

Figure 7.3 In this ad for Philadelphia Cream Cheese, the man in the image seems comfortable in his childcare role.



Dr. Pepper is one of several companies using advertising to encourage men to be a "man's man." For example, in their ads for Dr. Pepper 10, they use the tagline "Not for Women." This technique was also used by Miller Lite in a series of ads where men and women saved men from unmanly behavior. Agencies believe such techniques won't offend men because they do not tie themselves emotionally to ads the way women do. Men are also more brand loyal and may relate to products that seem loyal to the "brotherhood." Is this the new wave of stereotypes in advertising?

Beauty Stereotypes

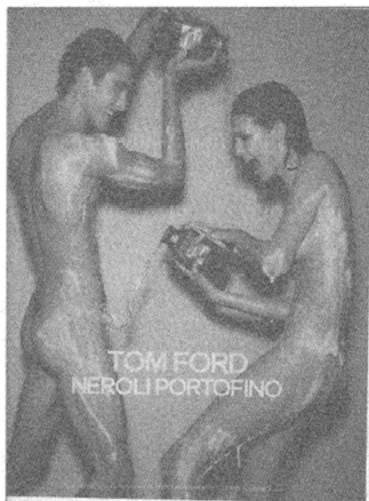
When we think of the people who appear in advertisements, we often think of men and women who are perfect physical specimens. They are young, with perfect skin free from acne and nary a wrinkle in sight; they are fit, with a six-pack stomach and no hint of cellulite, and they have full heads of glossy, thick hair. Women tend to be thin, and men tend to have well-developed upper torsos. An ad for Tom Ford fragrances epitomizes this trend (Figure 7.4). Now, we know in our heads that these people are professional models who are paid well to maintain themselves. We also know that advances in technology allow any flaws and imperfections to magically disappear from photographs. However, many view these images as presenting a standard of beauty and fitness that is in many cases impossible to attain, yet attempts are made to attain it anyway by purchasing products.

The cult of beauty is as old as the cult of the male warrior. Think of fairy tales from your youth: Girls and women tend to be portrayed either as good (Snow White, Sleeping Beauty) or bad (the Wicked Witch of the West, Cinderella's stepmother and stepsisters). The good women tend to be young and beautiful, and the bad women are either old or ugly (of course, examples such as the Snow Queen are exceptions to the rule). Similarly, good men are handsome princes, and bad men are ugly ogres. Both the ugly ogre (who kidnaps the princess) and the handsome prince (who rescues her) desire the beautiful princess. These myths from our childhood continue to resonate with us as adult consumers.

Theories of beauty are culturally constituted primarily because of common socialization experiences. Thus, individuals in a society possess shared cultural ideals. One of these ideals is that we, as human beings, find specific facial and body configurations pleasing to view (Ashmore & Soloman, 1996). We have associated these pleasing feelings with an overall positive attitude toward beauty, and as a result, we have determined as a culture that beauty is good and preferable to ugliness (Welszon, 1993).

Since our culture constantly undergoes subtle changes, beauty norms have also changed over time (Soloman & Ashmore, 1992). It has specifically been observed that societal expectations for beauty change with every generation (Jacobsen & Mazur, 1995). The standard of voluptuous beauty of Marilyn Monroe in the 1950s changed to the standard of trendy beauty of Twiggy in the 1960s and to supermodels such as Naomi Campbell and Linda Evangelista in the 1980s. Regardless of the "beauty paradigm" currently promoted by society, individuals strive to attain the ideal of beauty that is prevalent in their culture (Englis, Soloman, & Ashmore, 1994).

Figures 7.4 An ad for Tom Ford fragrances feature models with beautiful bodies.



Today, cultural norms in the United States continue to promote the importance of an individual's physical attractiveness, beginning in infancy and continuing through childhood and adolescence (Martin & Gentry, 1997). For women, beauty has been institutionalized to the point where an entire industry devoted to beauty has been created. Beauty is tied not only to appearance but also to mental health and physical well-being (Brand, 1999). This beauty ideal is an overall "look" that incorporates one's physical features as well as a variety of products or services such as clothing and cosmetics (Englis et al., 1994). Striving to meet the cultural ideal is a key selling message used by many types of advertisers involved in selling beauty-oriented products (Jacobson & Mazur, 1995).

In the United States and in several other cultures, an important part of the beauty ideal today includes a thin body type, and several studies have demonstrated how the female body depicted in all media, including advertising, has become increasingly thin (Turner, Hamilton, Jacobs, Angood, & Dwyer, 1997). Research has indicated that women in advertisements tend to be young, thin, and white (Kuczyński, 1998). Women who do not fit into this category, such as black and/or older women, are either invisible (Gantz, Gartenberg, & Rainbow, 1980), presented as tokens (Bailey, Harrell, & Anderson, 1993), or are portrayed negatively (Ploux & Neptune, 1997). There is a cultural taboo against large female bodies

(Wilson & Blackhurst, 1999), and advertisements often present large women as having bad bodies that limit both their wardrobes and their social engagements.

Critics point to women's fashion and beauty magazines as one of the most influential and potentially damaging media channels because they are directly concerned with the cultural ideal of beauty and provide a vehicle where advertisers can easily link their products to the process of trying to attain the beauty (Englis et al., 1994). The types of women portrayed in these magazines, both in advertising and in editorial pages, are parts of the unattainable beauty ideal. The average woman in the United States is 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighs 164 pounds (CDC, 2004), but the average model is 5 feet 11 inches tall and weighs 115 pounds (Tung, 2002).

Men, too, are subject to cultural ideals of beauty. While the exposure of the male body has historically been off-limits in advertising and other media, the past few decades have shown an increase in the use of the male body to promote products. Beauty standards have been set for men; for example, in terms of facial appearance, men are expected to have square jaws and full heads of hair. Male beauty is also equated with physical strength.

As media globalization increasingly provides a view of Western culture to Eastern countries, Western ideals of beauty are becoming popular (Jacinto, 2011). These ideals are often translating into risky and expensive actions. Chinese women, traditionally shorter than their Western counterparts, now chose to undergo surgical procedures to make them taller. In Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, women are undergoing surgery that "opens" the eye by reconstructing the eye socket to achieve a more Caucasian look. In India, cosmetic companies sell "fairness creams" to lighten the skin tone.

Decorative and Sexual Stereotypes

Closely associated with the idea of a beautiful face and body is the idea of decorative portrayals. When people are portrayed in advertisements, they are either actively involved with the product or service being advertised or passively decorating the advertisement. For example, a model could be seen as having just finished drinking milk (an active portrayal), or the model could be holding the product without interacting with it (a decorative portrayal), such as we see in the Elfa ad in Figure 7.5. Decorative portrayals show the people in the advertisements as passive and disengaged, whereas active portrayals show the person interacting directly with the product. Many advertisements featuring beautiful men and women tend to feature them as decorations. A study of advertising globally (Paek et al., 2011), found that women are four times more likely to be presented visually without a speaking role than males.

The fact that women tend to be portrayed in decorative roles much more often than men suggests that advertisements do not render a realistic depiction of the female gender role (Palf & Lakner, 1997). Specifically, many decorative depictions of women tend to show women in sexual or alluring positions. A sexual depiction is often an explicitly aggressive image of a woman that focuses on her lips, breasts, or groin area. An alluring depiction is less explicit and might feature a woman reclining submissively on a piece of furniture or on the floor or looking at the camera with her lips suggestively parted, as seen in the Knart ad featuring Sofia Vergara (Figure 7.6).

Decorative roles are seen as arguably representing society's view of the appropriate place for women in society: taking a passive position (Palf & Lakner, 1997). A recent study

Figure 7.5 The model in the Elfa ad is not interacting with the product and is merely decorative.



of magazines advertisements in Germany, Poland, and the United States found that both genders are frequently portrayed in decorative roles (Skorek & Schrier, 2009), with more women than men appearing this way.

When decorative and sexual imagery is used, advertisements often include nonverbal cues as an indication that women lack authority and possess less power than men (Simmons, 1986). Probably the most important scholar in the area of nonverbal cues is Erving Goffman, whose book *Gender Advertisements* (1979) explored a range of portrayals of women and men in terms of power. Goffman's findings include that women are generally pictured at a smaller relative size, especially height. Men tend to be pictured as taller than women, putting them in a position of power, authority, and rank (Figure 7.7) Body language often suggests that women are submissive toward products, such as the woman lying on the floor with her Burberry trench barely covering her body (Figure 7.8), whereas men are dominant over products (Figure 7.9).

Women are also seen as more tactile than men; that is, they more often are touching, cradling, and caressing objects. Goffman sees this type of touching as ritualistic, as opposed to more utilitarian aspects of touching such as touch that grasps, manipulates,

Figure 7.6 Sofia Vergara looks alluringly at the camera in this Kmart ad.



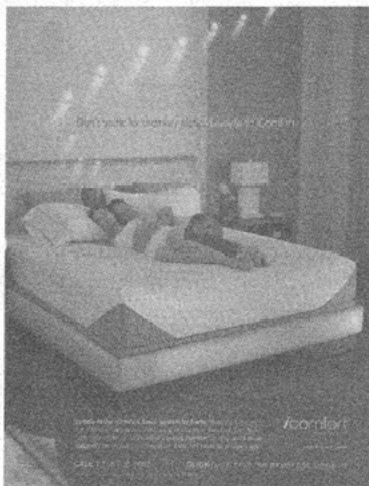
or holds. Again, this suggests the more passive nature of women in advertising. Similarly, women tend to appear removed from the social situation of the activity pictured in the ads. Often, their gaze is averted (Figure 7.10). Goffman (1979) refers to this as *licensed withdrawal*.

The overarching concern with decorative and sexual portrayals is that the individuals involved in such portrayals may become objects, similar to the objects that the people are trying to sell. With passive portrayals, there is a disconnection between the person and the object and possibly even between people (Hilbourne, 1999). Such feelings may pass on from the advertisement to the world, creating general feelings of disconnectedness among those who see the ad (Hilbourne, 1999).

INTENDED EFFECTS

In the previous chapter, we examined why stereotypes are generally used by the advertising industry. In this discussion of effects, we recap some of the key effects that relate

Figure 7.7 Even lying down, it is clear that the man in the iComfort ad is taller than the woman and is in a position of power over the woman.



specifically to gender and advertising, as well as provide some additional intended and unintended effects regarding the types of portrayals we have discussed so far in this chapter.

The Stage Is Quickly Set

Advertisers are not alone in using stereotyped imagery. Television programs, magazines, feature films, and other mass-mediated content all provide a somewhat limited vision of men's and women's roles in society that has become familiar to us as consumers. Stereotyped imagery is effective by virtue of its familiarity: Images such as the busy homemaker, the brawny construction worker, and the buttoned-down executive are instantly recognizable. Given that they are working within time and space constraints, advertisers have almost always relied on stereotypes to establish rapport with consumers and move on to more important information about the product or service being advertised. It is efficient for advertising to use gendered stereotypes because the scene becomes immediately set.

Figures 7.8 and 7.9 A submissive woman is portrayed in the Burberry fragrance ad. A man dominates the car, and the motor oil, in the Peinzoll ad.

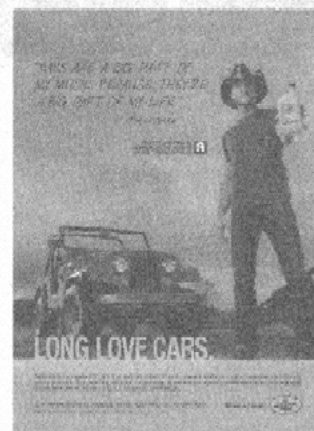
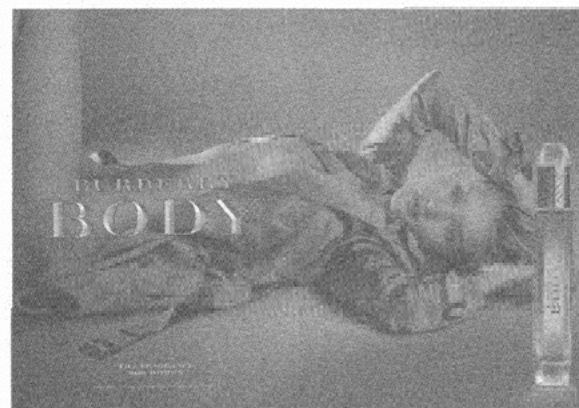


Figure 7.10 An averted gaze of the female model in the Ralph Lauren ad. Note the man's gaze is more direct.



Beautiful Things Are Appealing

As social beings, we like to look at beautiful things. Even as babies, we are more attracted to beautiful pictures than to ugly ones. Advertising images capitalize on this idea of liking, as attractive men and women are often used to transfer positive affect from the model to the product (Gulas & McKeage, 2000). Studies show that this “affect transfer” works well. Seeing attractive people activates thoughts of “goodness,” which extends to evaluations of other people and objects—such as the product the person is associated with (Psychology, 2011). This affect transfer also relates to sales: Consumers report increased purchase intentions for the advertised product after seeing ads for the products that feature attractive people (Petroshius & Crocker, 1989).

A study by Phillips and McQuarrie (2011) goes beyond simple brand attitudes and finds that individuals reading gendered fashion ads in magazines like *Vogue* reported that they felt creative, interested, inspired, and enthusiastic. Such ads elicited happy moods, and individuals gained positive experiences. Ads for beauty products, while not eliciting the same types of responses, resulted in a “priming effect” in which an implicit reference to a problem to be solved brings an individual’s preexisting feelings to the service. Thus, individuals who believe they have some physical flaw will relate well to a beautiful image in an ad to correct that flaw.

These predilections can be further explained by a theory called the **match-up hypothesis**, which suggests that attractive persons are highly effective endorsers for products that are used to enhance the consumer’s own attractiveness. Effectiveness in this case was measured in terms of both consumer attitude toward the brand as well as their purchase intentions (Till & Busler, 2000). Moreover, attractive endorsers are often considered more appropriate and a better fit than unattractive endorsers, regardless of the product (Till & Busler, 2000).

Role-Product Congruity

The idea that beautiful people can augment the persuasive ability of advertising for beauty-oriented products and services leads to the next intended effect of the use of some gendered stereotypes: **role-product congruity theory**. The role-product congruity theory simply suggests that advertising effectiveness can be increased when appropriate models are used. At first, it was suspected that female models were more effective in promoting feminine products than males, and vice versa (Kanungo & Pang, 1993). This suggests that beautiful women are effective at selling products to make women feel more beautiful. The role-product congruity theory goes beyond that simple suggestion to examine individual gendered role portrayals for different product categories. Research has shown that certain stereotyped portrayals of men and women are appropriate for specific categories of products (for example, a portrayal of a mom is appropriate for a product used in the home) (Ferguson, Kreshel, & Tinkham, 1990). This suggests that we as consumers have some idea of acceptable images that relates to the context of the advertisement.

The role-product congruity theory has also been used to examine relationships between images of spokespersons and products. Let us go back to the previous discussion that physically attractive models in advertisements have a positive influence on consumers’ attitudes toward beauty-enhancing products (Kahle & Homer, 1985). One explanation for this is **schema theory**, which suggests that memory is a blend of specific memories as well as general abstractions about people, activities, and objects (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). Paek et al. (2010), in a study of prime-time television commercials in seven different countries found that product type was the most consistent predictor of prominent character gender and voice-over gender among numerous factors, meaning that the match up or congruence between gender-role portrayal and product type still matters. Advertisers across countries seem to practice widely consistent role portrayals of human models in their advertising to match the advertised products. The authors suggest that this is evidence of the continuing reliance on stereotypes in the advertising industry regardless of cultural values or changing gender-role identities worldwide. The researchers argue that these depictions are likely to limit women’s roles in purchasing products (e.g., women will be less likely to learn about automobiles in preparation to purchase them if they don’t see women in car ads).

The Theory That Sex Sells

We have discussed that advertisers use attractive images to positively connect products to feelings that we already have. Before that connection can take place, the ads must get our attention. Often, sexual imagery is used to break through the ever-growing clutter in

the advertising environment. As Twitchell (1996) said, at a minimum, "sex doesn't sell, but it certainly captures attention" (p. 157).

A sexual appeal is a strong psychological appeal, second only to self-preservation. In humans, as in all animals, sexual desire is an instinctive reaction as we search for the perfect mate (Taflinger, 1996). Sexual imagery used in advertising for products like perfume, makeup, and clothing, then, can be explained or rationalized in part by this mating desire in humans: We want to look good to attract a mate and to propagate our species. However, sexual imagery has been shown to have a stronger persuasive ability for men than for women. It may be because men have a different set of criteria for selecting a mate than women do: Men traditionally tend to recognize that a woman who is young, healthy, and beautiful will be a good mate. Therefore, many advertisers use sexual imagery to get a man's attention and then associate buying the product with getting a mate (Taflinger, 1996). These types of messages focus on instinctual or physical types of meaning in messages.

For women, the persuasive power of sexual imagery works on a somewhat different level. A healthy, fit male model will attract the attention of many women and may even create desire for the product. Women, though, also pay attention to the long-term potential of a man—for example, his ability to be a good father and to provide them with money, power, and prestige. All these factors are almost impossible to put into any single advertisement (Taflinger, 1996).

Arguably, then, it is difficult for advertisers to use sex successfully to sell to women. Instead, advertising uses romance to make a sexual connection with women. Romantic images are less blatant and more ambiguous than traditional sexual messages: They provide images of courtship, relationships, and the process of falling in love (Figure 7.11). Sexual imagery in advertisements directed toward women becomes much more intellectual than physical (Taflinger, 1996).

UNINTENDED EFFECTS

Given this range of intended effects of using different types of gendered imagery consistently in advertisements, it is not surprising that a range of unintended effects has also been identified and to some extent documented. Many unintended effects are based on an assumption that gender portrayals do not reflect the range of roles that men and women undertake in the world today. Instead, advertisements tend to reflect a more limited representation. Other unintended effects focus on the media's power to create and transmit "cultural meaning" (Ferguson et al., 1990). This power is a more serious concern because advertising is not only providing a limited view of gendered roles, but it is also creating negative portrayals. Such portrayals inaccurately depict men's and women's roles in society and may ultimately influence individuals to believe that the portrayals are accurate. Thus, negative stereotypes are created in a society where the portrayals do not really exist (Ferguson et al., 1990).

Limited Social Roles

If mass media depict only a limited range of roles for men and women, the societal roles that people assume are appropriate for men and women will subsequently be limited. Regarding advertising in particular, it has been suggested that advertising's focus on women

Figure 7.11 Romantic image in a Nivea ad.



in the home may lead to women being excluded from many facets of life outside the home. In particular, a preponderance of female homemaker portrayals may cause both men and women to believe that women are unable to function outside the home without the guidance of men. In addition, advertisements may influence people to believe that women are unable to make decisions or exert power in any type of situation outside the home. The passive role of women in advertisements may suggest that women are dependent on others and unable to actively make decisions on their own. In the long term, passive portrayals in advertising along with the focus on the homemaker role may produce negative perceptions of women's abilities to perform competently in the workplace (Courtney & Whipple, 1983).

Similarly, the limited portrayals of men may result in men believing they are excluded from activities centered around the home. Men may believe that they are not equal partners in child rearing, household maintenance, and other activities. This may serve to reinforce the position of women as homemakers in that certain household tasks can only be successfully accomplished by a woman (Taflinger, 1996).

Value System Focuses on External Beauty

Advertisements that focus on the beauty ideal may send a message that one's looks are the only aspect that is important to the individual and to society. Some critics argue, specifically, that advertisements reinforce a cultural history of determining worth, particularly a woman's worth, by physical appearance (Wilson & Blackhurst, 1999). Fashion magazines, in particular, have been charged with presenting a strict beauty ideal that communicates a specific type of beauty is more highly valued than others (Englis et al., 1994). Advertising and editorial imagery in mass media must both share the blame for this problem.

When individuals are valued for only one part of their selves, their other accomplishments and attributes are trivialized. In our society, for example, some women believe men value them primarily on how they look, and any accomplishments outside of this realm are insignificant. Women can find this offensive and demeaning (Taflinger, 1996).

A value system focused on looks may lead to women developing issues with body image and self-esteem. Numerous studies connect exposure to beautiful, thin models with negative self-esteem among women. Waiflike, thin models (Figure 7.12) appearing in fashion magazines' editorial and advertising pages may make women feel helpless because these models present an image that is impossible to achieve. One research study, for example, showed that college students exposed to fashion magazines had different attitudes toward beauty and self-esteem than women exposed to newsmagazines (Turner et al., 1997). The women who were exposed to fashion magazines felt frustrated about their weight, felt guilty while eating, and were preoccupied with the desire to be thinner. They expressed these feelings more often than the women exposed to newsmagazines.

The consistent portrayal of thin women in all types of mass media, including advertisements, has been seen as playing a part in the cultural phenomenon of body dissatisfaction among women in Western societies (Johnson & Petrie, 1995) and is manifest in studies that relate exposure to attractive, thin models in media to increased amounts of depression and anger (Pinhas, Toner, Ali, Garfinkel, & Stuckless, 1999). Dissatisfaction is also related to decreased ratings of individuals' body image attitudes (Rebek-Wegener, Eickhoff-Schemek, & Kelly-Vance, 1998) and decreased perceptions of self-attractiveness among girls and women (Crouch & Degelman, 1998). These effects may in turn lead to increased levels of eating disorders (Pinhas et al., 1999), unhealthy dieting (Armstrong & Mallory, 1992), smoking (Garner, 1997), and cosmetic surgery among girls and women (Burton & Netemeyer, 1995).

Many fashion magazines are read by girls who are 16 and younger, and many girls have reported that they frequently see ads that make them feel like they need to diet (Tsu, 2000). Girls in the fifth, sixth, and ninth grade were more critical of their body shapes after looking at magazine advertising than before looking at them (Bass, 1994). Teenage girls who watched television ads using appeals that featured sex, beauty, and youth as selling points were more likely to believe that beauty and popularity were desirable than girls who watched ads without such appeals (Bass, 1994).

We do not want to downplay the importance and concerns about eating disorders, but some clarification about these disorders is necessary at this point. Although exposure to fashion advertisements has been linked to eating disorders symptomatology, it is important to recognize that such diseases cannot be attributed solely to advertising (Andersen & DiDomenico, 1992). Advertising is part of a larger mass media process providing problematic images to women. In addition, while controlled experiments indicate that such imagery

Figure 7.12 Ultrathin model in a Mercedes Benz ad.



can have some negative effects on women, there is no research that links exposures to advertisements directly to such diseases. Twitchell (1996) explains that diseases like anorexia and bulimia are "multifactorial disorders more attributable to biology, environment and personality than to the appearance of scrawny models in Diet Coke ads" (p. 154).

Objectification

Objectification is defined as any presentation emphasizing sexually suggestive body parts or not including the head. A focus on body parts results in individuals losing their humanity and becoming objects. In many cases, the body parts highlighted in advertisements suggest that the person becomes a sexual object (Figure 7.13). The process of objectification has been described as demeaning and dehumanizing. Often, objectification occurs at its worst when there is no role-product congruity, such as in the GoDaddy ad shown in Figure 7.14.

Figures 7.13 and 7.14 Objectification in two ads: one for Levi's and one for GoDaddy.



Rethink Your Own Ideas of Beauty

As a shaper of social roles, advertising can do much to affect the cultural beauty ideal that is prevalent in society today. One way to influence the beauty ideal is to produce advertisements featuring women who do not have thin, perfect bodies. We already see such magazines such as *Vogue* promising to be “ambassadors for a healthy image” (Cohen, 2012). That magazine’s “Health Initiative” promises to not include models with eating disorders or under the age of 16 in the editorial pages of the 19 international editions of *Vogue*. The effort started in June 2012 editions of *Vogue*, and worldwide editions all featured a theme of health, with U.S. Olympic athletes on the cover of the U.S. edition. Many hope that this decision about the magazine editorial content will influence portrayals in advertisements as well. Ben Darry, founder of a modeling agency in Canada, conducted academic research into how imagery affects a woman’s likelihood to buy a product and found that women related more to advertisements where the models reflected their own size, age, and skin color (Gush, 2012). This confirms an earlier study that found the overwhelming majority of consumers wanted models in magazines to represent that natural range of body shapes. The majority of women in this study said they were willing to buy magazines featuring heavier models, even though most believe that clothes look better on thin models (Garner, 1997).

Figure 7.15 A Lane Bryant ad featuring a plus-size model.



ADVERTISING’S RESPONSIBILITIES TO MEN AND WOMEN

Advertising is one industry where one person’s efforts and convictions can have an effect on the industry as a whole. With that in mind, here are some strategies and tactics to keep in mind.

Don’t Take the Easy Way Out

Advertising plays both a reflecting and a shaping role for men and women (Twitchell, 1996). It is important to recognize advertising’s strength in this regard and to use the power of advertising to portray more realistic images of men and women. Stereotypes can quickly set the stage for advertising, but this does not mean that the same types of images must be used repeatedly. Any type of realistic, familiar portrayal can quickly set the stage and aid in the storytelling process. Research has shown that realistic portrayals can have positive results for advertisers and that certain types of imagery, including objectification of women, cause negative responses from consumers (Elliott, Jones, Benfield, & Barlow, 1995).

Expand Expectations

Sometimes advertisers make automatic choices without thinking through other options that might be effective. One is the choice of a voice for a voice-over on a television spot. Often, a male voice is featured because it is the default choice. However, agencies should take the time to consider both men's and women's voices for voice-overs. This can add to the perception of women as powerful in our society (e.g., the "voice of reason" or "voice of experience"). In addition, rethink the activity level of girls and women in advertisements, especially in categories where they tend to be portrayed as passive. Show both men and women in a variety of settings, using products, as well as being experts and helping others learn how to use products. In this way, the actual societal roles of both men and women can begin to be presented in advertising.

SUMMARY

A variety of portrayals of both men and women exist in advertising (and other mass-mediated content) today. Many of the problematic images are the result of the beauty culture in the United States, which is a culture that the advertising industry can choose to support or to effect change. In this chapter, we examined the intended and unintended effects of a range of portrayals and provided food for thought for current and future advertisers to consider.

In the next chapter, we will continue our examination of portrayals of people by looking at minorities in advertising.

KEY TERMS

Affect transfer	102	Licensed withdrawal	99	Match-up hypothesis	103
Decorative role	97	Objectification	107	Role-product congruity	103

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the issues with stereotyping from a micro, meso, and macro perspective?
2. What evidence of role-product congruity and the match-up hypothesis have you seen in advertising recently? Is this an effective tactic? Why or why not?
3. What evidence of objectification have you seen in advertising lately? Why does such a negative practice continue?
4. What is the difference between decorative portrayals and objectification? Is one more problematic than the other?
5. Have you seen examples of negative stereotyping of men, especially younger men, in media lately? How do you personally react? Do you think such messages are effective? To state another way, if the ads make you laugh, is affect transfer happening?

CASE STUDY

SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE

The August 2012 issue of *Seventeen* magazine, a magazine that is targeted to middle-school-aged girls, announced that it would no longer feature thin young models in its editorial pages. The so-called *Body Peace Treaty* promises to "celebrate every kind of beauty" in its pages. In addition, the magazine promises to use real girls and models that are healthy and to never change girls' body or face shapes via photo manipulation. Any other type of alteration of an image (such as removing a mole or eliminating "fly away hairs") will be posted in a "before" and "after" format on the magazine's Tumblr site. This decision was due, in part, to similar efforts by *Vogue* magazine (described earlier in this chapter) and to an online effort by an eighth grader from Maine. The girl, Julia Bloom, collected more than 30,000 signatures online calling for the magazine to publish at least one unaltered photo spread per month.

1. You work at an agency that advertises a fashion brand to the tween market, and of course, *Seventeen* is one of your favorite vehicles. While the *Body Peace Treaty* does not extend to advertising—yet—you wonder if you need to rethink the images you use in your ads. Consider how changing your alteration policy has implications on the micro, meso, and macro level.
2. You currently use models that are a teen size 1 or 3. Should you include more real-sized girls in your ads?
3. You currently use Photoshop extensively to make the clothes look better on the bodies and to make the girl's faces prettier (take out fly away hairs, erase traces of acne, that kind of thing). Should you stop doing this? Should you follow *Seventeen's* lead and post before and after pictures?
4. If you change what you do for your ads in *Seventeen*, should you change for all the magazines where you appear?

FURTHER READING

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ADVERTISING & THE OTHER

Cultural Schemas for Racial Identity in Canadian Television Advertising

SHYON BAUMANN AND LORETTA HO

University of Toronto

Quelles significations sont rattachées à la race dans la publicité? Nous analysons un échantillon de publicités télévisées canadiennes aux heures de grande écoute dans le but d'identifier des schémas culturels associés à ce que cela signifie d'être blanc, noir ou d'Asie de l'Est ou du Sud-Est. Notre analyse empirique porte sur la publicité alimentaire et pour restaurants. Par l'entremise d'une analyse quantitative de contenu portant sur les liens entre la race et les sous-types d'aliments, nous démontrons des différences systématiques dans les types d'aliments associés aux différents groupes étudiés. Au moyen d'une analyse qualitative, nous éclairons ces modèles quantitatifs et présentons six schémas culturels de l'identité raciale. Ces schémas appréhendent à la fois la diversité et le privilège associés aux représentations des personnes de race blanche, et des contrastes frappants par rapport au statut et à l'émotivité parmi les représentations plus limitées des deux autres groupes.

What meanings are attached to race in advertising? We analyze a sample of prime-time Canadian television advertising to identify cultural schemas for what it means to be White, Black, and East/Southeast Asian. Our empirical focus is on food and dining advertising. Through quantitative content analysis of associations between race and food subtypes, we show that there are systematic differences in the types of foods that groups are associated with. Through a qualitative content analysis of the commercials, we illuminate these quantitative patterns and discuss six cultural schemas for racial identity. The schemas allow for both diversity and privilege in the representation of Whites, and

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Shyon Baumann, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 236 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, ON M5S 2J4, 647 998 6100. E-mail: shyon.baumann@utoronto.ca

poignant contrasts regarding status and emotionality in the narrow representations of the other two groups.

WHAT MEANINGS ARE attached to race in advertising? This paper addresses this question through an analysis of racial representation in Canadian prime-time television commercials. Sociological work on media content is founded on the premise that the nature of media content reflects and reproduces important dimensions of culture, of which schemas for racial identity are one salient case. Through investigating schemas for racial identities in advertising, we can uncover understandings of race in Canadian society that are otherwise difficult to measure.

We take the empirical case of food and dining commercials on prime-time Canadian television to address two core research questions. First, how do representations of race vary across different categories of foods? We pose this question to understand the patterns in which different racial groups are presented. Second, what clusterings of contexts, relationships, and character traits are members of different racial groups associated with, and what can these clusterings tell us about how race functions symbolically within commercials? We answer these questions by first examining quantitative data on the distribution of racial representation across different categories of food commercials and comparing these results with data on the distribution of product categories by race. Then, to gain a deeper understanding of the symbolic functions of race, and to address our second question, we conduct a qualitative reading of the predominant cultural schemas for racial identity emerging from our sample. Cultural schemas are broader than stereotypes (associations between a group and a trait) insofar as they define group boundaries, and provide scripts for understanding categories (e.g., categories of people) and for guiding behaviors in social settings (see Blair-Loy 2001; Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov 2004; DiMaggio 1997). For example, Baumann and de Laat (2012) provide evidence of a cultural schema for gender and age identity that understands older men as "society's bosses." Rather than just an association between a group and a trait, the cultural schema of society's bosses encompasses an association, as well as suggestions for how to interact with this group, and how to value and understand this group's place in society. Similarly, Roth (2012) argues that a "Hispanicized" schema for race constructs Latino as a racial category (as opposed to an ethnicity), and also suggests how to understand their place and value in society, with attendant scripts for interactions and expectations about Latino identity. Cultural schemas are socially constructed through circulating knowledge, beliefs, and values. Individuals both encounter and reproduce cultural schemas through daily social interactions. In addition to learning about cultural schemas through face-to-face interactions, we follow others in arguing that the media are another source for cultural schemas (see, e.g., DiMaggio 1997:280).

Based on our quantitative and qualitative findings, we identify six cultural schemas for racial identity: *White nostalgia*, *White natural*, *White highbrow*, *White nuclear family*, *Black blue collar*, and *Asian technocrat*. Some of our findings confirm previous research on representation of race and ethnicity in the media, but we also describe cultural schemas about White racial representation that were not found in earlier work.

Scholars have argued that depictions of visible minorities in Canadian media arise from a dominant racial discourse that demeans, demonizes, and stereotypes these groups (Henry and Tator 2003; Jiwani 2009a; Mahtani 2009). We build on this prior literature by examining race in Canadian advertising, in contrast to past studies' predominant examination of news coverage. Advertising is particularly susceptible to stereotypical depictions of social groups, including racial groups, that are shaped by dominant cultural schemas of identity. The media in general, and advertising in particular, play a role in reproducing cultural schemas by using existing cultural schemas to produce content. Constraints on time and space for content mean that advertising often presents extreme versions of schemas that are widely available and culturally predominant in order to efficiently and effectively communicate with broad audiences (Goffman 1979; Schudson 1984). Advertising therefore provides an excellent empirical site for learning about cultural schemas. In systematically studying television commercials, this paper documents portrayals that differ from prior research on race in other forms of Canadian media.

RACIAL REPRESENTATIONS IN CANADIAN MEDIA AND IN U.S. ADVERTISING

Within the Canadian context, scholars argue that the Canadian media underrepresent visible minority groups (Fleras 1994, 2011; Fleras and Kunz 2001). Past work generally employs critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk 1993) to argue that the media tend to marginalize, trivialize, delegitimize, caricature, and dismiss racial and ethnic minorities (Fleras 2011; Henry and Tator 2009; Mahtani 2009). For example, Greenberg's (2000:531) study of news coverage of Asian immigration revealed a pattern of framing of this group as variously an "invasion," as a social and economic hindrance, and greedy. Henry and Tator's (2003:137) study of the coverage of the Tamil community in Toronto newspapers found that Tamils were portrayed as essentially different from mainstream Canadians and implied that they "condone terrorism and illegal activity."

Though most Canadian research has focused on news coverage, one study on advertising found that visible minority women tended to be overrepresented in domestic, cleaning, and tourism advertisements (Kunz and Fleras 1998). The prior literature on racial representations in Canadian media is virtually unanimous in finding strong evidence for Othering and negative depictions of visible minority groups. We examine whether

similar portrayals of visible minorities exist systematically across advertising.

A plethora of research in other national contexts examines racial representation in advertising, with findings varying significantly between groups.¹ For instance, looking at U.S. results and citing population statistics from the mid-1990s, Taylor, Lee, and Stern (1995) and Taylor and Stern (1997) argue that while the Asian-American population was slightly over 3 percent at the time of research, representation of Asian Americans in ads ranged from 4 (Taylor et al. 1995) to 8.4 percent (Taylor and Stern 1997). Ten years later, when the Asian-American population reached 4.2 percent in the United States, Li and Joo (2005) and Taylor, Landreth, and Bang (2005) find that Asian Americans were featured in 8.3 and 10.5 percent of ads, respectively. Similar to their Asian counterparts, Blacks are well-represented in advertising in relation to their population. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Blacks make up approximately 13.6 percent of the population. Although numbers vary by study, they seem to appear in just over 10 to 25 percent of TV commercials (e.g., Coltrane and Messineo 2000; Wilkes and Valencia 1989) with similar ranges for print media (Millard and Grant 2006; Plous and Neptune 1997; Sengupta 2006), suggesting at least a proportionate numerical representation. Despite healthy rates of representation for Blacks and Asians, other minority groups are under-represented (e.g., Hispanics) or virtually unrepresented, as in the case of Native Americans (Maestro and Stern 2003). Moreover, when represented, minorities tend to appear in minor/background roles flanking White main characters (Bang and Reece 2003; Seiter 1990; Taylor and Stern 1997; Taylor et al. 1995, 2005).

When racial minorities are represented in advertisements, they often conform to stereotypes. East Asians are commonly portrayed as business professionals or workaholics who are technologically savvy and academically keen (Pake and Shah 2003), as workers in banks, telecommunications, retail (Taylor and Stern 1997), and technology (Maestro and Stern 2003). Some researchers estimate that ads for these types of tech-based services and products constitute 75 percent of Asian-American appearances (Taylor and Lee 1994; Taylor et al. 1995, 2005). At the same time, East Asians are not frequently depicted in meaningful familial relationships or friendships, but are restricted to collegial interactions (Bang and Reece 2003; Taylor and Stern 1997; Taylor et al. 1995). Asian Americans are rarely shown in the outdoors, in the home, or in social settings (Li and Joo 2005; Taylor et al. 2005). Wang (2010) suggests that the relegation of Asian Americans into the technological realm speaks to the reality that Asian Americans are only allowed to integrate into the United States in narrow ways, conceptualized in the media as "technical robots" who,

¹ The numbers of Latino, South Asian, First Nations, and Arab characters are so small that we cannot identify any patterns among them that would constitute cultural schemas. Our subsequent analyses are therefore restricted to patterns among White, Black, and East/Southeast Asian groups in food and dining commercials.

oversubscribing to discipline and hard work, become subhumans lacking emotions.

Unlike Asians, the range of roles Blacks play is slightly broader and includes business people (Maestro and Stern 2003), technicians (Pake and Shah 2003), and athletes (Burton and Klemm 2011; Pake and Shah 2003). They are widely featured in ads for finance/insurance, automobiles, travel (Bowen and Schmid 1997), and food (Bang and Reece 2003; Wilkes and Valencia 1989). Notably, they are underrepresented in tech products (Taylor et al. 1995, 2005). While Maestro and Stern (2003) argue that Blacks are frequently depicted outdoors participating in domestic or recreational activities, Martin (2004) points out that Blacks are confined to the outdoor environments of suburban and urban settings, and excluded from the "Great Outdoors" (Martin 2004), where one might engage in camping, hunting, or fishing—this setting seems to be the exclusive territory of Whites. More critical scholars argue that despite the sizable representation of Blacks in increasingly diverse roles, ad producers continue to employ negative or racist stereotypes, albeit in more covert ways, such as subtly associating Blacks with submissive roles, donning animalistic prints, or bodily objectification (Bristol, Lee, and Hunt 1995; Millard and Grant 2006; Plous and Neptune 1997). Although advertisers have moved away from overtly racist images, some contemporary ads still subtly suggest subservience and low social status (Burton and Klemm 2011; Fuller 2001).

An understanding of the representation of racial minorities is incomplete without some comparisons to the White mainstream. Levels of representation for White characters are at or above population levels for television (Coltrane and Messineo 2000) and print advertisements (Sengupta 2006). Regarding stereotypes, Seiter (1990) reports that ads exclusively featuring White children illustrate themes of nostalgia (e.g., old school days), domestic life (e.g., kitchen table), Victoriana, and great adventures. Corroborating this finding is research by Maestro and Stern (2003), Bang and Reece (2003), and Coltrane and Messineo (2000), suggesting that Whites are most often shown in the home, engaging in domestic or recreational activities.

We start with themes suggested by prior research (e.g., Henry and Tator 2003; Jiwani 2009b), and ask whether the same findings translate across space and time. Specifically, do findings about the representations of Blacks and Asians, relative to Whites, in the United States in the 1990s and earlier predict the way that these groups are portrayed in Canada in the late 2000s? On the one hand, Canadian culture is often thought to be more openly multicultural and inclusive. Moreover, Canadian society is becoming more racially diverse over time. These observations suggest that we might find more equitable and progressive racial representations in our sample, compared to prior research. On the other hand, Canadians consume a great deal of American media and share many cultural values

and ideals with Americans. Thus, it is also possible that our findings will resemble earlier American findings about the representation of visible minorities.

DATA AND METHODS

This paper is part of a larger project analyzing Canadian television advertising. The project includes content analysis of a sample of prime-time (8–11 PM) commercials on three Canadian networks—CBC, CTV, and Global. Despite the growth of Internet entertainment options, television commercials remain the largest advertising medium reaching the broadest audience. The sample was constructed from recordings of broadcasts for 21 evenings, comprised of Sunday through Saturday for each network. In order to diversify the time of year represented in the sample, recordings were spaced over an 18-month period, from July 2008 to December 2009.² Descriptive statistics for the larger sample from which the commercials in this study are drawn are found in the Appendix.³

Moreover, in order to develop a qualitative analysis of cultural schemas, we limit our study to the product category of food and dining, and only for visually present human characters (not voice-overs or animated characters). We specifically consider food and dining commercials for a number of reasons. First, as the largest product category of commercials in our sample, racial representation is relatively diverse here. Second, food and dining are an enormous market, so these types of ads have a broad target audience and important implications for a diverse general public. Third, food is a cultural object embedded with rich and multiple meanings. Across all races, the production and consumption of food play an important and symbolic role in everyday experiences, family and cultural traditions, and holidays. Following in a tradition of examining patterns in advertising to uncover cultural schemas (Goffman 1979), we expect broadly resonant messages about race in food ads.

2. We would expect cultural schemas for racial identity to evolve rather slowly, with important changes emerging gradually over perhaps decades, rather than year-over-year changes. We see our findings as applicable for many years following the data collection years of 2008 to 2009. At the same time, we would note that some of the commercials in our sample continue to be broadcast in 2013. Exact dates of recordings are available upon request.

3. Although racial categories are socially constructed, being neither homogeneous nor mutually exclusive, we contend that it is not only still possible to study representations of race in the media, but necessary. We follow decades of content analysis research on race in the media in how we measure and describe how race is represented in commercials. In brief, the code for "race" in the content analysis was based not only on skin color, but also on all visible phenotypic details (e.g., hair, facial characteristics, etc.) as well as contributing cultural details (e.g., dress, accent, etc.). As with all variables, our coding for race involved multiple coders, and intercoder agreement for race was 99%, which is typical for content analyses of race. Race is rarely presented ambiguously in commercials. However, we had a code for racially ambiguous characters, which was applied for those extremely rare characters whose race was not clear.

Our sample for this analysis includes 244 commercials featuring 1,063 characters (primary and secondary combined).⁴ We proceed first by breaking down the food and dining commercials to subtypes of this product category. Because particular kinds of food have particular cultural meanings, status, and market locations, we hope to uncover patterns in racial group associations with particular food types that reveal something about the cultural schemas for these groups. These quantitative findings give us a snapshot of racial representation, allowing us to make preliminary comparisons between stereotypes found in previous literature and those that seem to be in operation in our sample.

In order to gain a nuanced understanding of how our food ads conform to or diverge from existing racial stereotypes, we follow with a qualitative reading of the character roles in our ads to identify cultural schemas for racial identities. In our analysis, these schemas are themselves interpreted comparatively, as their meanings are contingent on their place within an ecology of racialized representations that vary by group (Jiwani 2009b:737).

The method for this analysis is inductive, and the process involved viewing each commercial in the sample and noting all details about characters' traits, social contexts (e.g., work, family, interpersonal interactions, etc.), social relationships, and race. After an initial viewing, the commercials were reviewed in order to identify similarities between characters' portrayals. This comparison of characters allowed for clusters of similarities to emerge, which then formed the basis for identifying the six cultural schemas for racial identity.

RACE AND CONNECTIONS TO FOOD AND DINING SUBTYPES

How does race correlate with food and dining subtypes? Taking cues from both the scientific and social scientific fields of food studies, we reviewed our food commercials and developed a typology of categories that are mutually exclusive and that allow us to describe the majority of ads (see Table 1).⁵

We present our data first percentaged across rows in Table 1, to show the racial distribution of characters within each food/dining category. Table 2 helps to contextualize Table 1 by percentaging down the columns to show how characters of each race are distributed across food categories. Whereas Table 1 shows how each food category is represented by characters of different races, Table 2 gives us a picture of how each racial group is represented through associations with food categories. Before looking at

⁴ The number of commercials for each race in the table add up to more than 244 because some commercials feature characters of more than one race.

⁵ Category definitions are available on request.

Table 1

**Distribution of Characters in Food/Dining Commercials across
Racial Categories**

Food/dining category	Percent White	Percent Black	Percent East/Southeast Asian	Total (N)
Whole foods	97	2	1	100% (235)
Fast food restaurants	80	14	6	100% (206)
Table service restaurants	87	11	2	100% (195)
Health foods	82	14	5	100% (180)
Processed foods	98	1	1	100% (172)
Other	85	8	7	100% (75)
Number of commercials	227	23	9	

Notes: Row totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 $\chi^2 = 64.011$, 10 df, $p < .001$.

Table 2

**Distribution of White, Black, and East/Southeast Asian
Characters across Food/Dining Categories**

Food/dining category	Percent of White	Percent of Black	Percent of East/Southeast Asian
Whole foods	24	6	9
Fast food restaurants	18	32	36
Table service restaurants	18	25	12
Health foods	16	38	21
Processed foods	18	2	6
Other	7	7	15
Total (N)	101% (942)	100% (88)	99% (33)
Number of commercials	227	23	9

Notes: Column totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 $\chi^2 = 64.011$, 10 df, $p < .001$.

each category, note that Whites are overrepresented overall in food advertisements compared to their Black and East/Southeast Asian counterparts; their representation in all categories of food ads combined (87 percent) is higher than their representation in the general sample of commercials (79 percent) and than their proportion of the Canadian population (80 percent).

There are several notable relationships in Table 1. The whole foods category is almost exclusively White, while fast food commercials are more dispersed across racial groups, with Blacks and East/Southeast Asians overrepresented relative to their proportion in food commercials generally. Health food commercials are very similar to fast food restaurants in the

breakdown of the race of characters, with representation from all three groups. Processed food commercials closely resemble the racial distribution of characters in commercials for whole foods, almost exclusively White. Given the different cultural meanings associated with food subtypes, these patterns raise intriguing questions about media representations of race, which we explore further in Table 2.

Table 2 shows the distribution of food categories by race and provides another perspective on the data to help clarify the significance of the differences shown in Table 1. Whites are spread almost evenly across all product categories, suggesting that there is flexibility in the associations the characters can make with different food subtypes. Black and East/Southeast Asian characters show a narrower range of associations, being concentrated in fast food and health food commercials, with Black characters additionally appearing in table service restaurant commercials.

The overall picture provided by these results is that whereas Whites are strongly associated with whole foods, Blacks and East/Southeast Asians are most often linked to fast food. These predominant linkages coexist with other secondary associations, namely Whites with processed foods, and Blacks with health foods. A chi-square analysis confirms that the differences between the racial groups are significant at the $p < .001$ level. While predominant associations conform to racial stereotypes, such as those found in the literature review, secondary associations are less prevalent, and less easily explained. In order to illuminate these associations and develop a better understanding of them, we conduct a qualitative reading of the ads.

TRADITION, STATUS, NATURALNESS, AND FAMILY

This in-depth qualitative analysis illuminates how observed associations in advertising inform cultural schemas for racial identity. What social characteristics of each of these racial groups tend to be emphasized, or downplayed, to produce the particular associations we find? To connect our theoretical understanding of race and representation with our empirical analysis of food advertising, we identify six schemas. We are not suggesting that these are an exhaustive list of the dominant schemas for racial identity in our culture; rather, these are the schemas that emerge in our data.

Four schemas pertain to Whites, one to Blacks, and one to East/Southeast Asians. The small number of schemas in these food commercials for Black and East/Southeast Asian characters is related to the small number of primary characters of these races in food ads. We first review these six schemas, and then discuss their cultural significance and possible relationships between them.

"White Nostalgia" Schema

This schema is represented in 58 ads in our sample. Two variations of this schema exist, one that is more closely related to food production, and the other to food consumption. These variations of the "Nostalgia" schema establish the idea that Whites have a long history of producing and consuming quality foods that have an enduring presence in the marketplace. For example, in the production variation, a commercial for Oka cheese depicts a production process circa mid-1800s, while a voice-over informs viewers that White monks have been "crafting" this product for generations. The use of the word "craft" suggests that production is not a mechanical process to mass-produce food; rather, it is an art that skillful monks engaged in to create legacy artisanal cheeses now enjoyed at important social gatherings. We also saw the authority and expertise of traditional food production associated with Whites in ads featuring historical production of bread (Dempster's) and jam (Smucker's). In the other variation, an ad for Ritz crackers romanticizes the consumption of food. A simple scene of a boy laying down crackers for a girl to follow, reminiscent of the children's tale Hansel and Gretel, coupled with the song of uncomplicated friendship and love for an angelic girl, attempts to transport us to a childhood when Ritz crackers was frequently enjoyed. Visual images, shot in a glowing soft light, trigger warm memories of consuming the snack. These nostalgic food commercials link Whites with brands that have an established status, and our sample of ads features only Whites as the bearers of tradition in food.

"White Natural" Schema

In this second schema, appearing in 18 ads, Whites are symbolically linked to nature and the wholesome foods it has to offer. A clear example of this imagery can be found in a relatively upmarket supermarket brand line of foods (President's Choice), where the CEO of the company is shown joining White male farmers from different provinces in their fields, presumably chatting to them about their produce. The CEO's voice-over, heard during the frames featuring farmers, justifies his company's choice to buy local—to support the Canadian farmer and the economy, and for "plain great eating." This ad illustrates the "White Natural" schema in several ways. Only White men are shown, in both producer and consumer roles. Five White farmers symbolize "the Canadian farmer," the ultimate producer of "plain great eating." This schema is noteworthy for the extent to which it diverges from social reality. In farmers' fields across the country, a great deal of agricultural work in Canada is done by racialized minorities, both Canadian and temporary foreign workers. This exclusion of minority farmworkers in ads reinforces the notion that Whites are especially in tune with, and are authorities on the natural world and are responsible for wholesome and natural food production.

"White Highbrow" Schema

It is important to note that not many high-end or luxury food products are advertised on television. However, the "White Highbrow" schema, used in seven ads, was still applicable to advertisements of food products that were not high-end per se, but relied on cues of high cultural and economic capital as selling points. For example, although Europe's Best Frozen Fruits is an affordable food product, the advertisement portrays a family with high cultural and economic capital. Cues include Baroque background music and an elegant dining table and room, with proper settings (including a napkin ring) prepared even for dessert. High economic capital is suggested through the modern and very large kitchen with expensive-looking appliances and kitchen utensils. That both parents are wearing business casual clothes implies that they hold well-paying white collar jobs. In our sample, highbrow status, as expressed through traditional symbols of high cultural and economic capital, is associated only with White characters.

"White Nuclear Family" Schema

The "White Nuclear Family" schema is the most common in our study. Represented by 50 ads, it cuts across advertisements for all our food and dining subtypes. In many of these ads, the White nuclear family is depicted at the dinner table, with one parent at the head, leading conversation as the family enjoys their food (e.g., Mr. Sub, Maple Leaf Prime, Dan Active). Although all ads in this category feature the typical configuration of mother, father, and children, some ads also explicitly depict the mother having the primary responsibility of preparing and serving food to her husband and children. This schema variously features additional elements of idealized family dynamics, such as the mother serving as the guardian of family health (Beagan et al. 2008), or the father as breadwinner. Moreover, the White nuclear family is shown to be both socially and physically healthy. Despite the social reality of a vast reduction in family meals and indeed in nuclear families themselves, the White nuclear family schema suggests that social stability and healthy eating alike are associated with Whiteness.

"Black Blue Collar" Schema

Because White characters so vastly outnumber non-White characters in commercials, the depictions of racial minorities in commercials are relatively powerful insofar as a relatively small number of them represent the schemas for racial minorities. From our sample, only one clear schema for Black characters emerged, which we label the "Black blue collar" schema, appearing in 11 ads. It is communicated through showing Blacks in a variety of blue collar work settings, most prominently in factories and auto

body shops. For example, an ad for "Honey Bunches of Oats" begins with a female voice-over asking "What's our favorite part of Honey Bunches of Oats?" A White food scientist examining a single flake under a microscope responds, "The crispy flakes." The camera then pans to the factory, where among other workers, we are shown two Black men in front of a packaging machine. The first simply smiles while holding a box of cereal, while the other performs a little dance.

The predominant subtext of this schema is one of safe inclusivity. On the one hand, commercials with Black characters provide diversity in advertising. It is recognition of both the racial diversity of the target market for the advertising and of society as a whole. Furthermore, the schema is not inherently negative, insofar as it does not play into traditional negative stereotypes of Blacks. On the other hand, this schema positions Blacks within a relatively *narrow* relationship to food—as working-class producers. This schema avoids the more negative connotations of associations with underclass membership, which at any rate would not make sense from a marketing point of view. Furthermore, because Black characters comprise so few of the total number of characters in our sample of ads, there is no other clear characterization of this racial group to nuance or to compete with this frame. The contrast between a White scientist and a dancing blue collar Black character reifies the Whiteness of the food scientist in this commercial and, implicitly, scientists in general, in contrast to the racial diversity of the category of manufacturing workers.

"Asian Technocrat" Schema

Unlike any of the other schemas we identify in the commercials in our sample, the schema of the "Asian technocrat" is quite negative. It is used in various forms in ads featuring Asians. In this schema, noted in six ads, Asians are portrayed as unemotional overachievers who respond to any and all situations in a robotic way. Again, as with Black characters, Asian characters are represented by a relatively small number of characters, and so only one schema emerged from our reading of the ads. This schema is illustrated by an ad for Baskin Robbins Ice Cream. An Asian grandfather sits in a rocking chair in the family room when the granddaughter approaches, appearing downtrodden. Grandpa asks, "What's the matter?" The granddaughter shows Grandpa a math test with a red F at the top and bemoans, "Mom said if I got an A we can get Reese shakes at Baskin Robbins." Grandpa uses his blue pen to change the F to an A, and states, "See you in the car." He vanishes, leaving his granddaughter to stare at her test with a complete lack of expression on her face.

The characteristics of the Asian technocrat, achievement-oriented, and robotic are communicated through the granddaughter. Immediately, viewers will recognize the Asian student who expects to perform well in math, or in all academic subjects, for that matter (Louie 2004). Though she

fails to achieve an A, which contradicts the model minority stereotype, her reaction conforms to the overused robotic trope (Wang 2010). Moreover, the failing grade for the Asian student is a (supposedly) comedic inversion of the well-worn schema of Asian academic achievement, and retains the link between Asian identity and a focus on academics. Upon receiving a failing grade, her emotions are simplistic and one-dimensional; she is sad. Even after her grandfather decides to take her out for an ice cream anyway, she is unable to demonstrate the basic and antilogous emotion of happiness, let alone more complex emotions that may arise in this situation: surprise, relief, or even guilt. In fact, she stands with her corrected test, face completely blank. It is hard to tell whether or not she was feeling *any* emotion at the offer of ice cream, which she previously lamented *over not being* able to have, given her bad grade. The grandfather, too, is portrayed as a technocrat. He approaches his granddaughter's emotions as a problem to be solved. She is sad, so change her mark and take her out to ice cream. He is frugal with his words, uttered in a matter-of-fact and monotonous way. Making no attempt to emotionally console the granddaughter, he instantly disappears, to solve her problem in a practical way, through buying ice cream. The robotic mannerisms portrayed by Grandpa and his granddaughter achieve the marketer's manifest goal of providing comedic relief. A latent result is that these types of images reinforce the stereotype that Asians are industrious but emotionless individuals interested only in climbing up the social ladder through academic excellence.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Despite the often-touted differences between Canada and the United States when it comes to issues of race, we find strong similarities between rates and modes of racial representation in advertising. We find underrepresentation of many visible minority groups, but an overrepresentation of Black characters relative to their proportion in the Canadian population, at a rate that resembles their representation in American media. This fact points to an overlap between American and Canadian racial representations in advertising, rather than a divergence. Moreover, as has been found in American research, the representations of Whites in advertising are more diversified and positive than the representations of other races.

Our paper is strongly aligned with Henry and Tator's (2009) claims that "[m]edia discourses plays a large role in reproducing the collective belief system of the dominant White society and the core values of this society" (p. 711) and that the "dominant discourses and representations ... reinforce the construct of whiteness as the normative universe" (p. 712). Our argument supports the main claims of prior scholars of Canadian media insofar as we find highly unequal racialized media content. However, we arrive at our argument through the identification of six schemas for racial identity that have not been identified before in Canadian media.

Our examination of how Whites, Blacks, and East/Southeast Asians are represented in Canadian prime-time food and dining commercials identified significant variations between these three groups. In terms of food subtypes, Whites were most often associated with whole foods, while Blacks' and East/Southeast Asians' appearances were most strongly concentrated in fast food commercials. This finding about fast food supports Henderson and Baldasty's (2003) research on U.S. commercials, and we agree with their interpretation that the association suggests a symbolic connection between race and class.

The cultural schemas we identify provide information about the symbolism attached to race in this sample of mainstream Canadian media content. We interpret the messages we see in these commercials as reflections of some of the dominant cultural schemas for these groups, and at the same time as agents for the reproduction of those dominant cultural schemas. The messages that come through are not only that Whites are associated with whole foods, highbrow food, and natural food, but that Whites *are* wholesome, highbrow, and in tune with the natural. Whiteness comes to symbolize all of these abstract ideas, assigning a type of visual "tangibility" through concrete examples. Furthermore, these schemas contribute to the construction of a script of what it means to be White, including the normalcy (however inaccurate) of the nuclear family, and associations with legitimate or highbrow culture and with authority and tradition. Our qualitative analysis helps to explain the initially surprising association between Whites and processed foods (to the near complete exclusion of other groups). In these commercials we see Whites associated with nostalgia and tradition, ideas on which these generally long-standing and well-known brands are trading. Although it is mostly true that Whites were the group that consumed these brands many decades ago, the continuation of this association may perpetuate a symbolic connection between Whites (but not other groups) and an idealized present and future.

In contrast to the various White schemas, these commercials provide just one schema each for Blacks and East/Southeast Asians. The narrowness of the representations is significant, because they present just one way to be a member of each of these groups. While the schema for Blacks is not overtly negative, it is nonetheless problematic. As the only clear schema in our sample for Blacks, it constrains this group to a relatively disadvantaged socioeconomic position. There is a poignant contrast here with the White Highbrow schema for the difference in status accorded to each group. Our quantitative findings show that Blacks are disproportionately associated with fast food commercials. This association exists within a social context where fast food is connected to lower levels of cultural capital (Johnston and Baumann 2010), and it is much less frequently consumed by people from higher socioeconomic status groups (Kim and Leigh 2011). Regarding health food commercials, this finding corroborates some of the more specific findings regarding stereotypical corporeality of African

Americans in earlier content analysis work (Burton and Klemm 2011; Mil-lard and Grant 2006; Plous and Neptune 1997). Bristol et al. (1995) observe an emphasis on Black bodies in advertising and interpret this emphasis as part of a schematic White/brains versus Black/brawn dichotomy in popular culture. Health food's connection to the body and bodily appearance can thus illuminate the association we find with Blacks.

The schema for East/Southeast Asians is narrow and negative. As the only schema for this group in our sample, it effectively Others them through implicit suggestions of their robotic, emotionless nature. It corroborates other earlier content analysis findings on Asian Americans (Pake and Shah 2003; Wang 2010). There is another poignant contrast, in this case with the White Nuclear Family schema, for the difference in warmth and emotionality accorded to each group.

Our findings point to a problem with the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of visible minorities in the media. Underrepresentation is a problem because it reinforces narrow cultural schemas for what it means to be a member of these groups, including dominant societal expectations (and self-expectations) about the identities and behaviors of group members. The rich, broad, multidimensional, and positive cultural schemas for Whiteness set up a contrast to other groups where Whiteness is implicitly preferable. Whiteness appears in commercials as a balance between production/consumption, labor/leisure, discipline/emotion, mind/body, with Blackness appearing as too bodily or Asianness as too robotic.⁶ We interpret the minority cultural schemas as both dependent on, and helping to constitute, the White cultural schemas. It is in contrast to one another that they appear as broad or narrow, and through which their significance is constructed.

In our view, advertisers utilize (rather than invent) dominant cultural schemas (of which race is just one kind), and the organizational constraints (on both time and the need to resonate with broad audiences) that apply to marketing make those schemas especially salient, and therefore ripe for analysis. Although food and dining advertising is a culturally rich source for identifying racial cultural schemas, this empirical choice has influenced which of the particular schemas we identify. We would strongly suggest, however, that these schemas are broader than the realm of food and dining, and encourage future researchers to systematically examine other forms of advertising and other media in Canada.

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⁶ We are grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for contributing this insight.

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Appendix

Table A
Descriptive Statistics off all Characters by Race, Gender and Character Role

	White	Black	E./SE. Asian	South Asian	Latian	Arab	Aboriginal	Race Unclear	Gender Total
Male	44% (2581)	6% (346)	2% (102)	1% (83)	1% (61)	<1% (21)	<1% (6)	<1% (38)	55% (3228)
Female	35% (2049)	5% (266)	2% (126)	1% (77)	1% (59)	<1% (2)	<1% (2)	<1% (35)	45% (2616)
Race Total	79% (4630)	10% (612)	4% (228)	3% (160)	2% (120)	<1% (23)	<1% (8)	1% (73)	100% (5854)
Primary Characters	84% (1561)	9% (163)	1% (27)	3% (61)	<1% (18)	<1% (3)	<1% (3)	2% (29)	100% (1865)

Table A represents the representation in prime-time commercials by race, gender, and character role. The racial categories replicate those used in the Canadian census, except that our category of East/Southeast Asian combines the categories of Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, and Southeast Asian.

CHAPTER 9

Advertising and Age, Sexual Orientation, and Ability

Marginalized or Mainstreamed?

At that moment, I realized that from the standpoint of advertising and corporate America, I was a dead man walking.

—Jerry Della Femina, on his 50th birthday

What makes a target audience attractive to marketers? Of course, an audience must be a good match for a product. But beyond that, many marketers are attracted to audiences that are large in number, that spend a lot of time with mediated content (both traditional and online), have a high amount of disposable income, and are not brand loyal but open to new products and brands. Would you be surprised, then, that advertisers ignore several of market segments that meet these requirements?

The previous two chapters set the stage for seeing that the dominant view of people who are targeted by Western advertising is young, thin, and Caucasian. In this chapter, we discuss three groups of people that 10 years ago rarely appeared in the media—in either media content or advertising. Today, the media is more open to presenting older people, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT), and persons with disabilities (PWDs). This discussion begins with consideration of major demographic changes occurring in the United States and, to some degree, throughout the world.

Advertising has traditionally reflected an overall youth bias (Bradley & Longino, 2001). Youth culture stresses, among other things, the importance of an individual's physical appearance to his or her self-concept. As people age, the importance of physical appearance to one's self-concept generally diminishes, and one's self-concept becomes based on values such as achievement, comfort, and security (Bradley & Longino, 2001).

Youth bias in American culture may have started with flappers in the 1920s, trend-setting young people from well-off families who spent a lot of time enjoying social life.

Flappers lived what seemed to be a glamorous, carefree life: a life that many might aspire to and that became an attractive market.

Throughout most of the 20th century, younger people spent a lot of time trying to find the newest, trendiest products before they would settle down in their 20s and 30s and buy homes, furniture, and appliances (Lee, 1997). Youth culture is not limited to the United States: Advertising in 1960s United Kingdom often focused on British youth culture as popular trendsetters. In the late 20th century, Japanese youth culture created global interest in anime and the *kawaii* culture that captures childlike innocence in products and messages for younger adults.

Conventional wisdom suggested that moving out of one's youth into adulthood meant that one's set of spending patterns became fixed. Instead of shoes and beer, purchasing focused on babies' and children's clothing, saving for college education, and planning for retirement. By the time people reached middle age, conventional wisdom stated, they had bought all that they needed to buy (Lee, 1997). If these people did try new things, they would be open to purchasing products marketed to youth, although the opposite is not true.

However, this cycle is changing as demographics around the world also change. One influence is the influence of **baby boomers**. The baby boom population is made up of people who were born between 1946 and 1964; today, in 2013, baby boomers range from 49 to 67 years old. When baby boomers first came into their own in the 1970s, a number of products and campaigns were targeted to the boomers. Not only was the boom large in terms of sheer numbers, but baby boomers also tended to be one of the most affluent segments in history, and they were not conservative in their spending habits. Moreover, baby boomers continue their spending habits and are not as set in their ways as some people anticipated.

Another group that has experienced significant growth are PWDs.

A disability is defined as a restriction in the ability to perform a normal activity of daily living that someone of the same age is able to perform. There are more than 55 million PWDs in the United States, about 18% of the U.S. population (United Nations, n.d.). The United Nations estimates that there are more than 650 million PWDs internationally. In the United States, PWDs spend more than average consumers on dining out (they dine out once per week) and travel more than other consumers. They also spend more time with media. Marketers, though, rarely picture PWDs in advertising or target media content (including websites) to this group.

A final group that has often been ignored are individuals who identify themselves as LGBT. There are more than 15 million individuals who identify as LGBT in the United States. Globally, some estimate that about 10% of the population identifies as LGBT, which suggests that the size of the market is over 650 million people. Estimates on LGBT buying power exceed \$2 trillion (FPLAG, 2006). The LGBT population are restaurant trendsetters and dine out more than the average American (Community Marketing, Inc., 2010). While specialized publications have targeted this community for years, societal changes are raising the profile of the community in recent years. But have advertisers caught up?

While each group will be examined separately, the overall implications of these groups and their out-of-the-spotlight status suggest several similar intended and unintended effects.

ADVERTISING AND ELDERS

Ho and Lambier (2010) report that there will be more than 2 billion people worldwide over the age of 60 by the year 2050. Many older adults have money to buy what they want and are either at the top of their earning power or living comfortably on their retirement incomes. They have more time to consider purchases than consumers with young children do. Most older adults have the ability to be exposed to many different types of media to learn about a range of products and services.

American culture has been criticized as having a blatant disregard and disrespect for older people (Tupper, 1995). These attitudes have been influenced by a number of factors. Historically, immigration from other countries to the United States is done by young people who leave the elderly behind. This lack of a tie with older adults may contribute to general disregard for older people. The United States is one of several countries founded on principles of individualism, independence, and autonomy. As people age, they may have to give up some of these valuable freedoms and therefore may not feel part of society. Mobile populations have an effect: As children grow up and move away from their parents, family ties can often be loosened. As with mass immigration, the value of the wisdom of the older generations becomes less important to society. Finally, medical advances keep people living longer, which suggest that death is now associated primarily with elders.

Globally, different societies value their elders differently. In Europe, many products and services are directed toward older adults, who are portrayed in European advertising as active and fun-loving people (Clark, 1988). Asian cultures embrace the idea of *filial piety*, the notion of complete and total respect for our family, especially elders (Buchbinder, n.d.). In Latin cultures, the concept of *familia* suggests that the extended family is as valued as the nuclear family. *Ubuntu* is an ancient African worldview based on the primary values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion, and associated values, ensuring a happy family and community (Broodryk, 2002).

In the United States, older people are generally absent from our mass media. When they do appear in commercials for mass-marketed products, older people can be stereotyped and mocked (Figure 9.1). Who has not parodied commercial lines such as "I've fallen and I can't get up" and "where's the beef." In the United Kingdom, only 5% of TV advertising shows images of mature people. Of those who appeared, the majority were either comic characters or characters portrayed as decrepit and aging ("Old Is the New Cool," 2005).

The primary categories where older adults appear are financial services, food, and health.

Elders are often portrayed as retired or as persons planning for retirement (Gardner, 2000). Elders tend not to be seen in the workplace or out with large groups of people but at home thinking about the immediate future and their financial needs. Often, such portrayals may generate a sense of uneasiness, as viewers compare themselves to the older adults in the ad. For example, viewers of an ad may ask themselves, Am I doing better than them?

Elders are seen as having different attitudes from youth and are often seen as more set in their ways than other groups. This stubborn attitude directly reflects the industry's view of older adults as people who are not open to new ideas and are fanatically loyal to their brands; therefore, advertisers should not bother marketing to them (Dychtwald,

Figure 9.1 Elders are often mocked in advertising messages, such as in this ad for Combos.



1988, p. 290). A lack of interest and involvement with technology is also seen (Figure 9.2). However, more than 50% of the mature market are keen to try new things, and they are in fact no more brand loyal than any other age group ("Old Is the New Cool," 2005).

One final representation was seen by the AARP (formerly, the American Association of Retired Persons): many ads characterize old people as sick, feeble, infirm, deaf, confused, or perhaps even socially isolated (Figures 9.2 and 9.3). Of course, many such portrayals suggest that the situation can be addressed by the purchase of a product. Picturing a group as less healthy than other groups can have devastating effects on that group, as we will consider further in the next section.

Persons With Disabilities

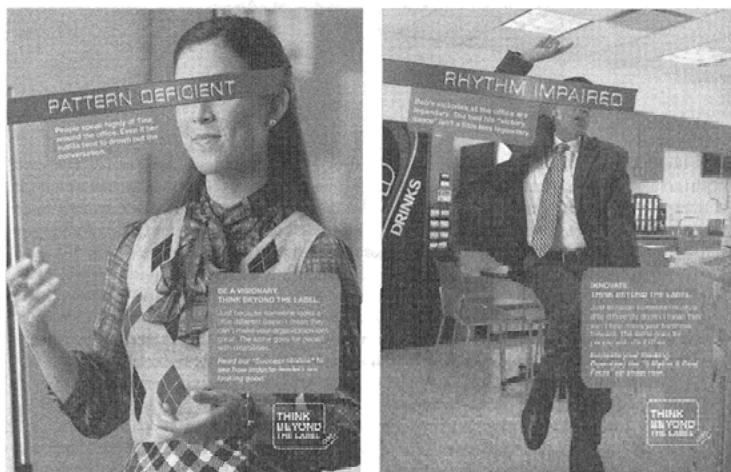
As previously mentioned, the Americans with Disabilities Act defines a disability as a condition that limits a person's ability to function in major life activities—including communication, walking, and self-care (such as feeding and dressing oneself)—and that is likely to continue indefinitely, resulting in the need for supportive services. Four general

by offering examples of people with “differences” who already worked at a company. For instance, one a television commercial featured a worker in a wheelchair who points out her colleagues who “you could label as ‘different.’” Among them are a woman dressed in a wardrobe of clashing patterns, who is “fashion deficient”; a klutzy young man at the copier, who is “copy incapable”; and a man who speaks very loudly and suffers from “volume control syndrome.” The commercial ends with the wheelchair-bound worker admitting she is impaired as well: she is labeled “coffee-making impaired.” A print ad featuring a worker who is “dancing impaired” provides copy that reads, “just because someone moves a little differently doesn’t mean they can’t help move your business forward. The same goes for people with disabilities.” The television campaign featured a physically impaired actress, Alana Wallace, who is an advocate for people with disabilities, as well as a performer. Whether such efforts have an effect on how the disabled are viewed is yet to be seen.

Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual Populations

Many marketers consider the LGBT consumer market to be a “Dream Market” because of the belief that these consumers represent a sizable market segment possessing relatively

Figures 9.4 and 9.5 The Think Beyond the Label campaign challenged mainstream perceptions of PWDs.



large amounts of disposable income (Oakenfull, McCarthy, & Greenlee, 2008). These consumers are also highly aware of brands' social orientation: 87% of LGBT adults would consider purchasing a brand whose parent company has equal benefits for LGBT employees (compared to 75% of non-LGBT consumers). About a fourth of LGBT consumers switch products brands because a different brand was supportive of the LGBT community. In addition, 47% of LGBT adults purchase a company's products or services when an advertisement has been tailored to an LGBT audience.

While media targeted to the LGBT community exist (publications such as *The Advocate* and *Out*, the cable TV network LOGO), it has been estimated that more than half of the LGBT population in the United States may not be exposed to LGBT media of any kind (Poux, 1998). Ads in these vehicles may not necessarily have specific LGBT content. One interesting study (Phillips, 2010) of advertising content, LOGO found that mainstream ads made up the bulk of all ads on Logo (59% of total ads). Gay and lesbian ads accounted for 39% of the total, yet nearly all LGBT ads were promotional ads for content on LOGO.

Why don't more ads feature LGBT individuals? More than 90% of gay men and 82% of lesbians reportedly read mainstream magazines. Perhaps because a 2006 study from marketing firm Fleishman-Hillard found that 24% of heterosexuals would be less likely to purchase a new or everyday product if a company used gays and lesbians to market or promote it (Fleishman-Hillard, 2012). In addition, the trend that some brands are reluctant to advertise to homosexuals in the mainstream media is fueled, in part, by concerns of a backlash from members of the non-LGBT audience, particularly radical right or religious movements.

Still, increasing numbers of brands target and/or show support for the LGBT community including Ben and Jerry's, Orbitz, Cover Girl, Levi's, Macy's, Wrigley's, Target, and JC Penney. For brands, these decisions can be risky. One JC Penney spokesperson is Ellen DeGeneres, a popular comedienne and talk show host who is also gay. This choice was criticized by a conservative group called One Million Moms, which threatened a boycott. JC Penney subsequently created a print catalogue for Father's Day that featured a real-life gay couple and the men's sons. When One Million Moms followed through on their boycott, JC Penney found that they were gaining new customers who shopped at the store in support of the messages. Another retailer, Target, marketed t-shirts in support of marriage equality. This effort, though, was in response to criticisms that Target's CEO backed a conservative, anti-gay Republican gubernatorial candidate (Moore, 2012). The t-shirt promotion was expected to raise up to \$120,000 for the Family Equality Council, a Washington-based group that is part of a Minnesota coalition pushing to defeat a state constitutional amendment against marriage equality. The effort was organized by Target employees and their allies.

Brands advertise to show support online as well. In 2012, Oreo cookies posted an image on Facebook in support of Gay Pride featuring a rainbow Oreo cookie (the LGBT community uses a rainbow to symbolize diversity—Figure 9.6). The Oreo Facebook page is one of the most popular ones on the online social network site, with millions of fans who visit the page regularly. Oreo, owned by Kraft Foods, wanted to show their support of diversity with the online ad (they have no plans to actually market the rainbow cookie). While the ad generated hundreds of thousands of thumbs up, many fans of the page posted negative messages and threatened to boycott Oreos.

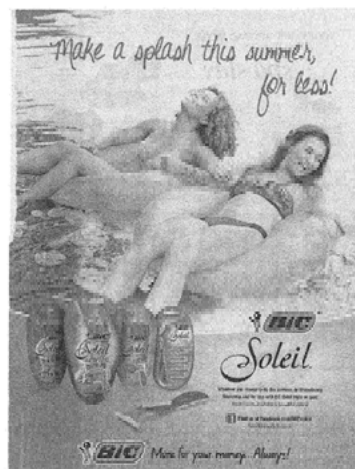
Figure 9.6 The Gay Pride campaign that appeared on Oreo's Facebook featured a rainbow-colored Oreo and, as a result, generated controversy among Oreo's Facebook followers.



Brands take boycott threats seriously. To minimize threats, some advertisers reach the LGBT community without alienating others by using the “gay window advertising” tactic. Ads composed in this manner speak to the LGBT consumer in a way that is not immediately noticeable to others, using imagery considered “gay vague” (Borgerson, Isla, Schroeder, & Thorsen, 2006). Gay vague images do not highlight same sex relationships: an ad could feature a group of people who may be considered “just friends” (Figure 9.7). In this way, advertisements generally avoid explicit references to heterosexuality by only featuring one individual or individuals of the same sex. In some ads, the model or models in the ad depict sexual ambiguity or an androgynous style (Schroeder, 2002). According to this conceptualization, gay window ads differ both from explicit appeals targeting gay consumers (e.g., a gay couple) (Bhat, Leigh, & Warlow, 1998) and from so-called *implicit gay ads* (Oakenfull et al., 2008), which feature unambiguous gay imagery (Figure 9.8). Studies show that gay window ads are readily recognized by LGBT consumers and may or may not be understood by heterosexual ones, depending on their subcultural knowledge, but if understood, they leave little space for ambiguity (Puntoni, Vanhamme, & Visscher, 2011).

When ads are explicit, portrayals of LGBT consumers often fall into some specific stereotypes (Borgerson et al., 2006) including the affluent, white gay professional (Figure 9.9). Less often seen are members of the LGBT community who are of color, lower income individuals, and butch lesbians. However, as mentioned earlier, more companies like JC Penney and IKEA are showing members of the LGBT community as families living suburban lifestyles.

Figure 9.7 This ad for Bic Soleil may suggest that the two women are friends to some and lovers to others.

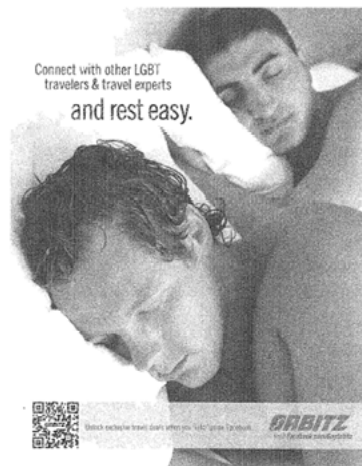


CONSEQUENCES OF INVISIBLE POPULATIONS

There are many reasons that these three groups of individuals tend to be invisible in advertising messages and thus may not be considered part of the mainstream. First, many people are simply uncomfortable with people who are not like them. Younger people can be uncomfortable with older people, or a sighted person can be uncomfortable around a blind person. Brands are often afraid they will present these populations in a way that is insulting or stereotypical, which has the potential of hurting the brand and insulting the population. Finally, in times when budgets are tight, messages directed to these groups, which can be considered niche groups, get cut first. These choices made by marketers and their agencies result in unintended effects toward the target audience and others in society.

The lack of presence of these niche groups in advertising could have the effect of making them invisible in all aspects of society. This may be especially problematic for elderly women, who are featured much less often than elderly men in advertising, misrepresenting their presence in society (Tupper, 1995). If elders, PWDs, and LGBTs are not seen in our society, others may not consider them important in societal processes (e.g., elections) or in the workplace. Arguably, reinforcement of the invisibility of these groups can cause harm to people's opportunity for treatment equal to that of mainstream consumers (Gardner, 2000).

Figure 9.8 The Orbitz ad invited consumers to connect with other LGBT travelers and travel experts.



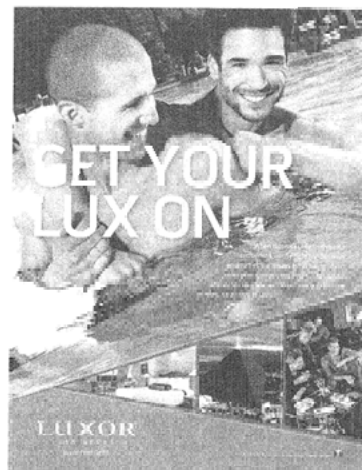
Marginalization

The predominance of traditional portrayals of white men and women (as seen in the last few chapters) leave little room for portrayals that are nontraditional. The focus on such mainstream imagery can result in the marginalization of persons in these groups. Additionally, when persons in these groups are pictured, the imagery often shows one individual rather than a couple or a group (Chura, 2001). According to Farnall and Smith (1999), individuals who viewed positive portrayals of people with disabilities on television shows and in films were less likely to report negative emotions associated with disability images. Certainly, seeing more diverse of groups of people in advertising content will also help to address people's levels of comfort with people who are not like themselves.

These Populations Are Offended

Individuals in these groups report that they are dissatisfied with the marketing efforts and are offended by some of the portrayals that they see (Bradley & Longino, 2001). Many advertisements feature stereotypes that rarely resonate with these groups. Elders, for example, are highly concerned with advertising's emphasis on their medical conditions

Figure 9.9 The ad for the Luxor in Las Vegas presents imagery of upscale men who like to pamper themselves.



(Leinweber, 2001). The apparent lack of authenticity of images that picture elders as old-fashioned and separated from the mainstream suggests to older consumers that the advertisers have no idea who they are or what they need. Such concerns are likely felt by other groups as well.

These Populations Are Devalued

Repeated exposure to commercials that carry a negative subtext may lead to the overall devaluation of invisible groups by others in society. For example, negative stereotyping circumscribes elders' potential by placing emphasis on unproductive and unsuccessful elders. This may create a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the capacities and experiences of invisible populations are limited (Vasil & Wass, 1990).

Creating Negative Expectations About Aging Among Younger People

As we have mentioned several times throughout this book, the media influence our worldviews. Thus, how the media portray older adults is not only damaging to the older adults themselves but also to younger people. Negative stereotyping and ageism create

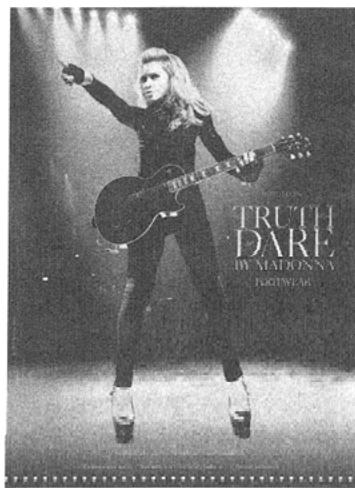
negative expectations, fear, and dread of aging among younger adults (Vasil & Wass, 1990), and it could as well influence perceptions of the workforce.

THE FUTURE

Around the world, advertisers and marketers are changing the way they look at these invisible groups. In Puerto Rico, for example, agencies are working to change the dominant stereotype in mainstream media of elders as fragile and inactive, and they focus more on active elders as an important consumer segment. Advertising professionals note that studies show that elders in Puerto Rico have increased confidence and self-esteem. As popular celebrities continue to age (Figure 9.10), it is also expected that they will appear in advertising, creating messages that may resonate with their contemporaries.

The more we see a range of people in advertising, the more individuals will be comfortable with a range of people in society. Media representations can be very strong in changing world-views: A study by Farnall and Smith (1999) showed that people who viewed positive media depictions of PWDs were significantly less likely to say that encounters with PWD made them angry, fearful, resentful, or concerned. They were also more likely to admire PWDs.

Figure 9.10 Madonna promotes her shoe line, targeted to women aged 27 to 50.



In 2012, Toyota created an ad featuring a transgender model, Strav Strashko. The ad has been called subversive and kinky, and the translation of the voice over is, "Not in trend, not casual, not for everyone." Not surprisingly, the ad has generated a lot of controversy around the world. But is this the new face (and body) of edgy advertising? You can see the ad on YouTube here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=zVwJrAr7GkY.

Borgerson et al. (2006) noted that consumers read ads with different types of psychological, social, and cultural viewpoints. These can include defensive mechanisms, unconscious denial, and conscious refusal. A newer concept, that of *straightening up*, captures a different type of viewpoint that allows consumers to avoid potentially uncomfortable readings, in this case, normalizing what advertisers intend. For advertisers, this finding shows how flexibly consumers read imagery, and it may dampen fears of offending certain target markets by showing individuals out of the mainstream.

SUMMARY

Advertisers have neglected elders in advertising messages: Elders are either ignored or are presented as disconnected from society as a whole. However, as baby boomers age, they present an opportunity for advertisers to reconnect with a group with the financial power to make or break brands. Advertisers should consider reconnecting with elders and understanding more about their lifestyles to create messages that best resonate with this group.

In the next chapter, we will go to the other end of the age spectrum and consider advertising directed to children.

KEY TERMS

Ability-Integrated (AI)
advertising 138

Baby boomer 135
Filial piety 136

Gay window
advertising 142

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What theories from Chapter 6 do you see reflected in this chapter? How do they explain some of the portrayals we see?
2. What are the issues with portrayals of these "hiding groups" from a micro, meso, and macro perspective?

3. In the "Fair & Lovely" case study in Chapter 8, you were asked to find examples of products that would change someone's outward appearance to have them appear part of a more desirable group. Were any of these products designed to help a person appear younger than he or she really is? If so, has your perception of these types of products changed after reading this chapter?
4. Sometimes, these populations are not only hidden from advertising and other media messages, but they are also hidden from public. Do you often notice older or disabled people in your day-to-day life? If so, what is your immediate reaction to them? For example, sometimes, if we are behind an elderly person in a line at the grocery store, we feel frustration since we think it might take longer for them to get through the line. How were reactions like this developed do you think? Can advertising do anything to change these reactions?
5. The TV show *Glee* has a character in a wheel chair, but the actor (Kevin McHale) is not a PWD. In fact, *New Mobility* magazine named the character Artie Abrams as the Person of the Year for their magazine, which is targeted to PWDs. How important do you think it is to have people with PWDs portray people with PWDs in media, as seen in the example in this chapter? Research the response to *New Mobility's* choice and see how that affects your response.
6. What is your reaction to the ad featuring Madonna (Figure 9.10)? Would you consider purchasing these shoes?

CASE STUDY

LIBERTY MUTUAL

The Liberty Mutual "Do the Right Thing" ads can be found on YouTube. Watch the three ads thinking about the concepts discussed in the last three chapters. Take a look at them:

Half Acre: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMwoeXr1cvo>

The Part Where You Let Go: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iw97Cf2lyGw>

Rain: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fi6xWMwDCw>

1. What types of people are portrayed in these ads? Are the portrayals positive or negative?
2. What is the brand message that you take away from these ads?
3. Do you take anything else away? What emotions do you feel after watching these ads? How might these emotions affect how you feel about Liberty Mutual?

FURTHER READING

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ADVERTISING & CHILDREN

Advertising to Children

Gimme, Gimme, Gimme!!! Do
Children Need More Protection from
Advertising?



Advertising to children is a topic that creates strong emotion in people. Parent groups want to protect their kids from questionable media and advertisers. Advocacy groups want to protect a vulnerable group they (and the law, for the most part) have decided can't protect itself. And, in the era of doing more with less money, educators find themselves torn between accepting help from media conglomerates willing to fund educational programs, all the while assuring parents that schools are still protected turf.

What's a grownup to do? If we take a "big effects" approach to the media – and especially to advertising – it's a short leap to implore the government to impose stricter guidelines on the advertisers. But as you've already seen in this book, nothing is as easy as it might seem at first.

What are the issues? First, it's easy to blame advertising for all the communication ills of the world – and particularly for children who may have run amok. For one thing, it takes the responsibility away from bad parenting. Yes, it may be nasty to have questionable material imprinted on a second grader's lunch box, but the parent doesn't have to buy the lunch box, the argument goes. Blaming advertisers without looking at the media as a whole is short-sighted at best – and dangerous at worst. As long as grownups are willing to digest hundreds of hours of every gruesome episode of the *CSI* and *Law & Order* franchises, it seems a little hollow to get upset because someone slipped a picture of a Coke can in a Disney movie, doesn't it? Besides, as Walker Smith's essay points out, kids are consumers, too. In some sense, they have earned the right to be treated as a target market.

Or have they? As Keisha Hoerner points out in her essay, children are vulnerable and don't understand the heavy-hitting tactics that come raining down on them day after day as advertisers try to convince them that they need a certain cereal, a certain brand of jeans, a certain back-to-school notepad. And it's not just about cereal, jeans, and school supplies. The American Psychological Association has called for an outright ban on advertising to children under 8. The recent national interest in obesity and children – and the role of advertising in making kids fat – is fuel for the fire. Lots of laws in the U.S. have been created for the sole purpose of protecting children. No one debates this. Yet just curtailing advertising to children may be easier said than done.

First, hardly anyone would expect children to watch only children-appropriate programming on television. Wildly popular shows like *American Idol* appeal to entire families. It would be impossible (even if everyone agreed this were a good idea) to keep *American Idol* fans under 8 from watching the commercials during the show. Second, if there are no commercials on television programs specifically geared toward children, it wouldn't take long before there were no shows for kids at all. Like it or not, commercial television is a conduit for advertisers. Demographically segmented shows deliver important consumer segments to the companies that pay for the right to advertise. It is impossible to filter out the "media waste" – audience members that the advertisers are not targeting. Third, there is an additional economic issue. While parents may deride the idea of advertising in the classroom, given the lack of adequate funding for public education, who can blame educators who "sell out" for books, audiovisual equipment, and other necessary materials to run a school adequately? As you can see, the issue is rarely as simple as it might seem on the surface.

And, what about programs like the Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology, which gives out millions in scholarship money to budding

scientists? The corporate name is closely tied to the program. Is that any different than kids being exposed to ads on television? If so, how?

What do we know about the impact of advertising on children? Some researchers have argued that there is a fundamental difference in strategy between advertising to adults and advertising to children. Mason (2004) argued that ads geared toward adults tend to focus on brand loyalty while ads geared toward kids focus on merchandizing tie-ins. (An example of this would be an ad campaign that would encourage kids to go to McDonald's to get their Happy Meal toy based on a current blockbuster movie.)

With the recent interest in the role that advertising plays in childhood obesity, there is renewed discussion on who is to blame. Is it the ads (true, there is lots and lots of non-nutritional advertising aimed straight at kids), or is it the inactivity of children (and poor eating habits) that are largely to blame? Richard Berman, writing in *Advertising Age* (2005), comments that 25 percent of children today get no exercise whatsoever! This is a classic examination of trying to figure out which came first. Do the ads cause obesity? Or do obese children simply watch more television? In research lingo, we call this the debate between causality and association.

Even if the food industry wanted to be helpful, efforts can backfire. As Berman points out, "voluntarily limiting food advertising to children looks like an implicit admission of guilt." What's an advertiser to do? It looks like there are plenty of people on both sides of the issue who have some ideas.

Advertising to children. It's about protecting a vulnerable group that can't protect itself. It's about preserving a free market society. It's about recognizing that a free market comes with responsibility. It's about allowing parents to decide how they want their children to behave. It's about kids being rewarded – and, some would argue, respected – for having opinions. As you can see, this is a complicated issue.

So, what's the right side of the argument? *You decide.*

Ideas to get you thinking . . .

- 1 Watch an hour of television for a program that you think is geared toward children. (Try the Disney Channel for starters.) Describe all the ads that you see in one show. Now watch an hour of primetime. Describe those ads. What kinds of similarities and differences do you see? Do you think any of the commercials you saw in the children's program are inappropriate?
- 2 Talk to some young children about the advertisements that they see. What kinds of conclusions could you make based on these conversations?
- 3 Take a trip to the grocery store and walk around until you find a parent or babysitter with a young child in tow. Without being obnoxious, try to observe the child's behavior

as the shopper walks down the aisle. Is the child asking for particular brands? How is the adult responding?

If you'd like to read more . . .

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Argument

Yes! Children need protection from the bombardments of Sponge Bob Square Pants, Ronald McDonald, and all the big purple dinosaurs

Keisha L. Hoerrner

Just do it. Have it your way. Because I'm worth it. No boundaries. Are these the messages parents strive to teach their children?

They may not learn them from parents, but children certainly learn these messages – and many more – from the advertising industry. The “consumerized childhood” is here, complete with training materials – commercials, billboards, animated cartoon characters making products like cigarettes cool, and catchy slogans – that work to capture the infant, toddler, school-age, tween, and teen audiences.

The numbers make it easy to see why children are an excellent market for advertisers: Children under 14 spend more than \$20 billion a year, and teens spend almost eight times that amount (\$155 billion) annually (Dominick, 2007; Moses, 2000). Children are also able to influence an additional \$180 to \$200 billion in purchases by their parents (Alexander and Hoerrner, 2006; Dominick, 2007). Scholars refer to that influence ability as “pester power” (McNeal, 1992). They are big business to advertisers, who currently spend \$15 billion a year trying to tap into the child market (Bishop, 2005).

Marketing research has shown that 12-month-old children can make brand associations (“Watch out,” 2001), so marketers are striving to literally create “cradle-to-grave” consumers. In March 2000, the International Research Institute, in cooperation with the Parenting Group, held a conference for marketers on children and their parents. Titled “Play-Time, Snack-Time, Tot-Time: Targeting Pre-Schoolers and their Parents,” advertisers explored “marketing practices that drive loyalty in the preschool market” and tactics to “find out the desires of toddler-age consumers” (“Watch out,” 2001: 12–13).

“Toddler-age consumers”? Do most parents see their 2-year-old as a consumer? As Dominick (2007) asks, would these parents feel comfortable

allowing a door-to-door salesperson to come into their living room and hawk a product to their children? Then why are children overwhelmed by advertising messages?

Major Issues

One of the concerns is that these toddlers – and their older pre-teen siblings – clearly do not understand the distinctions of fantasy versus reality and do not have the cognitive skills to discern deceptive and manipulative messages.

The primary reason Action for Children's Television (ACT), and other advocacy groups, implored the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to either ban ads directed to children or highly regulate them is the concern about manipulation. While ACT no longer exists, other parental groups, including the Motherhood Project of the Institute for American Values, have asked the industry to stop targeting an audience that simply does not understand advertising. The American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics have also weighed in on the issue, claiming younger children should not be exposed to advertising because they do not understand its purpose and strategies (American Academy, 1995; Kunkel et al., 2004). Commercial Alert, another advocacy group, proposed a "Parents' Bill of Rights" that includes a requirement for companies to disclose all product placements in movies, books, and video games. Yes, Johnny is not only learning about violent crimes when he plays "True Crime: Streets of L.A." He's also learning that Puma is the foot brand of choice (Dominick, 2007).

Another concern regarding kids and ads is that children who are least likely to understand advertising seem to pay the most attention to it. Young children watch commercials to a greater degree than older children because they do not comprehend the difference between program content and advertisements. It's all enjoyable entertainment, and they learn from ads the same way they learn from program content. "Research suggests that children under age 7 or 8 generally do not realize that ads are intended to persuade them to buy something. Younger children tend to think of ads as informational rather than persuasive" (Alexander and Hoerrner, 2006: 40). By 12, children's viewing habits of commercials are similar to those of adults. They ignore more of the ads and have a more cynical view of those they see than their younger siblings (McNeal, 1999).

Even knowing an ad is intended to sell does not give the child the cognitive capacity to "recognize the bias inherent in persuasive messages and therefore view advertising claims and appeals more skeptically" (Kunkel, 2002).

Children who believe in a six-foot purple dinosaur and assume they can actually visit Mickey Mouse's house when they vacation in Disney World do not perceive subtle advertising effects like bandwagon or strategies like celebrity endorsements. (Since some of those celebrities are actually animated characters, can there truly be truth in those ads?)

Advertisements, indeed, are everywhere, using every character children know and love. Even Children's Television Workshop, the creators of Sesame Street, have sold out. Thanks to a deal with the discount chain, children are learning that an ad for the Sesame Street clothing line is "brought to you by the letter K – for Kmart" (Dominick, 2007: 433).

Characters such as Ronald McDonald, Tony the Tiger, and the lovable Coca-Cola polar bears are helping children make choices about food and drinks. The December 2005 report by the Institute of Medicine, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sparked quite a flurry of media attention. Its findings were not new, however. Numerous studies have consistently shown that food advertisements directed toward children encourage a diet of sugar, fat, and empty calories that leads to obesity, diabetes, and other health problems ("Selling junk food," 2006). "Far from following the USDA Food Guide Pyramid, recent data show that TV ads promote a diet of more than 40 percent fats, oil, and sweets but only 6 percent fruits and 6 percent vegetables. The pyramid is basically being turned upside down" (Alexander and Hoerrner, 2006, p. 40). While the Institute for Medicine report recommended that popular children's characters such as SpongeBob Square Pants be used to promote healthy foods rather than junk foods, the advertising industry has been slow to accept this nudge ("Carrots Monster?," 2005).

In addition to 30- and 60-second commercials, children are exposed to advertising disguised as programs. For more than 20 years, toy companies have been working with production companies and networks to create animated cartoons based on their toys (Pecora, 1998). From "He-Man and Masters of the Universe" to "Justice League," cartoons are dedicated to selling toys. These "toy-based programs," as they are called by scholars, have been quite successful in terms of delivering an excited child consumer base to the toy companies while providing television networks with cost-effective animated programming (Pecora, 1998).

Another major concern regarding children and advertising is the “hyper-consumerism” created in children. The American Psychological Association noted that a comprehensive review of the research showed children are learning to be materialistic and to associate their self-worth with what they purchase: “They are what they buy” (Kunkel et al., 2004: 11). Teens are especially materialistic and very concerned with brands. As Moses noted in her book *The \$100 Billion Allowance: Accessing the Global Teen Market*, “A brand says a lot about who they [teens] are and where they stand in life” (2000: 8). Teens around the world, not just in the United States, want to achieve the American dream, according to Moses. “The United States has exported the American dream – translated loosely as the freedom to consume . . .” (2000: 10).

Protections for Child Audiences

There are some protections mandated by the government and provided voluntarily by the advertising industry to protect children from the onslaught of advertisements. Most of them are simply window dressing, however, and do little to truly protect this vulnerable market.

Thanks to parental advocacy groups like ACT, the FCC has required “separators” between television programs and ads directed toward children since the mid-1970s. The separators generally say “We’ll be back after these messages” and “We now return to our program.” The commercials directed toward children also include “disclaimers,” statements that are supposed to provide important information to the viewers. The most popular disclaimers are “Products sold separately,” “Some assembly required,” “Batteries not included,” and “Part of a balanced breakfast.”

Unfortunately, these do little to protect children from advertising. Research shows that children (especially those aged 8 and younger) do not understand the disclaimers (Kunkel et al., 2004). If the industry really wanted children to grasp the meaning of disclaimers, they would have to be rewritten to use words children comprehend. “You have to put it together” makes more sense to a first-grader than “Some assembly required” (Liebert, Sprafkin, Liebert and Rubinstein, 1977, as cited in Kunkel et al., 2004: 5).

In addition to mandating minor aspects of the advertising content, the FCC also limits the amount of time advertisements can take up within

children’s programming. The passage of the 1990 Children’s Television Act forced broadcast stations to limit the total number of advertising minutes within children’s shows to 12 per hour during weekdays and 10.5 per hour on the weekends. These advertising restrictions only apply to programming targeted to an audience of children below the age of 17. There are currently no governmental restrictions on the total number of ads within print media directed toward children or on internet sites targeting child audiences.

The advertising industry says it adheres to voluntary guidelines developed by the Children’s Advertising Review Unit of the Better Business Bureau. Its guidelines include statements about exercising care to avoid unfair exploitation of the “imaginative quality of children” and to avoid “social stereotyping” in ads with diverse characters (“Self-regulatory guidelines,” 2003: 3). Since it is a voluntary system, there are no prescribed sanctions in the document for advertisers who fail to adhere to the guidelines.

The Motherhood Project developed its own code for advertisers and sent it to industry representatives in 2001. The “Mother’s Code for Advertisers” includes the following six statements:

- 1 No advertising, marketing, or market research in schools, including high schools.
- 2 No targeting of advertising and marketing at children under the age of 8.
- 3 No product placement in movies and media programs targeted at children and adolescents.
- 4 No behavioral science research to develop advertising and marketing aimed at children and adolescents.
- 5 No advertising and marketing directed at children and adolescents that promotes an ethic of selfishness and a focus on instant gratification.
- 6 Good faith efforts to reduce sponsorship of gratuitously sexual and/or violent programming likely to be watched by children. (“Watch out,” 2001: 28)

The advertising industry is as likely to accept this code from concerned mothers as it is to stop buying time during the Super Bowl. Unfortunately for parents and their children, the advertising industry makes too much money targeting children. That means it will continue to take advantage of almost “No Boundaries” and continue to “Just Do It.”

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Counterargument

No! Children are smarter than we think.
We coddle them enough already!

J. Walker Smith

Marketers care about only one kind of person: consumers of their products. Admittedly, marketers care more about purchasers than mere users, but a person who is neither is of no interest. This is the only reason marketers are interested in children – that's where the demand for their products is found. Like it or not, kids are consumers.

Marketers didn't invent this fact. This is the reality within which marketers operate. Perhaps it could be argued that marketers should not care so much or in certain ways about particular sorts of consumers. But if so, that's for policymakers to decide. Setting the rules is not the same thing as playing the game. Marketers can hardly be blamed for competing within the rules.

Vilifying marketers as con artists preying on children is nothing but a straw man in a discussion that should center on the social and economic roles we are willing to let different people to play as well as the corollary consequences we are willing to accept. Kids are consumers because, by and large, we're okay with it. After all, parents are not shy about entrusting their children with central roles in household shopping decisions.

The 2005 Yankelovich Youth MONITOR surveyed 1,458 teens and pre-teens 6 to 17 years of age, along with a parent or guardian of each of the children interviewed. The results are a reminder of what everyone knows to be true – kids have a very big say in the decisions that shape the consumer marketplace.

- 85 percent of kids reported that they had helped their parents pick out the sneakers they wear. 90 percent of parents said that their children's preferences for sneakers are very or somewhat important in their decisions about what to buy.
- Figures are comparable for all kids' categories (respective percentages show the percent of kids who said they helped and the percent of parents who think children's preferences are very or somewhat important).

Kids' clothes: 84/96 percent. School supplies: 83/92 percent. Snack foods: 78/88 percent.

- Figures are only slightly lower for family dining decisions. Fast food restaurants: 76/84 percent. Breakfast foods: 70/88 percent. Dinner foods: 64/86 percent.
- Figures for family products show sizable participation by children, even if not the majority in some cases. Place to go for vacation: 50/79 percent. Family car: 26/38 percent. Hotel to stay at when traveling: 20/37 percent.

There is nothing unexpected in these findings. From time immemorial, parents have accommodated their children's preferences by including them in household decisions, thereby making their kids into exactly the kinds of people who affect the bottom lines of businesses. Directly and indirectly, kids influence the spending of roughly \$400 billion each year. No wonder marketers target kids. Influencing the decisions of those who buy and use their products is what marketers do, and, indeed, what marketers must be allowed to do if the marketing process is to work.

Yet, as much as parents want their children to learn by getting hands-on experience as consumers – and not infrequently, by taking complete control of many household buying decisions – they don't want marketers overwhelming their kids with ads. In the Yankelovich Youth MONITOR, 77 percent of parents agree that their children are bombarded with too much advertising. But as long as marketers don't subvert their authority, parents are okay with what their kids watch – 68 percent agree that “with the right parent interaction, TV can reinforce the values [they are] teaching [their] children.”

Parents are following through on their determination to teach their children how to use media and be smart consumers. From 2001 to 2005, the proportion of parents reporting that they discuss TV commercials with their children went up from one-third to just over half. 70 to 80 percent of parents talk to their children about TV shows and news stories.

In spite of the growing time and resource pressures of contemporary life, more and more parents are trying to be a buffer between their children and marketers. Parents are enforcing limits by using ads as a teaching moment. Of course, this may not be enough. Children are said to be so much more vulnerable to the importuning of marketers that they need special protections beyond what parents are able to provide.

The vulnerability and special needs of children are not in question. Marketers don't dispute any of the definitive and extensive body of

academic research demonstrating this. Indeed, children are afforded special consideration and treatment in a wide variety of realms, not the least of which are the workplace and the criminal justice system. But when it comes to marketing, the case for special protections is less clear.

Regulating the access of marketers to consumers based on the cognitive abilities of consumers is a knotty challenge. It has never been the case that a particular type of cognition is required in order to be allowed to shop. There is no prescreening for rational over emotional thinking or for the ability to differentiate reality versus fantasy or for holistic versus materialistic responses to ads, or, indeed, for anything. Different consumers think and process information and advertising in different ways. Except for outright fraud, marketers are free to engage consumers in whatever way might boost sales.

When it comes to the machinations of advertisers, adults are no less cognitively challenged than children. The literature on the cognitive capacities of adults is just as extensive and definitive as that about children. (There are just as many critics of advertising to adults as there are critics of advertising to children. Advertising is an easy and convenient fall guy for many social ills.) Princeton University social psychologist Daniel Kahneman was awarded the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economics for a lifetime of research (much of which was completed with his late collaborator Amos Tversky) into the innate cognitive biases that cause people to routinely reach decisions and take actions that, technically and even economically speaking, are illogical, irrational, suboptimal and, oftentimes, not in their own best interests.

Academic research about bad decision-making periodically makes for best-sellers. Arizona State University Regents' Professor of Psychology Robert Cialdini's (2006) widely read introduction to the principles of persuasion, now in its fifth edition, borrows more examples from advertising than from academic experiments. In fact, his book can be found on the bookshelves of many marketers. Not only does Cialdini dissect the ways in which perceptions can be manipulated, he counsels readers on how to protect themselves from persuasive appeals that take advantage of their mental habits and biases. In other words, Cialdini cautions adult readers to take special measures to protect themselves from their cognitive incapacities.

Harvard University social psychologist Daniel Gilbert (2006) recently tackled the issue of happiness in his bestselling book. After an exhaustive, book-long review of academic research on the numerous ways in which cognitive processes lead people astray, Gilbert concludes that people

mistakenly believe that money brings greater happiness because people are simply no good at all at predicting what will make them happy.

David Myers, the well-known Hope College social psychologist, is the author of two widely used psychology textbooks as well as many bestselling books that address key social issues from the perspective of social psychological research. In his text on social psychology (2005), Myers does more than simply report what's known. He gives students practical suggestions about how to manage their own attitudes and behaviors. In chapter 7 of the latest eighth edition, Myers includes a section entitled "How can persuasion be resisted?" (that has a sub-section called "Inoculating children against the influence of advertising"). Like Cialdini, Myers knows that because of their innate cognitive biases, adults need as much special coaching and protection as children.

If the cognitive incapacities of children justify more restrictions on marketers, then the same restrictions must be applied to most if not all adults, too. Adults are not making voluntary decisions to practice poor consumer decision-making any more than children are doing so, nor are adults any more aware of their biases. To keep marketers from advertising to children because children's minds don't work in accordance with some preset criterion is to presume that there is only one kind of mental process that marketers should be permitted to target. If this is true, then it applies as much to adults as to children. Stricter limits on advertising to children that are justified on the basis of cognitive incapacities create a slippery slope that would shut marketing down entirely (and thus the consumer economy, too).

One of the more common criticisms of advertising to children is that it makes kids too materialistic and overly infatuated with brands. Whether or not this is true, the notion that this is bad is not a scientific critique; it is a value judgment. It's chancy to base policy on value judgments in a free market system in which the fundamental role of policy should be to safeguard the ability of different people to subscribe to different values. If advertising is required to impart a certain set of values or to induce certain types of responses in order to be permitted, then it becomes little more than an organ of the state. Besides, whatever the merits and failings of materialism – a debate with a long, quarrelsome, and wholly inconclusive intellectual history – in a highly sophisticated consumer-based economy such as America's, it is probably good for children to learn about it early and to be intimately immersed in it and deeply knowledgeable about it.

One of the more extreme recommendations about regulating advertising to children is that marketers not be allowed even to conduct research in support of marketing to kids. This idea is so excessive that it might sound too far-fetched to ever happen, but in fact once the screw begins to tighten on marketing to children everything connected with it becomes fair game, marketing knowledge no less than marketing practice. But if marketing researchers aren't allowed to study what persuades kids, then academic researchers won't be allowed to do so either. It's the knowledge itself that would be taboo, not the source of the research generating such knowledge. Limits on marketing to children will not seem reasonable and benign once they begin their inevitable snowball and start impinging on the very research collected and used by critics to justify such limits. This is the paradox inherent in trying to dictate outcomes by limiting access. Prohibitions on research run counter to basic American ideals about the free exchange of knowledge and opinions.

Of course, there is no need to fret over the difficulties of regulating advertising to children if there is no need to do so to begin with. Maybe kids are naive, but in the 2005 Yankelovich Youth MONITOR, 81 percent of the 6- to 17-year-old respondents agreed that more companies should ask kids their opinions of things. Children want a voice with marketers. Just over half feel that companies do not understand the kinds of foods kids like to eat or the kinds of clothes kids like to wear. Kids want their say as consumers.

In fact, the entire consumer marketplace is moving in the direction of greater consumer control, to the point that *Time* magazine's 2006 Person of the Year was "You" (2006/2007). What *Time's* choice recognized was that the marketplace has now crossed a threshold such that marketers can no longer succeed without involving consumers in a collaborative, power-sharing relationship. Kids have dramatically changed the marketing landscape already through internet sites like YouTube and MySpace. Kids are now coming of age in a world in which they are expected to be in charge, and as a result, they will be even more assertive tomorrow.

Participation is the essential characteristic of every technology at the disposal of teens and pre-teens nowadays. Reinvention is the dynamic that their involvement brings to the marketplace. In a very real sense, kids are no longer at the mercy of marketers so much as marketers are at the mercy of kids. Maybe marketers are naive, but this is exactly how marketers feel these days. A. G. Lafley (2006), CEO of Procter & Gamble, the most storied consumer marketing company of all time, now speaks passionately

of the modern “let-go” world in which marketers can retain control of their brands only by ceding more control to consumers.

Not only has the internet put new tools into the hands of consumers – with which children are often the most proficient – it has also opened up information to consumers that they have never had access to before. In particular, the internet has put people in touch with other people. Peer-to-peer interaction is the true essence (if not the utter genius) of the internet, giving people unprecedented fingertip access to opinions, feedback, and counsel that provide a ready counter to marketing and advertising. In particular, parents are able to use this information to their advantage in their attempts to buffer their children from marketers. But for kids no less than for their parents, consumer control and empowerment is the future of the marketplace.

The popular culture to which children are exposed nowadays is teaching them new skills and perhaps making them smarter at the same time. Science writer Steven Johnson (2005), a Distinguished Writer in Residence at New York University, contends that contemporary popular culture is far from the mind-numbing wasteland it is often made out to be. Johnson marshals research and personal experience to argue that video games, prime-time TV shows, the internet, and movies are teaching kids new ways of thinking and of processing information that have made today's children measurably smarter than yesterday's children. Marketers face an increasingly sophisticated audience of teens and pre-teens. The playing field may not be level but it is by no means tilted heavily in favor of marketers any longer.

Kids are not marketing dupes, but they are not marketing resistance masterminds either. Sometimes, kids need help. But helping kids by regulating marketers opens a Pandora's box of problems and precedents. The best way to help kids is not to impose more regulations on marketers but to change the character of demand in the marketplace. Whatever the angle of the playing field they encounter, that's how marketers play the game.

Ted Levitt (1986), the late, renowned Harvard Business School marketing authority, once wrote that “[c]onsumers don't buy products. They buy solutions to problems.” This is business and marketing at its best – solving people's problems in innovative and affordable ways. One way to understand Levitt's observation is to recognize that problems constitute demand. What marketers do is respond to demand. If problems change, then demand changes. When demand changes, marketers change.

Regulations are hard to put in place and harder still to enforce. Business lobbies will fight against the imposition of stricter regulations and businesses themselves will push the envelope with ways to operate within the law while still marketing aggressively to children. This is what always happens. Despite best intentions, regulations continue to come up short in giving kids the help they need. That's why this debate about protecting children from advertising goes on and on . . . and on and on and on. There is too much faith in regulation as a panacea.

While marketers resist the yoke of regulation, they do not fight against demand. Instead, they pursue it – because that's where money is to be made. To enlist the support of marketers in the cause of improving marketing to kids, the focus must be on changing the character of demand, not on imposing more regulations.

Demand can be changed in many ways. Educating kids and parents is the most obvious way. Governmental and non-profit institutions can offer instruction and alternatives that would cause kids to be different kinds of consumers. There are successes to emulate from programs focused on things like drugs, smoking, and sexual behavior. Myers cites one notable example in which an educational program proved very effective at giving children a “more realistic understanding” of advertising.

Even greater impact can come from direct incentives, however. If there are foods or toys or activities that are better for children, then the answer is to “pay” children or their parents to consume these things. Marketers will scramble to offer more of anything that people are being “paid” to buy. Probably the best way to do this is to subsidize the preferred offerings so that they are cheaper. But however it's accomplished, the idea is to give kids a compelling reason to consume differently.

Even more important than incentives for children and their parents are incentives for marketers. These kinds of incentives change the character of demand by introducing governmental purchasing or tax policies into the picture. It's known to work. Many of the foods marketed to children are said to be unhealthy because they contain high-fructose corn syrup, a sweetener that is widely used because governmental agricultural subsidies make it the cheapest alternative for food and beverage companies to put into the products they produce and market (Maclean, 2002). Changing the ways in which governmental subsidies affect marketers' bottom lines is a much more straightforward way to get marketers to market different foods – and products of all sorts – to children.

In short, the best way to do the right thing by children is to work with marketers, not to do battle with them. More regulation guarantees a fight without guaranteeing anything for children. It's not clear that children need a lot more protection, but the best way to ensure that children get what they need is to make it profitable for marketers to provide it. If there is demand for it, marketers will do so willingly and enthusiastically. Marketers aren't so ambitious that they will try to lead demand, but if the demand is there, they will definitely go after it.

Let's stop trying to put marketers off the scent of the consumer demand coming from children. Let's be smarter and put marketers on to the new scent of a different demand coming from children so that marketers will gladly give children what they ought to have.

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Chapter 5

The Emergence of the Tween Market and the Expansion of Children's Consumer Culture

Natalie Coulter

When I grew up in the 1970s, there was no such thing as a tween. I remember being 11 or 12 years old and feeling like I was on the cusp of being something else. I knew I was becoming a teenager. One of the major moments that signalled this shift to me was the Christmas that I realized my wish list did not contain the usual items; instead of toys, the list only contained clothes, make-up, and the latest album from my favourite singer, Rick Springfield. I knew I was leaving my childhood behind, but I also knew I was not quite a teenager yet. At that moment I never thought about myself as a "tween." I had never heard of this term, nor had any of my friends or my parents. In fact, this term was not really used widely until the mid-1990s with the huge success of the Spice Girls. But that is what I was at that moment: a tween, a young girl in the liminal spaces between being a child and being a teen.

Today there is a verifiable tween universe. There is a whole array of commercial products, media texts, and digital spaces that are constructed for the tween, such as *Space Jop* on YouTube, Disney's array of live-action comedies such as *Liv and Maddie*, *Austin and Ally*, and *Bunk'd*, and Mattel's transmedia franchises (books, toys, TV shows, and movies) *Ever After High* and *Monster High*. Parenting magazines have advice columns on how to parent tweens. Girls even look forward to becoming a tween at the age of seven or eight. To celebrate, they can go to one of "Glam Gal Tween Spa's" nine locations in Ontario. One of the most obvious signs that the tween has "made it" is the creation of the exclusive retail space Justice (with a heart over the "J"), located in many suburban shopping malls in Canada. The store is bright, almost garish. It seems as if every item is covered in sequins, emojis, or pictures of chihuahuas wearing tiaras. T-shirts are emboldened with pictures of mythological creatures such as unicorns or pink tigers licking ice cream cones, and boldly state such things as "Happier than a bird with a french fry," "Everyone loves a happy girl," and "Keep calm and add more sprinkles." I find this store overwhelming, but of course, this store isn't aimed at me—it is aimed directly at the tween girl consumer.

Today, the tween is a well-defined, verifiable segment of the marketplace and a category of subjectivity. In the same way that the 1940s and 1950s brought the world the teenager (Palladino, 1996; Schrum, 2004), the late 1980s and early 1990s brought the world the tween. Today the tween girl is a large and lucrative market segment. It was estimated in

2013 that the tween in the United States was responsible for over US\$200 billion in sales each year: \$43 billion from their own money and \$157 billion spent by parents on behalf of tweens (Popai, 2013). The tween store Justice does particularly well in Canada, for some reason. In 2014, there were 23 stores in Canada; by 2016 there were 42 stores (Ascena Retail Group Inc., 2016). Overall, as of 2017, Justice has over 900 stores in total in the United States, Canada, Russia, and the Middle East.

History of the Tween

One of the first references of the term "tween" was in 1987 in an article written for the *U.S. News and World Report* by journalist Alice Z. Cuneo (1987). Cuneo suggested that in the United States there were 25 million "tweens, from nine to 15-years-old" who were "no longer viewed as the \$2 allowance crowd" (p. 51). Instead, they bought or influenced over \$45 billion worth of merchandise a year (p. 51). It was this buying power that advertisers and marketers started to notice.

There were some precursors to the tween prior to the 1980s. In the 1950s and 1960s teen girls were sometimes called "teenyboppers." Teenyboppers, however, were largely positioned as fans—literally, small fans of pop music. They were the screaming girls that rushed the stages of Elvis Presley concerts or who plastered their bedrooms with pictures of their favourite Beatle. The teenybopper was not a market segment the way that the tween became in the 1980s. During the same era, retail stores and clothing manufacturers categorized girls as subteens or preteens, but this distinction never really took hold as a site of subjectivity beyond such spaces. Furthermore, boys were not categorized as preteens, subteens, or teenyboppers; these terms were very gendered. There were other references to tweens prior to 1987; for example, a department store in Michigan had a junior girl's department called "twixt and tween" (Cook, 2004a). But these references came and went, and didn't really stick as a defining part of childhood. The 1987 reference was the beginning of a dramatic swing toward tweens as a legitimate market segment and category of subjectivity. If I had been a child of the late 1990s I would have known that my Christmas wish list was the wish list of a tween girl. But in the 1970s there was no sense of myself being a tween.

Once advertisers and marketers began to notice the buying power of the tween in 1987, it did not take long for the tween to crystallize as a legitimate market segment. By the early 1990s advertisers began to talk to tweens as a market, manufacturers and retailers began to see them as customers, and the media began to gather them as audiences. While the history of this is too big to go into detail here in this chapter, there is room to highlight a few key conditions that occurred to form the tween as a segment. First, for the first time in history, people were living longer and having fewer children. This shift in demographics meant that young people were outnumbered by their baby boomer elders (this partly explains the vast attention paid to the "yuppie" in the 1980s). The implications of this meant smaller families and grandparents living longer. This dynamic resulted in more resources funnelled to young people. This is the allowance effect: Fewer children in a family increases the chances that the allowances will be bigger, and because a child might have four living grandparents instead of one, there will be more monetary gifts from more grandparents. Young people had access to more disposable income than ever before. Smaller families also meant that children had more opportunities to influence the

purchasing decisions of the family; fewer brothers and sisters meant that one child could easily influence the choices the family made in the marketplace. Ultimately due to demographic shifts, young people were gaining more economic power to either buy or influence purchases (Coulter, 2014; Sutherland & Thompson, 2003).

A second shift was that in the 1980s there was major interest from governments on the health effects of such activities as smoking, alcohol, and drugs on the population's health (this is the decade that began the war on drugs). Since the habits of smoking, drinking, or doing drugs often start during adolescence, governments invested huge amounts of money studying how to get teenagers to not engage in these activities. They began to realize that talking to teenagers was too late. In order to get a teenager not to smoke, they had to get the message to them that smoking was bad for their health before they became teens. But they couldn't just talk to them as children, or the messages wouldn't carry any weight when the teen was faced with the decision to smoke or not—they had to be talked to as teens before they became teens for the messaging to take hold. Health and Welfare Canada, for example, designed the Break Free advertising campaign, featuring Canadian superstar Luba, to dissuade the "pre-smoking demographic." Not surprisingly, marketers and advertisers were listening, and they applied the same logic: If a company wanted teenagers as customers, they had to talk to them as potential teen customers before they became teens (Coulter, 2014).

A third, and perhaps most important, shift was that commercial media began to open up spaces for girls and made girls a lucrative audience. Prior to the 1980s girls were largely ignored as an audience. The assumed audience of most children's television was boys. The reason for this was that before the age of cable, when most homes had only a few television stations, the way television shows made money was to gather a big audience; the larger the audience, the more money a station could sell the advertising time for. This concept is often referred to as the "audience as commodity," where the audience's attention is the commodity that is sold to advertisers (Smythe, 1981). It was thought that boys would not watch shows for girls, whereas girls would watch shows geared for boys (Kenway & Bullen, 2001, p. 49; Seiter, 1993, p. 47). Many shows had a token girl, just to placate the girl audience. Examples include Minnie Mouse and Daisy Duck from the Disney cartoons, Wonder Woman from *Super Friends*, or Daphne and Velma from *Scooby-Doo*. Media producers designed these female characters to maintain the interest of a girl audience without being central enough to alienate the boy audience (Coulter 2014).

But in the 1980s there were changes in the regulation of children's television that made the girl a viable market and a lucrative audience. Prior to the 1980s, regulations in Canada and the United States positioned the child consumer/audience member as vulnerable to explicit commercialization. There were regulations in place by both the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) in the United States and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) in Canada to protect children from advertising as it was seen as "inherently unfair and deceptive." Policy-makers thought that children were "too young to understand the selling and purpose of, or otherwise comprehend or evaluate, the advertising" (FTC Staff Report from 1978, as cited in Kline, 1993, p. 213). These arguments started to erode as governments under the 1980s Reagan and Mulroney administrations began to offload governmental powers onto corporations and the marketplace.

One of the regulations that was repealed in the United States during this time was the rule that there must be a separation between programs and commercials. Prior to this shows had tight bumpers that would indicate to audiences that the show was over and the commercials had started by stating "Stay tuned, we will right back after these commercial messages." This statement helped the child audience differentiate between the show and the commercials. The other side of this regulation repeal was that television shows could now have characters that were also on products. Previously, products and TV characters had to be distinct. This is why most of the breakfast cereal characters were unique to the advertisements and did not appear elsewhere in the media, such as Tony the Tiger from Frosted Flakes, Toucan Sam of Fruit Loops, and Snap, Crackle, and Pop of Rice Krispies fame.

With the deregulation, the promotion of products could now take place within a television show. The outcome was that children's television shows became vehicles for selling toys. Shows such as *Strawberry Shortcake* and *The Smurfs* became 22-minute advertisements for a whole range of licensed merchandise. Through the magic of character licensing, a child could buy a whole range of consumer products adorned with their favourite characters, from birthday party favours to toys, school supplies, clothes, and even bedding. The value of a show for its producers was no longer about the size of the audience it could attract but the amount of licensed items that could be sold to its audience members. And thus, the girl audience became worth it. For example, it was worth it for the company Those Characters From Cleveland, the producers of *Strawberry Shortcake*, to have a smaller audience if they could encourage the girls watching to go out and buy the figures of Strawberry and all her "berry nice friends," along with the models of Strawberryland and the Strawberry Shortcake bathing suits, towels, and sheets. By 1986 Strawberry Shortcake was America's top-selling toy doll and had appeared on hundreds of products selling more than US\$1 billion worth of merchandise (Englehardt, 1986, p. 73).

While the regulation was repealed in the United States, its impact spilled over into Canada. Most of the provinces, with the exception of Quebec, which still has tight laws on advertising to children under the age of 12, followed suit and loosened their laws to keep up with the American children's entertainment industry.

The outcome of deregulation was twofold. First, it legitimized children as competent, market-savvy consumers who no longer needed the protection of governments. Second, it opened up spaces for commercial media to produce content targeted solely at girls. Media companies such as Those Characters From Cleveland conducted extensive focus groups and interviews with girls to produce a show and characters that appealed to girls. In television, perhaps for the first time, the girl audience was an audience worth pursuing. The impact of deregulation should not be understated—it caused a radical shift in how both children and girls were understood as a market by corporations. Both children and girls became seen as competent consumers who deserved to have the media and the marketplace produce content specifically for their own desires and needs. It was not a natural progression for children and girls to be considered lucrative audiences and market segments; it was changes in policy that created the conditions for this radical shift.

"Knowing" the Tween

The tween is usually defined as being between ages 8–12, or sometimes 7–14, or even up to the age of 15, as Cuneo suggested in 1987. It is a category that has slippery edges that shift depending on which company or organization is referring to them. But the idea is

the same: The tween is in between being a child and being a teenager. She is an age-based market segment who is chronologically, biologically, and sociologically on the cusp of being something else (Cook & Kaiser, 2004), but she is not there yet. Thus the tween is perched in the liminal spaces between childhood and teenagehood (the use of the term "teenagehood" as opposed to adolescence specifically highlights how the teen is a market construct whereas adolescence is understood as a stage of physiological and psychosocial development defined by developmental psychology). The tween is the identity of a consuming youth slowly distancing herself from childhood to gain the freedoms that come with being a teenager. The tween belongs to neither category completely but is embedded in both simultaneously (Cody, 2012).

What it means to be a tween in this state of liminality is defined differently by different companies, in different industries, and in different cultural contexts. For example, in a North American context, Justice describes the tween in its 2013 annual report:

Ever wonder what Being Tween is all about? Justice stores and Brothers online are at the forefront of tween fashion across the country and around the globe. It's about celebrating the fun and adventures of life during the ages of 7 to 12—the tween years. It's hot fashions. Cool prices. And extraordinary customer experiences. (Tween Brands, 2013)

Compare this with 612 League, an Indian clothing company that defines itself as the first Indian tween clothing company. The company explicitly states that it

celebrates a child's inner star—the internal strength that encourages them to stand tall, reach high and dream big. It takes pride in being part of the transformation from kids to teenagers who will grow up to be the people who make a difference tomorrow. The brand epitomizes today's children—smart, savvy, fashionable and active—the Global Indians of tomorrow. (612 League, n.d., para. 6)

Here the tween is positioned as a "smart" and "savvy" consumer who is preparing to become part of India's global workforce, a radical difference from Justice's definition of the tween as celebrating the "fun and adventures of life."

The tween girl that is described by companies like Justice or 612 League is not a real girl. She did not exist in the wilderness of Canadian suburbs waiting to be "discovered" in the way a marine biologist might discover a previously unknown species of fish in the depths of the ocean. Even though this is how market research companies describe it, they often state that they have "discovered" or "found" a new market segment in the trade publications. While this reveals a little bit about the arrogance of the advertising industry, it also provides insight into the ways that the dynamic forces of consumer capitalism work to segment young people into narrower, tighter marketing niches that offer more intense marketing opportunities.

Instead of being "discovered," tweens are an image or construction of an ideal girl imagined by a range of outlets. Including the popular press, retail outlets, marketing research, advertising, and the media. The tween girl is used by advertisers, marketers, and the media to illustrate the idealized market segment of tween. The tween girl that is discovered is not a "sentient being with a biography;" she is not a "living, breathing person but rather a social construction—an assemblage of qualities, beliefs, and conjectures

concerning the "nature" and motivation" of girls (Cook, 2007, p. 38). She is a rhetorical and figurative construct of an age-based consumer. She is what Cook (2004a) calls "a figment of the commercial imagination" (p. 7) that is produced according to the needs and logics of the cultural industries of young people.

It is helpful to think of the tween as a commercial persona. The word "persona" is etymologically derived from the Latin word for mask or character, often used in literature to refer to a social role in a script played by an actor. A commercial persona builds out of these etymological roots. Instead of being an actual live person, the tween is a portrait of selected attributes of an ideal consumer; she is a symbolic representation of demographic and psychographic data of a market segment in the marketplace. Commercial personae operate as a quick way to articulate a market segment. A persona is not to be confused with a character in advertising, such as the Hathaway Man, the Jolly Green Giant, or even the Marlboro Man. The persona functions as a means of symbolically representing a market segment.

Understanding the tween as a social construction fits within the theoretical framings of critical childhood studies that suggest that the categories of young people are socially, culturally, politically, and economically constituted within particular moments and spaces (see James, Jenks, & Prout, 2004; Zelizer, 1994). These constitutions serve the needs of adult-centred social, cultural, political, and economic systems. In this case, the framing of the tween fits the needs of the market in the context of neoliberal capitalism.

Discursively constructing tweens as a persona is a "commercial epistemology" (Cook, 2011) in which the industries of the marketplace, such as marketers, advertisers, market researchers, the media, retailers, and so on, identify and articulate a market segment according to its own needs and logics. An epistemology is a process of "knowing," where knowledge is understood not to be the discovery of a verifiable truth but instead is a deeply ideological process that both describes and constructs an object at the same time. Cook defines the commercial epistemologies of children's consumption

as ways of "knowing" about children and childhood that arise from the interested positions of those whose livelihoods revolve around ascertaining the marketability of goods and ideas. One might think of commercial epistemologies as lenses through which market actors see and apprehend children and childhood for specific purposes and toward particular ends. (Cook, 2011, p. 258)

Cook is not the only author to state this. Frank Cochoy (1998) argues that marketing itself is deeply ideological because it is essentially a "body of expertise that simultaneously describes and constructs its subject matter" (as cited in Marion, 2005, p. 3). Ien Ang has made similar arguments about the construction of the television audience. Ang (1991) argues that the audience "only exists as an imaginary entity, an abstraction constructed from the vantage point of the institution in the interest of the institutions" (p. 2). Ang states that an audience is not "an ontological given by a socially constituted and institutionally produced category" (p. 3). All of these authors highlight how companies and industries organize and define segments of the population in ways that contribute to the financial growth of the companies and industries.

Justice, for example, spends a great deal of time and energy trying to "know" or imagine who the tween girl is and articulating this notion of tweenness to its partners (such as its advertisers or manufacturers), employees, and girl consumers. It frames the

tween girl as focused on fun, adventure (although it is not clear what this adventure is), and fashion. In 2016, Justice hired the company Piper Jaffray, an asset management firm, for their expertise with retail analysis¹ to help the company compete with such retailers as Old Navy and Walmart, where the clothes are cheaper. Interestingly, this is not the case in Canada. The stores here consistently outperform their American counterparts. Since competing on price point with these huge retailers is too difficult—Justice, in other words, cannot "out-value" them—Justice's solution is to "out-tween" them (Lynch, 2016). To "out-tween" its competitors, Justice and Piper Jaffray got to "know" its customers. The company's president and CEO, Brian Lynch, boldly stated

everything we did at Justice—everything—strategy, change, adjustments that we made was because, frankly, our customers told us. When I said piles of research, literally piles of focus groups, research, surveys, videotapes, on what our customers said they like and didn't like" (p. 5). Based on this research, Justice deems that the girl is in the "inventive stage," everything is different, "today she wants to be an athlete, tomorrow she wants to be a fashion model, next week she wants to be an astronaut, it changes every day." (Lynch, 2016)

This is an example of commercial epistemology: Justice and Piper Jaffray have done "piles of research" to "know" that the tween girl is in an "inventive" stage. They conducted research with a particular objective, in this case the objective of understanding middle-class girls as consumers. The research design, including the focus of the questions asked, the participants included, and the types of information gathered is all geared to "knowing" girls as consumers. Other forms of knowledge, such as understanding girls as political actors, or finding ways to help girls build confidence, or how girls navigate the misogynist structures of school, are not relevant. While commercial media and market research all claim to "know" segments, they only know them as consumers, not as deep, complicated, nuanced human beings. Such information is not relevant. What is relevant is the type of information that can be used to "out-tween" other retailers and sell more goods (at higher margins) to tween girls. The tweens that Justice then presents in its catalogues, or describes in its corporate literature as being "in the inventive stage" or being full of "fun and adventure," are personifications of their research findings. They are not live, sentient beings, but are instead personified representations of the discursive constructions of girlhood (Coulter, 2014).

Boys are rarely defined as tweens, and when they are they are framed in very different terms due mostly to the fact that consumption is gendered as a feminized space, so the tween as a consumer category is most often feminized (Lury, 1995; Nava, 1992). In fact, Tween Brands, the corporate owner of Justice, had to close its boy's store, Brothers, in 2015 because it was underperforming. Apparently, boys do not like to be defined as tweens in retail spaces, nor do they care much about buying clothes at a higher price point from a store that has "out-tweened" its competitors.

Tween Girl as the Fun Girl

The tween girl that Justice articulates is a girl in a state of fun. The aesthetic of fun runs through Justice's entire corporate catalogue, which is not surprising, given that it is clearly stated in the company's annual report in 2013. There is fun everywhere. The corporate

reward points are called "Fun Bucks," and every image in the online catalogue shows girls in states of extreme fun. The models pose together, with their mouths wide open in a full state of laughter. There are rarely any poses of girls in states of concentration or reflection—no other emotions are presented. It is always fun. The graphic T-shirts boldly state "Frappes, friends and fun," "Every Cool Girl Needs a Fun BFF," "Happy girls are the prettiest," "When in doubt . . . Laugh," and perhaps most disturbingly, "Hey you, Smile" (the demand yelled out by cat callers everywhere).

This positioning of the tween girl as being in a constant state of fun reveals much about the cultural expectations of girls and girlhood. Fun is a gendered activity. While the boy models from the now defunct Brothers line are positioned in states of pleasure, they are not solely shown in a state of "ecstasy of fun." Rather, they are often engaged in activity or concentrating on what they are doing (while dressed in Brothers clothes, of course). The "graphic Ts" for boys read "Crushing it," "Faster than fast," "Just win," "Can't stop winning," and "#2 Fast 4U."

This is reminiscent of a long visual history in which females are shown in passive positions while males are presented in states of activity (see Goffman, 1979), but there is more to it than this. Justice's emphasis on fun reveals the social pressures on girls to be only in a state of fun. This singularity of emotion functions as a way to keep girls, and by extension women, from being political. The girl that asks political questions, fights systemic sexism in her school, challenges rape culture, pushes back and demands why boys get to worry about winning (like the T-shirt states) while girls should drink frappes, or even just says "no" is no longer fun. She has disturbed the happiness, she is no longer one of the happy girls that "are the prettiest," as described by the Justice T-shirt.

Such a girl would be what Sara Ahmed calls a "feminist killjoy." Ahmed (2010) argues that to be political is to disturb the fantasy of happiness, and thus threaten the status quo (p. 66). She states that figures of happiness are used as political tropes to justify social oppression and hide systemic inequalities. Thus, the pressures on girls to be in a constant state of fun functions as a means to depoliticize girlhood. It is possible to read the T-shirt that states "Happy girls are the prettiest" as a threat. The girl that finds moments of unhappiness, the girl that does not participate in the fun, is no longer "the prettiest," which according to contemporary beauty culture equates to not having value. Being a "feminist killjoy," even a tween feminist killjoy, comes at a social cost.

The argument here is not that Justice is conducting research on how to find ways to keep girls from being political, or that depoliticizing girlhood is part of Justice's corporate strategy. Although, interestingly, there is no reference within the company's promotional materials or within the company's corporate literature of why it is called Justice—the term Justice is an empty signifier. Instead, commercial epistemologies take place within a social and political context in which fun is gendered and women are expected to maintain the status quo of happiness.

Recently, in February 2017, Justice updated its Facebook page and website to include a model in a hijab announcing, "SEE YOURSELF IN JUSTICE! Come be a part of something fun, something you. We believe fashion is for every girl and even more of our styles are available in extended sizes than ever before. Check out what's new: www.shopjustice.com." The change is part of the company's new marketing campaign, "See Yourself in Justice." According to Keriakke Lucas, vice-president of corporate communications at Justice, the campaign is part of the brand's "message around inclusivity"

(Kuruvilla, 2017). The company has expanded to include plus-size clothes for tweens and has committed more overtly to a diverse range of representations in their models. In fact, Justice included a model in a hijab in February 2017, when US president Donald Trump mandated travel bans from Muslim countries and when Islamophobia was rising. This can only be seen as a political message.

This change may be part of a broader shift in the cultural expectations of girlhood. At the moment, *Teen Vogue* is one of the few media outlets to politically challenge Donald Trump. In December 2016, *Teen Vogue* ran an op-ed piece entitled "Donald Trump Is Gaslighting America,"² in which the author, Lauren Duca (2016), presented a clear argument on how Trump used the tactics of gaslighting to garner votes and how he continues to use it to undermine democracy. This op-ed piece received a lot of positive press from mainstream media outlets such as the *Toronto Star*, *NPR*, *The Atlantic*, and the *New York Times*. While these outlets all stated surprise that the teen magazine is "killing it," feminist media outlets such as *Jezebel*, *Bitch*, *Shameless*, *Powered by a Girl*, and *Rookie* have addressed girls as political actors for years—many of these have girls themselves produce political content. Beyond *Teen Vogue*, there are many other examples of girls being political actors, including Malala Yousafzai, Emma González a vocal advocate for gun control, the #NotMyPresident protests that occurred on the online game site Club Penguin, the Radical Brownies of Oakland (now called Radical Monarchs), the many public fights that girls have had over school dress codes that shame girls, and countless other examples. While girls' activism is not new, what may be new is mainstream media outlets beginning to recognize girls' political awareness and their desire for content that is politically engaged. Who knows, maybe Justice's T-shirts in 2018 will state "Activism is the new awesomeness." I hope so, but I doubt it; while there may be more inclusive representations, the narratives of beauty culture and the silenced female body might just be too strong.

Tween as a Transnational Category

Justice is growing globally. It has stores in 14 countries, and according to the CEO there is a "ton of demand for Justice internationally" (Lynch, 2016). This expansion is part of a broader trend because many transnational corporations see the tween consumer as a lucrative market. There is a rise of a global girl culture as older companies, such as Disney, Nickelodeon, and Mattel, alongside new companies such as DHX Media, Amazon Prime, and Netflix, vie to dominate the global marketplace by reaching out to tween girls in countries such as China, Russia, and Brazil. In attempting to cater to a global tween girl consumer, these companies privilege age and gender as the core features of tweenhood—to the exclusion of other ethnic, social, and cultural subjectivities. Privileging the universalizing aspects of girlhood—age and gender—erases the racial, ethnic, sexual, bodily, and cultural diversities of girls across and between transnational spaces.

The construction of the tween girl is part of the emergence of a globalized youth culture in which global capitalism homogenizes young people as gendered and aged consuming subjects to the exclusion of collective, regional subjective experiences (Buckingham, 2011; Wise, 2008). The imagined tween girl market is produced as singular, without diversity; the tween is assumed to be a predominantly white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual consumer (Cook & Kaiser, 2004; Sweeney, 2008). Dafna Lemish has argued that in the production of content for the international marketplace there is a tendency to erase the

cultural symbols and signs that mark a children's text as foreign or national to produce the "neutral grounds of global culture" (in Chan, Lemish, McMillin, & Parameswaran, 2013, p. 213). This meets the needs of global capitalism since companies can efficiently access global youth markets without having to produce content tailored to specific, individual regions (Wise, 2008). My concern here is that tween girl culture is too narrow, and in an attempt to be global it articulates girlhood as a homogeneous subjectivity to the loss of an understanding of girlhood as an aged moment that is intersectional with other categories of subjectivity such as race, class, sexuality, and, of course, a presumption of gender as a clear subjective category.

Conclusion

The story of the development of the tween girl market is part of a larger history of children's consumer culture in which children have increasingly become "known" as consumers. Throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, children have been central to the development of consumer capitalism. At the same time, consumer capitalism has increasing targeted, framed, and defined young people as consumer markets, and the physiological and psychological stages of youth have been understood according to the logics of the political and economic structures of consumer capitalism. In the 1930s, for example, the children's clothing industry began to define the toddler as a specific stage of childhood (separate from the infant or the child) that warranted a unique style of clothes that could accommodate diapers and the sway back of a child learning to walk. Soon after, various cultural forces worked together to legitimize the toddler as stage of subjectivity (Cook 2004a). In the late 1940s and earlier, the teenager began to appear as a distinct market segment and a new site of subjectivity when an emerging middle class was able to have their adolescent children attend high school and live at home. Young people were looking for ways to differentiate themselves from adult culture, and the marketplace responded by calling them "teenagers" and developing media and goods to cater specifically to their tastes (Palladino 1996; Schrum 2004). The toddler in the 1930s, the teenager in the 1940s and 1950s, and the tween in the 1980s are all examples of segmented categories of young people with origins in consumer culture, as media, manufacturers, retailers, and advertisers segment and bring into being different ages of youth.

Since the 1980s there has been a radical expansion of young people's consumer culture, and not just the tween. The baby, for example, has become a lucrative market segment: Disney has a Disney Baby product line, Baby Einstein (now owned by Disney) provides content for babies, and Toys "R" Us has a whole section of the store appropriately named Babies "R" Us. And, in case one missed that babies are positioned as consumers, the store even carries baby girl onesies that state "Born to Shop." Long gone are the days in the 1970s and 1980s, mentioned earlier, when there was a sentiment to protect young children from advertising because it was seen as deceptive and manipulative. But this issue is bigger than simply a critique of babies being targeted as consumers. Positioning babies as consumers reifies consumption as a natural component of being human. If the baby is "born to shop," then the story told of consumption by these companies and industries is that consumption is part of our DNA; babies as consumers produce the ideology that consumption is innately woven into our humanity.

Yet many scholars in the fields of children's studies and consumer culture studies are pushing back and critiquing this trend by exposing the centrality of the development of young people as consumers to consumer capitalism. Juliet Schor (2004) has stated that children are the "epicenter" of consumer capitalism (p. 9), while Daniel Cook (2004b) has argued that "childhood makes capitalism hum over the long haul" (n.p.). Both of these authors highlight the intense growth of children's media and consumer culture in the past 100 years as marketers have shifted from grouping young people together in large, unwieldy categories to dividing them into smaller, tighter, and more narrowly niched market segments. Instead of simply targeting young people as one homogeneous market, marketers target babies, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age girls and boys, tweens, teens, and college-aged youth. Each of these categories offers new opportunities to gather young people as audiences and consumers. It also provides more opportunities for obsolescence. The 8-year-old girl, for example, does not outgrow her Peppa Pig backpack, but she gets rid of it because it is too "babyish" and replaces it with a new Monster High backpack.

Market segments such as the toddler, the teen, the tween, and even the baby are not natural or inevitable categories of being and did not exist prior to the twentieth century. Instead, they are historical social constructions that have developed within the commercial epistemologies of the media marketplace. Being aware of this means that we can challenge, resist, and possibly even reframe these categories and push back on the commercial logics that are only interested in knowing people as market segments, enticing them to consume more. There are various organizations doing just this. For example, the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC), founded in 2000, has a number of objectives, including raising public awareness of the harms of the commercialization of childhood, advocating for policy changes, and campaigning for commercial-free spaces. They also provide support resources for schools and parents to do the latter. The organization has had many successful campaigns, including persuading Disney to stop promoting the Baby Einstein videos as educational, preventing Hasbro from producing a line of dolls for 6 year olds based on the burlesque troupe Pussy Cat Dolls, and more recently, in 2017 CCFC pushed Niantic Inc., the producers of Pokémon Go, to not send children under the age of 13 to sponsored locations such as Starbucks or McDonald's as part of the game.

The other organizations that take on this fight as part of their mandate are wide and diverse. These include Common Sense Media, a site that helps families make smart media choices by rating and reviewing media content and providing resources for digital literacy; New Dream, Juliet Schor's site, which, while not specifically geared to children, attempts to empower change in people's consumption habits; and Amy Poehler's Smart Girls, an online space dedicated to supporting young girls who are "changing the world by being themselves" (2017).

In Canada, for the past 15 years, MediaSmarts has provided programs and resources to help children and teens develop their critical-thinking skills and "to engage with the media as active, informed digital citizens" (MediaSmarts, 2017). The site has blogs, lesson plans, tutorials, and workshops. In producing this content, MediaSmarts has partnered with many Canadian organizations, such as the Canadian government, the Entertainment Software Association of Canada, the Girl Guides of Canada, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and the Canadian Library Association. A recent campaign (2017) is "Project Shift: Creating a Safer Digital World for Young Women," a national multiyear project led by YWCA Canada and funded by the Status of Women Canada. It is critical to

the survival of humanity that such organizations are successful. Positioning children as consumers has implications that go beyond the encroachment of commercial culture into children's culture. The persistent positioning and "knowing" of young people as consumers only, and not addressing them as citizens, has serious consequences for the health of democracy and for the environmental sustainability of the planet.

Review Questions

1. What is a commercial epistemology? How do advertisers, marketers, retailers, and the media participate in "knowing" a market segment? Why is the word "knowing" in quotes?
2. What changes occurred in the 1980s that provided the conditions for the development of the tween market segment?
3. Why are girls positioned as tweens much more than boys?
4. Why is the development of the children's market central to the rise of consumer capitalism?
5. How is the positioning of the tween girl as being in a state of fun an example of a commercial epistemology? How is this a political process?

Activities

Look up the websites for a major retailer such as Toys "R" Us, Walmart, the Gap, or Joe Fresh, or else look up a major media company such as Disney, Nickelodeon, DHX Media, or Corus. Explore how the company discursively constructs what it means to be a child. Also look for how it frames different types of children (boys, girls, age-based categories, etc.). Things to look for include how does the company segment childhood based on age or gender? Who is represented and who is not? What kinds of activities are the children doing or not doing? What is the company's mission statement? Does it frame its consumers in a particular way? What assumptions are made of the company's child consumers?

Another activity is to conduct a similar type of analysis of a nongovernmental entity, such as Girl Guides, UNICEF, MediaSmarts, the Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood, Girls Inc., or EU Kids Online. Assess how this organization discursively constructs what it means to be a child. You can ask similar questions as above, but you can also ask what issues is the organization addressing? What solutions does the organization offer? What assumptions are made about children by the organization?

As a third step, it could be helpful to compare the findings from the first activity to the second.

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Notes

1. While I am unable to access the research that Piper Jaffray completed, since it is proprietary, there was a transcript of a presentation that Piper Jaffray made to the company's shareholders. It is no longer available online.
2. "Gaslighting" comes from the 1938 stage play *Gas Light*, in which the lead character is manipulated by her husband into thinking she is delusional by changing small things in her environment, then denying that these things have changed.

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SOCIAL ADVERTISING & SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ADVERTISING

USING YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

The thing I hate the most about advertising is that it attracts all the bright, creative and ambitious young people, leaving us mainly with the slow and self-obsessed to become our artists.

Banksy, British street artist

The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat.

Lily Tomlin, US actress and writer

ALL I WANT IS A LITTLE RESPECT

The advertising profession doesn't enjoy the greatest reputation. In fact, of the 30 professions rated on their ethics and honesty by research powerhouse, Roy Morgan (2013), advertisers came 29th. Only nine per cent of respondents rated the ethics and honesty of advertisers as 'high' or 'very high'. This put us just above used car sellers (who've held the bottom spot for 30 years), and just below real estate agents and state politicians.

So that's the bad news. The good news is for the last three years the figure has improved. In 2011, only five per cent of respondents believed we performed our jobs with ethics and honesty. In 2012, it rose to eight per cent, and currently we are enjoying the heady heights of nearly one in 10 people claiming to respect advertisers. Now, despite the pretty low base, I believe the image of advertisers is improving. Over the last few years, we've seen globally successful TV shows about advertising such as *Mad Men* and *The Crazy Ones* (apparently inspired by Leo Burnett Chicago). In Australia, there's been the extremely successful *Gruen* series (*Transfer, Nation, Sweat and Flame*) that has turned several advertisers into household names. However, I don't think these shows are the reason advertising has become more respectable. I think it signifies that people are more interested in what advertisers have to say. And the single reason for this newfound respect is, I believe, that we are becoming more useful to the world.

We've just lived through the beautifully coined 'information age'. We have loads and loads of information, we are interconnected and sharing this wonderful information. Google and other companies have helped us 'organize all of the world's information' (Google's mission statement), and it's now at our fingertips. Yes, all of the world's information is available to everyone—including people much smarter than you and me. Yet even with these conditions, in which the smartest people

have access to all of the world's information, we still struggle to make the world a better place. What significant problems have we solved through 'information'? Wars? They still happen. Crime? Getting worse. Poverty? Still happening and could be getting worse—hard to tell. Equality for humanity? Absolutely not. Global warming? Seems to be getting worse. Mental health? Seems to be getting worse. Did all this access to information help us predict the Global Financial Crisis? No. Does information encourage more people to ride a bike to work than drive a car? Can we convince a rich nation to give 10 per cent of its wealth to a poor nation? Can we stop men from sexually abusing women? No, no and no. Information, and its close cousin, rational debate, hasn't solved any of these issues. Without being a 'glass half empty' kind of guy, I wonder if information is useful in solving any of the world's big issues.

So where does one turn? One possibility is to an industry that knows how to influence and change behaviour. Why not turn to an industry that has convinced people to pay \$10 for a beer, \$1000 for a new barbecue and \$100,000 for a new car? Why not seek insights from an industry that's made it normal to update your car every few years, your wardrobe every few months, and your toothbrush every few weeks?

Advertisers are the masters of manipulation and influence, and even though we may not understand fully how our craft works, we know it gets results. Other industries are curious and want advertisers to unbottle their tricks to help solve issues of significance. Do-gooders are getting into bed with the devil, potentially for the greater good. I've witnessed this first-hand. The techniques of advertising are being shared with the world—for good, not evil.

The aim of this book is to put advertising on the trajectory of helping rather than hindering. I've tried to distil what I've learned as a psychologist in advertising and trust you've found it useful. This final chapter adds some topspin to that information in the hope you'll use these behavioural change techniques for good.

THE DEBATE

Rory Sutherland is a charismatic and ebullient chap. He insists he's 'just an ad man', though he is head of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertisers (IPA), the UK's umbrella body for advertising. I caught up with Rory in early 2013 at a London pub, where we had a good chat about where advertising has been, where it's going, and how it will benefit by embracing an understanding of behavioural sciences.

Rory is a spokesperson for advertising and doesn't shy away from controversial topics. On the subject of advertising and ethics, Rory (Sutherland 2010, emphasis added) has said:

The truth is that marketing raises enormous ethical questions every day—at least it does if you're doing it right. If this were not the case, the only possible explanations are either that you believe marketers are too ineffectual to make any difference, or you believe that marketing activities only affect people at the level of conscious argument. Neither of these possibilities appeals to me. I would rather be thought of as evil than useless.

There it is in plain black and white. Marketing is effective. It can, and does, make people do things. Advertisers can make people take up smoking. We can make them eat too much. We can make them laze around and not move. Marketing and advertising has the potential to do all of these things.

Interestingly, Rory could have been channelling Perry London (1964), who 50 years earlier said,

We cannot, on the one hand, argue that our availability as professionals is worthwhile and justified, and on the other hand maintain that we are not in the business of changing people's behaviour.

However, London wasn't talking about the advertising profession—he was talking about psychologists and clinical psychology.

Those practising the arts of influence or behaviour change need to decide if they want to do evil or do good. We need to be transparent about the power and influence that those in the behaviour change game can have over others. Further, we need to be honest about the fact that sometimes humans deceive themselves because of an inbuilt need to justify and make sense of our own behaviour. People can be very susceptible to behaviour change experts. I'm not sure what the answer is, but the quote, 'With great power comes great responsibility' (equally attributable to Voltaire and SpiderMan) comes to mind.

An encouraging sign that marketers and advertisers acknowledge that they're in the business of trying to change other people's behaviour—and therefore should be doing it ethically—is Unilever's 'Five Levers of Change' (Unilever 2011). Unilever is sharing the model in the hope that others will find it helpful and use it to inspire people to turn their concerns about sustainability into positive actions. The 'Five Levers for Change' are:

1. *Make it understood*—Sometimes people don't know about a behaviour and why they should do it. This lever raises awareness and encourages acceptance.
2. *Make it easy*—People are likely to take action if it's easy, but not if it requires extra effort. This lever establishes convenience and confidence.
3. *Make it desirable*—The new behaviour needs to fit with how people like to think of themselves, and how they like others to think of them. This lever is about self and society.

4. *Make it rewarding*—New behaviours need to articulate the tangible benefits that people care about. This lever demonstrates the proof and payoff.
5. *Make it a habit*—Once consumers have changed, it is important to create a strategy to help hold the behaviour in place over time. This lever is about reinforcing and reminding.

We now have a lot of information on how to change behaviour, and the Unilever principles are as useful a starting point for behaviour change as any I have seen. However, there's much more out there, and it's worth investigating which principles would best apply to your particular cause. For example, if you are a charity trying to raise money I suggest you read the excellent report by Sanders, Halpern and Service (2013). *Applying Behavioural Insights to Charitable Giving*.

If you don't get a chance to read this, then consider the following wonderful insight from psychologists De Bruyn and Prokopec (2013). If you are asking people to donate money to your cause, then do the following: have a row of options with donation amounts. Ensure the low option is on the left and the high option is on the right. To maximise the number of people donating and get the highest donations possible, do the following:

1. Ensure the left-hand option is as low as possible (say \$1). The lower the amount that appears here, the more people you will get to donate.
2. Ensure the donation amounts escalate in size very quickly. The larger the increments are, the more money each person will donate.

So to maximise the amount of donations you receive, and to get the highest average donation possible, your options should look like those in Figure 15.1.

Figure 15.1 Maximising donation levels

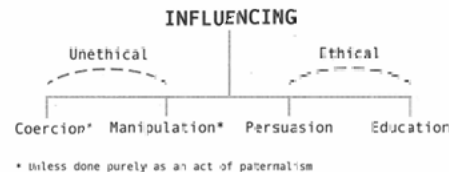
\$1	\$10	\$100	\$1000	\$5000	\$10,000
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IS MARKETING ETHICAL?

Doug Gimesy is the founder and principal of consultancy The Framing Effect, which helps clients frame messages in the most persuasive manner. He also teaches marketing and business ethics at Monash University, Victoria. Doug is a passionate environmentalist, governor of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and a very good nature photographer. He takes the ethical side of persuasion very seriously. I was fortunate to attend one of his day-long seminars at Melbourne University, where he shared his theories on framing and the ways in which 'optimised' messaging gets people's attention.

Gimesy believes there are four levels of influence: coercion and manipulation, which are normally deemed unethical, and persuasion and education, which are deemed ethical (see Figure 15.2).

Figure 15.2 The unethical and ethical levels of influencing



Source: Gimesy (2013).

Let's agree with Gimesy's contention that education is ethical and that advertising is not in the business of coercion. Therefore, the tension point is when persuasion becomes manipulation. The *Oxford Dictionary* (2013) defines 'persuade' and 'manipulate' as:

Persuade: To induce (someone) to do something through reasoning or argument. It wasn't easy, but I persuaded him to do the right thing.

Manipulate: To control or influence (a person or situation) cleverly or unscrupulously: the masses were deceived and manipulated by a tiny group.

Did you spot the dilemma? Persuasion is about convincing someone to take action based on 'reasoning or argument'. I don't think (nor do most others in advertising) that 'reasoning or argument' is an effective way to change behaviour. As discussed throughout this book (and highlighted by Sutherland above), most behaviour isn't processed rationally by the consumer. No matter whether an advertiser appeals to System 1 thinking or 'low-involvement processing', or asks people to play a game, these techniques don't ask a consumer to make a rational decision to purchase or not to purchase.

I have two things to say about this. First, to marketers and advertisers: **be careful when using your powers**. Remember that your ad is but one of thousands that are viewed by consumers. When you add all those views together, there's a cumulative pressure to consume. Be as positive as possible. However, as I write this I can't help thinking of the famous quote from the 'Socrates of San Francisco', Howard Gossage. Howard was an ad man in the *Mad Men* era and one of the first to talk openly about the morals and ethics of advertising. He said: 'To explain

responsibility to advertising men is like trying to convince an eight-year-old that sexual intercourse is more fun than a chocolate ice cream cone' (O'Reilly & Tennant 2011).

If advertisers behave themselves, the next challenge is to the consumer. My advice is to **get educated**. There are very few voices to help the consumer understand the powers of marketing or explain how feeble-minded and vulnerable to persuasion we humans are. Most consumers still believe advertising doesn't work on them. It does—and you don't even need to be aware of the ads for them to have an effect! Hopefully this book is a useful part of that self-education process.

DON'T ADVERTISE THINGS THAT HARM

As an aside, I believe every brand or product has a right to market itself as long as it doesn't harm the self or others. The only legal product to fail this test is, in my opinion, cigarettes. Cigarettes, when used as the manufacturer intended, significantly harm you. Therefore, I don't think they should be marketed. My strong views against cigarettes could be based on personal experience; my father died at the age of 67 from cancer. He loved smoking so much he asked that his coffin be painted like a packet of Marlboro Red cigarettes (see Figure 15.3). He also asked me to deliver his eulogy: 'Adam, say whatever you like, but make sure they cremate me so I can light up one last time.' Yes, he had a good sense of humour.

My father's death was hardly the first that could be (at least partially) attributed to smoking, and it seems clear that ad agencies continued to accept accounts from the tobacco industry long after cigarettes were known to be lethal. As advertisers, we must be vigilant and strive to avoid such self-delusion in the name of making a buck. Are there brands or products available today that, if used exactly as the manufacturer intended, could cause harm? If so, we shouldn't advertise them.

Figure 15.3 My father's coffin



There are two ways advertisers can use their powers for good—and by 'good' I mean in a manner that benefits and does not harm people. They are: a) using the powers of behaviour change to assist a good cause; and b) helping a not-so-good cause become better.

ASSISTING A GOOD CAUSE

This book outlines many good causes, such as Who Gives a Crap sustainable toilet paper, where 50 per cent of profits go to sanitation programs in the developing world. It also looks at ways to increase funding for community radio station, FBI, and how to maximise workplace safety for WorkSafe. Advertisers love doing work for causes with a positive impact both because these organisations are hungry for and open to creative ideas, and (somewhat more cynically) this kind of work is viewed favourably by awards bodies.

If you hope to influence behaviour for a good cause, use this book for inspiration and go forth and do good in the world. I've worked with several charities, including the Cancer Council NSW, Save the Children, the Australian Red Cross and Mind Shift—the National Self-Esteem Initiative, of which I'm patron. I'm often shocked at the amount of money wasted in the communications space through boring, ill-informed or poorly executed campaigns. This contributes to 'donor fatigue' in which people or nations lose interest in a particular cause (or causes) and stop donating. If a cause is for the greater good, you have a licence to grab people's attention by any means possible. Don't be afraid to be 'out there' or to create controversy.

When I worked for the Cancer Council NSW, the brief was to stop teenagers from thinking that tanning was cool. The organisation was enthusiastic about using youth media and messaging to appeal to teens and tweens (10–12-year-olds), as well as traditional media. They said we could be as attention-getting as we wanted to be. With this very clear brief, we decided to co-opt things that were cool to tweens and apply them to the action of resisting a tan. We enlisted the services of a very cool hip-hop artist called Lyrics Born and co-wrote a song, with a three-minute music video to go with it. Then we filled it with shocking content—sexy guys and girls, a hideously ugly animation of a singing melanoma, and a rapper called 'Al Bino' who rapped about how cool it is to stay white. We wrapped it up in a wonderfully dark title, 'It's a Beautiful Day for Cancer'. Although it is difficult to measure the campaign's success, I still enjoy the memory of being at a friend's party and seeing their child in a 'It's a Beautiful Day for Cancer' T-shirt singing the lyrics to himself. You can check out the song on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE8HvGlt2U&oref=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch?v=DE8HvGlt2U&has_verified=1).

I really liked our earworm¹ campaign, but when I saw the campaign called 'Dumb Ways to Die' I instantly knew advertising agency McCann Melbourne had taken the idea to a whole new level. Metro Trains Melbourne wanted McCann to 'engage at-risk young people who were likely to become injured in or near a Metro train station'. It wanted young people to pay attention to, and talk about, a safety message. The campaign was developed after two key insights: deaths and accidents around trains are entirely preventable; and young people are digital natives and want to be part of the communications, not talked down to (Chan & Mills 2013). Using these insights, John Mescall, executive creative director at McCann Australia, developed the 'Dumb Ways to Die' concept—with a catchy song and accompanying digital strategy that became the most awarded piece of advertising work of all time. Some cynics claim this is because there are more award shows now, so it can't be considered the best work of all time. Regardless, it's up there with the best.

The campaign used four key principles:

1. Treat the campaign as entertainment not advertising.
2. Launch the song as you would any other song.
3. Amplify the campaign through social media and PR.
4. Ask people for a commitment.

The song and case study can be seen on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJNR2EpS0Jw and www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxZ_ZznO2ek).

The song is the third most watched viral ad of all time, with more than 67 million views on YouTube. Data suggests train accidents decreased significantly in the year following the campaign, although a causal link between these two factors has yet to be made. Forty-four thousand people committed (via pledge) not to do dumb things around trains. Further, thousands more downloaded the song or played the Dumb Ways to Die game. However, given the amount of awareness it created, this level of interactivity appears small. I would have asked more of the listeners who engaged with this content. Regardless, I love this campaign. Did it change behaviour? Probably. However, human behaviour is complex and measuring behaviour change can be as difficult, or even more difficult, than creating it.

Even when a campaign is for a good cause, the principles don't really change.

1. Select the behaviour to change.
2. Assess it against motivation and ease.
3. Work out the right action spur to use.
4. Apply the spur with creative flair.

¹ An earworm is an advertising expression for a song or jingle that has a tendency to play itself in your head over and over again.

The campaign for 'A Beautiful Day for Cancer' had a very shocking video that made use of the evocation action spur. 'Dumb Ways to Die' was more complex and an excellent demonstration of reframing; that is, suggesting that being killed or injured at a train station because of risky behaviour is just plain dumb. No one wants to be thought of as dumb, especially young kids. It also used ownership (through content sharing) and commitment (through the pledge—which felt slightly peripheral to the campaign but was still there). To have 67 million YouTube views and almost 45,000 pledges is not a great rate of conversion.

It's easy to get it wrong when creating campaigns for good. An example of a campaign with good intentions was Red Cakes Day, which asked people to bake red cupcakes to raise awareness of haemophilia. Like many great ideas in this space, the interactive ad communicated the actual cause, but it's unlikely it had much impact because:

1. Baking cupcakes is not a very visible or frequently occurring behaviour. People like to 'signal' to others when they are participating in a cause (by, for example, growing a moustache or wearing a red nose).
2. It asks too much of people. Baking cupcakes isn't easy. Further, some people don't bake at all.
3. It doesn't link very elegantly to the cause. What's baking got to do with haemophilia?
4. It feels a bit uncomfortable—linking blood with a red cake.

On the ease-motivation scale, the score is low. Contrast this with November, which asks men to grow a moustache during the month of November to raise money for prostate cancer research. It's a brilliant idea because it's easy for men to do (in most cases), highly visible, clearly communicates the cause and makes the cause feel cool or aspirational.

MAKING A NOT-SO-GOOD CAUSE BETTER

In 1997, I left a relationship with a girl called Rosie who was a quintessential intellectual, left-wing hippie type. She had a rather profound impact on my life and for a short time I wore a dress (why should men wear trousers and women wear dresses?) and didn't eat meat. There were other afflictions that went with this new-found liberation, including changing my name from Adam to Max (I've never actually changed it back, so according to the NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages, it still is 'Max Adam Eric Ferrier').

At around this time, I heard a talk by founder of the Body Shop, the late Anita Roddick. She was an amazing speaker. I was moved by what she said and liked her advice for living an aware life of conscious consumption. At the end of her talk, she invited questions. I had a question about a new shoe Nike had just launched—its

first 'green' shoe made from biodegradable materials. This was a time when Nike was synonymous with 'sweatshops'. I asked Anita if she thought Nike's hypocritical shoe should be supported by the general public. Should we buy this organic shoe from a company that uses child labour under horrific employment conditions? I was sure her answer would be, 'Of course not.' In fact, I think I asked the question in order to rant about how bad Nike was.

I was wrong.

Anita vehemently defended Nike and its organic shoe, and berated me for asking such a stupid question. She said of course we should support corporations when they do the right thing, not because they care or don't care. They are businesses that want to make money. They don't have feelings. When consumers support the 'good' shoe, the company will make more of them. When we ignore the bad shoe, it makes fewer of them. Anita spent some time answering my question as I stood at the microphone feeling smaller and smaller. However, her words had a significant impact that I still remember all these years later. When bad companies (and people) do good things, we should reward them. This will encourage more good behaviour.

We now live in a multimedia world where everyone has access to social media and the collective can find a platform. We have the power to influence the world and make corporations more accountable. Change.org is one of many websites that allow people to upload information about a cause and ask others to join it. And here's the thing: corporations are listening, and will continue to listen. As consumers become educated about the connection between their purchases and the impact of these, the more vocal they'll become in demanding that corporations source ethical products. A case in point is Nike, which has dropped subcontractors that use sweatshops.

Corporations derive value from making consumers genuinely happy as opposed to creating advertising that gives the perception of being a good corporate citizen. Some good examples include:

- Samsung Life Insurance's 'Bridge of Life' that uses lighting and messages of hope and compassion to dissuade people from using the bridge to commit suicide (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYMWPSKRpE).
- Increased bone marrow donor registrations through pharmaceutical company. Help Remedies and international bone marrow donor registry DKMS (www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwaGgXoHOFY).
- Paint company, Dulux, painting disenfranchised neighbourhoods around the world as part of the 'Let's Colour Project' (www.youtube.com/watch?v=rULv_FWsfCw).

Advertising dollars are funding these initiatives. Instead of traditional advertising, these corporations are using their advertising budget to do good work. It's easy to view these actions as a cynical grab for favourable corporate

publicity—and a part of me does—but it's also easy to see these actions in a genuinely positive light. It should be encouraged.

Advertising is complicated and multifaceted. It no longer emanates from a TV or sits on outdoor ads passively transmitting its message. But it still concerns me that advertising has reached a supersaturated situation. Advertising's reach means it's an omnipresent force against the little ol' consumer. To all advertisers, I suggest you look at what you're giving the world versus what you are asking of it. If you pollute the world with ugly, gratuitously sexualised and sexist outdoor ads asking young men to buy your shoes, does it feel as though you're giving as much as you're taking? Or could those young men, who are potentially turned on by your crass advertising, be reached through less crass means? Are there more pro-social and positive ways to get their attention?

In my opinion, and it's only an opinion, one of the positive impacts of social media is that society's tolerance of unacceptable behaviour has diminished. As more people have a voice, and more people listen to that voice, small groups of people (described as 'clicktivists') can attract attention to particular issues. It's as if the sheer pervasiveness of advertising ends up annoying people to the point of action. As a consequence, São Paulo in Brazil and the American states of Hawaii, Alaska and Maine have placed a complete ban on outdoor advertising—with other metropolitan cities pushing for limits on their use.

CONCLUSION

Advertising is on a journey. It's moving from interruption and forced projection to promotion that relies on peer-to-peer recommendations—or that gives as much as it takes, such as creating apps or games. There's a saying that 'advertising is the tax you pay for an unremarkable product'. If you get the product right, the less you need to manipulate, persuade and coerce people to buy it.

So advertisers, use your powers of persuasion for good. And consumers, use your purchasing power to encourage the greater good.

The Insider: Alain de Botton

I think we need to make a distinction between influencing someone to do something good (make the world nicer, develop their talents, be kind) and influencing someone to do something bad (something slightly depressing, counterproductive or fruitless). Assuming the former is the goal, the key is to appeal to someone's 'better nature', which means not in any way making them feel guilty about their 'worse nature'. Give their less positive sides a chance to exit gracefully. Flattery is often seen in a bad light, but it is also a form of strategic exaggeration of the good—which helps to bring it more fully to life.

Alain de Botton is a writer, philosopher, TV presenter and entrepreneur. His books and TV programs discuss various contemporary subjects and themes, emphasising philosophy's relevance to everyday life. I've never met Alain, although we've exchanged emails over the years and follow each other on Twitter. He seems like a very nice man, and I was sincerely interested in his opinion to the Insider question.

The Insider: John Mescall

People derive enormous satisfaction from being a part of something bigger than themselves. It's the whole belongingness thing. So whenever you can, you should position the shift in behaviour you are attempting to elicit not so much as a plea for action, but as an invitation to join something brilliant.

As an individual, your actions can seem rather inconsequential: 'What does it really matter if I do the right thing or the wrong thing? I'm only one person.' But if you feel that you are part of a big idea or a movement ... your actions take on significance to yourself that far exceeds the relatively small thing you have done.

It's why Movember works so brilliantly well. It's why Kiva has to date managed to distribute nearly half a billion dollars in micro-loans. It's why the Dumb Ways to Die campaign got millions of people to share a boring message about rail safety.

Create a sense of collectivism through an idea that's designed to attract people to it, and you will most likely succeed.

Cry poor, beg, plead or attempt to guilt or shock people into submission, and you will most likely fail.

John Mescall is executive creative director at McCann Erickson Australia. He's also creator of the world's most awarded advertising campaign (quite an achievement), 'Dumb Ways to Die', for Metro Trains. I've known John for many years. He has a reputation as one of the nicest (and funniest) guys in our industry. At the 2013 *Mumbrella* Awards, I was runner-up for 'Thinker of the Year'—John rightfully won.

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