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GENDER ADVERTISING IN THE 90S -
CONTEMPORARY OR TRADITIONAL STEREOTYPES ?

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INTRODUCTION

Advertising often reflects the prevailing attitudes and stereotypes held by society. Much attention has been directed by researchers at the roles portrayed by women in advertisements, whereas the male's depiction has been all but ignored since 1958.

The growing number of women entering the workforce together with the rise in feminism in recent years has triggered a change in sex roles for both men and women. This changing of relationships between the sexes, as reflected by sex-role changes in both sexes, has potentially broad implications for consumer behaviour and the marketing strategist.

The purpose of this study therefore is :

To provide an empirical view of sexism in British magazine advertising to determine the frequency of defined role portrayals and the extent to which these portrayals have changed from 1982 to 1992.

To provide an insight into the actual communication process of advertising.

To address concerns raised by researchers about how the portrayal of men and women in advertisements is examined. This includes research investigating the influence of culturally prescribed sex role characterizations in promotions and the gendering of products.

To provide suggestions for future role portrayals in advertising.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Societal criticisms have centred primarily on women's stereotypical roles in advertisements and the perpetuation of women's 'place' in society. Critics contend that women's roles are changing but that advertisers are not keeping pace with these changes by depicting women realistically. In general, the research has concluded that women have been historically portrayed in a narrow social and occupational manner. It is noteworthy that all the studies reviewed here examined stereotyping in the United States ; also, with the exception of *Lysonski (1983)* no recent studies in the United States have examined the ways in which men are depicted in the media.

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In the earlier studies, women were found to be portrayed in stereotypically feminine roles, whether in the home or workplace. One of the first studies by *Courtney and Lockertz (1971)* analysed the roles portrayed by men and women in eight general audience magazines and reported a number of stereotypes being reflected in the advertisements. They were :

1 A woman's place is in the home.
2 Women do not make important decisions.
3 Women are dependent on men and need men's protection.
4 Men regard women primarily as sex objects.

A follow-up study using the same methodology was reported by *Wagner and Banos (1973)*. Their aim was to detect any shifting in stereotyping within this 20 month span. Their study showed changes had occurred in the increased percentage of women being portrayed in working roles ; 21 per cent in January 1972 as opposed to 9 per cent in April 1970.

Sexton and Haberman (1974) examined five magazines, each representing a different genre of magazine and a different audience appeal. Their conclusions were that women continued to be shown as domestic, in predictable environments, as alluring and decorative. There was, however, a significant decrease in advertisements portraying a woman as housewife or mother. The standard used by *Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976)* to evaluate any change in the portrayal of women's roles was actually based on the roles of males as they appeared in magazine advertisements of 1958. In other words, they looked at the frequency of roles portrayed for men under stereotypes such as 'Dominance over women', 'Authority figure' 'Career-orientated' etc. and evaluated the female portrayal from those stereotypes. Their results along with those of *Venktesan and Lasco (1975)* confirmed previous studies - that advertisers had not responded to societal change.

TABLE 1

STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES ON FEMALE ROLE STEREOTYPING IN MAGAZINE ADVERTISING

RESEARCHERS	YEAR EXAMINED	RESULTS
Courtney & Lockeretz (1971)	1970	Stereotypes of dependency, domestic sex objects and unimportant decisions.
Wagner & Banos (1973)	1972	Moderation in stereotypes identified by Courtney & Lockeretz.
Sexton & Haberman (1974)	1950 - 51 ; 1960 - 61 ; 1970 - 71 ;	No significant changes in stereotyping Some moderation in housewife or mother stereotype.
Venkatesan & Losco (1975)	1959 - 1971	No significant changes in Advertising.
Belkaoui & Belkaoui (1976)	1958, 1970, 1972	No significant changes in Advertising.
Pingree et al (1976)	1973 - 1974	No significant changes in Advertising.
Lysonski (1983)	1974 - 75 ; 1979 - 80	Women shown less frequently as dependent upon men and more frequently as career - orientated ; men depicted less in themes of sex appeal, dominant over women and as authority figures.
Courtney & Whipple (1985)	1984	Role portrayals need to be consistant with product type.
Wiles & Tjernland (1991)	1988 - 1989	Swedish magazine advertisements depict the sexes in non - decorative roles more than US magazine advertisers resulting in significant higher portrayal of women in working and non - working roles than in the US.
Klassen, Jasper & Schwartz (1993)	1972 - 1989	High portrayal of 'traditional' ads.

The study of *Pingree et al (1976)* concluded that advertisements reflected women most frequently in traditional roles of wife and mother. More recently, women's image relative to that of men's seems to have improved. *Lysonski (1983)* confirmed that sex role stereotyping continued to be prevalent but role portrayals did undergo some metamorphose. In particular, women appeared less frequently as dependent upon men, while men were less likely to be depicted in themes of sex appeal, dominance over women and as authority figures. Advertisements also portrayed women more frequently as career orientated and in non- traditional activities.

Courtney and Whipple (1985) did a very thorough review of female role portrayals and communication effectiveness and concluded that role portrayal needs to be consistent with product type. It is perhaps their study that pro - vides the best recent summary of the allegations about advertising sexism, the empirical support, and implied social effects.

Wiles and Tjernland (1991) studied sex role stereotyping in magazine advertising in Sweden and compared those roles to sex roles portrayed in magazine advertising in the United States. Their findings suggested that the Swedish magazine advertisers feel more comfortable showing women in more of a variety of working and non-working roles than do their US counterparts.

Klassen, Jasper and Schwartz (1993) using Goffman's (1976) analysis of gender display studied the images of relationships of women and men when portrayed together in advertisements. Their study indicated a disproportionately high number of advertisements that portrayed women in 'traditional' roles, however the data also suggested that these traditional depictions have been decreasing since the early 1980s and that 'equality' portrayals are on the rise.

Table I outlines the results of the studies on female role stereotyping in U. S magazine advertising.The notion that women are stereotyped in advertising has been given ample empirical support in the United States. However the frequen

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cy and meaning of these stereotypes have been subject to frequent and considerable debate. Growing from this debate are the many research studies (already mentioned) to substantiate clearly the extent to which women are portrayed stereotypically in the media. These American research studies have established the fact that "sexism" has been ubiquitous in advertising. Such research indicates that the most common stereotypes of women in magazine advertisements portray women as sex objects, as decoration, as dependent upon men and as lacking the ability to make important decisions.

Since magazine advertising often mirrors contemporary society, one would expect the sexist portrayal to have moderated in the past few years. Many socio-economic forces have elevated the status of women in society in the last decade. In particular, an increasing minority of women have been assimilated into professional careers while others have acquired a strong educational background. Furthermore, changing role structure in the family has brought significant variations in the female role. Consequently the frequency of various traditional role portrayals in British magazine advertisements may have diminished over the last few years to convey the altered roles of women in society.

It is possible, however, that a cultural lag exists so that women are still generally depicted in traditional roles. A corresponding research tradition on this topic does not exist in Britain. With a wide variety of British magazines on the market today, an analysis of their advertisement content was indeed a timely endeavour. Various categories of magazines for women and men were examined to detect any shifts in stereotyping which have occurred. Moreover, the ways in which men are stereotyped in magazine advertisements were also examined, as scant research has focused on sexism regarding the male's depiction in the media. Therefore, the main issue raised here is whether advertising accurately reflects contemporary men's and women's roles or depicts stereotypical roles for men and women.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study examines British advertisements from a spectrum of magazines with a conservative middleclass readership. The following questions summarise the nature of the study :

1 What types of role portrayals are used to depict women in British magazine advertisements ? How do 1982 portrayals compare and contrast with those in 1992 ?

2 How are men portrayed in magazine advertisements ? Have there been changes in role portrayals of men from 1982 - 1992 ?

3 How do general - audience, men's and women's magazines vary in female male stereotypes ? Has the relative use of these stereotypes changed from 1982 - 1992 ?

4 How do specific classifications of men's and women's magazines depict women and men in advertisements ? (given the stereotype categories in Tables 4 and 5) e.g.

Do men's magazines portray women as career-orientated or sex objects ?

Do general-audience magazines portray men as family man or authority figure ?

And how do women's magazines portray men and women ?

TABLE 2

MAGAZINE TYPE

1) GENERAL AUDIENCE MAGAZINES :

                                          Sunday Times magazines
                                          Harpers & Queen

2) WOMENS MAGAZINES :

    Fashion :   Vogue
                                              Womans Own

    Home :   House and Garden

3) MENS MAGAZINES :

    Sport :   Sport and leisure

    Special interest :   Car

    Professional :   Management Today

CHAPTER ONE   METHODOLOGY

Initially my sample was to include three popular magazines (i.e. general - audience, men's and women's) in order to understand how men and women when pictured together are portrayed. But upon reviewing the selection of magazines available today, I felt additional material was warranted and broadened my study to an examination of a spectrum of magazines.

Therefore, the procedures followed in this present study closely reflect those of *Lysonski (1983)*. A stratified random sample of eight magazines were examined to answer the research questions. The three basic categories of magazines (i.e. men ; women ; general - audience) were defined according to their general readership. *Table 2* presents the selected magazines under these categories with subdivisions based on particular gender-related interests. The magazines were carefully selected in order to cover a wide range of subjects yet still confine to a conservative readership.

The advertisements analysed were selected from among the highest circulation of magazines in the UK - e.g. *Woman's Own, Vogue, Sunday Times.* The classifications from *Willings Press Guide* and *British Rate and data* were used to classify individual magazines into the specific audience appeal. In the general - audience section the *Sunday Times* magazine was an obvious choice with 21% of its advertisements appearing in the miscellaneous products category (a profile of the different product categories appears in Table 6) therefore appealing to a very general - audience readership. *Harper's and Queen* was chosen for its differences in addressing men and women on the basis of their age, class, wealth or politics. The emphasis in this magazine is on career improvement, on successful glamourous men and women and is very much fashion orientated with over half its advertisements (52 per cent) appearing in the ' Clothes, fashion and fabrics' category.

The three most popular women's magazines were selected from the vast array available to todays modern woman.For the fashion-conscious, the British edition of *Vogue* was selected as it clearly represented similar magazines in this class.

Moreover, no magazine analysis would be complete without *Vogue* - the high fashion high class, world - renowned women's 'glossy'. In opposition to the other women's magazines in the analysis which are of the more traditional kind (*Womans Own, House and Garden*) the reference to family roles etc. - cooking, housework and childcare - is almost non-existent. Instead there is quite a staggering preponderance of advertisements concerned with clothing and appearance.

What can be deduced from the number of such advertisements as in many contemporary women's magazines is the areas of the body accessible to marketability. *Woman's Own* still remains as one of the magazines with the highest circulation in the UK today with the majority of its advertisements depicting women concerned with physical attractiveness and as housewife. For the home-orientated, *House and Garden* was selected, although it may be argued that men could also read this periodical, it does have a higher female readership.

The selection of men's magazines proved to be a difficult task. Even in today's current climate of widely publicised material, there is still a very limited range of contemporary men's magazines or magazines that can be specifically termed as 'male defined'. The British editions of *GQ* and *Esquire* could not be included in my study as both magazines were not launched in Britain until 1988. Such magazines do not generate a large readership and their absence clearly highlight the fact that men select magazines that address their particular interests i.e. for professional men *Management Today* and for the automotive enthusiast *Car* magazine with no less than 78 per cent of their advertisements depicted auto- related.

As regards magazine availability and readership, it is relevant here to note the interpretation of gender differences in the psychological literature. One of the major differences is the achievement- affiliation orientation where males are supposed to have a higher level of achievement orientation (*Anastasi*, 1961; *Bakan*, 1966; *M c Clelland*, 1975 ; *Maccoby and Jacklin*, 1974). Achievement ori

entation involves the drive to accomplish external goals, to achieve success, and being assertive, independent, and self-centered. This theory certainly supports the range of magazines available to contemporary men which tend to be either sports/outdoors or business related.

Once the titles of periodicals were picked, selection of specific issues for analysis was based on season. Four issues per year (one per season) were analysed for the years 1982 and 1992. March, June, September and December were chosen, however where availability was lacking another month of the same season was analysed. One issue of a weekly magazine was chosen randomly per month as mentioned above. The ten year span between 1982 and 1992 provided the opportunity to detect any shift in stereotyping following the advertisement examination.

TABLE 3

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADVERTISEMENTS CONTENT-ANALYSED FOR EACH SEX*

YEARS	WOMEN STEREOTYPES	MEN STEREOTYPES
1982	553	275
1992	434	199
	987	474

* Advertisements featuring both men and women were examined for both men's and women's stereotypes.

The total sample of advertisements analysed for women and men is shown in *Table 3*. Advertisements were selected on the basis of role portrayals alone, therefore product-only and text-related advertisements were not included. Only full page advertisements and double spreads were selected for analysis as smaller advertisements and feature length promotions proved difficult to analyse. Advertisements featuring both men and women were examined for both men and women stereotypes.

TABLE 4
CATEGORIES FOR WOMEN STEREOTYPES

Dependency
Dependent on male's protection
In need of reassurance
Making unimportant decisions

Housewife
Women's place is in the home
Primary role to be a good housewife
Concerned with tasks of housekeeping

Women concerned with physical attractiveness
To appear more appealing (e.g., youthful)
Concerned with cosmetics and jewellery products
Concerned with fashion

Women as sex objects
Sex is related to product
Sex is unrelated to product

Women in non-traditional activities
Engaged in activities outside the home (e.g., buying a car)
Engaged in sports (e.g., golf, tennis, skiing)

Career-orientated
Professional occupations
Entertainer
Non-professional (e.g., clerical, bankteller)
Blue collar

Voice of authority
The expert

Neutral
Woman shown as equal to man

None of the above categories

TABLE 5
CATEGORIES FOR MEN'S STEREOTYPES

The theme of sex appeal
Macho (e.g., physical strength, prowess, "cool")
Womaniser (e.g., physically attractive, active seeker)

Dominant over women
Protects woman
Man is in control
Man offers reassurance to woman

Authority figure (product representative)
Provides the expertise (i.e., the expert)
Celebrity
Voice of authority

Family man
Activities at home
Conventional activities

Frustated male
Frustrated in work
Frustrated in life

Activities and life outside the home
Concerned about his own needs outside the home
Shown in activities and sports (e.g., golf, hunting)
Seeking gratification outside the home

Career-orientated
Professional career orientation

Non-traditional role
Shown performing non-traditional activities
(e.g., washing dishes, changing baby's clothes)

Neutral
Man shown as equal to woman

None of the above

To achieve the content-analysis, coding categories were developed to reflect the stereotypes most frequently used in advertisements. Separate categories for women's and men's stereotypes appear in *Table 4* and *5*. The women's stereotypical categories were based upon several previous studies, while male stereotypes were developed by *Lysonski (1983)*.

Looking at *Table 4* ; the categories for women stereotypes ; we may bear the following questions in mind : Where is a woman's place in society ? Does she make important decisions ? Can she now be termed as independent ? Do men still regard women as sex objects ? The categories for men stereotypes in *Table 5* were chosen so as to be consistent with previous research. Typical questions to be considered here could be : Do men remain dominant over women today ? Can he still be termed as the authority figure ? Is he being portrayed more as family man ? All advertisements were carefully studied before a final stereotype was selected. When an advertisement presented both a man and a woman on an equal basis, the advertisement was given a neutral rating for both men and women's coding categories.
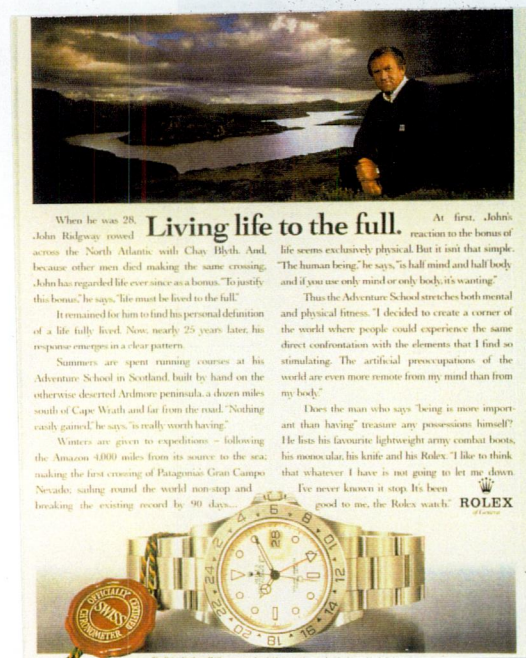

fig. 1.1   1992 Rolex advertisement featured in Sunday Times.
The stereotype of 'authority figure is portrayed here..

Fig. 1.2   *Neff* oven advertisement appearing in House and Garden '82. The woman is portrayed as housewife, while the man is given the portrayal of 'dominance over women'.

Fig. 1.3   *Chanel No 19* advertisement featured in Vogue '92. The theme being 'concerned with physical attractiveness'.

In the *Rolex* advertisement (fig. 1.1) although the man is depicted outside the home, the category of 'authority figure' was chosen here. He is the product representative, also a celebrity figure in his achievements and he carries an authoritive voice by 'Living life to the full' wearing his rolex watch. The *Neff* oven advertisement (fig. 1.2) is a typical example of a 1982 advertisement portraying both a man and a woman. The woman was stereotyped as 'housewife' but a number of factors were considered before making this selection. She is dependent on her husband for *his* money, but she needs that money because *she* is concerned with the tasks of housekeeping. Her primary concern is to be a good housewife, which of course she will be if she has that *Neff* oven which in turn leads to her place being in the home. The man *appears* as the 'authority figure', yet the theme of 'dominance over women' is chosen as he bears all the dominance characteristics. He is of course in control as he carries the cheque-book, that in itself offers protection to the woman ; she is further reassured-when she realises he has made the decision and writes the cheque.

A profile of product categories appears in *Table 6*. Once the coding categories were established the advertisements were also content-analysed by product category. (products are discussed in detail in chapter 3) For example, take the 1992 advertisement for *Chanel No 19* perfume (fig. 1.3) - 1) the product being perfume was classified under cosmetics and beauty aids 2) the woman was stereotyped as 'concerned with physical attractiveness' and 3) the men were stereotyped under the theme of sex appeal.

In brief, the content-analysis covers a range of topics for role display for men and women and questions if these portrayals are realistic, accurate, diverse ; if women are commonly shown as dependent, sex-objects, decisive or domestic and whether men remain authoritive and dominant over women in today's society.

TABLE 6

SUMMARY OF PRODUCT CATEGORIES REPRESENTED IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS

	%
Auto and related products	7.0
Tobacco	0.7
Cosmetics and beauty aids	19.4
Personal hygiene and drugs	1.5
Jewellery	5.2
Clothes, fashion and fabrics	38.9
Liquor and beer	2.0
Food (cereals and beverages)	2.7
Home appliances and furniture	3.4
Household items	1.2
FInancial (e.g., banks, insurance)	0.9
Airlines and travel	4.2
Recreation	2.7
Miscellaneous	10.1

TABLE 7

FREQUENCY OF ROLES PORTRAYED BY WOMEN

Women stereotypes	1982	1992
Dependency	1.6	0.2
Housewife	4.9	3.0
Women concerned with physical attractiveness	43.4	47.9
Women as sex objects	19.0	18.4
Women in non-traditional activities	3.4	5.3
Career-orientated women	5.1	4.4
Voice of authority	11.0	9.2
Neutral	10.5	9.7
None of these categories	1.1	1.8

CHAPTER TWO   ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

My findings suggest that changes have occurred between 1982 and 1992. However, the most significant findings in this research are that the themes of 'concerned with physical attractiveness' and 'sex objects' remain the most commonly used in the female portrayal and the frequency of 'authority figure' remains highest for male portrayal. Throughout this chapter indepth frequency portrayals of men and women are examined. The results are illustrative that it is crucial that one examine a selection of magazines to detect stereotypical role portrayals.

Frequency of roles portrayed by women

Table 7 presents the frequencies of the different categories of female stereotypes in the magazines examined. Evidently the themes of 'concerned with physical attractiveness', (about 45 per cent) and women as 'sex objects' (about 19 per cent) are most commonly used in advertisements.

> 'It is this obsession with the glamourisation of the body which draws the feminist critics of magazines for their 'commercialisation' of sexuality by which women are trapped in retrogressive narcistic representations.'
> (Coward, 1978 p. 54)

My research indicates that changes that changes have occurred over the decade. For example, the frequency of both the dependency and housewife themes declined while the theme of 'concerned with physical attractiveness' increased from 43.4 per cent to 47.9 per cent over the decade. Unexpectantly, the depiction of women as the voice of authority and neutral images are on the decline though their frequency still remains high, at around 10 per cent. Advertisers apparently are accommodating themselves somewhat to women's changing roles. It is clear, however, that women are seldom depicted in non-traditional activities and as being career orientated. The dependency theme registers as a low figure in 1982 (1.6 per cent) and is further diminishing (0.2 per cent in 1992).

TABLE 8
PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN STEREOTYPES BY MAGAZINE CLASSIFICATION AND FOR TIME PERIODS

Women stereotypes	General Audience mags		Women's mags.		Men's mags.	
	(n = 230) 1982	(n = 165) 1992	(n = 274) 1982	(n = 230) 1992	(n = 49) 1982	(n = 39) 1992
Dependency	1.7	0.6	1.5	0	2.0	0
Housewife	3.0	1.2	5.8	4.3	8.2	2.6
Women concerned with physical attractiveness	52.6	48.5	43.1	55.7	2.0	0
Women as sex objects	15.2	14.5	24.5	24.3	6.1	0
Women in non-traditional activities	3.9	4.8	1.8	3.5	10.2	17.9
Career orientated women	3.5	4.8	2.6	0.9	26.5	23.1
Voice of authority	9.1	12.7	12.8	6.1	10.2	12.8
Neutral	9.6	9.7	6.9	4.8	34.7	38.5
None of these categories	1.3	3.0	1.1	0.4	0	5.1

Frequency of roles portrayed by women under magazine classification

Table 8 provides an expanded view of the women stereotypes for the three categories of magazines in the study. Variations can be seen for each category. For the stereotype of dependency in women, there is a decrease in general-audience magazines from 1.7 per cent to 0.6 per cent this theme has virtually disappeared in the women's and men's magazines in 1992.

The housewife theme also shows reductions in men's magazines (8.2 per cent to 2.6 per cent) and registers a decline for both women's and general-audience magazines. The theme of women concerned with physical attractiveness shows mixed results. This theme being the most commonly used in women's and general-audience magazines while men's magazines seldomly provide this image.

The stereotype of women as sex objects registers a decline in all the categories especially for men's magazines where it has virtually disappeared (6.1 per cent in 1982 to 0 per cent in 1992). Regarding the portrayal of women in non-traditional activities, increases do occur in all the categories, particularly in men's magazines (10.2 per cent to 17.9 per cent).

While the theme of career orientated women increases in general-audience magazines it actually decreases in the other two categories. Although women are increasingly entering the workforce, advertisements have not portrayed this. The voice of authority portrayal decreases by almost half (12.8 per cent to 6.1 per cent) in women's magazines, although it's marginally on the increase in the other categories.

The result of the neutral category where men and women appear as equal registers unsatisfactory mixed results, virtually the same in general-audience magazines, on a decline in women's magazines while on a significant increase in men's magazines (34.7 per cent to 38.5 showing surprisingly large figures in this area.)

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TABLE 9

FREQUENCY OF ROLES PORTRAYED FOR MEN

Men stereotypes	1982	1992
The theme of sex appeal	9.8	15.6
Dominant over women	7.3	3.5
Authority figure	22.2	21.6
Family man	6.2	7.5
Frusrtated male	8.0	2.5
Activities and life outside the home	12.0	14.0
Career-orientated	10.5	9.0
Non-traditional	2.2	3.5
Neutral	20.7	20.1
None of these categories	1.1	2.5

The findings here indicate that of the three categories examined, men's magazines present the most realistic view of women and their roles in society. The data suggests that traditional depictions of women have been decreasing since the early 1980s and that 'equality portrayals' are on the rise with significantly higher results unexpectantly revealed in men's magazines. One may argue here that the portrayals in men's magazines may be invalid due to limited magazine choice and selection. But magazines, too, are open to opposing interpretations and (as mentioned before) due to the lack of material in this area any advertisements analysed in the men's magazines are certainly valid.

Frequency of roles portrayed for men

Little systematic research on the portrayal of men in print advertisements has taken place since *Courtney and Whipple's (1983)* call for research, therefore the following results are of great importance. *Table 9* reports the frequencies of roles portrayed by men. This table shows that of the magazines examined men are stereotyped in terms of the authority figure and as neutral i.e. equal to women. This result depicts that advertisers are undecisive as on how to portray men in their advertisements. Changes in these male stereotypes, however have occurred ; most noticeably the theme of sex appeal increased from 9.8 per cent in 1982 to 15.6 per cent in 1992. Significant decreases have also occurred for the dominance over women, frustrated male and career-orientated roles.

Overall what can be noted here is a blurring of the conventional directions in the advertising address to men and women; constructions of masculinity and femininity are less fixed; household activities and self-adornment have become less gendered - less specifically female activities. Therefore what we begin to observe is a shift in the practice of role portraying in advertising.

TABLE 10
PERCENTAGES OF MEN STEREOTYPES BY MAGAZINE CLASSIFICATION AND FOR TIME PERIODS

Men stereotypes	General Audience mags		Women's mags.		Men's mags.	
	(n = 90)	(n = 67)	(n = 76)	(n = 48)	(n = 109)	(n = 84)
	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992
The theme of sex appeal	20.0	23.9	11.8	29.2	0	1.2
Dominant over women	10.0	4.5	7.9	2.1	4.6	3.5
Authority figure	17.8	14.9	15.8	16.7	30.3	29.8
Family man	6.7	3.0	10.5	10.4	2.8	9.5
Frustrated male	3.3	3.0	5.3	0	13.8	3.6
Activities and life outside the home	12.2	11.9	7.9	6.2	14.6	20.2
Career-orientated	4.4	10.4	7.9	6.2	17.4	9.5
Non-traditional	1.1	3.0	6.6	2.1	0	4.8
Neutral	24.4	23.9	23.7	22.9	15.6	15.5
None of these categories	0	1.5	2.6	4.2	0.9	2.4

Frequency of roles portrayed by men under magazine classification

Table 10 provides a closer view of the male stereotypes for the three categories examined. Notable variations can be seen for each category. The theme of sex appeal has increased with a significant increase of 11.8 per cent to 29.2 per cent in women's magazines. This data suggests that the fashion market is using many more male models than previous years, but also that advertisers have decreased portrayals of military, big business type males that were portrayed in the past. Also, the working man today is allowed to enjoy life and pursue pleasure without feeling guilty *(Engel, Blackwell & Kollat 1978).* It was predicted, in this 1978 study, that the portrayal of males in working roles would show a decrease since 1958 accompanied by an increase in the portrayal of males in non-working roles. Finally, with the increased number of women working outside the home it was predicted that, over time, males would more likely be shown in family and home roles.

From these results it appears that such predictions have been correct. The theme of dominance over women shows a significant decrease in all three categories as does the role of frustrated male. Does this suggest that working women are indeed on the rise ?

The authority male figure image remains consistent except for general-audience magazines where this portrayal decreased from 17.8 per cent to 14.9 per cent. The family man portrayal decreases in general-audience magazines, remains consistent in women's magazines and shows a significant increase in men's magazines from 2.8 per cent to 9.5 per cent.

Another shift was found for the theme of activities and life outside the home. While general-audience and women's magazines remained consistent, men's magazines showed a strong increase from 14.6 per cent to 20.2 per cent. Different results emerge for career-orientated and non-traditional roles. The only significant change being the decrease of career-orientated male in men's magazines from 17.4 per cent to 9.5 per cent.

PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN STEREOTYPES BY MAGAZINE CLASSIFICATION AND TYPE WITHIN EACH CLASSIFICATION AND FOR TIME PERIODS.

Women Stereotypes	General Audience mags.						Women's mags.				Men's mags.					
	Sunday Times (n=42) (n=37)		Harpers & Queen (n=188) (n=128)		Vogue (n=219) (n=184)		Womans Own (n=32) (n=30)		House and Garden (n=23) (n=16)		Sport & Leisure (n=15) (n=7)		Car (n=7) (n=13)		Management Today (n=27) (n=19)	
	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992
Dependency	2.4	0	1.6	0.8	1.4	0	0	0	4.3	0	0	0	0	0	3.7	0
Housewife	9.5	2.7	1.6	0.8	2.3	0.5	15.6	23.3	26.1	12.5	13.3	0	14.3	7.7	3.7	0
Women concerned with physical attractiveness	40.5	27.0	55.3	54.7	47.9	60.9	40.6	43.3	0	18.8	0	0	0	0	3.7	0
Women as sex objects	2.4	10.8	18.1	15.6	24.7	25.0	21.9	10.0	26.1	43.8	0	0	42.9	0	0	0
Women in non-traditional activities	7.1	5.4	3.2	4.7	1.8	1.6	3.1	10.0	0	12.5	33.3	71.4	0	15.4	0	0
Career orientated women	9.5	10.8	2.1	3.1	2.3	0	6.3	3.3	0	6.2	0	0	0	7.7	48.1	42.1
Voice of authority	7.1	8.1	9.6	14.1	13.2	6.5	9.4	6.7	13.0	0	6.7	0	42.9	15.4	3.7	15.8
Neutral	19.0	29.7	7.4	3.9	5.5	4.9	3.1	3.3	26.1	6.2	46.7	28.6	0	46.1	37.0	36.8
None of these categories	2.4	5.4	1.1	2.3	0.9	0.5	0	0	4.3	0	0	0	0	7.7	0	5.3

Individual magazine frequencies for women

Table 11 provides a breakdown for the various stereotypes by magazine category and type of magazine within a category. The results are illustrative that it is crucial that one examine different magazines within a category to detect stereotypical role portrayals. Looking at the table column-wise, one can see that for the two periods general-audience magazines tended to use the stereotypes concerned with physical attractiveness. For example, *Harpers & Queen* use this stereotype about 55 per cent of the time. Examination of this column, also shows decreases in the use of dependency and housewife, while a steady increase in the voice of authority. Different results emerge from the other stereotypes. The theme of women as sex objects actually increased in *Sunday Times* magazine from 2.4 per cent to 10.8 per cent while *Harpers & Queen* shows a decline. The portrayal of women in non-traditional roles marginally decreases in *Sunday Times* magazine while it's on the increase in *Harpers & Queen*. Women as voice of authority shows an increase in both magazines and lastly the neutral portrayal, but a very valid one in the case of *Sunday Times* showing an increase from 19 per cent to 29.7 per cent.

Within the category of women's magazines, 'concerned with physical attractiveness' is again the dominant role theme while the sex object imagery is also common. As might be expected, the housewife theme is used frequently in home-orientated magazines showing a significant increase in *Womans Own* from 15.6 per cent to 23.3 per cent; yet a significant decrease in *House & Garden* from 26.1 per cent to 12.5 per cent. *House and Garden* have also introduced the themes of women in non-traditional roles and career-orientated women, whereas in 1982 these advertisements didn't exist. An analysis of the men's category shows that the dependency theme and the theme of women concerned with physical attractiveness are virtually non-existent in all three magazines. The housewife image also shows a steady decline in all three magazines. Mixed results emerge from the other themes ; with women in non-traditional roles showing a strong increase in both sports/outdoors and special interest magazines unlike the professional men's magazine where it still registers nil. As might be expected, professional men's magazines feature a high frequency of

TABLE 12
PERCENTAGES OF MEN STEREOTYPES BY MAGAZINE CLASSIFICATION AND TYPE WITHIN EACH CLASSIFICATION AND FOR TIME PERIODS.

Men Stereotypes	General Audience mags.				Women's mags.						Men's mags.					
	Sunday Times		Harpers & Queen		Vogue		Womans Own		House and Garden		Sport & Leisure		Car		Management Today	
	(n=44)	(n=45)	(n=46)	(n=22)	(n=42)	(n=31)	(n=13)	(n=7)	(n=21)	(n=10)	(n=22)	(n=8)	(n=22)	(n=37)	(n=65)	(n=39)
	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992	1982	1992
The theme of sex appeal	11.4	24.4	28.3	22.7	14.3	38.7	23.1	28.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.6
Dominant over women	4.5	4.4	15.2	4.5	9.5	0	0	0	9.5	10.0	4.5	0	0	2.7	6.2	5.1
Authority figure	20.4	18.2	15.2	9.1	11.9	9.7	23.1	14.3	19.0	40.0	27.3	0	45.4	29.7	26.2	35.9
Family man	11.4	4.4	2.2	0	4.8	6.5	23.1	14.3	14.3	20.0	9.1	0	4.5	18.9	0	2.6
Frustrated male	6.8	0	0	9.1	2.4	0	7.7	0	9.5	0	0	0	4.5	2.7	21.6	5.1
Activities and life outside the home	18.2	15.9	6.5	4.5	11.9	6.5	0	0	4.8	10.0	22.7	75.0	36.4	24.3	4.6	5.1
Career-orientated	9.1	6.8	0	18.2	9.5	6.5	15.4	0	0	10.0	4.5	0	9.1	5.4	24.6	15.4
Non-traditional	0	0	2.2	9.1	7.1	0	0	14.3	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	10.3
Neutral	18.2	24.4	30.4	22.7	28.6	29.0	7.7	14.3	23.8	10.0	31.8	25.0	0	10.8	15.4	17.9
None of these categories	0	2.3	0	0	0	3.2	0	14.3	9.5	0	0	0	0	5.4	1.5	0

women as career orientated although it has declined by 6 per cent. The neutral role features a high frequency in all three magazines although different results emerge.

Individual magazine frequencies for men

Table 12 presents a similar breakdown for the various male stereotypes by magazine category and type of magazine within a category. As in the last table, the results demonstrate that magazines with a different category depict the role of a man differently. However, the shortcomings of my sample must be indicated here with respect to the amount of advertisements in this table, therefore only limited judgements can be made. Looking at the general-audience magazines, different results emerge, although there has been significant declines in the portrayal of dominance over women, authority figure, family man and activities and life outside the home.

Within the category of women's magazines, both *Vogue* and *Womans Own* show a significant increase in their portrayal of men in a sex appeal setting, with 38.7 per cent of *Vogue*'s advertisements in 1992 depicting this role. The portrayal of frustrated male has now ceased altogether. Finally, an examination of the men's category shows that the image of authority figure, activities and life outside the home and the neutral portrayal are the most dominant themes.

In brief, we can detect a shift in the practice of role portrayal in advertising. Women appear less frequently as sex objects, as housewives and more independent. Men *remain* as authority figures, yet are more likely to be depicted in 1992 as family man and in activities and life outside the home. One may conclude advertisements with 'wornout' stereotypes may not gain simple attention in a cluttered environment, much less respectful attention. Inappropriate role portrayals can simply be alien to the experience of contemporary women (or men) and hence be seen, if at all, as irrelevant. A lack of identification with the roles portrayed is likely to reduce the attention, credibility, retention and later recall of any advertisement.
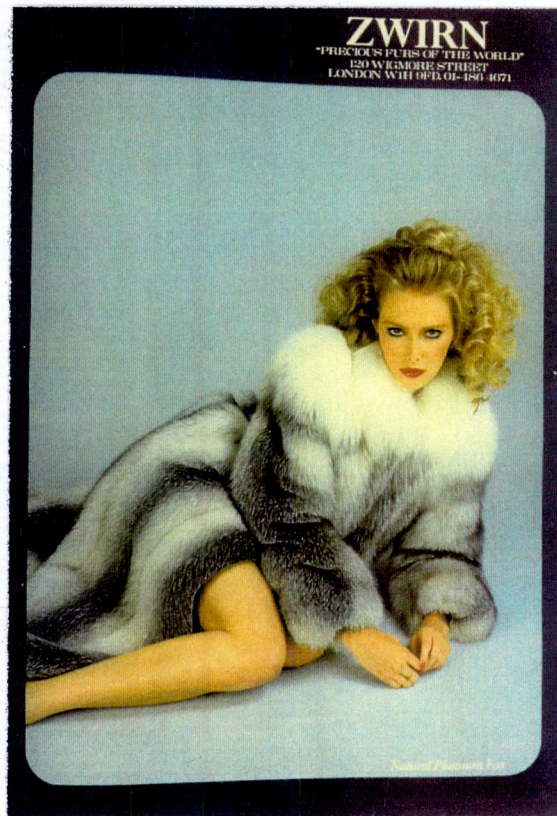
Fig. 1.4
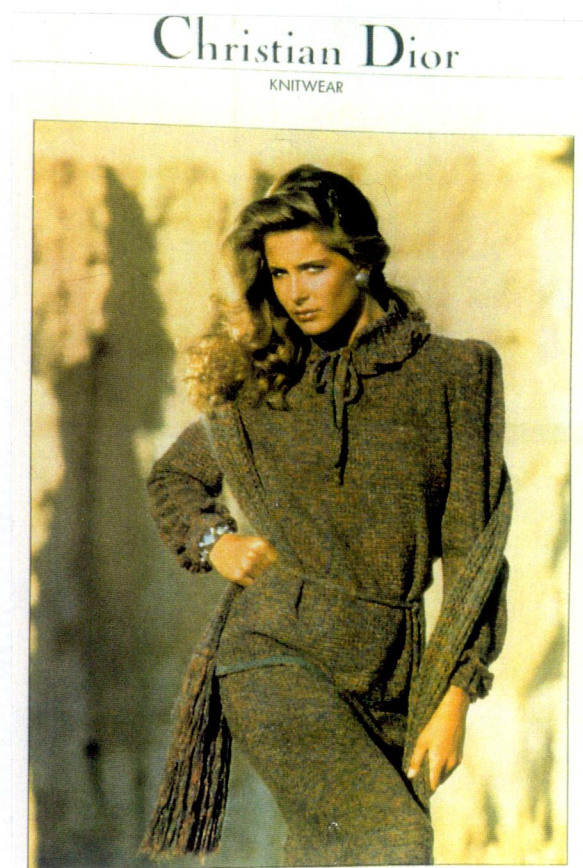
Fig. 1.5   The above are examples of advertisements portrayed in Vogue '82 depicting women in exaggerated provocative positions.

CHAPTER THREE   IMPLICATIONS

The importance of understanding consumers' perceptions as they relate to changing sex roles should not be underestimated because of their potential impact on the effectiveness of marketing strategies. As men and women assume different roles, they would be expected to view themselves differently and this change in self-concept would likely influence their perceptions of marketing strategies, in particular promotional strategies and product positioning. This chapter provides an insight into the actual communication process of advertising. It also reviews research investigating the influence of changing sex roles on individual's perceptions of 1) promotions and 2) products. These two areas are reviewed individually and future research is proposed in each section which would enhance our understanding of each area and the relationships between the perpetual constructs such that effective marketing strategies may be developed.

Sex roles as portrayed in advertising

The results show that advertising's role portrayals have undergone some metamorphoses from 1982 to 1992, although these shifts were not dramatic. Women appear less frequently as sex objects and the theme of dependence upon men has all but diminished, while men are more likely to be depicted in themes which emphasise sex appeal, and which portray them as authority figures and in activities and life outside the home. Advertisements do not seem to be responding fast enough to the changing careers and roles of women; women are portrayed less frequently as career-orientated in both women's and men's magazines, with only a slight increase from 3.5 per cent to 4.8 per cent in general-audience magazines. Likewise, for the portrayal of women in non-traditional activities, the figures register an increase but at such a low frequency, can they be termed as significant ? The *Zwirn* fur advertisement (fig. 1.4) and the *Christian Dior* knitwear advertisement appeared in *Vogue* '82. They depict women in exaggerated provocative positions. The *YvesSaintLaurent* (fig. 1.6) and *Chanel* (fig 1.7) advertisements appeared in *Vogue* '92. We notice that the role portrayals have not changed dramatically. Therefore, stereotypical images of women and men persist in British advertisements.

Fig. 1.6
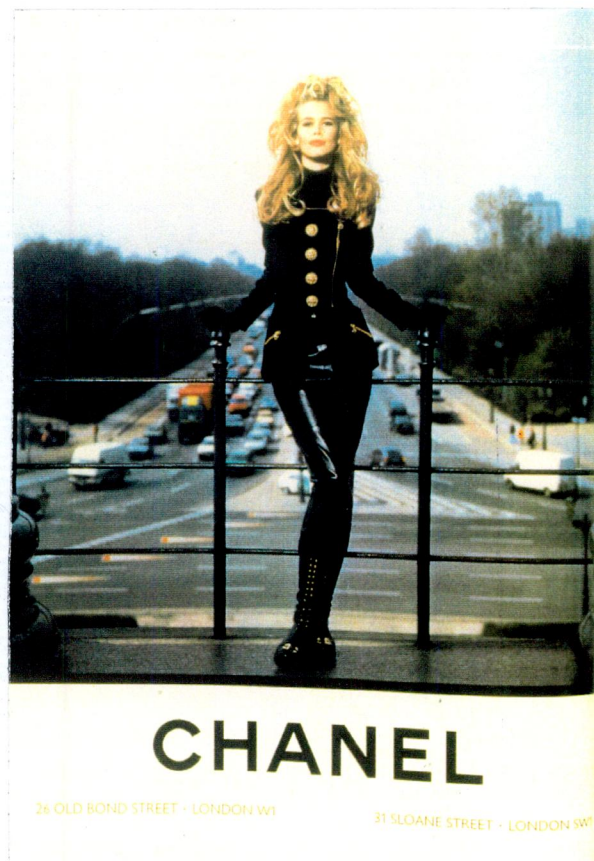
Fig. 1.7   The above are examples taken from Vogue '92. We notice that the role portrayals have not changed dramatically (refer to figs. 1.4 and 1.5).

Even though some stereotype categories have declined, women continue to be portrayed at a high frequency as sex objects and as concerned with physical attractiveness. The sex object stereotype remains at about 19 per cent; i.e. up to the present day 19 per cent of all advertisements still persist in portraying women as sex objects. The theme of women concerned with physical attractiveness, in particular remains very high, at about 48 per cent.

Using women and men in a sexist tone in advertisements may have profound controversial social implications. One alarming reason cited by critics for the negative consequences of sex-role stereotyping is the behaviour it can evoke. Consumers' perceptions as they relate to changing sexroles should not be underestimated because of their potential impact on the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

Marketers' concerns revolve around the effectiveness of traditional versus progressive sex role portrayals in advertising and individuals preferences for one type of portrayal over another. Most published research focuses on the latter. *Lull, Hanson and Marx (1977)* found that women were more sensitive and critical of the sex role stereotyping of females than were men and that their responses were somewhat related to the extent to which they agreed with the sentiment of women's liberation. Other studies indicate that younger and more highly educated women are most critical of such stereotypical portrayals. *(Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia 1977, Venkatesh 1980; Witowski 1977)* Some women are so critical of such stereotypical portrayals that they stop using a product. *Venkatesh (1980)* documents that a woman claimed that she stopped using *Wisk* laundry detergent because the portrayal of women in the advertisement was 'very demeaning'. *Bettinger and Dawson (1979)*, however, did not find traditional roles offensive to women but did find more liberated depictions offensive (women pictured in masculine occupations).
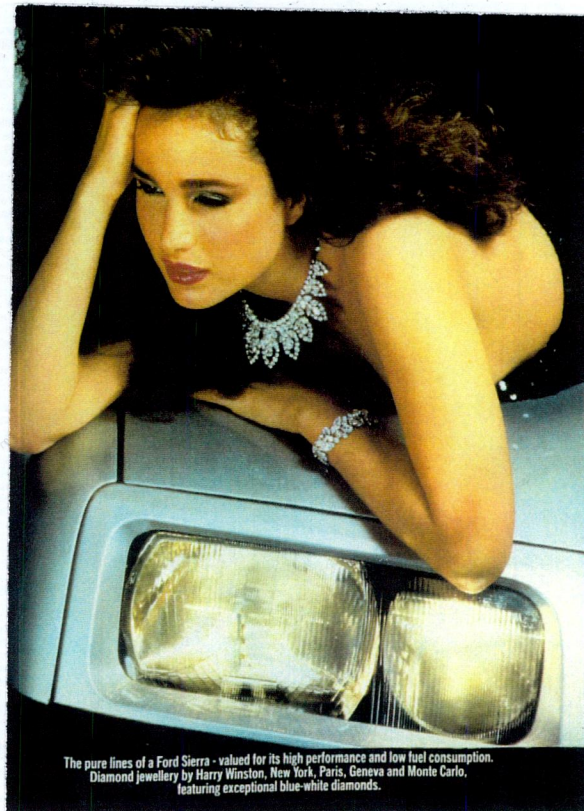
Fig. 1.8   A 1982 ad, typical of its time constantly depicting women for adornment purposes.

Fig. 1.9   1992's Volvo advertisements (fig. 1.9) show a new marketing consciousness emphasizing
                  the theme of life and activities outside the home and depicting the user of the car as family
                  man. Incidently both advertisements were featured in Vogue.

Wortzel and Frisbie (1974) measured individual preferences for women's role portrayals in advertisements by having women construct print advertisements for a variety of products. The women were instructed to match pictures of products with pictures of women who were portrayed in family roles, fashion roles, sex object roles and career roles. None of the role portrayals were consistently preferred. Instead, subjects matched the product to a role portrayal based on the product's function. For example, family role portrayals were preferred for products used by the family. Perhaps advertisers are at their best when depicting women who balance the responsibilities of career and family.

The 1982 Ford (fig. 1.8) advertisement is typical of its time ; constantly depicting women for adornment purposes. 1992's Volvo advertisements (fig 1.9) show a new marketing consciousness emphasising the theme of life and activities outside the home and depicts the user of the car as family man. It might be suggested also that advertisements featuring women in progressive roles may be more likely to generate attention than advertisements depicting women in traditional roles because they may be unexpected and different from the norm. Will these advertisements be better comprehended, however, and lead to purchase intention more often than the traditional advertisements ? Attention should also be directed to the type of product promoted and individual difference variables as they relate to traditional and progressive role portrayals for men and women.

The Communication Process

The major function of the product image is to communicate ideas by means of messages about the product. A simple view of communication is that it is the ordered transfer of meaning and is essentially a social affair. The communication process is the passage of a sign from a source to a destination. Along with an encoder at the source, and a decoder at the destination, there must be : a medium, which is the technical or physical means of representing the intangible in the tangible form for transmission ; a channel, which is the physical means of transmitting the message ; and a code, a system of rules and conventions for
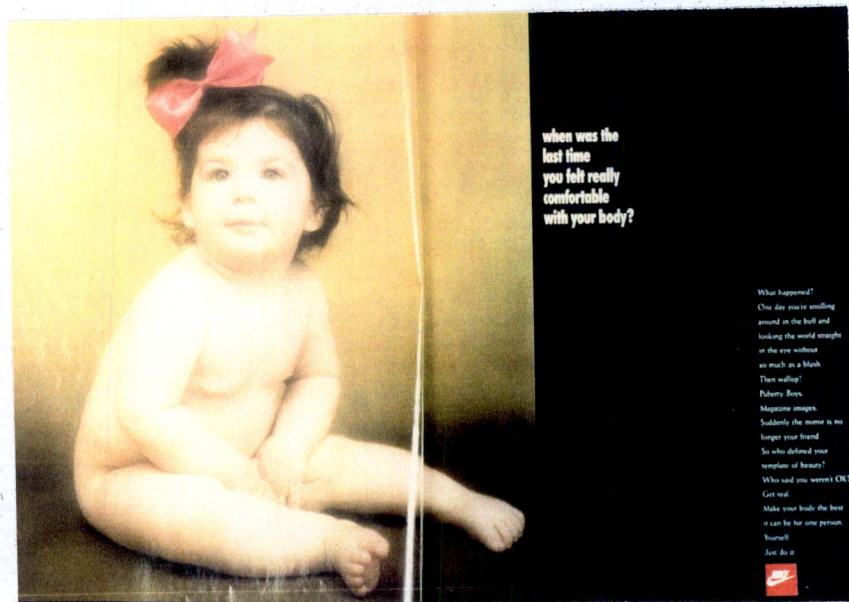
Fig. 2.0   *Nike* softens its image for women without compromising its athletic roots.

determining the meaning of the message. (*Dimbleby, R and Bruton, G 1982 p.29*)

Advertising Communications

'Advertising is the most potent influence in adapting and changing habits and modes of life, affecting what we are, what we wear and the work and play of the whole nation.' (*Williamson, 1978 p.12*)

Advertising defined in this way is misleading, as advertising not only influences the world we live in but is influenced by it. Advertising serves as a form of representation of the world we live in. Advertisements must take into account not only the inherent qualities of the product but also the way in which they can make these mean something to the consumer. Advertising can play a very powerful part in the ascribing of meaning to a product and the communication of this image.

The art of advertising is the creation of feelings, moods and attitudes with particular objects, which, when seen in conjunction with the product have the effect of transferring these feelings to the product ; linking the possibly unattainable to the definitely attainable *(Williamson 1978)*. The marketing team has the task of identifying the various cultural meanings (e.g. gender or class meanings) that are intended for the product.The creative team then scan the cultural world for the objects, people or contexts that make the sought meaning live in the advertisement *(McCracken 1990 p.6)*.

Take, for example *Nike*'s ad campaign (*Advertising Age, Aug 9, 1993*). There's no female equivalent to Michael Jordan ; that is why the marketing team for the women's division at a 'sweaty man' company like *Nike* have such a challenge. *Nike* became the No. 1 athletic shoe marketer by appealing largely to men with its sometimes humourous advertising featuring sports heroes like Mr. Jordan and Bo Jackson. Don't whine, *Nike*'s advertisements say 'Just do it'. That sentiment may appeal to women who are just starting a fitness programme, but the idea of emulating super-athletes doesn't. It's more important to women to know they can succeed in a lot of areas, to be multidimensional. In its first TV campaign dedicated to the women's market they decided to take a reflective
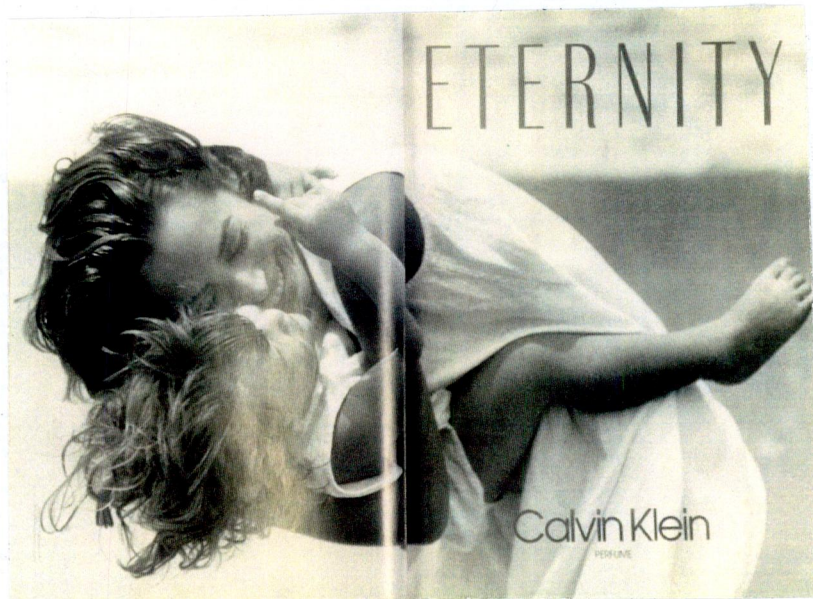
Fig. 2.1   A 1992 ad of *Calvin Klein* featuring the older woman and the nature of her life.

approach. This approach involved softening *Nike*'s image for women without compromising its athletic roots. *Nike* encourages women to use exercise as a way to take time for themselves and to achieve a balance in life. (fig. 2.0)

Another example is Calvin Klein. For Calvin Klein, men's underwear may be to the 1990s what blue jeans were to the marketer in the early 1980s. Klein's stylish men's underwear have become a cultural phenomenon due to the recruitment of real life pin-up boy/rap singer Markey Mark. Mr Mark sports the designer underwear in advertisements, at times appearing solo and at others in provocative poses with model Kate Moss. This campaign proved a boon to the brand, which after posting only small gains in the first three quarters of 1992, ended up with an 18 per cent increase in sales for the year and is now one of the largest divisions within the Calvin Klein product lines. His women's collection features older models such as Lauren Hutton and Patti Hansen, Klein believing their recruitment to be a strong statement (fig. 2.1). Quoting Klein

'Women who buy the collection [the higher-priced clothes] are not teenagers. And it seemed to me that they would feel really good, looking at a beautiful woman. They could identify with her.' (*Advertising Age, Aug 9, 1993*)

Therefore, the main objective of an advertisement is that the consumer should be able to associate the product with the images shown in the advertisement and allow the transfer of meaning to take place. The most crucial stage is when the advertisement is shown to the consumer. A photographic image, which is basically a mute set of objects, can be at the same time rich in meaning and imprecise, ambiguous and deceiving. The meaning that a consumer extracts from a given communication consists of both the meaning asserted in the message and also that inferred by the receiver.

Gendering of products and its role in promotion

The notion that products possess symbolic images is not a new one *(Levy 1959)*. These images are of concern to marketers because consumers not only purchase a product for its functional benefits but they purchase the image they

21

Fig. 2.2   *Bell*'s whiskey confirms to the association of liquor with having a masculine image.
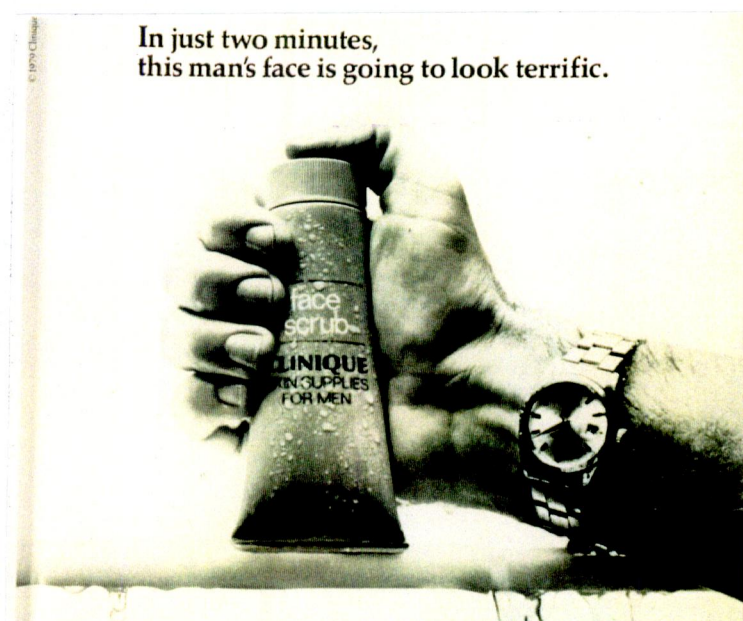

Fig. 2.3   *Clinique* is an example of a company targeting its product to a new market - skin products
              being formerly sex-specific.

perceive the product to have, whether real or imagined. In fact, advertising sells a great deal more than just products.

'Through the use of imagery, the display of lifestyles and the exercise and reinforcement of values, advertisements are communicators of culturally defined concepts such as success, worth, love, sexuality, popularity and normalcy.' (Leymore 1975; Price 1978; Williamson 1978)

Several studies have investigated recently the extent to which various types of products possess gender images (Allison, Golden, Mullet and Coogan,1979; Alreck, Settle, and Belch, 1982; Golden, Allison and Clee, 1977). Products found to have masculine images include a pocket knife, tool kit, shaving cream, cuff links and a briefcase, to name a few (Allison et al). Products with feminine images include a scarf, baby oil, hand lotion, bedroom slippers and gloves. Although consumers commonly hold gender images of products, the basis of those gender images is not completely understood. Allison et al. speculate that products may be sex-typed based on the gender of the group most likely to use the product. In addition, cultural norms relating to sex roles may dictate the types of products most appropriate for men and women to use implicating a circular relationship. This relationship between products' use and its gender image is intuitively logical but remains to be tested. As sex-roles change in society, new markets may open for products which have been previously sex-specific (e.g. hairspray for men).

Liquor has always been associated with having a masculine image. The Bell's whiskey advertisement (fig. 2.2) is no exception, with the copy exaggerating this male association. 'True spirit, Genuine character' carries a double meaning. The technique of advertising is to correlate feelings, moods or attributes to tangible objects, linking possible unattainable things with those that are attainable. The relationship between 'ideology' and 'subject' is one of simultaneous interdependence. In the Bell's advertisement nothing here 'says' that the fishermen are like Bells or that 'they' have a similar aura. We are given two signifiers, and required to make a 'signified' by exchanging them. The fact that we have to
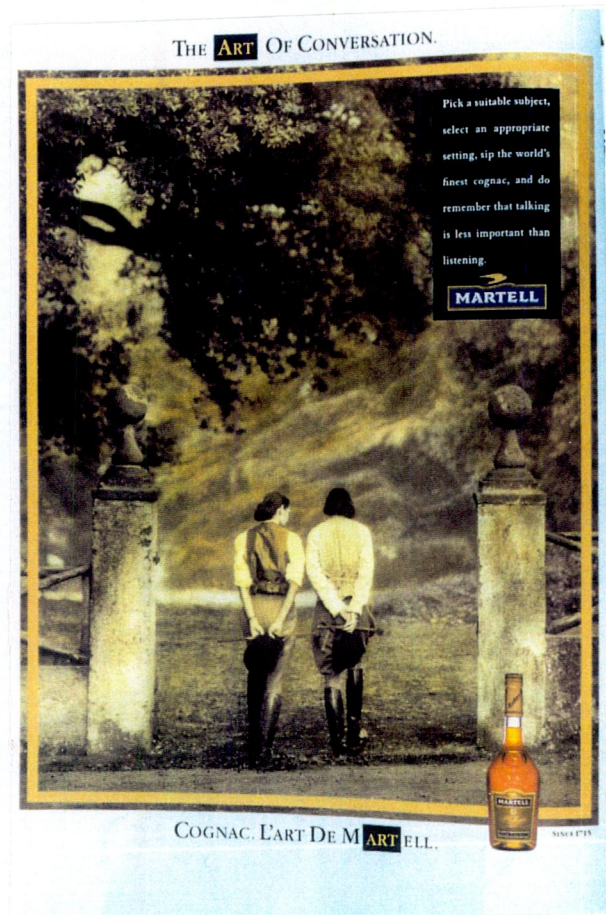
Fig. 2.4

Fig. 2.5   The above are examples of marketers altering the gender image of their products.

make this exchange, to do the linking work which is not done in the advertisement, but which is only made possible by its form, draws us into the advertisement. Its meaning only exists in this transformational space; the field of transaction; and it is here that we operate - we are the space.

'We are set to work on an ever-increasing number of areas of the body, labouring to perfect and eroticise an ever-increasing number of erotogenic zones. Every minute region of the body is now exposed to this scrutiny by the ideal . . . Moisturise,display, clean off, rejuvenate - we could well be at it all day, preparing the face to meet the faces that we meet.'

(Coward, 1984 pp 80-81)

Marketers have attempted, as well, to form gender images for products and brands. Advertisements for cosmetics and diet drinks have traditionally been aimed at women; with the theme of women concerned with physical attractiveness rising to 47.9 per cent in 1992. However, in an attempt to expand the market for products traditionally aimed at women, advertisements have more recently been directed at men with the stereotype of sex appeal rising to 15.6 per cent. One example being 'Clinique - skin supplies for men' (fig. 2.3). To what extent can marketers alter the gender image of a product, whether it is one they have created or one which has been culturally determined ?

The *Martell* liquor company (fig. 2.4) is positioning its cognac to a female market by enlisting two female models to promote the product. Can a stereotypically male product be perceived as acceptable for women as a result of two women promoting the product ? In the maturity stage of a product's life cycle, marketers often try to 'ungenderize' a product or brand. The *Raleigh* bicycle campaign (fig. 2.5) with its 'Saturday night, Sunday morning' slogan may be an example of this strategy. Beer has traditionally been positioned as a masculine product, but *Raleigh* has featured men and a woman, drinking beer together in a social situation under the 'Saturday night' slogan supposedly consuming the product. The woman is portrayed here in a non-traditional role, yet the ratio of male : female is 5 : 1 (the woman being the only person with her back to the

viewing audience). This advertisement clearly shows awareness of the changing role of women in society; the products here are ungenderized in an attempt to introduce the female into formerly male practices i.e. drinking beer and shown in activities and life outside the home; yet with a very tentative approach. Do consumers weigh promotional cues on an equal footing with usage cues in forming gender images for products ? We would hypothesize that usage cues are critical and the effectiveness of promotions could be enhanced by featuring the targeted gender in a 'usage' situation.

Sex role characteristics in promotions

Although a product's gender image up to this point has been characterised as either masculine or feminine, this distinction has been questioned and tested *(Allison, Golden, Mullet and Coogan 1979)*. Earlier studies conceptualised a products gender as a bipolar construct, while later studies began treating the masculinity and femininity of products as separate dimensions, prompted somewhat by *Bem's (1974)* research on sex roles. Bem was interested in classifying individuals according to their sex role orientation as masculine, feminine, androgynous or undifferentiated. Individuals rate themselves on a series of masculine, feminine and neutral trait dimensions and are subsequently categorised as high masculine, low feminine (a masculine orientation), high feminine, low masculine (a feminine orientation), high masculine, high feminine (androgynous) and low masculine, low feminine (undifferentiated).

The logic then followed that if people could be classified along these dimensions based on their sex role orientation, so too may products be perceived along these dimensions. Additional evidence supporting the gender classification of products is desirable. Potentially, marketers may be able to draw up a typology of products along gender dimensions which may provide insight into how classes of products may be characterised.

Exploring the roles men and women play in society, trait characteristics commonly assigned to men and women, and potential usage situations *(Dickson*

Fig. 2.6   Traditional role portrayals.
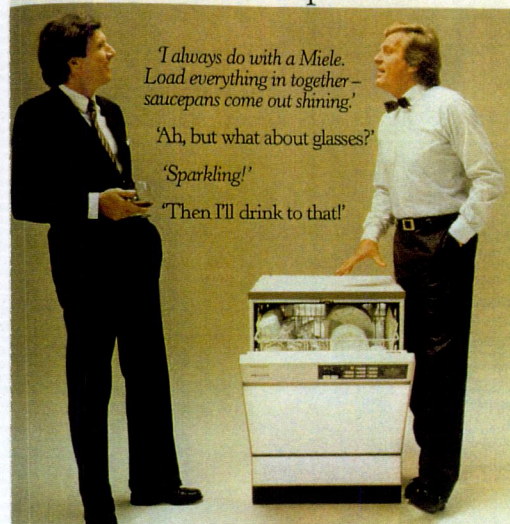
1980) may provide a starting point in such a classification scheme. For example, the category of household items may be perceived as highly feminine because of women's traditional role as housewife, though this stereotype is decreasing (4.9 per cent to 3.0 per cent). The *Miele* advertisements (fig. 2.6) portray their women totally 'at home' with their appliances while men are portrayed as 'alien' to the kitchen. *'Aha, no wonder you volunteered to wash up'* suggesting their incapability in the kitchen. 'Financial services' may be considered as masculine because of men's perceived knowledge or expertise in handling financial matters or, rather, their traditional assumption of this role. It is noteworthy here to recall the male stereotype of authority figure remains the highest frequency at 21.6 per cent (see Table 9). Groups of individuals may differ with respect to such gender stereotyping because of their own lifestyles. For example bachelors, dual career couples, even college students may be less likely than those residing in a traditional family structure to assign clearcut gender images to such products and services because of their own personal exposure to household maintenance, budgeting, etc. Such a classification scheme based on individuals' perceived roles, personal characteristics, and possible usage situations may provide advertisers with the answers on how to make their next strategy decision.

As mentioned earlier, product gendering has become an issue in developing promotional strategies. Marketers gender products in an effort to target new groups of customers and develop new market segmentations. Altering the gender of a product or service, however, is not undertaken without some degree of risk which (as the results show) accounts for the persistence of stereotypical images of men and women in British advertisements. While opening up new market segments, promoters risk alienating their established market. The question arises as to what degree men and women can be credible spokespersons for cross-gender products, given that product usage by men or women (as depicted in such advertisements) is likely related to the product's overall gender image. This concern is especially critical given the general sensitivity of males to using products with a feminine image. Can a woman credibly promote

an Individual Retirement Account ? Will the advertisement for 'the crumbliest, flakiest milk chocolate in the world' namely *Cadbury's flake* depicting a woman be as effective if the roles were reversed ?

Since these are 'products' which both men and women can certainly buy into, it is critical that the spokesperson not alienate target consumers. Advertisers know that women are much more emotionally attached to chocolate ; they see it as a treat, as an escape. Will a woman be effective promoting the latest IBM to business people ? Not according to the way gender is used in *Management Today*, with the male authority figure increasing to 35.9 per cent. Products and services such as computers and bank loans, have primarily been and remain to be promoted by men, whether targeted for the workplace or to parents in the home. Are there certain 'types' of masculine products a woman can endorse effectively ? Indeed, *Langer (1987)* addresses the confusion by stating :

'gender marketing in the 1980s and beyond means knowing when to address women as women, men as men, and people as people, regardless of sex.'

Gender perceptions of source characteristics in promotions

Are there definable source characteristics which may lend credibility to cross-gender promotions ? Research in social psychology may provide partial insight. An individual's appearance in terms of their physical attractiveness, grooming and physique have been found to affect perceptions of their masculinity and femininity. *Gillen (1977)* found that individuals are sex-typed based on their physical attractiveness. Attractive women are perceived to as less masculine than unattractive women while attractive men were perceived as more masculine than unattractive men. *Cash, Gillen and Burns (1977)* conducted further research to determine if attractiveness would be a detriment to women in the workplace, especially relative to stereotypically male occupations (where masculine traits would likely be important for success). They found that highly attractive women were less apt to be recommended for nonmanagerial jobs.
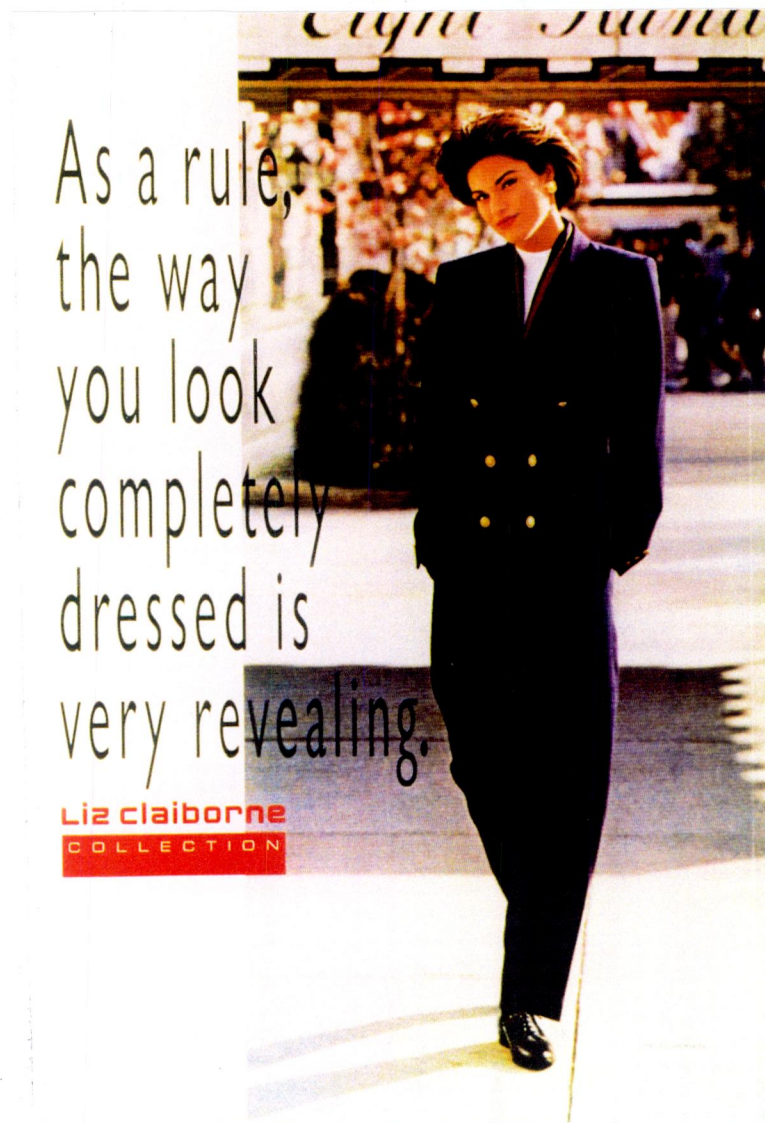
Fig. 2.7   Liz Claibourne's portrayal of the affluent contemporary female.

Taking *Gillen's (1977)* theory into account, it might be expected that attractive women will be less effective than unattractive or average-looking women in promoting products with a masculine image because the unattractive women are perceived as relatively masculine. This suggestion is clearly highlighted by the phenomenal result of 47.9 per cent of all advertisements (see Table 7) showing women depicted in the theme 'women concerned with physical attractiveness'. Can they all be termed as very attractive ? Also worthy of a mention here are the two highest product categories represented ; 'Cosmetics and beauty aids' and 'Clothes, fashion and fabrics' - products with a feminine image. Therefore, it seems attractive women are more effective promoting products with a feminine image and unattractive women more effective in the promotion of products with a masculine image. (since attractive men are perceived as more masculine). This latter suggestion may be faulty, however, given other research which has found that attractiveness is always an advantage for men, regardless of sex-typing *(Cash and Janda 1984)*. Additional evidence supporting the gender classification of products is desirable.

However, there is some evidence that an individual's grooming and physique influence perceptions of their masculinity and femininity. *(Cash and Janda 1984)*. Women groomed in a relatively masculine fashion (short hair, little makeup, clothed in a suit) were perceived as more competent and were more likely to be judged as potential managers than women groomed in a 'feminized' style. *Liz Claiborne's 1992* advertising (fig. 2.7) is an example of women groomed in a relatively masculine fashion - 'As a rule the way you look completely dressed is very revealing'. Individuals who are perceived as tall, strong and broadshouldered (whether male or female) are judged to have masculine personality traits and thought to be employed in a masculine-type occupation. Future research should investigate the extent to which these 'image' variables interact with the gender of a model and reflect on their perceived masculinity and femininity, thus, influencing the model's effectiveness in promoting 'gendered' products.
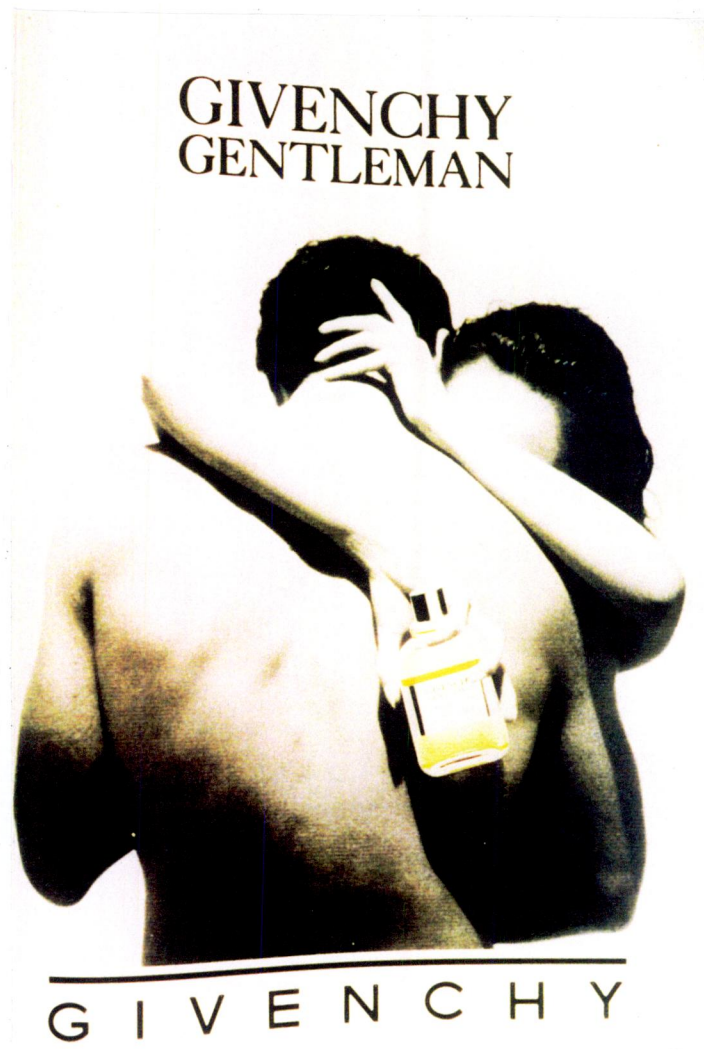
Fig. 2.8   The masculinity of this product is further emphasized with its use of a tall, muscular broad-shouldered model. (appearing in many of the 1992 magazines examined.

Martell's advertisement (fig. 2.4) proves that "pure" masculine appearances may be beneficial in the context of promoting certain gender-stereotyped products with its use of tall, broadshouldered models (judged to have masculine traits) and employed as horseriders. Certainly all male models featured throughout the magazine selection were tall, strong and broadshouldered ; *Boss, Givenchy,* (fig. 2.8) *Ellesse* to name but a few. There is little, if any, evidence whether a female model can enhance her credibility in promoting a 'masculine' product by wearing a business suit rather than a dress or by altering other aspects of her appearance. The use of masculine props (such as the suit) may enhance the effectiveness of a woman promoting a product with an otherwise masculine image.

It might also be questioned whether these image variables are more effective with certain classes of products. With increasing numbers of women entering the business environment in professional managerial positions, *she* may well be an effective promoter of business-type products or financial services (possibly reflective of her financial independence). These categories of products/services may be more applicable in terms of their sex-typed image than others which may be linked to roles women have not assumed in great numbers (e.g. building - builder, motor sports - rally driver). Similarly, there may be certain 'feminine' products men can or cannot endorse effectively (*'Clinique* for men' ; *Mr Muscle* oven-cleaner) and these too may be related to tasks which men have or have not begun to assume in the household.

Researchers have made considerable progress in broadening our understanding of the effects of changing sex roles on consumer's perceptions of products and promotions. It is clear, however, that marketers are in need of additional information regarding promotional strategies, product positioning strategies and the individuals to whom their strategies are aimed.
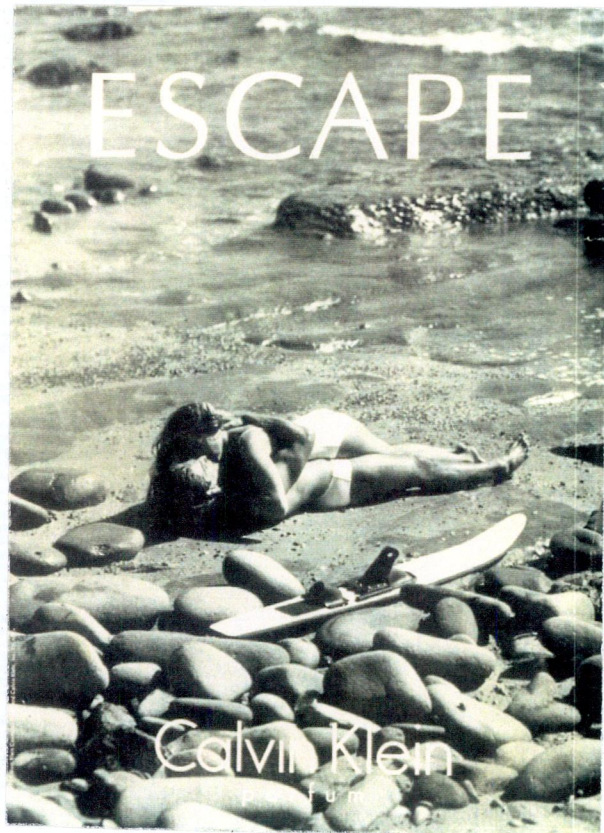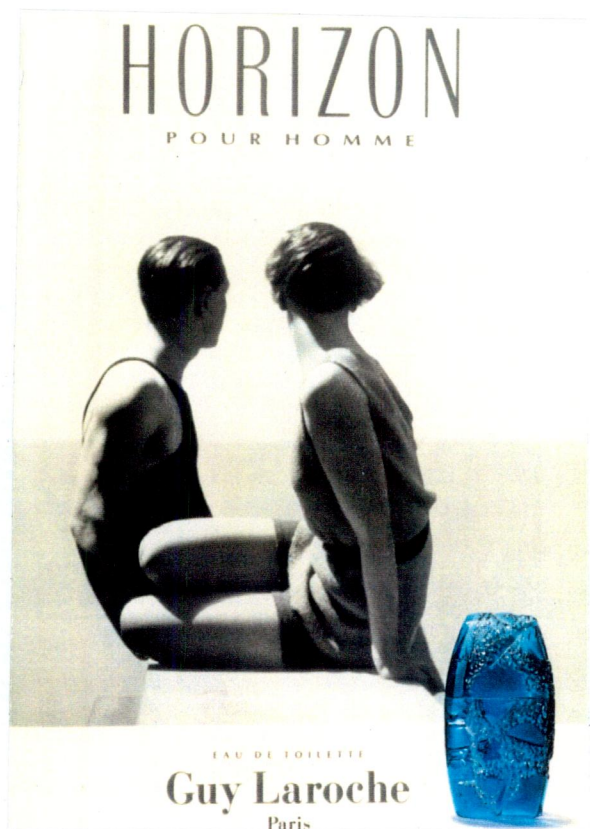
Fig. 2.9

Fig. 3.0

Calvin Klein and *Guy Laroche* introduce a new mood in their 1992 advertising.

CHAPTER FOUR CONCLUSION AND THE FUTURE OF ADVERTISING

As previously mentioned, the excessive use of sexual stereotypes, especially of women may have profound controversial social implications. The content analysis research indicates that some progress has taken place in depicting women more accurately and less negatively, but at such a slow rate these depictions are token and largely lost in the continuing communication of traditional stereotypes. This is in spite of the specific suggestions of *Whipple and Courtney (1980)* on how creators of TV commercials should portray women. This chapter questions the slow respondence of advertisers to the changing careers and roles of men and women in today's society and also provides suggestions for advertising's future.

Several factors might explain the modest change which has occurred ; these include

1 The advertising community is intransigent and chauvinistically resistant to change.

2 Their communicative conciseness make stereotypes the easiest efficient solution to the creative problem.

3 The size of the segment of consumers sensitive to sexism is small enough to be irrevelant to the most heavily advertised products.

4 Sexism in advertising does not affect consumer behaviour.

The Intransigence Argument

The intransigence argument, although no doubt believed by many feminists is deemed implausible for several reasons.

'The advertising industry is vigilant in its research in order to be in step with consumer attitudes and preferences' *(Bartos, 1983).*

Referring once again to the research which indeed contradicts *Bartos* to a certain point - the industry does not seem to be vigilant enough. Yet, while the advertising agencies have been slow to recognise the contemporary female, and are more intent on selling the male fantasy view of women there is a new mood prevailing. *Calvin Klein* (fig. 2.9) and *Guy Laroche* (fig. 3.0) seem to be encouraging this new mood and are portraying women as equal partners at

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Fig. 3.1   The traditional depiction of women, appearing in House and Garden 1982

play and in love with men. In one particular advertisement, women have even risen to occupy the office of president *(Donna Karen)*. Feminists may applaud this new marketing consciousness because - at last - they are being seen as they wish to be seen. Finally, the advertisement industry as an institution is guided less by principle or any arguments of ethics or morality than by the pragmatic concern with what sells. If sexism didn't sell, it wouldn't persist.

Stereotypes -The Easiest Solution ?

It may be more likely that creative limitations make establishing non-stereotypical roles difficult. The clarity of social stereotypes (a commercial culture's mythical images), the ease with which they can be evoked in production, and the reliability of what they evoke in consumers, all suggest their communicative efficiency. The creative challenge to avoid sexual stereotypes may be too difficult, without substantial economic motivation to justify the effort, or to hire the talent. This explains the reason why many advertisers are now showing product and product alone. *Robinson and Cornish kitchens,* for example, depict their handmade kitchen of 1992, uninhabited; yet at the forefront is a plate of fruit, a glass of wine, a newspaper, the inviting chair; all encouraging that woman or *man.* No kitchen advertisement in 1982 ever depicted this; the woman was always at home in her kitchen (fig. 3.1). Jewellery advertisements are also taking this approach, examples being *Tiffany & Co., Chanel, Cartier* etc.

Who Cares Enough To Act ?

The argument that the segment of sensitive consumers is small or irrelevant to many products is temporal, in that public awareness and concern may grow or diminish over time, and it depends critically on the degree to which these consumers display their sensitivity. While awareness and concern has apparently been spreading over the last couple of decades, this may not translate itself into altered consumer behaviour. Every advertising professional knows of examples where attitudes have been changed, but these have not automatically translated into changed brand sales. If awareness of sexism in advertisements does not lead to changed brand preferences, changed purchase intentions and probabili

ties, or at the extreme, boycotts of those advertised products, then there is little economic pressure or incentive for advertisers to change their ways.

Agreement among psychologists suggests that changes in behaviour can be induced by exposing people to symbolic messages in books, films, television and advertising. In the case of sex-role stereotyping, some viewers might use the role model as a mirror to gauge what they perceive as appropriate behaviour. It is as if the advertisements can create a self-fulfiling prophesy where a person tries to become like the model featured in the advertisement. Indirectly, others may treat women in accordance with the imagery they observe in the advertisement. *Whipple and Courtney (1979)* for example, argue that :

> . . . indirect effects may extend to an increased willingness by observers of both sexes to approve role limitations for others, to lowered sensitivity to the problem, and to expectations of sex discriminations . . . advertising indirectly produces a negative effect,working to limit the aspirations of men and women and encouraging them to have a stereotypical view of occupational roles.

Growing evidence suggests that mass media play an important role as a source for the development of our societal conceptions. Hence, the frequent depiction of women and men in settings involving physical attractiveness may contribute to a preoccupation with appearance, vanity and narcissism. Such a likely tendency might then prelude or limit attention to more intrinsically important forms of self development or improvement. The pervasive focus on physical attractiveness in advertisements may lead to the depersonalisation of men and women as objects that require mere grooming. *Lasch (1979)* suggests that some feminine portrayals are designed to intensify the growing narcistic tendencies among women.

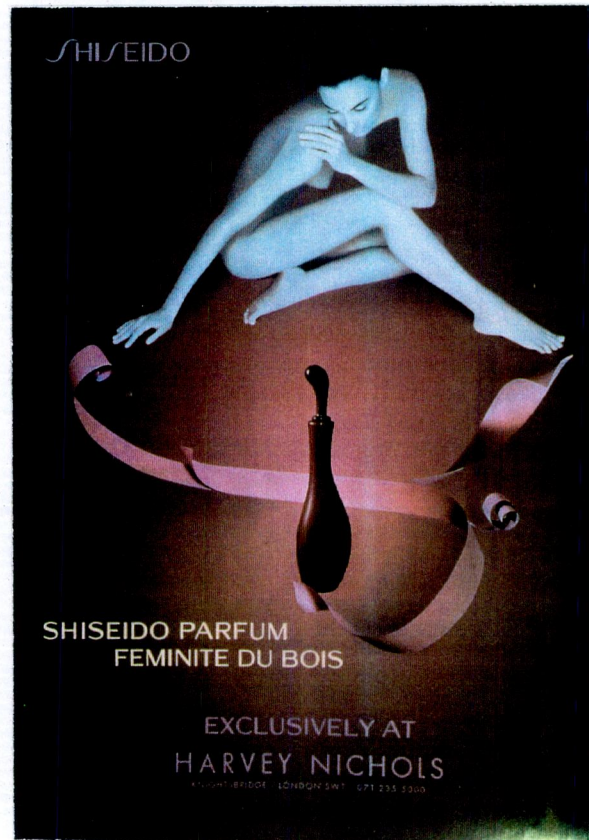Fig. 3.2   Are women being portrayed too thin ?

Fig. 3.3   Example of the 'neutral' role portrayal .

ADVERTISING IN THE FUTURE

Advertisers need to be wary of stressing the 'Wrong Elements'.

It is clear that marketers are in need of additional information regarding promotional strategies, product positioning strategies, and the individuals to whom their strategies are aimed. Advertisers need to be wary of stressing the 'Wrong Elements'. It is possible that advertisers have been addressing the wrong elements in their handling of female role portrayals in advertisements. These 'wrong elements' *(Kilbourne, 1987)* include the objectification of women and its relationship to violence, the negative attitude towards maturity, the obsession with 'skinniness' leading to potential eating disorders, and the unrealistic 'ideal' beauty standard. An example here is a *Shiseido* perfume advertisement (fig. 3.2) where the woman is so thin she echoes the narrow shape of the bottle. *Formule B* (fig. 3.3) depict women as neutral to men. Perhaps, they can be termed to be using the 'right' elements

Advertisers need to realise that role depictions that worked in the past may not work in the future.

The perceptions of women may be directly impacted by such films as *Still Killing Us Softly* and the growing focus on women's studies and feminine literature. This situation indicates that the offensiveness associated with female role portrayals is dynamic rather than static. In other words, because of the growth in awareness of women's issues, advertisements that may have been acceptable in the past may now be considered inflammatory. Advertisers should therefore not necessarily continue to rely on past successful role depictions employing female models.

Advertisers cannot risk alienation of affluent women.

Affluent contemporary women appear to be a sensitive and a proactive segment of the population. These women with a high social profile, may often be key market opinion leaders for new products ; therefore, marketers must be acutely aware of possible alienation as a result of shortsighted advertising strategies.

Fig. 3.4   *Motorola* 1992, depict men and women on an equal basis. Here, we
              have the portrayal of men and women in roles that actually reflect their
              day to day living

Corporate public relations has a crucial function.

Corporate public relations must be charged with demonstrating to potentially sensitive consumer groups the company's concern for 1) the advertising portrayal of and 2) the internal corporate treatment of women. This programme can be facilitated in part through a continual monitoring of women's perceptions of their role portrayals in advertisements as done in previous studies. One thing is clear : Advertisers must communicate better with the contemporary female audience about the improvements that have been made as well as making further substantial changes in their advertising messages. *Motorola* (fig 3.4) have taken the right approach and depict men and women on an equal basis. Here, we have the portrayal of men and women in roles that actually reflect their day to day living.

Role portrayals of women in advertising should be an internally marketed element of corporate policy.

The fact that a growing segment of women are entering the corporate ranks *(Lundstrom, Sciglimpaglia 1977 p 72-79)* and the interaction between the salesforce and socially sensitive buyers in the distribution channel (e.g. a large retailer concerned about consumer boycotts and adverse publicity), encourages corporations to 'market' their role portrayal philosophy internally with their own employees. In particular, those employees with high customer or public contact need to be sensitive to this issue and able to promote the company's proactive stance toward appropriate portrayals of women.

In conclusion, it is clear that advertisers must deal with a very sensitive, complex and emotionally charged set of perceptions toward role portrayals in advertisements. The results of my analysis show that advertising's role portrayals have undergone some metamorphoses from 1982 to 1992, although these shifts were not dramatic. However, what is revealed is a blurring of the conventional directions in the advertising address to men and women i.e. constructions of masculinity and femininity are less fixed. Certainly the limitations of my sample need to be pointed out. The sample, although selected from a spectrum of magazines and representative of the highest circulation of magazines in

Britain, was somewhat small with limited availability of magazines. However, one thing remains clear : my results remain consistent with those of previous studies.

The research investigating the influence of changing sex roles on individuals perceptions of promotions and products indicates that traditional gendering of products may be declining with both sexes consuming certain types of products, such as beer and skin products. Marketers need additional information in this area, however, regarding promotional strategies, product positioning and the individuals to whom their strategies are aimed.

What may be needed is the portrayal of women and men in roles that actually reflect perceived attributes and their individuality. Explorations in the roles men and women play in society, trait characteristics commonly assigned to men and women, and potential usage situations *(Dickson 1980)* may provide a starting point to advertising's future. This study reveals that some progress has taken place in depicting women more accurately and less negatively, yet further changes are required. Hence, one may conclude that the changing role of women in British advertising is both fact and fiction.

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