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National College of Art and Design

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Department of Industrial Design

New Masculinity: A psychological assessment of masculinity and new masculinity with particlur reference to the Alessi Design Factory.

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Introduction

”Everything has become sexual, anything can be an object of desire; power, knowledge - everything is interpreted in terms of phantasies, in terms of repression, and sexual stereotyping reigns in every last corner” (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 9).
Design by its nature is interwoven with so many different areas, from technological sciences to lifestyle marketing. Industrial design has lead critics and historians alike to examine design in a broader sense, viewing design not as an object, but as a statement. A design has socio-cultural roots and in turn will stimulate these areas, making the design of products multi-faceted and complex. Designs are born from the current socio-cultural climate and peoples response to it, this is why an objects aesthetics, form and meanings are all transient factors, and can only be assessed objectively to the culture of the time. The product development process nowadays encompasses a large area of empirical and scientific studies such as, psychology, philosophy, advertising and marketing. Products are therefore formed not from a singular idea, but an amalgamation of the consumers desires and fantasies, their aspirations, and cultural and political context. All designs have to be carefully coded and marketed to be in flow with current social trends. Within the various consumer desires is one of the largest and most successful selling points, gender, be it femininity or masculinity. Themes of gender run through all forms of culture, art, literature, music, film. Design has been disliked and criticised for it’s overly simplified and stereotyped approach to gender issues. As feminists have opposed designs for their superficial interpretation of femininity, masculinity has been also misinterpreted in a similar way. However the Gung Ho attitude to masculinity has been accepted because it relied on basic and yet successful selling points. Male consumers saw masculinity in design as almost an animated hyperreal interpretation of reality, and therefore it’s presence in product design was accepted and desired.

Differentiation in design was initially a marketing ploy, but later became a way of providing visual warnings against homosexual tendencies. This is especially clear

in the area of fashion, and in product design to a certain extent. Products designed for the male market have in general always had tones of competition, achievement and heterosexuality, while female products have evolved around issues of maternity and domesticity.

Masculinity in design is not a singular issue which can be addressed and discussed, but is an entire history, development and ever changing concept. Masculinity has however retained certain characteristics, which have been open to extreme criticism from both male and female commentators. Revolutions have come an gone, and now masculinity has reached a stage of involution and self reflection. Masculinity has never initiated its own evolution, but has continually responded to forces against it as a way of redefinition. The archetype masculinity has never seen much change and this is due to certain emotional inarticulacy among men and an attitude of complacency. Nevertheless the old and tired masculinity has been changing slowly and is being redefined in culture, fashion, and now in the product design sphere.

To understand the whole concept of masculinity it is necessary to understand some of the cultural and sociological issues surrounding it. Also to understand the psyche of man, a look at psychology can be beneficial at proving and disproving common myths and stereotypes. Psychology is now an important factor in forecasting consumer trends and market requirements, as it gives an insight to why people are attracted to certain form, colours and semantics.

Masculinity although a prominent force in design is also an area that is finally being addressed an analysed for it's shortcomings. No matter how impartially discussed, the fact of concentrating on masculinity could be seen as another male self promoting campaign. This will hopefully not be the case as designers will write a new language for design masculinity, which will embody more refined and articulate aspects of the male personae.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the treatment of masculinity in product design and to look closely at the emergence of new masculinity. The image of social and cultural masculinity has changed, and this thesis will highlight this new definition of masculinity in the product design world. The interrelated areas of marketing and advertising are researched and reviewed for their influence on the development and promotion of new masculinity in product design. The first chapter deals with the social and political history of masculinity, and how early product differentiation was to lead to gender stereotyping in product design. For this chapter Penny Sparke is consulted for her knowledge on femininity in design while Adrian Forty gives an account of the beginning of product differentiation. From this chapter the problems of masculinity in design will be highlighted, along with the social factors that contribute to the to the evolution of masculinity itself. The representation of masculinity and femininity in product design up until the late 1980s will be discussed. For the purpose of understanding masculinity and the masculine consumer, chapter 2 will uncover some of the mysteries behind masculinity in design. In the second chapter a psychological insight is given to why men and male products appeal to the male psyche and why they are marketed in such a way. Together with this analysis, this thesis will attempt to establish how various marketing strategies utilise these psychological findings, in their approach to gender and sexuality in products. New Masculinity, is reviewed in chapter 3 with examples from the current Alessi catalogue. The Alessi philosophy expressed through their products, is a new and intellectual way of confronting gender in products. They have redefined masculinity, and they have offered a new revamped masculinity in product design.

Chapter 1.

Masculinity in its different forms.

Macro masculinity.

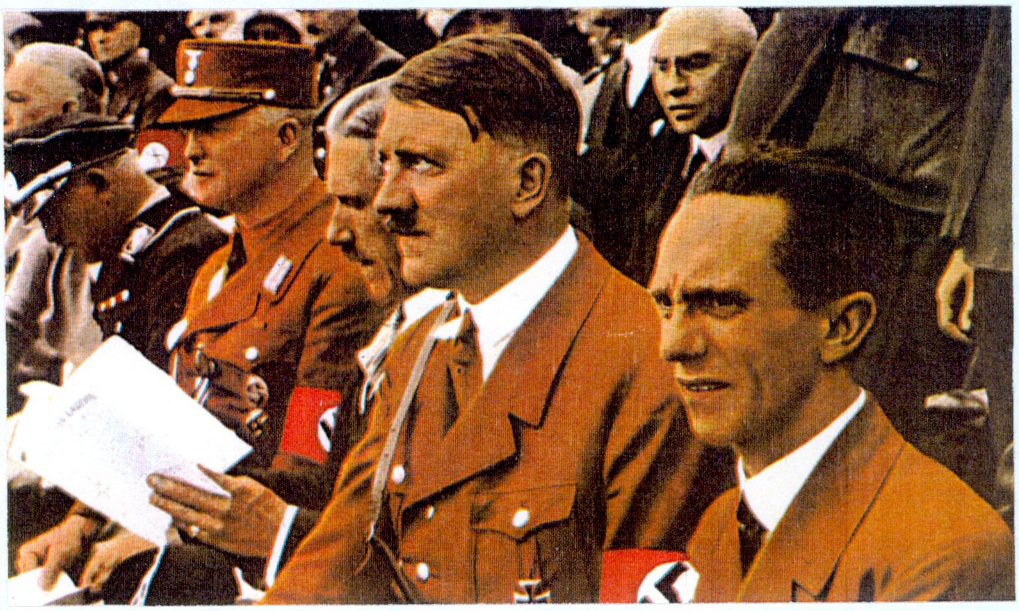
Masculinity in its entirety encompasses cultural, social, and political issues, which can be generally classed as gender studies. Although there are many guises of masculinity they are all dependent on each other. Masculinity is the psychological and somatic identity and the nature and characteristics of the male. Masculinity can be found in non-living things, for example consumer products. It is therefore necessary to discuss masculinity in design in a larger context. The history of masculinity, the signs, signifiers, codes and trends most all be understood before analysing modern/new masculinity. “Only now after two decades of feminism are men finally beginning to respond with extensive analyses of their own gender.” (Middleton, 1992, p. 6) Industrial design because of its many references is influenced by cultural trends and lifestyles. Masculinity in the design sphere has always had strong connections to femininity, although for the most part has been antagonistic. Feminists have fought there own separate struggles and are a group that have a huge effect upon masculinity. “Manhood is used to sell everything from cigarettes and politicians to toilet cleaners and toys.”(Middleton, 1992, p. 3) So masculinity in design has been developed as a myth and perpetuated through the marketing environment as a transcendental concept, which is designed to be desirable and often manufactured to suit the consumers mindset. Masculinity is most prominent and defined in the product design world. It is because of the presense of design in society, that has also brought with it a form of market led masculinity.

Masculinity in politics.

The political background of masculinity has been affected by major disturbances in history these include industrialisation, World War 1, World War 2, and the female suffrage movement. The socio-economic factors of the 1850s saw society

being divided into working class, middle and business class. With these economic distinctions also came a more defined difference between masculinity and femininity. Men were cast as rugged, active and absent while women became domestic and passive. Recent critical theory states that male prowess and hegemony was heightened by the First World War and again by the Second World War. The Second World War saw Nazi Germany develop the Superman Theory (See Fig. 1), and through careful media manipulation, had the German public believe the propaganda.

Fig 1. Hitler, Himmler, and Goebbels in Nazi uniform. An example of chauvinism and narcissism, the Superman Theory.

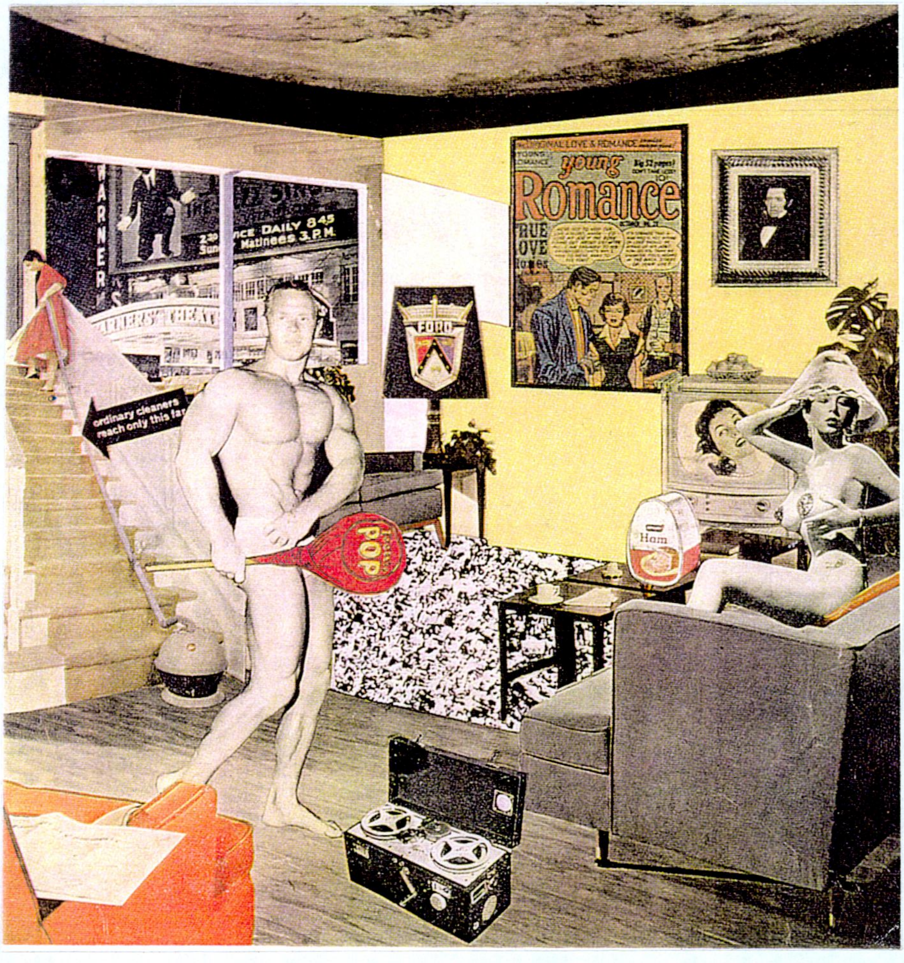


Men were to be dominant, virile, and pure and this was expressed through indulgent military clothing. Women were exploited in film to boost morale and ego. This was an example of what Nietzsche referred to as the Superman Theory, and was more vigorous and powerful than the Oedipus Complex, men wanting absolute control and dominance.

> He at the very beginning of history of mankind, was the Superman whom Nietzsche only expected from the future. Even today, the members of a group stand in need of the allusion that they are equally and justly loved by their leader but the leader himself need no one else, he may be of the masterly nature, absolutely narcissistic, but self confident, and independent. (Freud, 1923, p.93)

The sixties and seventies brought more turbulent years to political masculinity, with the sexual liberation years and pressure from the homosexual community. Also around this time there is the Men Against Sexism movement started by men, was an attempt to highlight the injustices committed by men, and to resolve modern masculinity to a more compassionate level. Richard Hamilton in his collage, *Just what is it that makes today's home so different, so appealing* (see fig. 2). seems to define the dreams and aspirations of an entire era. The programme for his collage was, men, women, food, history, newspapers, cinema, domestic appliances, cars, space, comics, T.V., telephone, information, interior/exterior space. This collage was done in 1956 a showed a realistic and depressing view of the consumer society in America. This collage illustrated the packaged lifestyles and gender stereotypes that were so abundant. The hippie era and the psychedelic rock years of the 70s saw a change in the traditional roles of gender, with men and women expressing themselves through music and art, and forming a more equal and classless lifestyle.

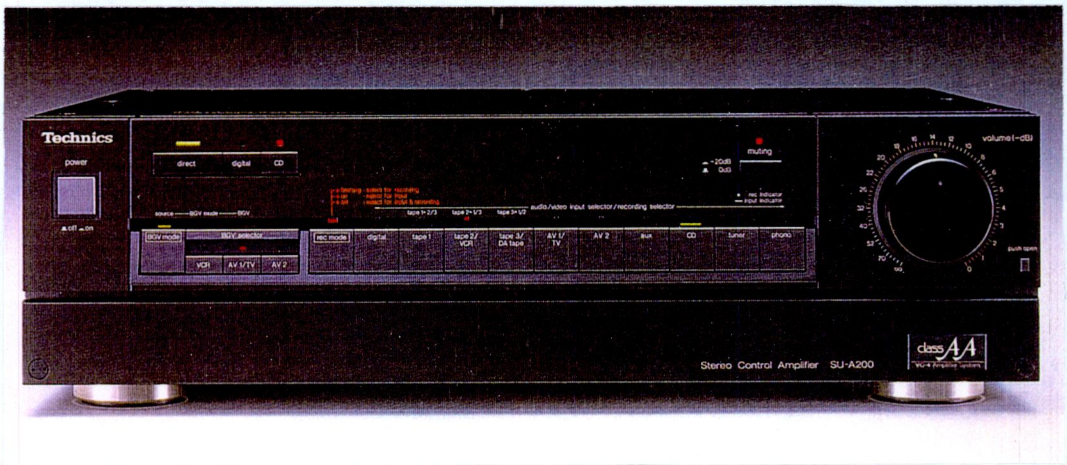
Fig. 2 What is it that makes today's home so different, so appealing. Richard Hamilton, 1956.


Young Romance
True Love
Ford
ordinary cleaners reach only this far
POP
Ham

The commodification of latent desires.

Although products are designed and marketed at certain groups the femininity/masculinity and heterosexuality/homosexuality of the products are interpreted usually some time later by the consumer. This is not to say that marketing people get it wrong but the passive semantics of an object can be deciphered differently and often small details of a products function and form could change it's overall meaning. Masculinity in design is varied, and can be divided into three separate areas. The first being male products, aimed and marketed to suit male needs and desires. The car industry is perfect example as the car purpose is often marketed as a fertility symbol, and the car it's self demands masculine aggression and dominance to yield the peak handling and excitement . The second area are products that are formed and styled on male body or are suggestive of the male form. Freud states that swords are symbols of the phallus. These products glorify the mesomorphic male body, of ruggedness and muscle definition. Such products include the form and styling of Japanese Sports cars of the 80s. In architecture it has been said that buildings have a gender and Le Corbusier derived his lexicon of materials from building types mainly inhabited by men (factories and monasteries).' Thirdly is the area of male semantics where the product expresses themes beyond that of the function or form, these are usually themes of ambition and sexuality.

Fig. 3 The black box styling of Hi-fi's, an illustration of a Technics amplifier.



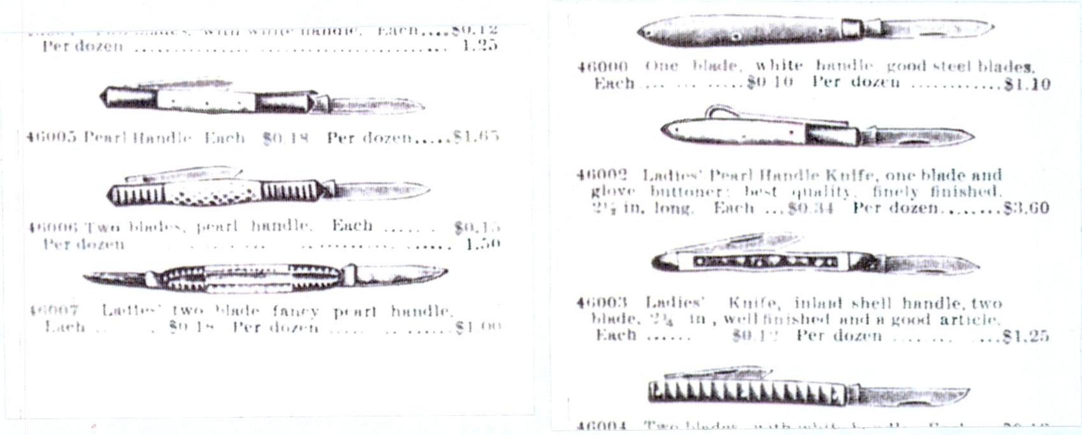
Hi-fi's (see fig. 3) are a product area in which male semantics feature strongly, as it can be seen the sexuality and seductiveness attached to the materials and finish of audio goods. Also within the technological hi-fi industry a lot of the active (functional) semantics are overly complicated as to appeal to the male ego. This is again an attempt to capitalise on the male desire of wanting to command and understand products, and also to add a sense of skill to operating the system.

> Many men are still imprisoned in emotional isolation, living out repressive masculine roles. Even though many men today have a clearer awareness of their need for emotional fulfilment, the essence of what it means to 'be a man' has changed surprisingly little. The pillars of maleness continue to be strength, invulnerability and maintaining a competitive edge. many men continue to feel that they must prove themselves every day. For many men even after years of changing stereotypes, emotional honesty and openness are still among the sacrifices they make to manhood. (Naifeh, 1987, p. 22)

This social isolation allows the masculine identity to produce its own direction which does not have to confirm to other facets of society. This male emotion martyrdom is every present in the product design industry, as male products are the voice of many a men's desire to express their stoicism.

It is important when discussing masculinity to see the portrayal of femininity in design, as it was often the case that femininity was designed and marketed from a male perspective. Differentiation in design was highlighted by Adrian Forty, where as far back as 1895 an American mail order catalogue started to make incremental changes to the form of pocket knives and produced 131 variations (see fig. 5)

Fig. 5 The selection of female knives from 1895



Per dozen 1.25

46005 Pearl Handle Each $0.18 Per dozen.....$1.65

46006 Two blades, pearl handle. Each $0.15
Per dozen 1.50

46007 Ladies' two blade fancy pearl handle.
Each .... $0.18 Per dozen $1.00

46000 One blade, white handle good steel blades.
Each .... $0.10 Per dozen $1.10

46002 Ladies' Pearl Handle Knife, one blade and glove buttoner; best quality, finely finished.
2½ in. long. Each ...$0.34 Per dozen........$3.60

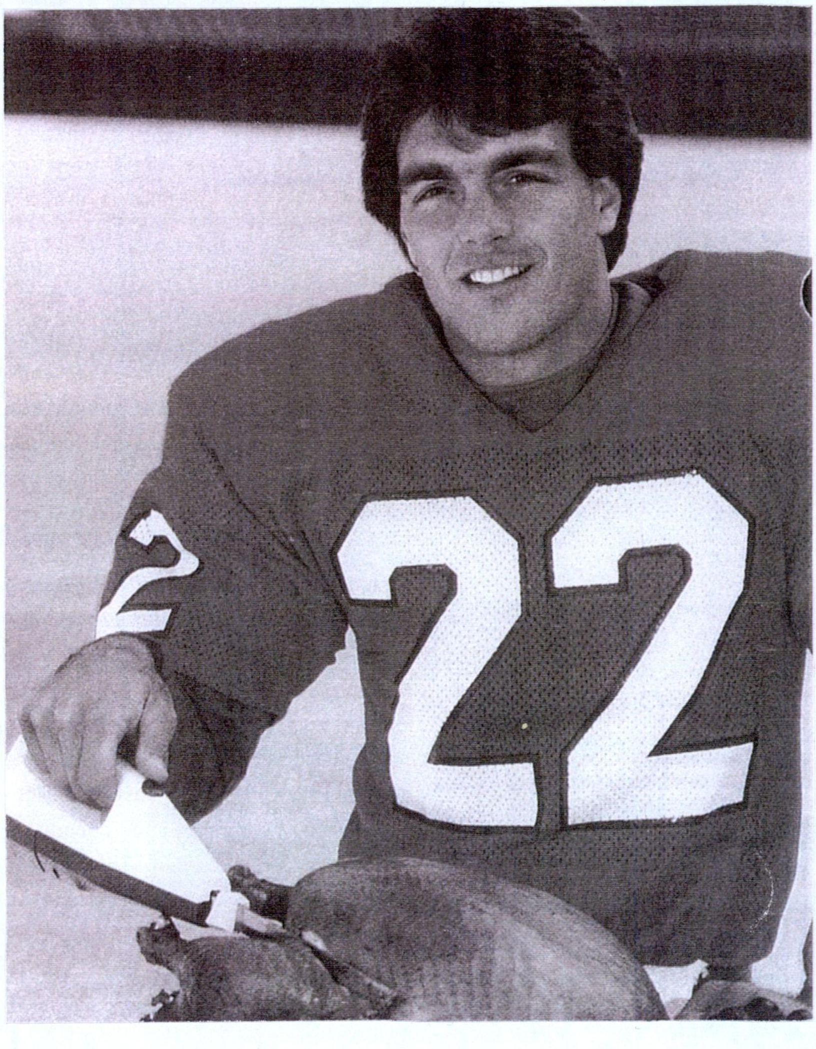
46003 Ladies' Knife, inlaid shell handle, two blade, 2¾ in, well finished and a good article.
Each ...... $0.12 Per dozen $1.25

The knives were divided into four categories, ‘ladies’, ‘men’s’, ‘boys’, and, ‘men’s heavy pocket and hunting’. (Forty, 1994, p. 60)

It was not so much the subtle changes that made this concept so clever, but the idea that new markets were opened using virtually the same product. This was because the image of the product had been cosmetically altered to suit the female and male stereotypes of the time. The women’s edition being smaller and having coloured flower illustrations, juxtaposed with the mans model which was bigger, heavier and embodied all the blueprints of masculinity.

Ellen Lupton in here recent article, deals with the introduction of the electronic carving knife to America in the 40s. It was originally aimed at the female (housewife) market, however it was the functional nature of the product that determined the market area. The carving knife was used to bolster the insecure ego of the new American suburban husband, as it was the male ritual of food preparation and also the traditional role of food provider. (see fig. 4)

Fig. 4 1940s advertisement for the electric carving knife aimed at the male market



Masculinity and indeed male semantics in product design have been stereotyped, usually to avoid male self reflection and also because the stereotype provided a comfortable and sometimes egotistical image.

Another reason for differentiation, apart from the marketing element, was to provide a clear warning against homosexual attraction in social encounters, viewed as unacceptable to mainstream society and a threat to 'manhood'. (Flugel, 1930, p. 34) This idea that masculinity in design has developed codes that warn against homosexuality, is clearly expressed in the design and layout of men's changing rooms and toilets. Toilets are developed around the cultural prohibition of looking at ones neighbour while urinating, which initiated the structure of the men's room and was designed to ward off: fear of the abject and homosexual desire. (Edelmann, 1996, p. 152)

Gender stereotyping

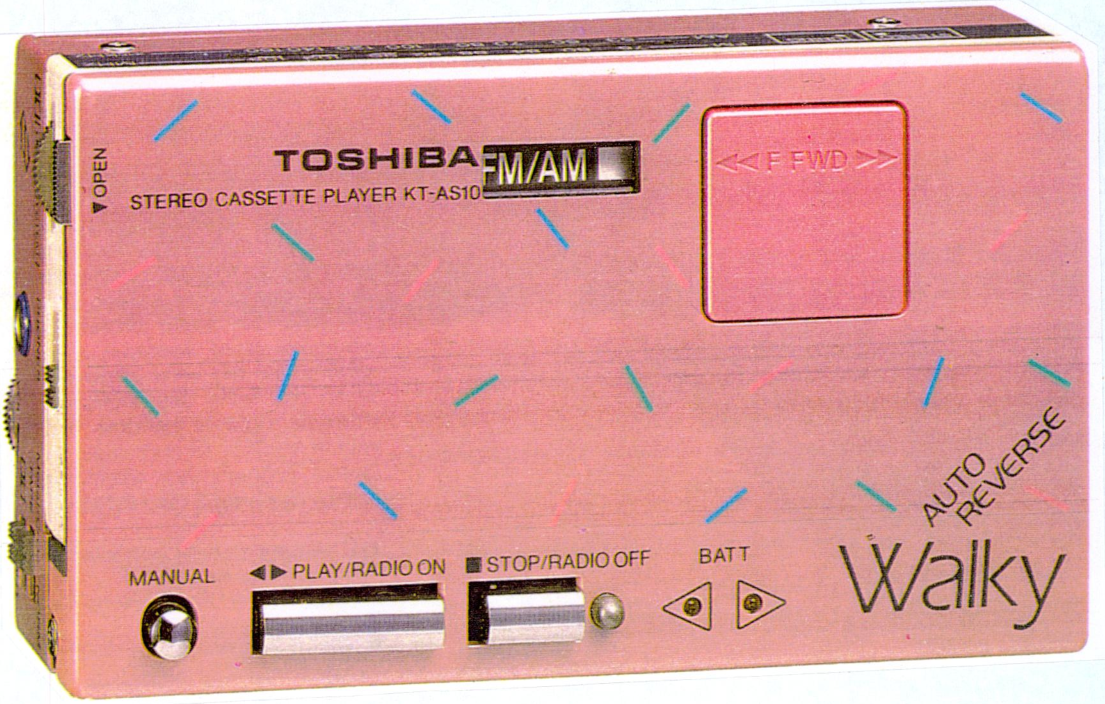
The stereotyping of the sexes is in product design a short cut in market research, enabling designers to have an off the shelf, half baked package of male and female, colours, forms, images and semantics. Masculinity, expressed through hard geometric forms, technologically advanced and potent semantics, contrasted the pastel, curved and simplified form of femininity.

> The use of such strategies by designers can be viewed in a number of different ways. These were clearly tactics aimed at increasing sales and can be seen that light, as a manipulative and exploitive means of offering women what they thought they wanted. Equally this could be seen as men taking women's culture out of women's hands in order to feed it back to them in a pre-digested form thereby denying them opportunity for creativity. (Sparke, 1994, p.124)

Penny Sparke demonstrates the feminine undercurrents in product design in her book, The Sexual Politics of Taste, and gives a good account of the designer femininity expressed throughout the design spectrum and using product design examples such as the 1950^{s} pink vacuum cleaner designed by James Dysons which was an ironic statement of the unyielding stereotypes of the time. Yet thirty

years later, Toshiba produced a pink cassette recorder, probably hoping that such simplistic product differentiation would go unnoticed (see fig. 6).

Fig. 6 A pink personal stereo from Toshiba 1985, illustrating the colour stereotyping of products

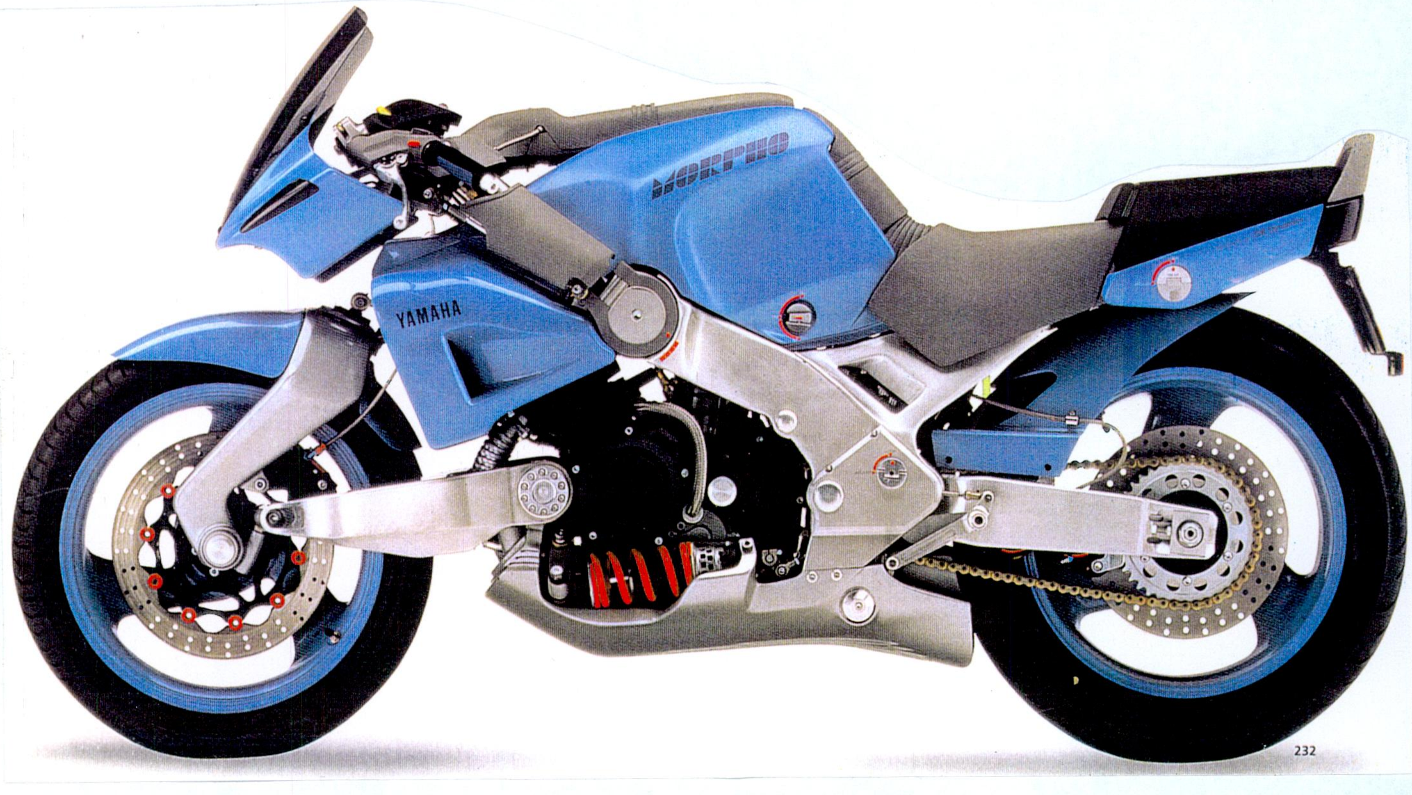

TOSHIBA
FM/AM
STEREO CASSETTE PLAYER KT-AS10
OPEN
F FWD
AUTO REVERSE
Walky
MANUAL
PLAY/RADIO ON
STOP/RADIO OFF
BATT

As feminine design has been constructed from the lowest common denominator, masculinity has also suffered the same fate. "It was consumerism and the marketplace rather than political struggle and therapy that was providing a language for changing masculine identities."(Middleton, 1992, p. 191) This is a common understanding of the product design process that it is marketing led, subordinate to the real needs of the consumer, but psychologically appeasing the consumers with trendy lifestyle marketing campaigns. Masculinity was manipulated for market demands, and recently is being reinvented to suit social demands.

> This move away from the hard forms and manifestations of technology, the hard edged black box, towards a consideration of the sensual comfort response, subjectivity is to be welcomed since it implies a greater understanding of peoples psychological and sensory needs. On the other hand , it also highlights the marketing of such desires and pleasures as commodities and the addition of feminine ingredient in product design (Pawley, 1992, p.24)

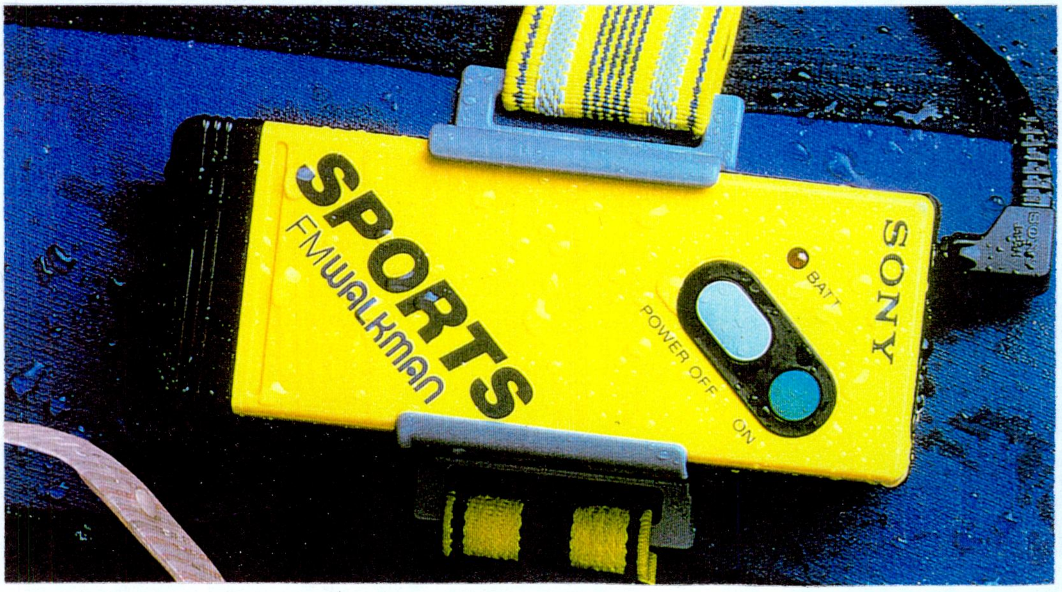
As discussed previously masculinity has been coded into colours, symbols and forms, which unfortunately have remained strong over the past century. Yamaha, a Japanese motorcycle manufacturer, introduced the *Morpho* (see fig. 7) in 1989, and in a deliberate attempt to counter the flashy and dynamic bike styling of the eighties, made the bike look regressive and purposely unstyled. Although this was done in direct opposition to the technological based styling of the time, the semantics of the product were almost identical, in that it expressed the archaic blueprints of masculinity i.e. roughness, narcissism, and prowess.

Fig. 7. A retro styled Yamaha motorbike still containing the archetype masculinity. 1989.



It is still true today that this changing of maybe colour and materials could alter the target market/the same product. Sony a major home entertainment company, produced a range of audio products aimed at the young and energetic market (see fig. 8). Using what could be described as primary colours the products had a childish quality about them. Stereos and Hi-fis were coloured in yellow and had bright graphics, indicating the sport references. This was also marketed a certain lifestyle, which was synthesised to suit a certain type of person, who would aspire to living or experiencing this lifestyle.

Fig. 8. Sony sports radio, another area of stereotyping, however is a unisex product.



Masculinity evolving.

In Britain during the eighties, it was the decade of Thatcherism that spawned a contradiction of images and metaphors of masculine identity: toy boy, new man, new father, lager lout, the yuppie. This was great time for advertising and marketing as the masculine image could be contorted and manipulated to reflect consumer trends, but usually as an attempt to regenerate the masculine theme under some new and superficial guise.

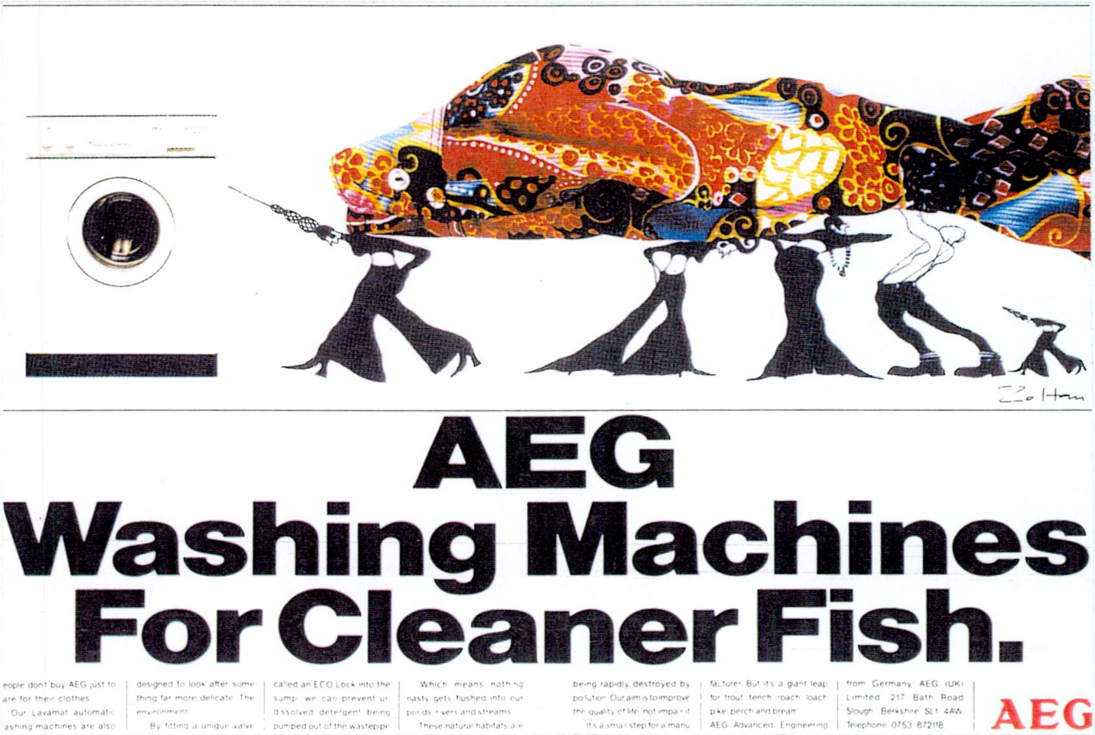
The mid eighties saw subtle changes to the backbone of masculinity, and in 1997 men appearing in an edition of the Mother Care catalogue. An early deviation was the publication of Cosmo Man in the 1970s , which didn't succeed due to the abruptness of it's arrival, and that the British male was still too conservative to buy a magazine. A psychological reason behind it's failure is the fact that a product so closely aligned with that of the female would be perceived as having certain homosexual overtones, and therefore would undermine the masculine mentality of the time. Another angle was taken in the repackaging the new masculine themes, which was to put the male in a caring and fatherly context. The L'enfant poster although pop and mainstream was a huge success, which featured a male naked to the waist, cradling a young baby. This makes masculinity approachable through the infant, who symbolises fidelity and monogamy. This poster was liked especially by women, who saw it as an optimistic representation of the satiated man. Freudian analysis suggests more subliminal motivations, identifying the baby as a substitute for the phallus, and this mininmising of the phallus in design, was the beginning of new masculinity.

> The new man, non competitive, yet successful, who prioritised love and relationship over personal fitted perfectly into an advertising market which was increasingly concerned with lifestyle marketing rather than particular products. (Chapman, 1988, p. 227)

Another political movement regarding social and environmental issues was the green movement which had an effect on the portrayal of masculinity and also on masculinity. The Green Movement became quite popular in the mid eighties and this style of consciousness began to reshape acquisitiveness. (Whiteley, 1992, p. 64) This was a good introduction to the concept of new masculinity, as men became more aware of the changing semantics of consumer products. The wastefulness and exuberance of the eighties was surely coming to an end. Washing machines(see fig. 9) to cars all had themes of environmental protection and preserving resources. To look at this cynically, one could see it as another cleverly orchestrated marketing strategy reflecting the current political climate, and the products expressing these ideas on a merely superficial basis. However environmental protection brought with it other areas of interest, because to care

about the environment, one had to care about the welfare of others whether they be family or friends. This meant that men began to realise that there was a darker side to the instant gratification of consumerism, that by-products, toxins, environmental damage would all create problems for offspring and future generations. So masculinity was slowly losing its selfishness, and gaining a responsible social stance.

Fig. 9. A.E.G. washing machine advertisement appealing to the conscientious consumer



eople dont buy AEG just to are for their clothes

Our Lavamat automatic ashing machines are also designed to look after something far more delicate The environment

By fitting a unique valve called an ECO Lock into the sump we can prevent undissolved detergent being pumped out of the wastepipe

Which means nothing nasty gets flushed into our ponds rivers and streams

These natural habitats are being rapidly destroyed by pollution Our aim is to improve the quality of life not impair it

It's a small step for a manufacturer But it's a giant leap for trout tench roach loach pike perch and bream

AEG Advanced Engineering from Germany AEG (UK) Limited 217 Bath Road Slough Berkshire SL1 4AW Telephone 0753 872118

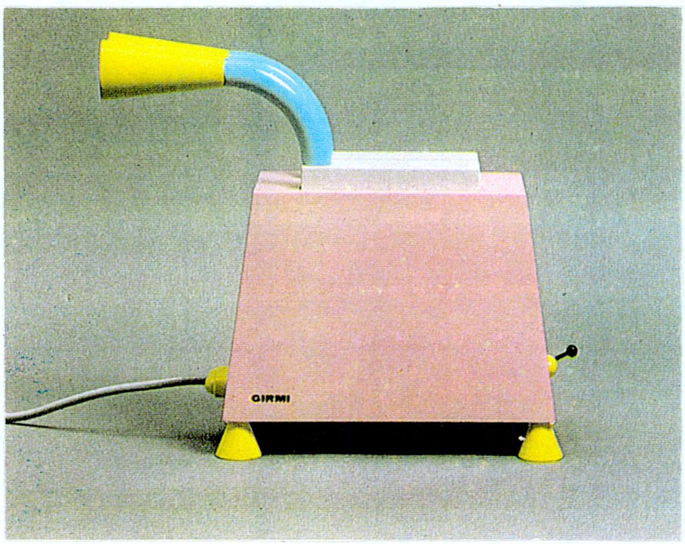
Memphis masculinity.

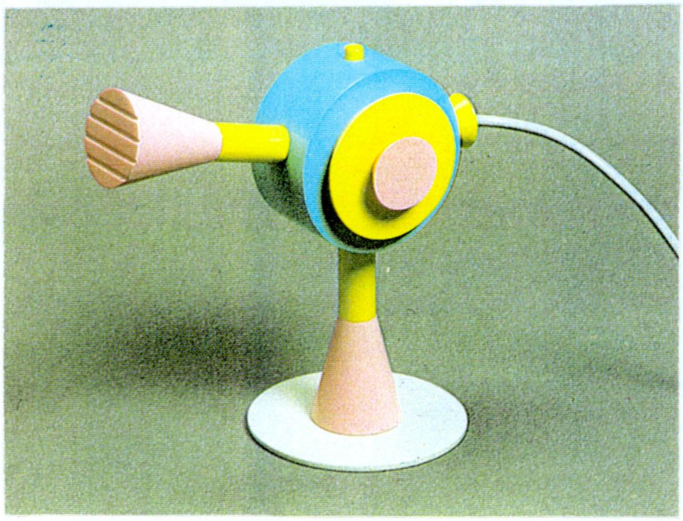
To give an example of how certain design groups were beginning to start readdressing gender issues in design, Memphis started to produce unisex and hybrid designs. Another force responsible for the redefinition of masculinity is the Italian based design group Memphis. This group was started in 1981 by Ettore Sottsass as a vehicle to comment on the shortcomings of post-modern design, and post modern masculinity. Sottsass disliked the one dimensional aspect to many of the mass produced products, and how they reflected so poorly any of the social or cultural issues of the time. It was this group that went about questioning and reacting to the gender issues of product design, leaving the old blueprints of gender behind and to formulate proper and real symbols for the eighties. Sottsass learned that the ‘beauty’, ‘formal correctness’, ‘coherence’, ‘function’ even the utility of an object were not absolute metaphysical values, but that they responded to a culture or a system and varied in accordance with historical and cultural conditions. (see fig. 10)

> Memphis has abandoned the myths of progress and of a program of cultural regeneration capable of changing the world according to rational design. Having also abandoned the utopias of the 60s and 70s, it has taken the first step toward the recomposition of an open and flexible design culture that is aware of history conscious for consumption as a search for social identity and of the object as a sign through which a message is conveyed.(Sottsass, 1981, p. 34)

In the 1980^{s} many art and decorative museum had exhibited a piece of furniture by Memphis. This although quite elitist, it still provided a reference for larger and less informed design manufacturers. This movement was a large cornerstone in the design field for the redirection of common masculinity, and showed the need for a new approach to gender and especially masculinity.

Fig. 10. Some of the domestic products designed by Memphis Milano.





Summary.

It is evident from the varying and sometimes conflicting dimensions of masculinity, that some are genuine and others that are marketing led. It is difficult to prescribe an exact formula to masculinity as it has different codes and vehicles of expression from nation to nation, and even the same product would be have completely conflicting meanings for people of different cultures. So to try and resolve the problem of gender stereotyping, must be appreciated the complexity of semantics and product image. The globalists, Swatch, Phillips, etc,

have made designs and marketed them, so that they can be desired and accessible to everybody, and because of their universal appeal the identity and semantics are generally cliched and stereotyped. Stereotyping is then a expedient marketing tool used to give a clear and basic impression about their product. However as has been discussed in this chapter the problem with stereotyping is that it can be misleading and in the case of femininity and masculinity can misrepresentative. The standard masculine stereotype has been a serious fault within design industry as it has promoted what are now seen as politically and socially incorrect trends i.e. exaggerating the male presence, highlighting physical strength and aggression. From the different interactions of design with society it is again uncertain whether design is marketing led, or to what extent each influences the other. Design must now take the responsibility of starting to adjust masculinity, so it will be properly alligned with the society and culture of 2000.

Chapter 2

Psychological approach to masculinity in design

Designing a psychological response

> Advertising is making people want things or buy more of them, or keep buying the same brand. Marketing is finding out what people would want if it was offered to them, finding out how to offer it to them, and making them want it before advertising kicks in. Design is a subsidiary, a tributory of the two rivers, an innocent child of these manipulative parents. (Naylor, 1996, p. 107)

This is true of the advertising and marketing industry, and this chapter will examine some of the reasons for this. Also the idea of market led design will be looked at as it is often the consumers desires and aspirations that dictate the next trend or fashion in product design. Sexuality has always been a safe and successful marketing angle, but why is this? How long will this be accepted, before its cheapness and social incorrectness becomes tiresome.

There have been many attempts to quantify and analyse products on a scientific level, applying formulas and equations to justify aesthetics and form. As discussed in the last chapter the study of semantics is a new concept in addressing the shadowy area of product meaning and hidden codes of sexuality and desire. The psychological approach to the product development process is becoming more widely used, and succeeds in determining consumer needs and the construction of masculine and feminine identities in material culture. Products are becoming more complicated in their meaning, embodying social, cultural and psychological issues. It is therefore necessary to examine products, aesthetically and functionally, and on a psychological level to examine the mysteries behind design successes and failures. Failures have been the result of bad management and/or inherently weak designs, but some products have not provoked a proper intellectual and emotional response due to a lack of knowledge regarding the human psyche.

Sigmund Freud and D.W. Winnicott, major a cultural critic and psychologist constructed theories on how man expresses his identity, and is subservient to instinctive and innate desires. These theories hold through to today's consumer market, and the product design world. Masculinity has for a long time sold many products, but why has such a mythical and sometimes self degrading image been so successful?

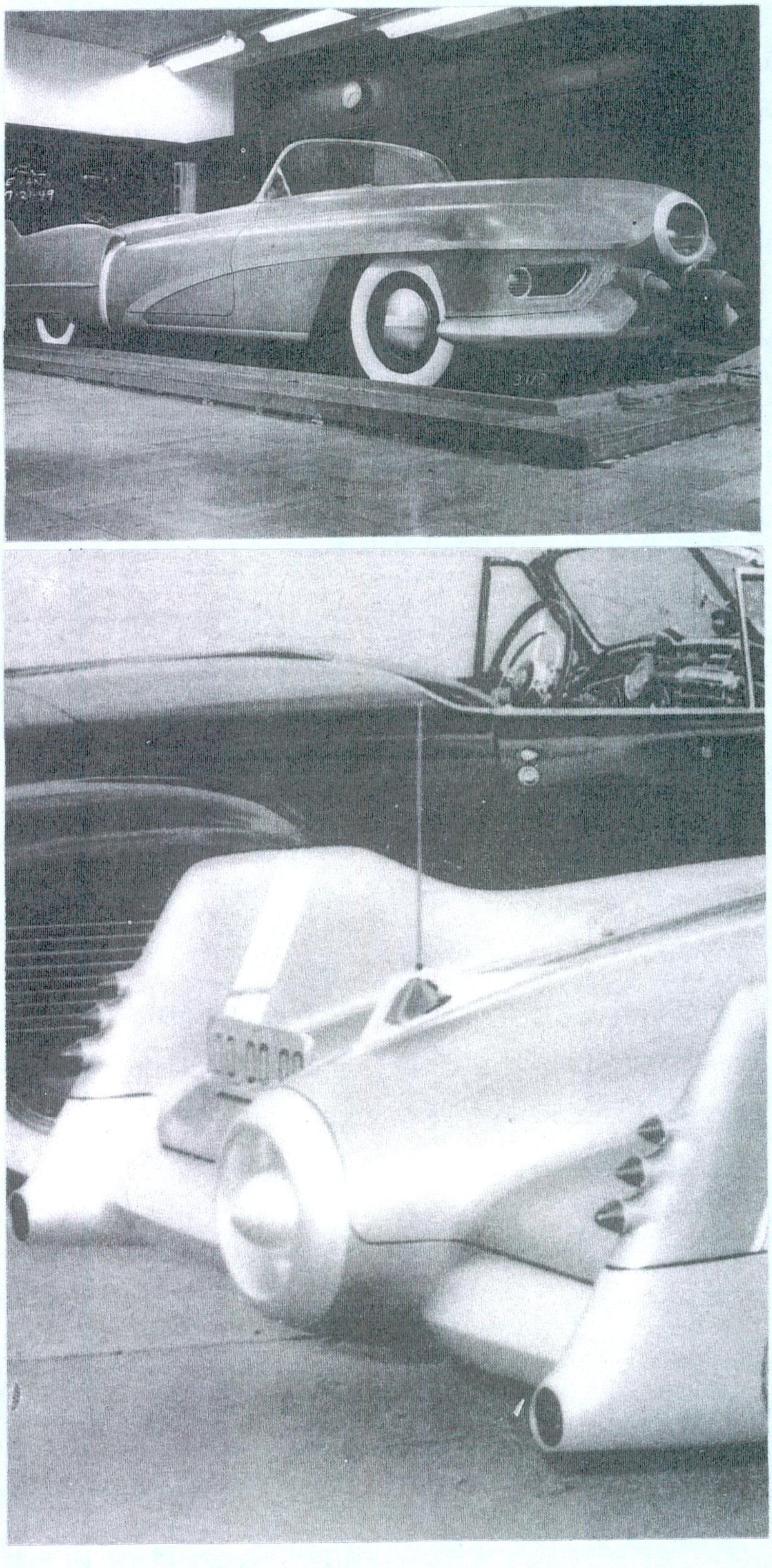
What shapes masculinity ?

Sigmund Freud developed the Oedipus Complex which is still relevant to todays marketing strategies. The Oedipus Complex is a theory whereby adolescent males compete with their fathers for their mothers love. This can be illustrated in the market place of today, where the adolescent market tends to have strong sexual and competitive semantics. A good example of this is the car industry, which aims the sportier model at the vibrant youth market, who need the myth that they have progressed and achieved more than their fathers. As there is a deliberate differentiation between male and female designs, there is also a difference between the adolescent and male parent market, as to allow the adolescent to assert his perceived manhood and masculinity.

Another theory of Sigmund Freud discussed in his essay, *On Narcissism: An Introduction* is the concept of erotogenic zones, which is similar to overt sexuality expressed by consumer goods. Freud had argued that individual psychology consists of the innate and unorganised drives that seek gratification according to the pleasure principle. These drives are defined by their location in specific erotogenic zones. These zones stand for a place: oral sucking and ingestion, anal withholding and releasing, genital arousal or orgasm. They provide both a source of gratification and also a means to achieve it. This ideas are very relevant to the passive semantics of consumer goods, as products, especially male, affirm the male sexuality by offering the gratifying forms of both the male and female physique. An early mass produced example of this is the Buick le Sabre (see fig.

11), a car that had female contours, to reinforce the male perception of sexual dominance, yet also combined aeroplane style fins that suggested the aggressive and militaristic male sense.

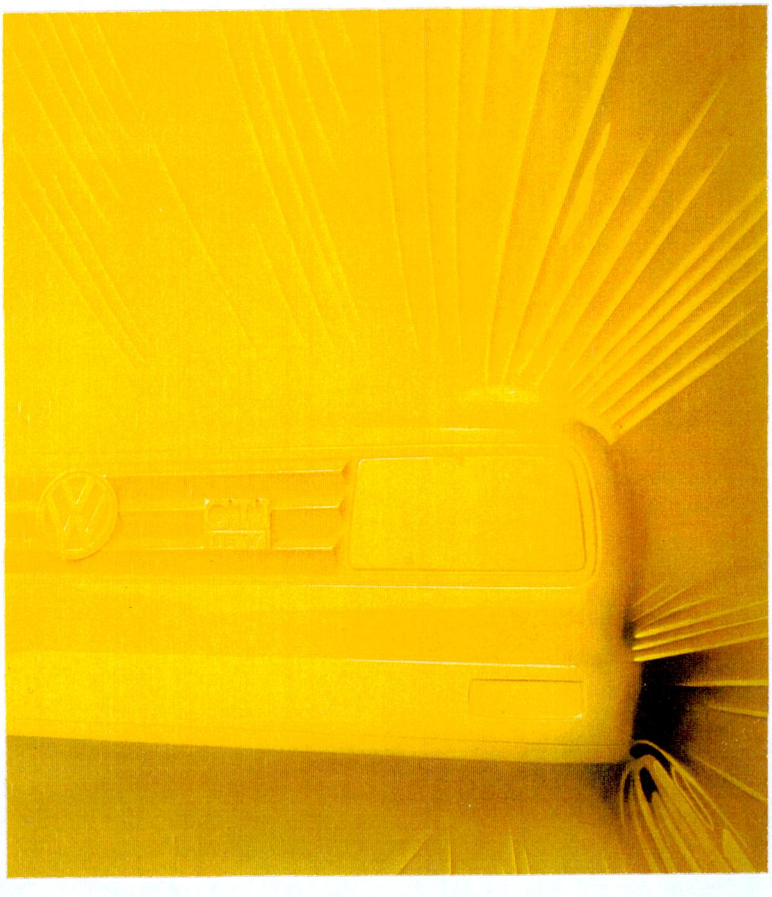
Fig. 11. The Buick le Sabre, embodying all male desires, virulence, power, aggression.



These concepts are good guidelines in the commodification of sexuality and show to a certain extent the cultural and sexual perspectives necessary to judge the aesthetics of a product. Masculinity is still marketed on similar terms to these which have been previously discussed, however because of developments within political and cultural masculinity the semantics of product design are becoming more socially aware, with the new man marketing strategy of the late eighties.

Fetishism as described by Freud is a sexual perversion, where a person depends on some material object particularly clothing, for his sexual gratification. The observations have been made fetishism is a male perversion and associated with an aversion of the embodiment of female sexuality a further sexual inequality. It is the women's body whether in corporeality or reality that is the object of male desire(see fig. 12). These desires are suggested in design using forms and colours suggestive of the female body. Kitsch design has been the product design response to fetishism, adding a cheap sexual image to the product, for example red leather car interiors and chrome finishings

Fig. 12. A self promotional campaign by Perilli. Fetishism used in combination with the cars styling.



Sexuality or exploitation

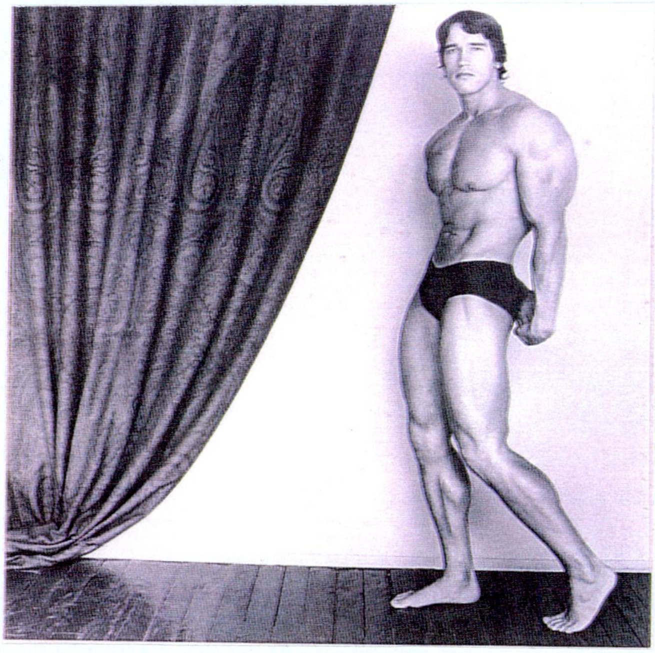
“So widely and incessantly discussed, so prominently marketed and consumed, so repeatedly the subject of contests over permissiveness and liberation.” (Evans, 1993, p. 89) It is a well known fact that sex sells and this was blatantly illustrated by Madonna’s book entitled *Sex.* This was as much a statement of the fascination and desire associated with this theme, as it was feminists triumph of self exploitation. Far from an industrial product it still landmarked the consumer climate and how such an unimaginative theme could receive such attention and success. Similar high end pornography have been published for years, yet never carried with them such irony and cleverness as does Madonnas publication. Pirelli, an Italian tyre manufacturer have similar explicit photography on their calendar, but it’s subscription to the tired male depiction of women has left it receiving mere bad press for it’s archaic exploitation. This is an area open to psychological examination, why people are drawn to such products, and do they feel satisfied by the codes and meanings surrounding the book, and its perpetuation of the old and obvious masculinity.

Ray Crozier makes a number of useful points regarding the consumption of such material, the first of which being peoples expressing subdued desires by the consumption of sympathetic products, and seconly an identity is formed by his or her association with actual or imagined groups in society. (Crozier, 1994, p. 78) The idea of being somewhat able to produce cultural and social meanings and myths for the public is what makes the marketing and design of new products so difficult. This concept that people purchase goods to affiliate themselves with a certain image, is how marketing experts design certain virtual lifestyles, which the consumer unwittingly thinks are ne3w social trends publised by advertising and marketing..

The phallus as a mass-produced object.

"Its polished and hard surface heralded a new version of male subjectivity that wanted to abolish any opposition between inside and outside, interior conscience and exterior will." (Boscagli, 1996, page 56) This is a statement of the psychological response men had when confronted with the power and prowess featured in the supercars of the eighties. This is another important theory in the study of masculinity in product design is the concept that people have an interior and exterior aesthetic, where men's private emotions and desires are expressed outwardly in a three dimensional fashion. Ian Marcia in essay entitled *The Gym* covers this idea of interiority and exteriority with regard to body builders. The motivation behind body building is to replicate a form similar to classic physiques of ancient times(see fig. 13) Interiority is the precincts of the mind, and exteriority of the body builder is the transcendental, mesomorphic form styled and designed to suit their mental perception of beauty (Marcia, 1996, p. 189) . This ritual has been termed as phallic masculinity and hypermasculinty, as the male body and its sexuality have been indirectly commodified, by the marketing of other goods, cars, perfumes, etc.

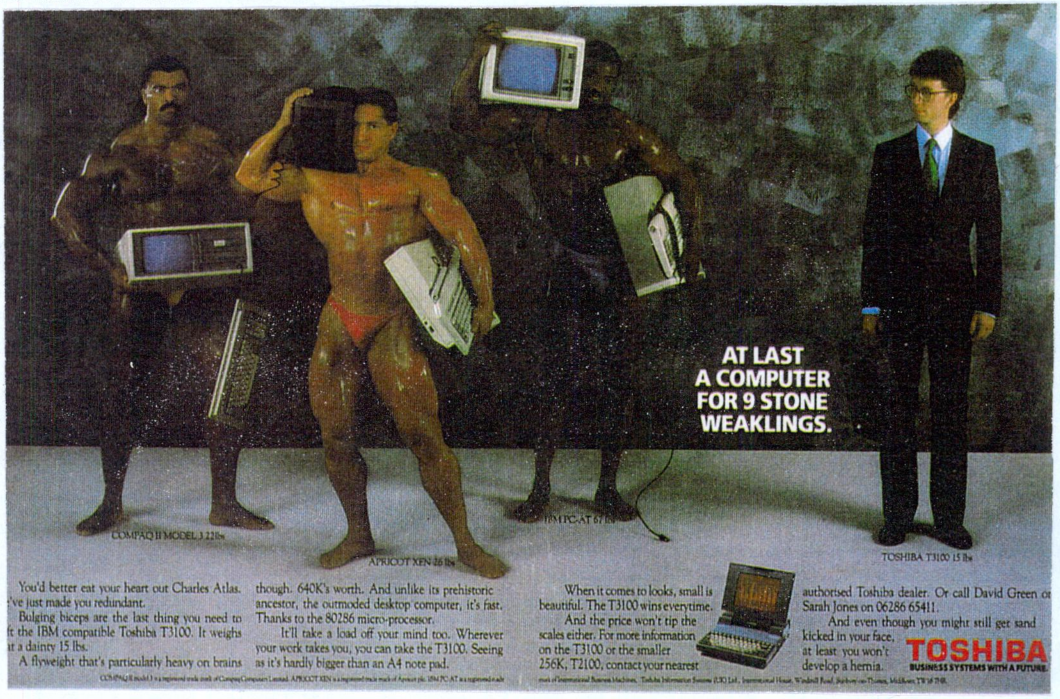
Fig. 10. A mesomorphic body. A Robert Mapplethorpe photograph of Arnold Schwarzenegger.



This gym physique cannot be bought a such, nevertheless can be mentally desired, and eventually acquired to express their mental aspirations of superiority and prowess. A continuation of body building, is to consume products that express locked emotions in a living and corporeal sense. This again points in the direction of the treatment of masculinity as marketable and indeed profitable. It is product design which gives the consumer a positive object to affirm his beliefs and interpretations of external stimuli.

When purchasing an object the perception is an amalgamation of desires/dreams and reality/function (Winnicott, 1953, page 34,). This is evident nowadays even among seemingly inert products like the computer, which has been marketed not to emphasise formal joys of the computer, but the internal drives i.e. processing speed, hard drive output, and again for a relatively new consumer product is expressing the design blueprint of masculinity, competitiveness, ambition, power and so on (see fig. 14) This is because of the tried and tested form of masculinty is usually the safest and quickest way of introducing new products.

Fig. 14. An advertisement for the Toshiba laptop, that has power and speed within its smaller form.



You'd better eat your heart out Charles Atlas. 've just made you redundant.

Bulging biceps are the last thing you need to t the IBM compatible Toshiba T3100. It weighs t a dainty 15 lbs.

A flyweight that's particularly heavy on brains though. 640K's worth. And unlike its prehistoric ancestor, the outmoded desktop computer, it's fast. Thanks to the 80286 micro-processor.

It'll take a load off your mind too. Wherever your work takes you, you can take the T3100. Seeing as it's hardly bigger than an A4 note pad.

When it comes to looks, small is beautiful. The T3100 wins everytime.

And the price won't tip the scales either. For more information on the T3100 or the smaller 256K, T2100, contact your nearest authorised Toshiba dealer. Or call David Green o Sarah Jones on 06286 65411.

And even though you might still get sand kicked in your face, at least you won't develop a hernia.

On the other hand, it could be the consumer that has a hangover from the prejudicial masculinty of the eighties, and interpreted the product according to this frame of mind. This means that even to change the codes of masculinity overnight would still leave men interpreting them incorrectly for a long time to come. So marketing is a good mediator between the product and the consumer, but its truthfulness is only loyal to profit. However large social movements must be honoured as was done with the Green Movement, and how Oliviero Toscani responded to the AIDS crisis with his photo-advertising for benetton.

Relativity of semantics and form.

Berlyne predicts that people will most like objects and places that are moderately familiar and will be more averse to the novel and the over-familiar. Common sense is ambivalent on this matter, suggesting that we like 'the old favourites' and also that 'familiarity breeds contempt'. It is true that in marketing that labelling a product as new can lead to an increase in its sales. What is commonplace for one generation can look odd or even ugly to another. consider the flared trousers of the seventies, popular cars of the early sixties such as the Vauxhall *Victor* or the Ford *Prefect*, radios and televisions of the twenties and thirties. It is risky to provide examples, because any of these designs may become fashionable again, and look pleasing and normal. The same principle can be applied to the concept of fashionable images and lifestyles, the energy conservation green period juxtaposed by the exuberance and waste of the 80s. Also ideas concerning sexuality undergo changes to appease and even direct the public. Design is perceived through ever changing perspectives with the objects being analysed by an ever changing subjectivity. Masculinity and indeed new masculinity are a progression and reflection of current social and cultural climates. Once people are convinced of this new or different masculinity it will slowly contradict the ethos of the old, so as before the evolution will bring with it humility and realisation of self contradiction. The new masculinity in products will be real proff of hypocracy, but will be welcomed for its integrity.

Summary

From the psychological perspective the design industry and designs can be viewed as a mediator between the individual and their emotions, subdued or inarticulate. Freud and Winnicott give us some explanation as to why industrial design has developed such strong and unyielding semantics. Consumption has become more than necessity and is now a way of expressing desires in a corporeal sense. This is how masculinity has remained a constant for so long, because it responds at a very basic level to male emotional reticence. However, due to the trend of new masculinty, people who like to be fashionable will accept it and others will see it as a fresh and more socially responsible masculinity. New masculinity extends beyond the Oedipus complex, and in one sense could be a direct reaction to its competitive nature, as it educates the post adolescense male of family virtues. This change, although non-competitive and more compassionate, could still be seen as the only acceptable option, because as the codes and rules of new masculinity are marketed to the man, the female market is also being introduced to the concept of new masculinity. New masculinity could be another cyclical fashion trend. By the time this has become fully understood by the consumers, will it have changed to something else? How long will any new lifestyle and fashionable persona last before the market becomes saturated and the consumers hungry for a new identity? This seems to be the inevitable progression, yet with the case of new masculinity, it is inextricably linked to femininty and because of its strong social awareness and therefore transformation or regression would be difficult. As new masculinity is in society, culture, it may at first be only a superficial persona, affected by people who want to affiliate themselves to the image of the day. As discussed previously, the idea of the body being a structure on which a desired form is constructed to emulate a certain trend, will probably also construct a different mindset, not naturally, but adopt and consume the social trends that are most popular.

Chapter 3

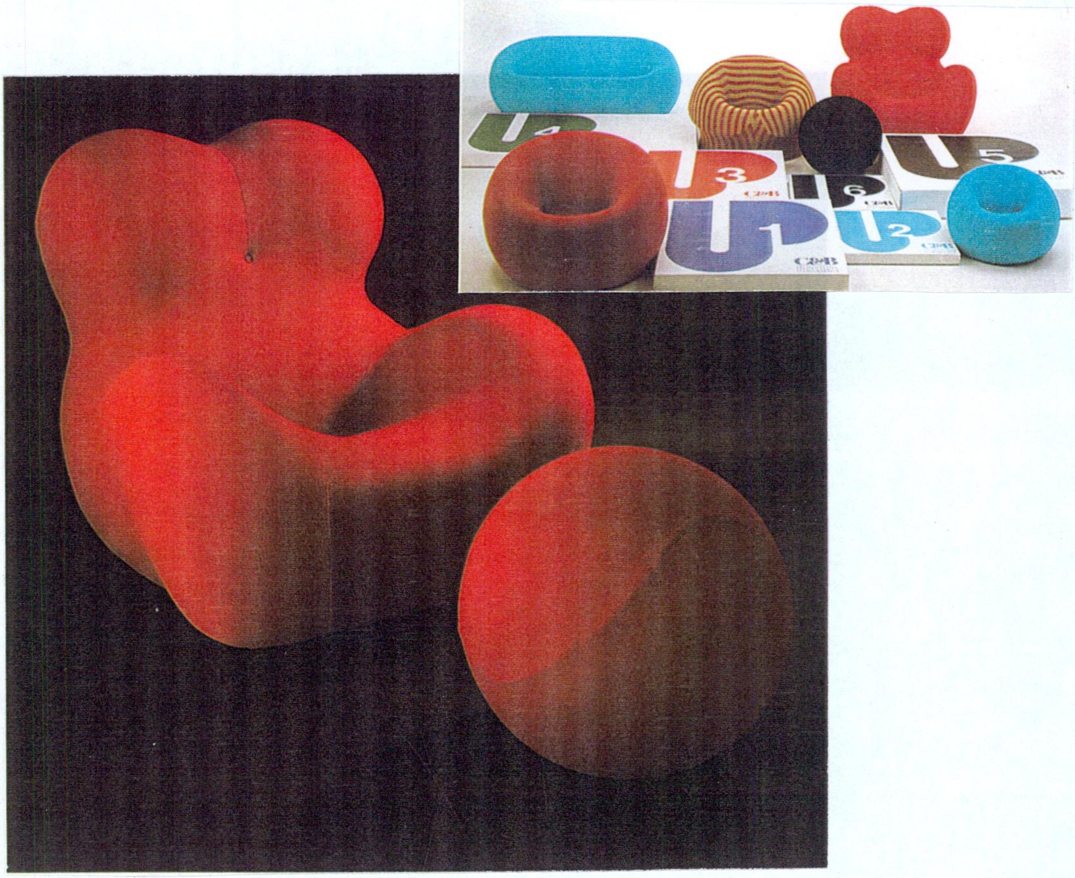
The New Masculinity in Alessi's Philosophy.

Alessi and Italy.

"If other countries have a theory of design, Italy had a philosophy, maybe even an ideology."(Eco, 1992 p. 82)

To appreciate Alessi it has to be seen in the context of Italian design. Italy and especially Milan has been at the forefront of design innovation and avant garde products. World renowned designers have produced some of the great design classics, such as the *Vespa* and Ettore Sottsass' Olivetti typewriter, *Valentine* (1969). Gaetano Pesce cleverly emulated the 70s lifestyle and culture by designing the funky and comfortable furniture called the *UP series* which inflated automatically when the packaging was opened (see fig. 15).

Fig. 15. The UP series from Gaetano Pesce emulating in 3D the relaxed and fun atmosphere of the late 60s.



The 1970s and 1980s saw the philosophical design houses of Alchimia and Memphis (see Ch. 1.5) overturned the standard design theories of post moderism. Although one city of Italy maybe only appear to be a very specific and narrow perspective of global design, however the German, French and Japanese all have commissioned the likes of Pininfarina and Alessi to design cars and domestic products. The Italian design ethos has been able to stimulate the entire design landscape.

The Alessi Design Factory is a well known Italian design group, and during the 1980s emerged at the forefront of design activity. Founded in 1921 to produce crafted products in metal for eating and drinking. Alberto Alessi launched the company into the design decade through his unique collaboration with designers and architects such as Ettore Sottsass, Richard Sapper, Achille Castiglioni and Alessandro Mendini, and the creation of two main trade marks: ‘Alessi’, geared towards mass production and ‘Officiana Alessi’ towards more experimental limited editions.

The Alessi Design Factory has added intellectual thought to the world of design and developed new codes, symbols and semantics that are reflections on society and culture. Alessi have had the privilege of redefining the contemporary language of design, combining philosophical and psychological theories to produce new and avant garde designs. Similar to Memphis, Alessi have questioned and often discarded the stagnant approach taken by the larger manufacturers of consumer products. The notion of product differentiation and stereotypes is too limiting for Alessi, as they have seen that identity, culture, society, have to be addressed as an interactive whole, and not expressed independently of each other. Alessi have addressed areas of cultural importance including statements on contemporary design. Sexuality is a strong theme running through Alessi Catalogue, but has been dealt in new and innovative ways, emphasising life and vitality, rather than exploiting the subject. This chapter will follow the treatment of gender and sexuality in Alessi designs, and how Alessi’s philosophy develops and defines the form and semantics of their products. As in the last chapter concentrating on psychology, Alessi have begun to research the

real motives behind masculinity and femininity, and have neglected the common stereotypes, and found a new system for combining gender issues. Alessi are a small company and have no technology or huge marketing campaigns to support their products, so they have added an intimate and intellectual aspect to their products.

> In our society objects have become the main channel through which we communicate our information to others about values, our status and our personality. The possession and use of objects essentially means an exchange of cultural and social meanings. Through the free choice of the objects which surround us, we invest in them an important social meaning treating them as signs of our values to be communicated to everybody in a visible and intelligible way. (Alessi, 1994, p. 10)

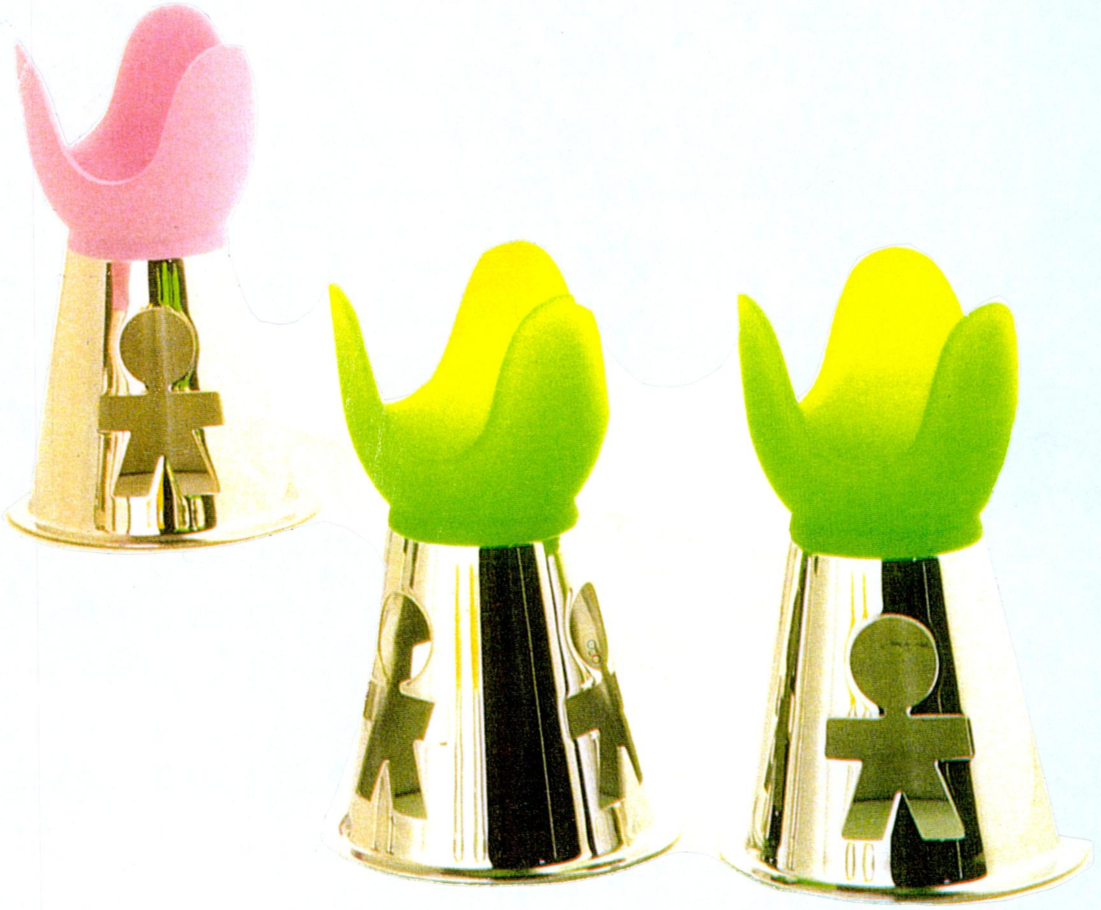
Adding wizardry to products

Stefano Giovanni and Guido Venturini Founded King Kong Productions in 1985, and revolutionised the orthodox aesthetics of the day. They have taken references from mainstream popular culture and reinvented it in their designs, one such example being Disneyland as the family collective memory and also the fact that it has such a strong cultural impact.

> Disneyland is a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulacra. it is first of all a play of illusions and phantasms: the Pirates, the Frontier, the Future world etc. This imaginary world is supposed to ensure the success of the operation. but what attracts the crowds the most is the social microcosm. (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 12)

"They work on ideas as an iconographic, primary and conceptual datum with a mixture of poetry and irony that supersedes the disciplinary conceptions of objects form, composition and design." (Gabra-Liddel, 1994 p. 121) They created the first communicative objects of the 1980s which are now highly successful in 1990s.
The *Girotondo* series (see fig. 16) for Alessi was highly successful (more than a million pieces sold to date). This series was a very simple design, a repeated figure cut-out which everybody could recognise.

Fig. 16. The *Girtondo* egg cups with the cut-out man, appealing to all age groups.



This was an example of what D. W. Winnicott described as a transitional object (see chapter 2). The child style figurative icon brought with it sentimentality and an intimate mental response to the user. The objects have passive semantics which communicate subtlety the family values and transgenerational theme. Also within Girotondo series the feminine and masculine concepts are not evident, both combined into a more maternal idea, the masculine codes illustrating the nurturing and compassionate side of the new masculinity.

As stated by Freud there is always a tendency for men to indulge in play, as play is a humorous interpretation of the habitat and environment. (Interpretation of dreams, 1945) Playing is an important concept for the Alessi group as it brings life and personality to products by encouraging the user not only to use but also to play. "Play as a tacit agreement allowing the construction of an imaginary in

which we can recognise ourselves protect our innermost tenderness and creativity, finding a way of sharing it" (Polinoro, 1994, p. 132).

Transitional objects from the Alessi Planet.

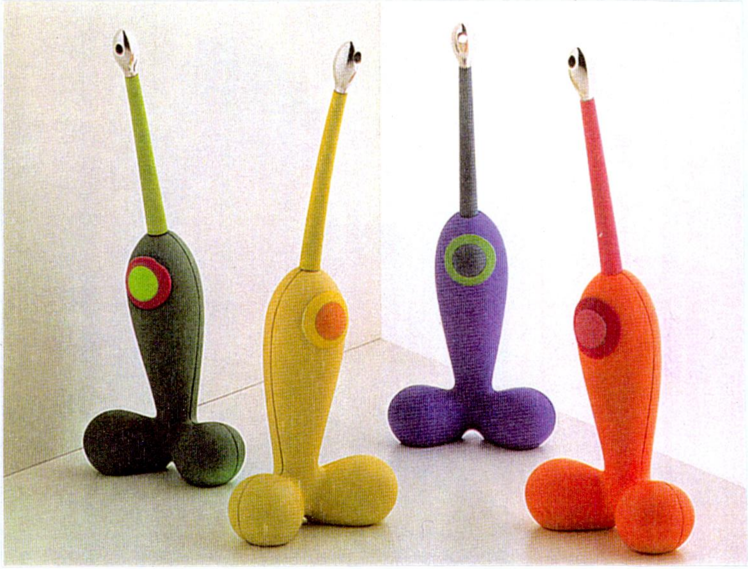
> We all had the sensation that there was still a hidden side to the Alessi planet. The authoritiveness, lucidity and impact of the products that had been made until then did not quite satisfy our most delicate, tender, intimate and affective demands. (Polinoro, 1994, p. 132)

As a progression from the eighties and including Stefano Giovannini and Guido Venturini, the Centro Studi Alessi was started in 1991 and indeed continued some of the philosophies followed by the earlier King Kong Production. D. W. Winnicott and his transitional object theory was again a strong psychological reference point for Alessi, as it gave them a framework in which to create objects, which triggered a personal, collective, and emotional response. With this new concept Alessi entered new areas of representing gender in design, with fresh semantics and codes for the 90s. Masculinity was no longer a singular and discreet entity forming its identity from reaction to femininity, but instead masculinity and femininity were combined into a concept of mutual dependence, and the idea of sexuality wasn't oppressive, but dealt in a imaginative and fantastic context.

New contexts for new masculinity.

The *Firebird* electric gas lighter (see fig. 3a) and the *Gino Zucchino* (see fig. 17) plastic sugar sifter designed by Guido Venturini, are new and refreshing examples of a clear psychological approach to gender in product design. These designs are a statement of modern times and also ironic in their tone of disappointment at the lack of proper gender symbolism in many consumer products. As these designs are also pointing out the ancient taboos, yet face these taboos with a new language of semantics. The phallus design gas lighter is treated as an transitional object and it's previous connotations and myths have been dispelled, and replaced with the concept of playfulness and fun.

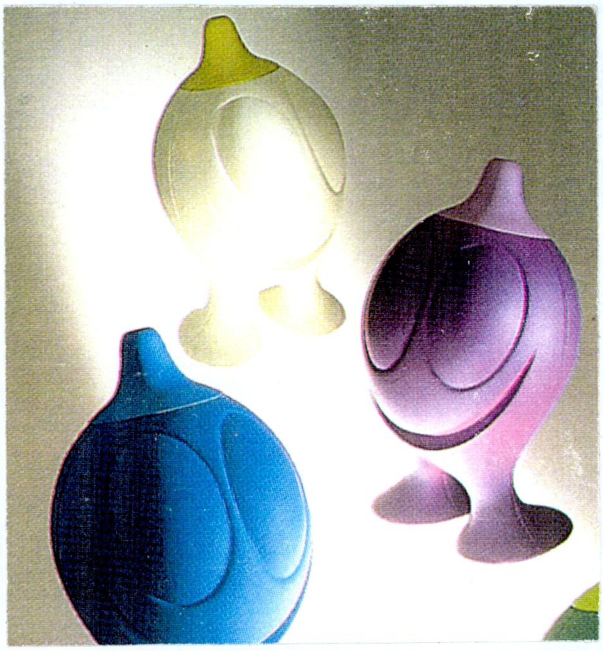
Fig. 17. The Firebird electric gas lighter, bringing humour to the phallus.



The masculinity of this object is of course not so much idolised, as reinterpreted and the clarity in which it is represented does not make an issue of it and paradoxically gives the product unisex classification. The strong masculine blueprints of omnipotence and dominance are changed to codes of sensual and emotional intimacy. "If objects are the new vehicles of imagination their imagery in turn will become, in the world of communication and expression, new vehicles for confidently creative and easing of tension." (Venturini, 1996, p. 65)

The *Gino Zucchino* (see fig. 17)plastic sugar sifter also designed by Guido Venturini, holds the same sexuality and semantics as the *Firebird.* However from a male designer he has made an unbiased product catalogue, with the icons of each gender displayed and given the same status. The Breast is according to Winnicott the original transitional object, as it the child's first real interaction with reality or an intermediary zone between objects and subjects. The *Gino Zucchino* has a smiley face to illustrate the humour and the new perspective sexuality is being treated with.

Fig. 17. *Gino Zucchino* The breast shaped sugar sifter, implying nourishment and growth.



The *Mix Italia* range is another of products from the King Kong team, who have again used everyday domestic objects as symbols for nourishment, growth and reproduction. This series (see fig. 18)includes a espresso maker, coffee maker, creamer and sugar bowl, and together form a complete story and meaning. All the items in the set have a rounded, bullet shape main body which in Freudian analysis symbolises the womb. The espresso maker, coffee maker and creamer(see fig.)all have handles suggestive of the phallus. So the vessel (womb) and the handle (phallus) are combined in the one product to illustrate the inseparability of the two objects, and how together they generate life. The sugar bowl (see fig. 4)is given its form by it's symbolic or real function, the breast as a nourishing object to the new born as sugar is to coffee, adding sweetness and strength. The products have a sexuality, however the masculinity is directed towards a more passive role, as the vessels (womb) is the main and largest part of the series. The philosophy of the range is 'Family Follows Form' and therefore the male identity is not created in personal achievement, but rather through communal development and collective memory within the family unit. Another Alessi theme, 'playfulness' is evident in these products as they communicate a sense of fun and humour to the user. The chrome finish of the main bodies is to reflect the timelessness and

indestructibility of regeneration, while the handle is purposely understated in black to symbolise the secondary nature of the phallus.

Fig. 18. Mix Italia range.

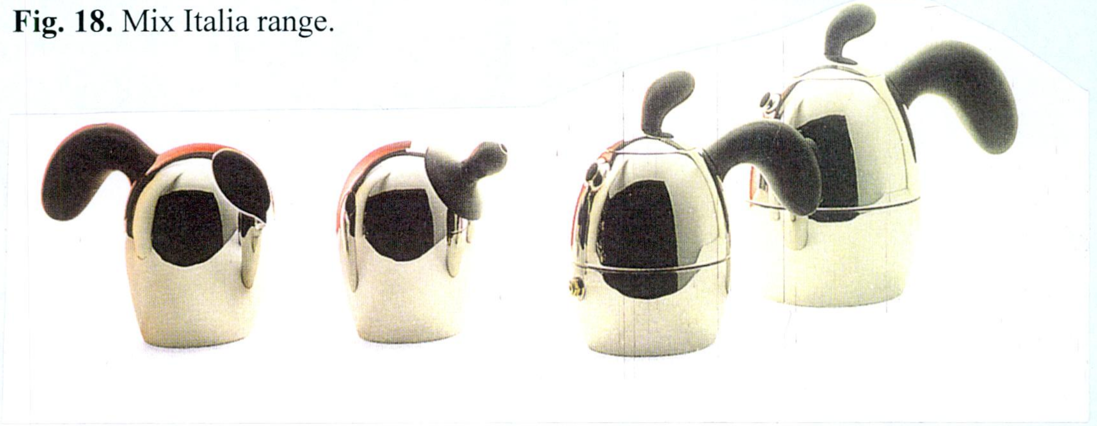
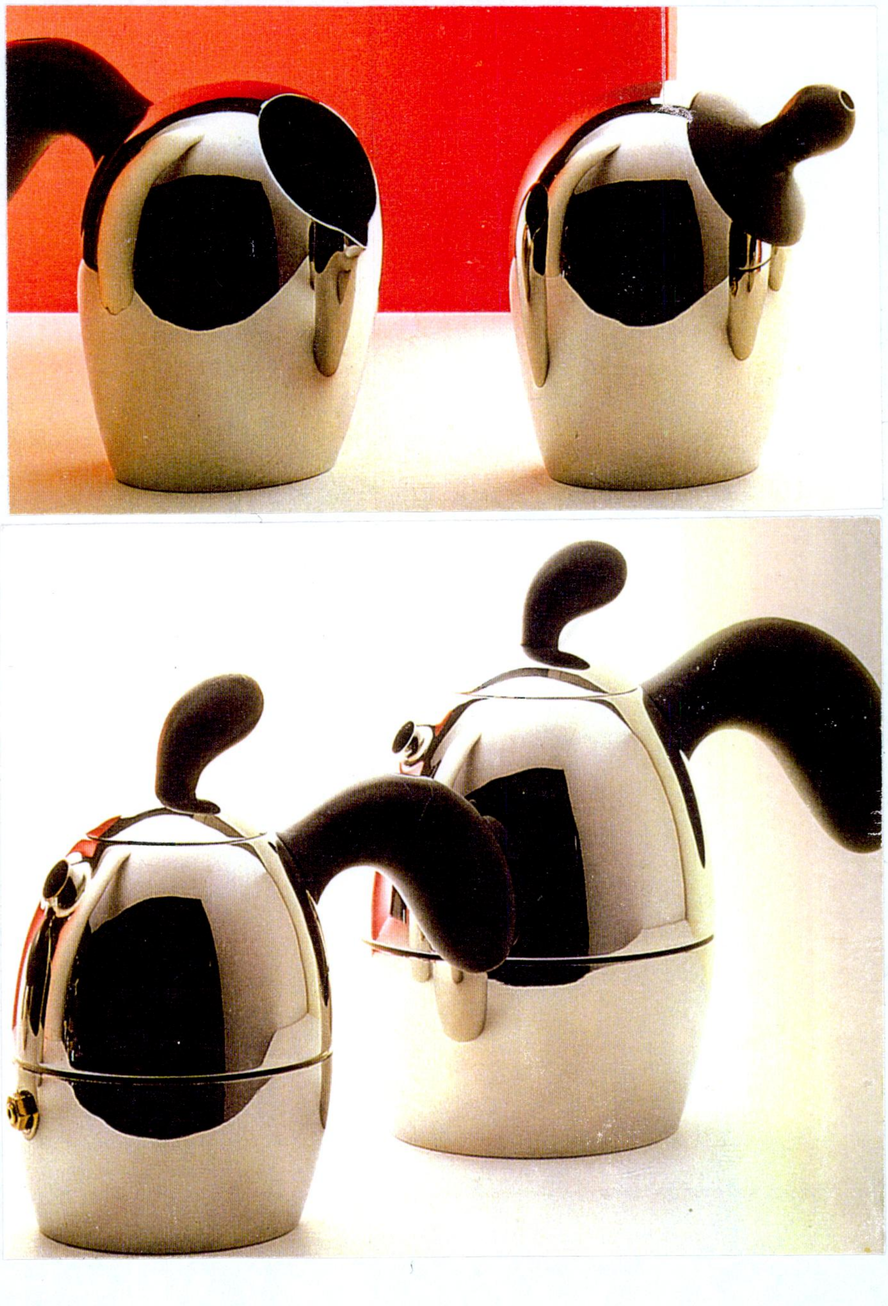
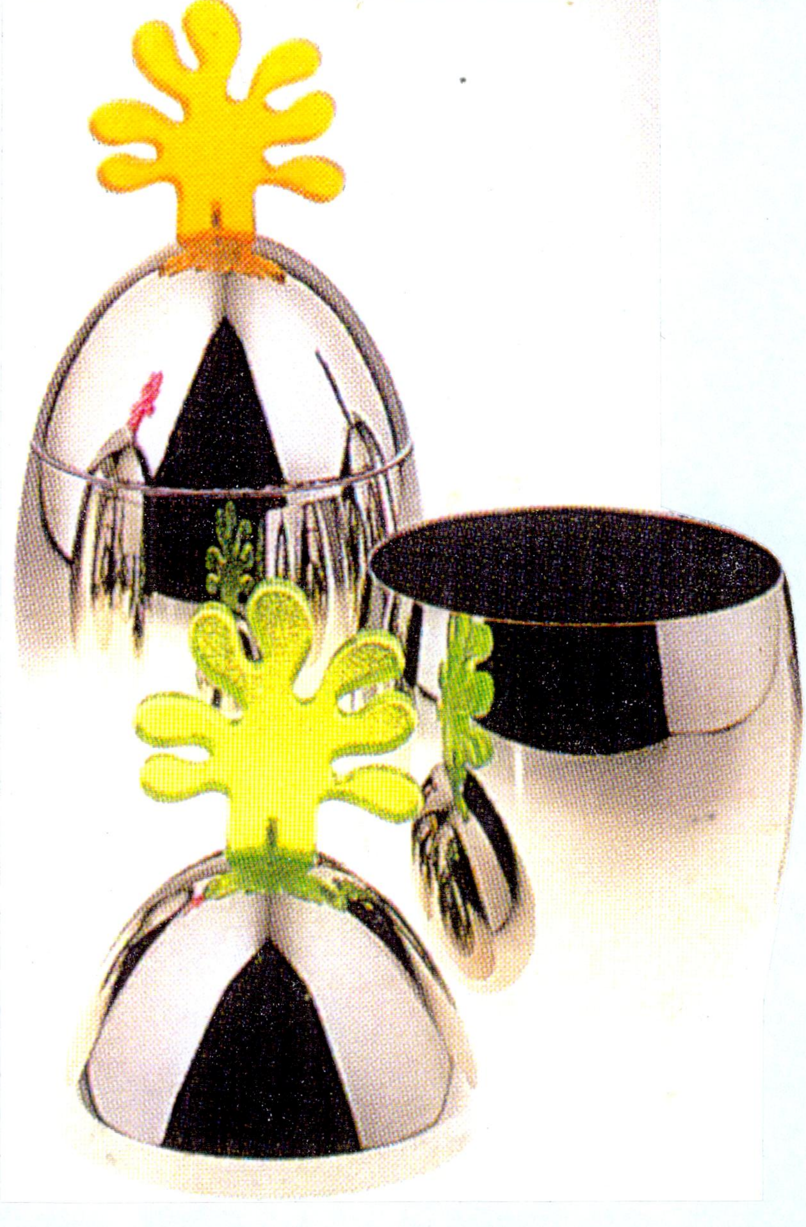


Fig. 18.1. *Mix Italia* espresso maker and coffee maker, sugar sifter and creamer



The *Memory Containers* (see fig.19) continued the philosophy of the British psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott, in that they expressed the idea of the 'transitional object'. It is a product that holds other items that have sentimental value, so there is subjectivity and objectivity associated with the product. Designed in 1994 the principle behind these objects was expressed by Alfredo Alessi, 'we must learn to play with our dreams and our fetishes, to smile at them and to encourage the integration of consumerism with our consciences'. (Alessi, 1994, p. 127) According to the designer of the objects, Joann Lyle, The *Memory Containers* have both a practical and symbolic presence and their inspiration was drawn from cultural heritage and personal experience. (Lyle, 1994, p. 125) The form of this product is again suggestive of the womb and reaffirms the Alessi concept of 'Family Follows Form'.

Fig. 10. *Memory Containers*, designed from the transitional object philosophy.



Another important factor in the study of new masculine codes, is colour which has always been an easy route I differentiating products. Nigel Whitley in his book Design for Society parallels two periods in history, the first being Henry Fords statement 'as long as its black' and the second the Bauhuas theory 'as long as it's white'. This emphasises the importance of colours in design and how colours are intrinsically linked to the products identity.

There are many articles and journals that give estimations to the psychological impact of colours. It has been the case that products would follow the standard colours associated with that particular product. The Alessi Group unlike other more mainstream designers, have adopted a palette of colours from the fashion industry, making the designs more trendy and style orientated. These colours are clear break from the stereotypical domestic colours of the past, (white=domestic, black=Hi-fi), to colours with vibrancy and androgyny. The female goods of the past have been elevated to designer goods of today with both men and women desiring these products. The colours of green, pink, cobalt blue sensual and unisex appeal.

Summary

New Masculinity as witnessed in the philosophy and products of the Alessi Group has taken new directions in informing the male of social duties and gender inequality. What is now important is how broad or effective this new masculinity will become. Like all new lifestyles or marketing strategies, there is always a window period before the campaign dies or succeeds. This new masculinity is hopefully not another ill-fated marketing led design reformation, but a long overdue reappraisal of the representation of masculinity in design. Consumers will create virtual personas to affiliate themselves with the new masculine thinking. A lot of major manufacturers will emulate the Alessi ethos, introducing non-traditional and correctly represented forms of gender.

Conclusion

Masculinty in its entirety permeates not only the area of product design, but through every facet of culture and society. For this reason product design has never really been able to accommadate all the subtle variations in the evolution of masculinity, but instead has remained constant the archtype constructed in the late Nineteenth Century. Adrian Forty as mentioned in chapter 1, highlighted early product differentiation by an American mail order catalogue, who made incremental changes to pocket knives as to develop a male and female market. This can be viewed as a clever marketing technique, but more genuinely catering for the different users, ergonomic requirements, and styling preferneces. However differention in design did become a sure and fast way of doubling sales with minimal changes to the product. From the early gender stereotyping of men requiring big and women floral, came the century of gender stereotyping in a products form, colour and semantics. Products became male, were specifically marketed at the male ego. Power, force and aspiation became the semantics of all male product. Mesomorphic, feminine lines, blatant colours, grunt and gusto all became part of the cleverly engineered masculinity for the marketplace. Masculinity in product design and within products was delerately animated, offered a super, omnipotent image, overt sexuality. Why was the archetype accepted and loved for so long? The common pschological traits of men were of ambition, competition and emotional reticence, so the archetype masculinty was always flattering to the male ego. Its falsehood and exageration overshadowed its basic flaws, so it was accepted for its aspiration qualities. The male and female product stereotyping became so polarised that any attempt of a crossover, would be seen by the male consumer as homosexual. It is not until the feminists outcry about the absurdity of gender in design, and the whole social and cultural expression of masculinity, that the archetype masculinty begins to change. The marketing of stereotypes became a way of putting products in social context, perpetuating the notions of female domesticity, and male ambition. There had been fluctuations in masculinity on a political front with the feminist movement

in the 1970s but design needs a window period befor committing itself to maybe a passing trend.

A psychological view of masculinity has been examined in chapter 2, which gives an insight into the reasons behind male products and the mentality of the male consumer. Freud's theories of the Oedipus Complex and Narcissism explain on a psychological level the male desires and yearning for identity and success. The Oedipus Complex confirming the male characteristics of ambition, competition and aggression, that are evident product design. Marketing and advertising has utilised this concept and it has proven to be successful. It confirms the built-in hierarchy of consumption and the product semantics of virulence, ambition and succession that appear in the post adolescent market.

Interior and exterior aesthetic provided another way of examining the male consumer. As Ellen Lupton illustrated with the example of the body builder, interior desires and ambitions are realised through a 3D object, or in the case of the body builer, his body. This concept proves the hypothesis that mem consume an identity, or interior (somatic) aspirations are expressed in an exterior (corporeal) manner. It is true that products express these latent desires, desires to be part of something, desires of success and of having tangible evidence ot their minds. It is latent emotions of the male consumer that are so vunerable to marketing and advertising as they offer very palatable themes of sexulity, identity and success. These virtual personas created by the industry are transcendental and therefore so appealing. Consuming identity is a pathetic concept, but nevertheless socially acceptable and gives a false sense of wellbeing.

D. W. Winnicott and his transitional object theory pertains to both male and female, and is again a development of the interior and exterior concept. The transitional object is a psychological platform for the foundations of new masculinity. It deals with collective memory and intersubjectivity, bringing the isolated masculinity of the past into a more family orientated masculinity of the future. Androgyny and equal semantics are the new direction, with product design

no longer portraying a dominant male sexuality, but rather expressing sexuality and masculinity in terms of responsibility and growth. This theme is not exclusive to the product design sphere, but has been expressed in film, fashion and the media.

Is this change then a cyclical trend, offering new guises of the old, or a real change from the stagnant and socially incorrect masculinity of the past? The answer is yes, product design and also advertising have become more socially conscious, with the Green Movement in design and the emphasis on safety in the car industry. These new marketing campaigns have appealed to the consumer to adopt a attitude of selflessness and to consider the environmental implication of consumption.

This new masculinity will come as a fresh departure from the old and wont have the confrontational properties of the old, that incensed the feminist and female population. Although this new masculinity has lost its aggression and developed a new strength of consideration and compassion, it is still being marketed with just as much zeal, which raises the question is this a mere marketing strategy and a passive acceptance on behalf of the consumer, or a definite reflection of the social climate and which now so strongly contradicts the masculinity of the past? Masculinity has leapfrogged into the 90s and therefore has appeared as a stark contrast to its history as it has to completely rewritten before it will be an acceptable and truer representation of men.

The Alessi Design Factory as discussed in chapter 3 has a global influence in product, so often reviewed and awarded for there impact on design. Alessi have produced products for the mass market, but at the same time retain an exclusivity about them. They are not restricted to current technological advances or market research, which gives them the freedom to develop meanings and statements to include in their products. They have reinterpreted the codes of utilitarian products, and brought the individualism of craft goods to a larger audience. There products have a sculptural form about them and also carry a similar dept of meaning.

The *Girotondo* series was based on the transitional object theory and provide the user with a emotional charged object, which empathises with the more humane and social aspects of a persons interior aesthetic.

As was discussed in previously I the conclusion, men consume an object in the hope that it will personify their interior aesthetic or ego, but with the *Girotondo* series it does not present an identity, but stimulates the emotions and evokes personal and collective feelings. This adds a sentimentality to the products and gives them a timeless and personality, which was lacking in a lot of the mainstream products of the 80s. The Alessi factory have challenged the concept of the phallus, reduced its presence to realistic proportions, and combined it with forms suggestive of the womb, marking its interdependence to the female form and aesthetic, as shown in the *Mix Italia* range. It is Alessi clear understanding of symbols and meanings in culture, that has produced this concept of new masculinity.

The new masculinity is already making an appearance in the colur and forms of more mainstream products. The monolithic black box form of technological products is slowly metamorphasizing into a more curved and sympathetic shape. Although the forms are becoming more unisex in their styling, but a the same time retain a sexuality. This sexual theme, has become more refined and developed a sensorial empathy, which is longer overtly masculine or feminine, but a milder and more understated common sexuality. Calvin Klein's new fragrance *CK one* included the theme of collective sexuality, and masculine and feminine equality without homosexual overtones. Ford motors launched the *Ka* a product design version of the philosophy behind *CK one.* This car had a subdued advertising campaign, showing mere glimpses of side panels and interior features. The *Ka* car embodies the concept of new masculinity, being non-competitive and non-aggressive. This car is not being marketed on the pretensions of power, size, and performance, but rather invites the male and female consumer to cherish and love the car for personality and new clean styling.

New masculinity and indeed femininity are closely linked, both not through the antagonism of the past, but rather a finer and more social relationship of today. Differentiation in design has turned a full circle, as now product differentiation is becoming blurred and androgynous. The same product then because of its middle ground in terms of gender can effectively be sold to the male and female market. the predominantly male products of Hi-fi's have lost their techno edge, and become more suited to consumer needs and again the masculine semantics have been reinvented to make the products friendlier. The sensualizing of products, but to the extent of making them masculine or feminine, will be what bridges the gender chasm that product stereotyping helped to perpetuate.

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