

Thesis No. 656  
MO055797NC

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

**THE GREEN AGENDA;  
THE EFFECT ON PACKAGING AND ADVERTISING**

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
History of Art and Design  
and Complementary studies.

In candidacy for Degree.

Faculty of Design.  
Department of Visual Communications.

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March 1990

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## INTRODUCTION

Is it green? More and more people are asking the same question in shopping centres, small shops, chemists and petrol stations. The green issue has become part of our everyday vocabulary and a real concern for the public. Words such as bio-degradable, ozone friendly, etc. grab our attention on advertising billboards or exploding from a yellow flash on the side of a new product on our super-market shelf. The media bombard us with programmes concerning the state of the environment and the state of our health as a result of over-exposure to toxic chemicals. We have been labelled "the throw away culture" among other things, because of the enormous waste problem created by over-production.

The seriousness of the problem is now being realised and pressure is being placed upon industry to find less hazardous methods of producing goods and to produce more environmentally friendly products. Public concern is growing and the trend towards buying green products increasing although the problem still remains far from being solved. With the arrival of new products and altered existing ones all competing for the same market, it has become necessary for advertising to adopt a new selling strategy in its approach to creating awareness about these products.

The green issue has crept into perhaps the most unexpected area of advertising and is manipulating its market in a very subtle yet powerful way using heightened environmental awareness. In packaging, too, there is an increasing influence to be traced. Apart from the obvious, Greenwatch and Ecover products, it will be seen that the existing packs have had to be altered to accommodate for the present trend in buying in order to sustain their markets. Shopping centres are largely responsible for introducing these green products to Ireland and promote them using stylised point-of-sale material.

In the following chapters I wish to examine the effects of industry upon the environment and the reasons for the situation created by it. I will discuss the Green Party, how it has gained strength and changed public opinion. Its ideals and philosophy are also a topic of discussion. I wish to show how organisations, such as the media and Green Party have created a new type of customer in the market.

This new customer is concerned with issues such as the state of the environment, etc. This situation has resulted in the emergence of green products aimed at this market. I wish to examine how designers have packaged these products and altered existing ones to accommodate for the new market and its demands. This change in the



market has resulted in advertising re-directing the messages of their campaigns. The shift in advertising direction is not only related to products which possess harmful elements to the environment but to the general advertising of consumer goods.

#### STATE OF THE EARTH

Man can hardly recognise the devils of his own creation:  
Albert Schweitzer.<sup>(1)</sup>

The history of life itself is the relationship between living things and their surroundings. Since the dawning of time the environment has to a great degree sculpted its inhabitants into the forms which we see today and has provided them with all they need for survival. But in the last half a century the balance of the power has shifted, giving man an enormous capacity for creation and destruction. This power has enabled man to behave recklessly and without responsibility towards vegetation and animal life.

One such example is the chemical Strontium 90 which is released into the atmosphere through the explosion of nuclear missile testing. This returns to the earth as rain or drifts down as fallout and becomes part of the soil. This causes the chemical to become involved in the food cycle, eventually becoming part of us and remaining there until we die. 500 new synthetic chemicals are

produced each year. These chemicals are completely artificial and are introduced to the crops as either pesticides or preservatives. These chemicals are totally foreign to the body and it is not known how much damage they cause long term. In effect, this implies that modern man is carrying chemicals around in his body that, since the birth of life itself, have never existed.

Some of the reasons for this apparent reckless behaviour are the gradual increase in world population and prolonged life expectancy. By the year 2000 at the present rate the world population will be over six thousand million. This situation is placing demands on industry like never before, causing a greater need for housing, food, heat, etc. Better education has resulted in people wanting a better home environment. This leads to increased tension on the producer to make better appliances and more nourishing food in turn causing increased waste in terms of packaging. Modern economic growth leads to increased production and so increased pollution. And so, this cycle continues. The main problem with overall increased production is that it becomes necessary to design chemicals (however hazardous) that preserve and make food more nourishing. But there has been little or no testing regarding their long term effects.

In post World War II America, the production of synthetic pesticides was 124,259,000 pounds in 1947. This

figure makes a staggering leap to 637,666,000 pounds in 1960. This pattern of growth in the use of pesticides is mirrored in Europe as well.

Other forms of pollution are also causing the decay of our atmosphere. Sulphur-dioxide emitted by chemical plants, oil refineries, power stations and the domestic burning of fossil fuels such as coal and coke are all causing a greenhouse effect, increasing the natural temperature of the earth by the insulation of the sun's heat. This in turn causes the polar caps to melt, increasing the tidal height and altering weather patterns affecting vegetation. Chlorofluorocarbons, CFCs, are bi-products of aerosols, these erode the ozone layer causing a lethal excess of ultra-violet light to penetrate, leading to genetic mutations in animal and plant life as well as causing skin cancer.

In London in 1952, 4000 people died as a result of breathing an excessive amount of smog. Smog is largely composed of coal and oil from cars and domestic and industrial usage. In Los Angeles presently 70% of the city space is devoted to the car in the form of car parks and roads. Three million vehicles pass through it daily releasing 2000 tonnes of exhaust fumes daily and 450 tonnes of nitric acid. They then react chemically to make a lachrymatory fog causing serious lung problems and affecting suburban vegetation. The air we breathe is becoming more and more lethal. The situation is beginning to reach epidemic proportions globally. The problem is one of attitude.



The prevailing industrial attitude towards the environment is one of evading responsibility for their actions. Industry has looked for short cuts in solving its immediate problems and has not examined the long term consequences of its actions. It is only very recently that industry has taken notice of the destruction it has caused. Sadly, this is the result of public pressure and a demanding market which insists on change. One of the main pressure groups to begin this change was the Green Party.

#### THE GREEN CHALLENGE

The Green Party has, until recently, been seen by the public as a very obscure organisation mostly made up of drop-outs or hippies. This attitude towards them has to a large extent affected the seriousness of their message. They were not even considered a serious political party in Ireland and tended to be catagorised with "Others" when the result of voting was broadcast at election time. This changed radically when in the 1989 Irish election they received a total of 24,824 votes and did this with very little advertising behind them. With one member, Roger Garland, now in the 26th Dail they are at last being listened to and are considered a force with which to be reckoned.

Their manifesto is not like most other political party manifesto. It does not make promises in the usual economic way but offers a change in attitude for an alternative



society committed to saving the world and dedicated to personal fulfilment. Their policies are radically different with an emphasis on change regarding the obsession with wealth created in present day society. They wish to see a more feminine as opposed to patriarchal society. And it is for this reason they have been branded as feminists. To this they claim they have gone beyond feminism as they wish to see feminine characteristics being adopted in society. They want to see an end of the exploitation of the earth's resources as an end for private gain and are in favour of taxing energy with an aim of reducing the consumption of fossil fuels. This would imply heavy taxes on cars, etc. But they would accommodate for this by abolishing income tax.

The Green society would be one of the small family business and individual enterprise. Large corporations would cease to exist as the Green Party would view them as dehumanitarian. The Green Party philosophy can be broken down into seven guiding principles as follows:

1. All political, social and economic decisions should be taken at the lowest effective level.
2. The impact of society on the environment should not be ecologically disruptive.
3. Conservation of resources is vital to a sustainable society.

4. Society should be guided by self reliance and co-operation at all levels.
5. As caretakers of the earth, we have the responsibility to pass it on in a fit and healthy state.

The poverty of two-thirds of the world's family demands a redistribution of the world's resources.

The need for world peace overrides national and commercial interests.<sup>(2)</sup>

These are the principles listed in their manifesto, printed on recycled bio-degradable paper in line with their beliefs. In real terms their policies are at times too Utiopian to be believable. But by and large, their manifesto makes an interesting, if radical view. The Green Party's global impact has been very fundamental in changing attitudes in industry. An example of their increasing strength in terms of public opinion was when the Saatchi and Saatchi <sup>(3)</sup> advertising agency, who represent the English Tory Party, requested Mrs Thatcher not to mention the word "green" in her speeches as they felt this would act as free advertising for the Green Party. But how has design adopted to the green challenge?

The Green Party's attitude towards packaging is one of conservation as a solution to environmental pollution - smaller scale disposal of domestic refuse, a reduction in the use of packaging (which would be bio-degradable).

But clearly, packaging serves as advertising on the shelf for the particular product. So how has industry accommodated for this contradiction? The answer lies with the package designer.

#### PACKAGING (INTRODUCTION)

"If you can visually say a food product tastes good without ever using words, you're home. If you feel as if you want to pick the product up and take a bite of it wrapper and all, you have really done something".<sup>(4)</sup>

Primoangeli (Designer)

At its most basic definition, a package is a container designed to hold a specific object or product. Packaging was one of the earliest human inventions. Baskets, jars and skins were used to transport food and water over long distances safely. As man began to live in communities and built towns a primitive industry began to develop. Early Egyptian tomb paintings, Plate 1, show government officials weighing and measuring consumer goods all separately on weighing scales. In Greece and Rome, laws were passed governing the quantity of oil and wine to be transported in amphorus (large ceramic jars). So it is clear the mass produced package is not a recent invention but a gradual development of an early idea.

Today, packaging is itself a sophisticated industry encompassing the most advanced printing technology and



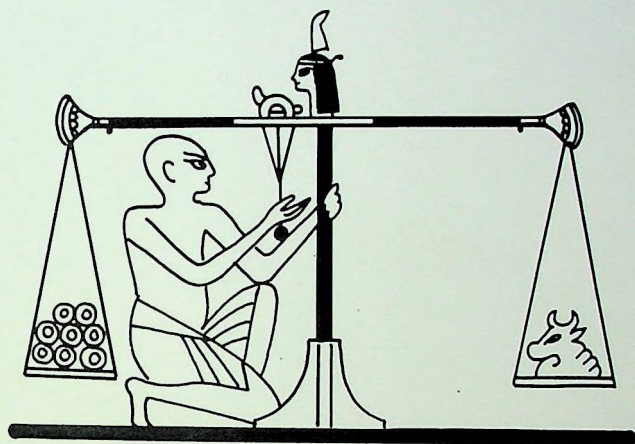


Plate 1: Early Egyptian tomb painting.

most innovative design. The wealth of form and colour on our supermarket shelf is endless in its variety as designers use different combinations of structure and colour to grab our attention for a brief selling second. The main printing techniques developed for packaging are Flexo-printing and Graveure. These techniques are especially effective for printing on plastic reels of film (although silk-screen is occasionally used). Flexo-printing is a process by which rubber printing plates are made from the designer's finished artwork. The plates are then wrapped around metal drums and printed in the usual manner. This form of printing is cost effective for printing on reels of plastic film. The quality is not as good as the Graveure process but it is effective providing the artwork is simple in structure.

Graveure is a more expensive way of printing and gives excellent results whether printing on reels (film), carton or plastic. Both these processes are the most popular for printing on plastic containers. The structure of the carton container is created by Cut-and-Fold machines which are designed to take the printed matter and construct it to a pre-designated structure. The plastic containers are produced by injection moulding, whereby as its name suggests the plastic is moulded into the designed form on which the paper label is applied. The product is then "Filled" into the pack. The technology at work here is very fundamental to our understanding

of the limitations it can impose on the designer as "all things are not possible" and a package designer must at all times be aware of the restrictions placed upon him by production methods.

Packaging theory has evolved parallel with that of advertising. This is simply because the pre-determined design of the package will eventually effect the conceptual end of the advertising campaign. Continuity is essential when advertising a new brand; therefore, it is crucial that the package complement the advertising campaign. There are several ideas on the function of the package designer. Milton Glaser<sup>(5)</sup> believes that the explosion in package design came with the arrival of the shopping centres. Producers of the same product were forced to fight it out on the shopping centre shelf and to do this they employed identities for themselves. He believes that the product should be targeted at its audience and the vehicle to achieve this should be the package. This theory involves research into your target market, strictly defining the audience to which the producer believes he is selling. To create an effective identity for the product is the next task and all the psychological tricks of association will be used to achieve this.

Another school of thought believes that advertising is a "Pull" strategy and that it compels people to search for the product. In this case the package acts as a homing beacon. This idea lays heavy emphasis on the



"push power" of the advert and tends to see the pack as incidental and secondary. Both of these notions are, of course, based on the assumptions that we can be compelled to buy things. But perhaps a more accurate term would be "impelled" as buying is a voluntary action and not involuntary, as the previous term suggests.

To understand the language of packaging involves an understanding of basic semiotics, as a designed package uses symbols to communicate its function and to direct itself at a specific audience. These symbols or signs can be broken down into two parts, the Signifier and Signified. Judith Williamson states

"A sign is quite simply a thing - whether object, word, or picture - which has a particular meaning to a person or group of people. It is neither the thing nor the meaning alone, but the two together. The Sign consists of the Signifier, the material object, and the Signified, which is its meaning. These are only divided for analytical purposes: in practice a sign is always thing-plus-meaning".<sup>(6)</sup>

By using symbols the designer can communicate several layers of meaning in a package. By adding one symbol to another, the designer can complicate these messages and make unseen subtle suggestions to the customer.

## **GREEN PACKAGING**

Recently, we have seen the appearance of a new wave of products on our supermarket shelves. It comes as no

surprise that all these products are environmentally friendly. These green products were originally introduced to Quinnsworth and were imported from the sister organisation, Loblaws Supermarket in Canada, as they were not being produced in Ireland. Superquinn have now introduced the Ecover and GreenForce products to their shelves and are advertising them with their Superquinn Greenwatch Campaign. It is clear that a market has appeared and many potential suiters are appearing to fill it. This new range of products has a large selection including foodstuffs, detergents and fuels. The packaging of these products is handled in a unique manner very different to their rival products. Examine Plate 2.

Here we see Green Force washing powder in an average carton construction as you would expect. But the concept behind the package reveals it has more than a passive face. An illustration is used of water cascading down a mountainside. In the background there are pine forests and mountains. The illustration is loosely rendered, capturing the movement of the water as it explodes into a white flash at the bottom of the mountain. The sky is handled using diagonal strokes emphasising the speed of the gushing water. What does this mean and why does it appear on a box of washing powder? This illustration is in itself a sign, and a very powerful one, as it appears on several sister products, Plate 3, unifying them.



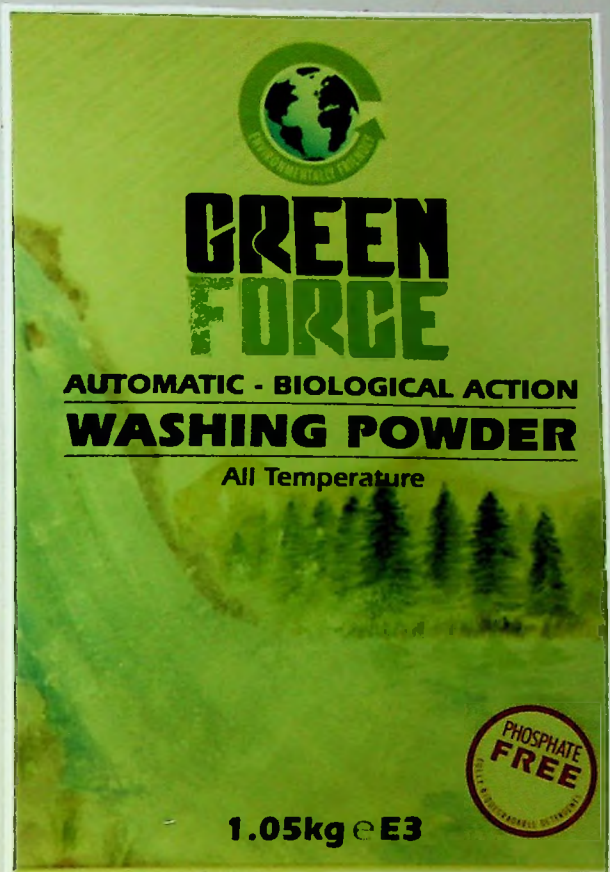


Plate 2: Green Force washing powder



Plate 3: Green Force product range.



At first glance our impression is that the powder contained in the pack will, because of its lack of dangerous chemicals, do no damage to the environment. But on closer inspection there is a secondary message which is much more subtle and therefore more powerful. Why use an illustration instead of a photograph? Perhaps this is because an illustration is more personal and directly associated with freedom of expression and individuality. The use of a waterfall as opposed to a serene lake suggests that it was intended to be associated with force and energy which implies youth. This idea of youth and energy is again reinforced by the brand name of the products "Green Force". On looking at the logo we find two different tones of green used. The word Force is lighter and closer in colour to that of the illustration. This visually lessens the impact of the word as it is partially obscured by the overall colour of the pack. This has the effect of communicating the meaning of the word "Force" without giving it equal visual status, therefore suggesting its value in a subliminal manner.

On closer inspection we find re-styled "Rs" in both Green and Force. The implications are that the supporting bar is pushing its way through the main bar of the R interfering and breaking its continuity. These re-styled R's resemble sprinters as they begin a race implying strength and speed. This idea is reinforced by the slight



Plate 4: Ecover product range



Plate 5: Ecover washing powder.

serifs on the left-hand side of the type indicating speed. The message behind this pack is clearly not a passive one as we would apparently think, but a complex series of messages all suggesting youth, individuality and force. The package aims itself at the young active buyer who is involved in current events. It is aggressively seizing upon its market by mirroring the qualities the buyer believes he or she has. This pack is effectively using sign language to address its audience and create ideas using a network of symbols and implications. This use of symbols is again to be seen in Plate 4 where we find a large range of products all using similar layouts.

An example of one of these Ecover products is Plate 5. Ecover washing powder. This pack uses symbols and signs similar to that of the Green Force pack (Plate 3). Here again we find an illustration, although this time the treatment is essentially linear in approach. The illustration is framed in a circular border with a white band surrounding it. This has the effect of including two ideas in one illustration. The circular motif is, on the one hand, a view of a washing machine loading door. This is reinforced by the water filled area in the illustration which resembles the perforated effect as seen on the inside of a washing machine. The secondary image refers to that of the earth. This is achieved by the circular shape of the illustration and the white band which surrounds it suggesting the atmosphere. This point



is emphasised by the cloud shape suggesting atmosphere on the left hand side of the pack and by the logo for the product Ecover which is broken into two words Eco-Ver by the colour treatment. Eco is blue, representing sky, and Ver is green representing earth. This of course signifies the environment and acts as a powerful symbol throughout the range of products. By unifying the idea of earth and a washing machine into one illustration a third resulting idea is suggested. This resultant is the act of cleaning the environment. This is the objective message of the package design but it communicates itself in a subliminal manner making it harder to see and understand.

This is because the elements in these packs can be seen as quite separate from each other and only become unified messages when assembled. And it is the assembled elements that suggest the message behind the design of the pack. For example a washing machine and the environment suggests the notion of cleaning the environment. Even the word Ecover suggests Recover as in "Recover the World". Aware of current trends, this particular pack also aims its message at Animal Rights supporters by including the message "not tested on animals" in the white cloud and placing a white dove (a symbol for peace) flying towards it. Clearly these packs are more complex than they appear. But perhaps the most striking difference



Plate 6: Ariel (adjusted pack)



Plate 7: Ariel (original pack)

about them is that these products do not boast of their merits such as cleaning power, etc.

The point addressed by these packages is a general concern, not a specific one. The idea of saving the world by buying the Ecover brand or Green Force products is at the heart of their message. By and large their products are easily identifiable as they address themselves to the environmentally aware. But existing products, too, have had to be altered to accommodate for the green challenge.

These newly adjusted packages and products are now becoming more environmentally friendly to increase and sustain their target markets. These products tend to be phosphate free, CFC free and bio-degradable. In the case of Ariel Ultra, Plate 6, for example, we can clearly see a radical departure from its previous pack as in Plate 7. The product is more concentrated and, therefore, halved in amount. This is the selling point of the advertising campaign. But the altered pack seeks to leave no stone unturned in its expression of this message. The addition of green stripes indicates clearly that the powder is an active one as stripes imply speed. The colour green, perhaps an obvious choice, implies its speed in returning to the environment. This is again emphasised by the logo placed in italics. This sort of pack directly aims itself at a market more conscious of the environment



and risks the quality of its packaging by its enthusiastic desire to grab the attention of the passing buyer. But there exists a trend in packaging that does not bombard the customer with obvious changes.

In Plate 8 we find Glade Pot-Pourri (Dry Spray). This shows a complete departure in design direction. But the change in direction is far more subtle than with Ariel. On examination we find no hard evidence to affiliate this pack with green products. It does not possess any green element either in logo or layout and there is very little attempt to sell the product on its greenness. Yet it seems to insist visually that it is completely harmless and natural in origin and therefore, of no danger to the environment.

This approach to packaging is perhaps the logical conclusion to the green agenda. It seems that the Green Party's intention of reducing bio-degradable packaging to a minimum has been assimilated into design and the result in Plate 8, where the package creates an illusion which takes on the face of innocence. Glade Pot-Pourri looks harmless and inviting. It does not say verbally that it's harmless but insists visually that it is completely harmless. This effect is achieved by the use of the phogograph in which flowers fill the shape of the package. The effect of this illusion is quite complex. Firstly,



Plate 8: Glade Pot-Pourri.



Plate 9: Charm spring bouquet.



it is stating that the contents of the package are pure flower scent and that these flowers are freshly picked.

The secondary idea concerns that of shape and form. We as observers cannot see both flowers and container at once as the perspective of the photograph conflicts with the shape of the container. This leads us to deny the nature of the aerosol container by the fact that flowers and the metal of the container are foreign to each other. The observer substitutes the metal with a transparent materials such as glass or plastic. So, in effect, we are intended to be viewing a glass full of freshly picked flowers. The photograph by use of its own perspective denies the flat rounded shape of the container by giving it artificial depth, This illusion is of critical importance to the advertising campaign where the flowers literally become the shape of the vessel. Clearly Glade wishes to be seen as a pure and natural product even though it still uses pressurised containers which in themselves are dangerous pollutants.

If we contrast the Glade Pot-Pourri container with existing Charm Spring bouquet, Plate 9, we see how differently the designers have approached their products. The Charm spring bouquet is designed without attempt to hide the fabricated container. The outlined graphic illustration with the airbrushed vignette seeks to enhance the container but not disguise it. The design direction



behind the Charm container is clearly that of the average aerosol on which the graphic information seeks to inform and attract. This is not the only intention of the Glade Pot-Pourri design.

The freedom to choose an image for a package is endless in its variety of possibilities. Because of this it is possible to communicate many messages which may not be of relevance to the product. This enables the designer to fabricate sentences using simple images which, when collected together, make secondary resulting suggestions which are the unapparent intentions of the designer. This aspect of design allows the designer to accommodate for a given problem which he must solve. The green issue has resulted in a situation in which the designer must attract the environmentally aware customer whilst not radically altering the package in structure. Glade Pot-Pourri is an example of the situation resolved. Clearly the designer had to reconcile the demand for change placed upon industry by the green issue with a harmful waste product (the aerosol can). The solution: an aerosol can which looks like something else, in this case a column of flowers. The green issue is becoming assimilated with industry and this unification is taking place at the designer's desk where problems become resolved.

## ADVERTISING (INTRODUCTION)

As with packaging, advertising has been greatly affected by the swing of public attention onto the green issue. Although most advertising may seem unaffected, subtle changes have occurred and are fundamental in the shaping of our attitudes towards the products. Advertising is one of the most inescapable parts of our everyday lives. No matter where we turn, we are confronted by images and words which grab our attention for a brief selling second, existing in many forms. No place or times is sacred for the advertiser. Advertising by its nature works by making associations and links between objects and ideas. This in turn creates symbols. The symbol then acts as a pointer from object to meaning or idea. Essentially, advertising seeks to make a market for its product by using social symbols already in existence and by making new connections between them. In this way it differs from packaging, as with packaging, the symbol itself is the package.

This is shown when we buy one product rather than its rival because we wish to be seen as a certain type of individual, becoming the type of individual by owning the package concerned. Advertising seeks to create the association, thereby creating a market for the product. In doing this, advertising has been accused of reducing everything to an object. This is caused by process of making associations. For example, when associating a beautiful woman with perfume we reduce the woman to object

status as she becomes a symbol for beauty and not an individual. And it is as a symbol that she becomes associated with the perfume, transferring her symbolic value onto the perfume. Class structures, too, are often referred to in advertising. This area provides ample material for the advertiser, to direct his product by associating a type of individual with the product. The ability to project value on to objects using symbols is the secret of advertising as it stimulates needs in the buyer by making the buyer feel he (she) is lacking in something. Advertising, in effect, creates artificial needs in the market and fills these needs with its products.

The ability to create need is a powerful force. And it is this hollowing out process which ads are designed for. This can only be done by creating new structures of meaning and giving products meaning or value to us. This method of transferring value in the structure of the ad is a process by which products become seen as objects of symbolic value. Advertising works in an existing social structure and refers to symbols and beliefs in it. By doing this it creates the illusion of a real situation in which we can become involved. But it is the illusion of reality created in the ad which recreates new symbols in our minds. As ads are designed to show how reality should or could be and not how it is. And it is our desire to be part of the ad reality which gives the ad the power to sell to us products we do not need.



In this manner we are given needs which cannot be fulfilled thereby perpetuating a market for the advertised product. This is why ads always seek the viewer to become involved in their drama, etc. Because unless we are involved in the ad we cannot identify with its characters, symbols or meanings and therefore desire the product.

Although ad reality may appear to be mirroring the world around us, the opposite is in fact the case. As each ad will use every detail to create the world with which it wants to associate its product and any myth associated with an idea or object will act as a pointer to the product and transfer its value. Ads in every medium work in this manner. All ads have a basic message in mind but will continually reinforce this message by use of association with other ideas and messages. This is the language of advertising which works in a dream like reality.

### **GREEN ADVERTISING**

Recent trends in advertising have been greatly affected by public concern about the green issue. This has greatly influenced advertising, even on products which are not a direct concern of the issue itself. If we examine Plate 10, we find Lever's billboard poster designed to promote Radion Micro washing powder. This is the more concentrated version of the larger pack. The trend towards smaller more concentrated products is also evident in the Ariel pack, Plate 6. Radion is itself a new product only launched on the Irish market in 1989 and still in the process of establishing itself

on the supermarket shelf. Clearly, Radion wish to be seen as a participant in the move towards green products.

The structure of the Ad is very straightforward and the copy line "Radion results with only half the powder" seems to speak for itself. But there exists subtle messages beneath the surface of this poster. The woman depicted in the poster represents to the viewer, a mother. This is evident by the iron and newly ironed washing in the foreground of the ad. The mother-figure acts as a symbol or sign and is associated with motherhood and childbirth. This idea of childbirth is hinted at by the moon shaped earrings the woman is wearing, as the moon is a traditional symbol for motherhood. This idea of motherhood is then transferred on to the Radion pack. This is achieved by the loving glance the mother gives to her new arrival (the Radion Micro pack). This is further suggested by the sub-copy line "Good news for you and mother nature" which ties both package and mother together and acts like a verbal umbilical cord. The viewer is suddenly caught in the loving embrace of mother and child. The colours in the poster add to this maternal atmosphere. Ochre, greens and browns, all earthy colours, since childbirth is a natural state. This poster, by a clever series of associations, wishes to direct itself at the desire to give birth and wishes to associate this with the Radion Micro pack. Even the notion of a Micro pack suggests "Baby pack". The trend in advertising to use motherhood and childbirth as selling tools is all too familiar.



Plate 10: Radion billboard ad.



Plate 11: Ariel Ultra billboard ad.



The departure taken here in this poster shows this state with a heavy emphasis on the naturalness of the act of childbirth. It wishes to show us motherhood and Radion micro are both part of a natural process like birth, growth and decay. It is interesting to note that this ad does not concern itself with the merits of the pack such as cleaning power, etc. This poster is concerned with showing Mother and Radion micro as inseparable as with Mother and child. The resulting implication from this association is that childbirth is a natural act like buying Radion micro.

This ad stands in sharp contrast to Plate 11. where we find a billboard ad for Ariel Ultra washing powder (Discussed earlier). In this ad we find no attempt to integrate the product with a natural cycle even though this product is phosphate free and halved in amount. The approach taken here is an informative one. This ad associates itself with cleaning results and its merit as an altered product. This is the usual structure for a product such as a washing powder and differs greatly from the symbolic language of the Radion ad in which suggestions are formed by subtle manipulation of characters, objects and their meanings.

This idea of naturalness and being part of nature's circle is again to be seen in Plate 12.

Represented here is an advert on a double page spread from a magazine. The company represented is Knorr with

its brand of Vegetable stock cubes. In this ad we again find reference to motherhood and nature in its main copy line "This cube helps Mother Nature. Other cubes help smother nature". The sign language behind this advert is again the key to its meaning. Vegetables are apparently randomly placed on this page with a pack of Knorr cubes among them. This particular ad works using a sort of visual hypnosis, whereby the viewer looks at the overall image and categorizes them as all vegetables. This includes the vegetable stock cubes which appear at home with the overall image. No attempt is made to emphasise the stock cubes as they appear roughly the same size as the surrounding vegetables and share the same descriptive typeface which is aligned beside each separate item. The association here is that the stock cubes share similar qualities as the vegetables. These qualities are that of being part of Mother Nature's cycle and part of her produce. This idea is transferred to the stock cubes by making them appear part of the natural family in the ad. To further complicate this, the centre of the ad is taken up by leeks. These leeks are the only item in the ad which bleed from both ends of the page. This makes them appear as if they are still in the act of growing. This symbolises growth and development. Clearly, Knorr wish their stock cubes to be seen as nature's produce and part of the growing process.







The sign language here is very effective in convincing the viewer of the purity of the stock cubes. The direction of this campaign is obviously influenced by the green issue and this advert affiliates itself with it. The idea of purity is an element which runs throughout these campaigns as it becomes an intentional bi-product of the messages and symbols behind the advertising campaigns and packages. Purity is, of course, very important to the cautious buyer and most, therefore, be integrated with the product image.

An example of a product which wishes to be seen as a totally pure product is Plate 13. This is the Mitchum aerosol spray ad which appears in SHE magazine. The ad represents a green towel curled into the shape of the original can. The implications of this ad are endlessly complex. The towel in the ad symbolizes a naturally produced product used for drying and refers to the drying of oneself after an exhausting game. The idea of a game or competitive sport is referred to by the grass-like effect on the texture of the towel and the powder-like effect of the typography on the towel, which is similar to the effect of lines as seen on a football pitch or tennis court. The combination of these two ideas produces the refreshing idea of the feeling of exaltation one receives when one has completed a difficult task such as an exhausting game. The idea of a "high" is again emphasised by the copyline "Twice the drying power to tuck under your arm" which suggests that the game is over and we are leaving with the towel

"tucked under our arm". The resulting suggestion inferred by these symbols is the idea of the body perfect. The marble-like effect behind the towel further reinforces this as marble is directly associated with Godliness and perfection. Clearly the user of this aerosol is competitive and in perfect physical condition or would like to be seen as possessing these qualities.

The portrayal of the Glade Pot-Pourri aerosol uses the same visual trick to achieve the illusion which helps hide the true nature of the aerosol can. In the case of Glade Pot-Pourri the illusion is achieved by use of a column of flowers whilst the Mitchum aerosol uses a harmless towel to convey the idea of purity. These images help convince the viewer that the packages have been altered greatly when only minor modifications have been made to them. With added pressure upon manufacturers to change their products, this is perhaps the logical step they must make to appear as if they are responding to the demand for change.

If we examine Plate 14, we find a magazine advert for Vision Cookware. Normally a product such as this would require advertising of a more informative nature showing, perhaps how effective and streamlined the pan is. This is the case with an ad produced by Dansk Designs Ltd, Plate 15, which shows the beauty of the product but makes no attempt to integrate it with nature. Here the streamlined quality of the cookware is emphasized by the aesthetic





Plate 14: Vision advert.  
(SHE magazine 3/89)

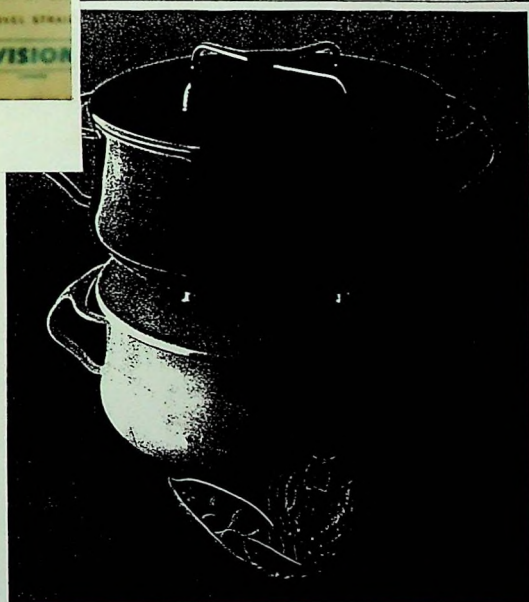


Plate 15: Dansk designs advert  
(Bookman & C.B.S.)




placing of one vessel over the other which shows the subtle curves and contrasts in the design. With this ad, the message is that the pot is a beautifully designed object and no attempt to disguise its industrial origins is being made.

The Vision cookware ad, Plate 14, takes a different direction. This ad wishes to signify the vision pan as a product of nature. By superimposing hanging pans with an apple tree, a whole series of relationships are formed. Presumably, the Vision pan is meant to be thought of as being picked from a tree as one would pick an apple. This suggestion implies that there was no industrial involvement in the production of the pan, thereby denying its origins. It is obvious that the way of thinking is a direct result of the green issue and subsequent public pressure. But here we find a product not directly associated with the issue. This trend in advertising, to make products appear as if they are part of the natural process, is carried through to car advertisements. Here we find complex images, often hardly relating in content to the product in question.

This form of advertising is radically different from that of the technological ads of the seventies and early eighties where cars were shown as streamlined, high-tech and enduring. Examples of this are Plates 16 and 17 which represent ads for both Ferrari and Volvo cars and were released in 1980 and 1989 respectively. These ads show


*Only those who dare... truly live*



For the name of the authorized Ferrari dealer nearest you, call these numbers toll-free: (800)447-4700 or, in Illinois, (800)322-4400

**Ferrari**

Plate 16: Ferrari advert 1980



**BUILT LIKE A VOLVO.**


The Volvo 460 ES like every other Volvo is built around a strong, rigid, integrated chassis.

The doors are built with extra-thick steel.

The frame and chassis are made of steel.

The engine, transmission, and other vital components are built to last.

Volvo 460 ES is built to last.



**TESTED LIKE A VOLVO.**


Volvo like every other Volvo the 460 ES is tested both on a proving track and in a real safety center.

Volvo is an industry leader in crash testing.

Volvo is the only car to pass the most severe crash tests.

Volvo is the only car to pass the most severe crash tests.

Volvo is the only car to pass the most severe crash tests.



**A VOLVO.**

Volvo is just one small thing. The 460 ES doesn't look like a Volvo.

Volvo is a fine, sleek, and most beguiling line. It's a perfect blend of light and light, often, which.

Also on many, it's a perfect blend of light and light, often, which.

Also on many, it's a perfect blend of light and light, often, which.

Also on many, it's a perfect blend of light and light, often, which.

**NOTHING LIKE A VOLVO.**

Volvo is just one small thing. The 460 ES doesn't look like a Volvo.

Volvo is a fine, sleek, and most beguiling line. It's a perfect blend of light and light, often, which.

Also on many, it's a perfect blend of light and light, often, which.

Also on many, it's a perfect blend of light and light, often, which.

Also on many, it's a perfect blend of light and light, often, which.

**THE VOLVO 460 ES. \$12,440.**

Plate 17: Volvo advert (Cosmopolitan 6/89)





## The execution is different, but the concept is basically the same.

Both vehicles are very difficult to destroy. However, the M-41 (at right) was built to withstand slightly heavier treatment than the Volvo 144 (at left).

As a result, the M-41 weighs in at 50,000 lbs. And for all its bulk, carries only four men—in extreme discomfort, we might add.

It gets 1.1 miles to the gallon and won't go over 10 miles an hour.

In other words, it's a tank.

The Volvo, on the other hand, weighs in at just 2,600 lbs. And for all its lack of bulk, carries five men—in extreme comfort.

It gets substantially better gas mileage and will go fast enough to attract police cars. Which are faster but not as strong.

In other words, a Volvo is strong in the way a tank is strong and has strengths where a tank has weaknesses.

Just how strong is a Volvo?

You could stack eight Volvos, one on top of another, without disturbing the Volvo on the bottom. That's a total of 10 tons. Six steel pillars, fused for maximum strength, support the roof (this means that Detroit calls cars with no steel pillars "hardtops" when in reality they're just the opposite.)

For its role, the Volvo body is made from one solid piece of steel. There are no weak points because there are no seams. In other parts of the body, where seams occur, 10,000 spot welds fuse them together.

It's also kind of construction that once led Ford & Daimler Benz to make the following statement:

The Volvo is possibly the toughest vehicle

anywhere this side of the Aberdeen Proving Grounds and there is a growing legion of happy owners who will be glad to verify the point.

The Aberdeen Proving Grounds, incidentally, is where the U. S. Army tests tanks.

It never has some plating.

Volvo has a fourth secret story. First the body is etched in zinc phosphate so the paint gets a sure-like grip on the metal. Then it's dunked in rustproofing primer. The body then gets one undercoat, one selenite coat and three color coats of baked enamel. 33 lbs. of protection in all.

It's because of this that you hear stories like this:

One day a friend of this writer told of an experience with a dent in the door of his Volvo. He had it repaired and noticed that the shop charged him a modest sum for body work but nothing for paint. Being honest, he raised the point. The body man explained that after lugging out the dent, the paint was still undamaged—in there was no need for a re-paint!

A Volvo doesn't rust, doesn't rust in three years.

There is an obvious advantage in owning a car that's built like a Volvo. Once it's paid for, there's still something left to own.

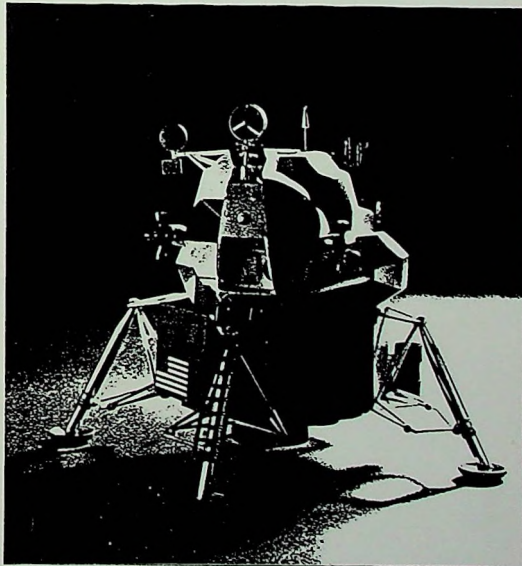
A Volvo can help you fight off the impulse that drives you into debt every few years. Because by keeping it, you can keep making payments to yourself instead of the finance company.

Of course, if you're not interested in adding money to your coffers, you can sell your Volvo after three years. And delight in how little you lose.

Volvo's depreciation is shown as they disintegrate.



Plate 18: Volvo advert 1969  
(When advertising tried harder.)



It's ugly, but it gets you there.



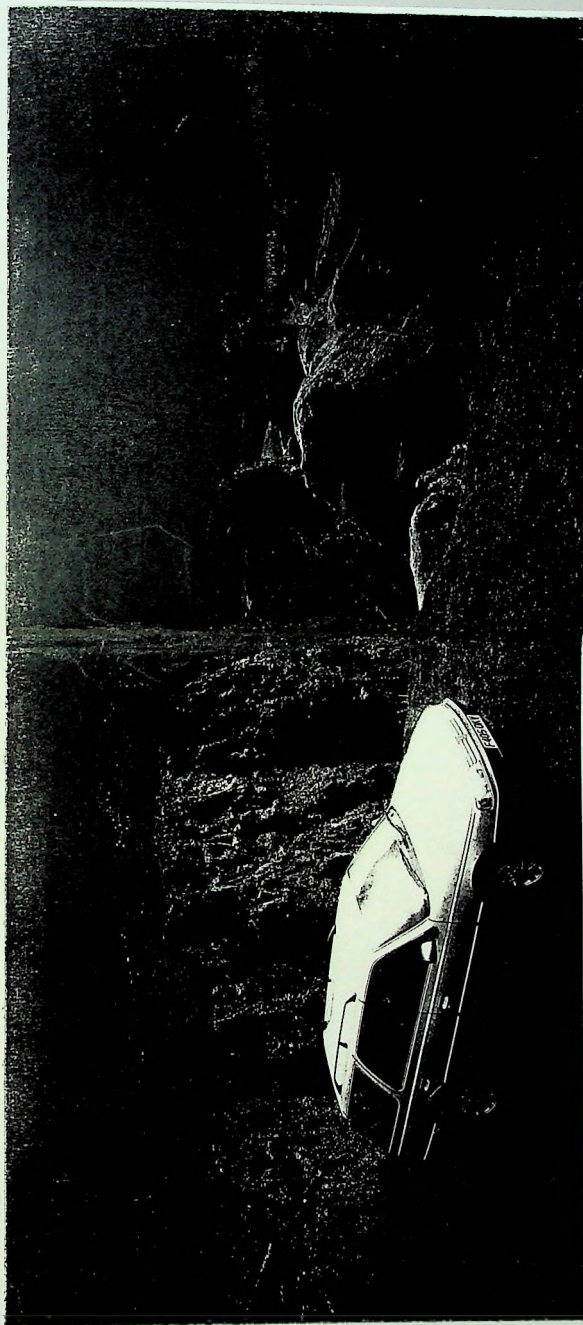
Plate 19: Volkswagen advert 1970  
(When advertising tried harder.)



how streamlined the cars are and make the cars appear alien and dangerous. The absence of people and dramatic photography helps generate this feeling. These are cold and austere objects produced by a futuristic technology. The principal idea behind both ads is that these cars are superior and dynamic and will command the road when driven by their, presumably superior owners. In this way these ads are designed to show the greater industry that produced them.

Other examples of this approach are Plates 18 and 19 in which we discover the Volvo's (Plate 18) tank-like ability to sustain any battle and the Volkswagon's (Plate 19) ability to travel the most unimaginable distances. These ads by use of witty images refer to the cars' merits as a manufactured object. No attempt is made to hide the industrial origins of these cars, but exactly the opposite occurs and they are presented to us as hard impersonal objects produced by industry to do the job. This approach stands in sharp contrast to a new trend in contemporary advertising where we find a radically different approach in advertising direction.

Examining the new Peugeot 405 estate ad as seen in January '89 edition of YOU magazine (Plate 20). We find a striking difference in approach to its design. The ad shows a photograph of the Peugeot in front of a vast landscape which ends with the sea. We see the two owners



## THE NEW PEUGEOT 405 ESTATE. MORE ROOM TO BREATHE.

Wide open space. Secretly not just the sight of it can take your breath away. So why should a car that offers you more space be boring? It shouldn't. But more than that, it is.

The new Peugeot 405 Estate has room. Because it gives you all the style, performance and sheer driving pleasure you'll get from any Peugeot 405.

Here's the outrageous, stylish, desire-

Take the car's aerodynamics. Long hours in the rain? The wind tunnel has rated the 405 Estate one of the lowest drag factors of any estate on the road. What more, it's built on exactly the same chassis and has the same exterior dimensions as the 405 sedan.

The result? The 405 Estate simply looks and feels right. Instead of the bulkiness of so many estates, you can enjoy the handling and performance of a sedan. The top of

the range 17X 1.9 model, for instance, will take you from 0 to 60 (space permitting) in 9.9 seconds. V6e tracing.

But if you're worried that all this may have been achieved by sacrificing load space, be the easy. The 405 Estate isn't a hatchback pretending to be an estate. A nearly 38 cubic feet, the 405's load space is as generous as you could wish for - in fact it's wider than that of any of its major competitors.

When it comes to equipment, you'll find the 405 offers standard auto features you'd pay extra for on other estates. These are the plants of choice though. Between petrol, diesel engines for instance. Manual and automatic gearboxes. And between 4 different trim levels. But what's your choice, you can be sure of one thing. You'll have bought an estate car and a driver's car. All in one breath.



**PEUGEOT 405 ESTATE**

PEUGEOT THE LION GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Plate 20: Peugeot 405 advert (YOU magazine 7/89)

on a mountain top in the background looking at the panoramic view. The copyline "The new Peugeot 405 estate. More room to breathe" cleverly ties two ideas together as it refers to the fresh air and open scenery as well as the size of the interior of the estate car. Throughout the copy matter we find facts about the car integrated with the idea that the car is a "pleasure to drive". This ad is informative, but is designed to show us the car as a beautiful object at home with its surroundings. It differs greatly from the cold austere ads for Ferrari and Volvo cars in which both people and natural surroundings are removed. The new Peugeot 405 is something more than just a car, it becomes an object for driving pleasure with an owner. The fact that people appear in the Peugeot ad is significant as it places the car in a relationship with its owners. We the viewer see that the car has taken the owners to this beautiful spot. And it is therefore giving them pleasure. Here the car ceases to become purely an object for transportation but a vehicle to escape the everyday problems of living, even the copymatter mentions the idea of "sheer driving pleasure". This idea of giving the car a personal relationship with its owner is carried through to T.V. commercials. Here we find the car involved in a network of human relationships redefining its value.

Examine Plate 21, the recent Vauxhall Astra ad as seen on television. This ad recounts the following story:





Plate 21: Vauxhall astra advert 89.

A man awakens in his house to find his wife (girlfriend) has left him. He sees she has also taken the car. He then pursues her through the countryside. We are then shown his wife leaving, driving through the countryside in the Vauxhall Astra. She arrives at a hotel where she meets a new man. Meanwhile, her husband arrives and discovers the situation which he remedies by driving off in the Vauxhall Astra, much to his wife's anger. This ad is not accompanied by a dialogue but by the song "Always on my Mind" by Elvis Presley, which runs throughout the ad until the end, when we hear the Vauxhall theme music and the copyline: "Once driven forever smitten". The nature of the ad makes it amusing to watch, but there is a distinct lack of the car's merits advertised throughout the ad. Instead, we find a story in which the car (Astra) has a relationship with the actors. In the ad we assume the man is in pursuit of his wife but at the end it seems that he was, in fact, in pursuit of the car. Also, we are not sure if the soundtrack "Always on my Mind" refers to the man's relationship with the woman or with the car, the Astra. The ad clearly seeks to humanize the car by involving it in a set of human relationships which form a sort of love triangle. this ad is distinctly cloudy and it is unclear if the man really wants back the woman or the car. It is this situation which the ad is designed to create, as in this state of confusion we equate similar value to both woman and car. And it is this equation woman = car



that is the objective of the ad. At this point the car ceases to be an object and becomes something closer to a personality with which we, too, can form a close relationship. This idea is emphasized throughout the ad by the placing of the event in natural surroundings and the use of horses towards the end of the ad. These elements are used to disguise the mechanical nature of the car. An ad similar to this is Plate 22, the Fiat (UNO) campaign launched in 1989.

In this ad we, again, enter the structure of a story. We see a couple watching television. The girl obviously bored, leaves to go shopping in the Fiat (UNO). We now enter the magical world of the Fiat (UNO). Firstly, we see the car and woman pass through a cathedral. Then she buys fruit and vegetables from a roadside market in what looks like French countryside. Next we see car and woman travel over the Swiss Alps to buy a watch in a jewellers, presumably in Switzerland. Following this, we find her shopping in an exotic market; and, finally, we see the girl encounter a man who seems to be a lover on a balcony with the UNO in the foreground.. Clearly the world of adventure and excitement are part of the Fiat (UNO). Similar to the previous ad, this ad makes no specific reference to the car's merits such as mileage per gallon of petrol, etc. This ad shows us both woman and car as adventurers and companions as both car and woman appear in every shot and are never distinctly separated. In this way, the car





becomes more than an object for travel but a close travelling companion as well. This gives it the status of friend. The reference to a magical world is another element in the ad which serves to undermine our pre-conceptions of what a car is supposed to be. By showing us this exotic world we are being led to believe that the car acts as a key to it. The car now becomes a magic carpet on which we can partake of adventure. The objective of the ad is to re-define our conception of what a car can be by giving it a new definition in which it ceases to be a cold austere object used for travel and becomes something of a magic carpet capable of fulfilling every fantasy. This method of redefinition leaves the viewer with the impression the car now exists as a vehicle for pleasure and appeals to our appetite for fulfilment and not to our reason. The car no longer appears alien and cold.

The idea of nature is heavily emphasized in both Astra and UNO campaigns as both animals and countryside appear in both ads frequently. These elements help the suggestion that the car is not a mechanical invention separated from an and nature but is a part of it. And it is this idea which is behind both campaigns. Another ad which heavily uses the theme of nature is the Timotei shampoo campaign launched in 1989, Plate 23. This ad directs itself at the concerned buyer. In the beginning, we see a house beside a river in the country. Then a girl with





Plate 23: Timotei advert 89.



long blonde hair appears and fades through to a waterfall. This becomes a scene in which the girl is seen washing her hair in the river. The ad becomes a series of picturesque stills in which both woman and nature are superimposed so they become one. In turn, Timotei shampoo is seen beneath the river and simply dissolves, leaving the logo resting on a smooth stone on the river bed. The idea here is one of growth and decay as Timotei is seen as part of the natural cycle.

The use of nature as a symbol has of course many powerful associations as when we become affiliated with nature we hold a torch for that which is good and right. And it is this idea of good as in "good for you and mother nature" which the advertiser wishes to address. By being good, we appear to be in a state of saintliness and of course can do harm to either man or nature. In this way the producer is not threatening the environment by his products as they are part of the natural cycle. This trend in advertising is largely the result of outrage at the damage caused to the environment by industry. The media and movements such as the Green Party have brought this to the attention of the public and the concerned buyer is now a powerful force on the market. This change in advertising has presented us with the outward ideals of a clean and healthy environment. In this way these ads pacify us by giving us reassurance that our environment is in no danger. Although all ads do not adopt this approach, a noticeable amount do and it is the producers of these

products which are all too aware of the current opinion regarding the environment. This is why a gradual increase in the use of natural elements is to be found in contemporary packaging and advertising.

### CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the present course of industry has been a reckless abuse of the environment. The reasons for this are related to the guiding principles that industry have taken. These principles are fundamentally "speed and quality" in terms of production. With this attitude at the core of industry it has been necessary to use more efficient chemicals and methods in production and it is the use of these synthetic chemicals that have caused the environmental situation today. The subsequent public outrage caused by this situation has largely been brought about by bodies such as the Green Party and the Environmental Alliance. These bodies have actively expressed outrage at the reckless behaviour by industry towards the environment, using the media as a platform for their message. The effectiveness of their message can be judged by the growing popularity of political parties such as the Green Party and the increasing number of votes they receive in elections.

This increasing trend has resulted in the appearance of a new market, consisting of the cautious buyer who is concerned about environmental destruction and the

consumer goods which cause it. Manufacturers are now in a position where they must alter existing production methods and products in order to sustain their threatened markets. The move to protect the market can be seen by the clever use of design to make packages appear unremoved from the natural cycle. Similarly, new brands of products such as Ecover and Green Force have appeared, which direct themselves at this breakaway market. These packages do not inform the buyer of their merits as a designed product, but direct themselves at the general concern of saving the environment, and therefore consider their function a secondary issue. This is a change in design emphasis, as previously, designers used the merits of the product as a significant factor in the design of the package. This shift in emphasis is also mirrored in advertising.

Here we find a swing towards associating products with ideas such as nature, motherhood, and natural beauty and an attempt to overcome the association of industry with the product it creates. Now the ad seeks to redefine the origins of its product by implying they are of natural origin or giving the products a new meaning. This change in advertising direction is not only concerned with products effecting the green issue but with general advertising for consumer goods. In this way a gradual tendency to redirect the buyer's attention from industry has occurred in advertising and design.



Designers have had to reconcile a demanding market with an industry that is reluctant to change and it is this reconciliation which has resulted in the move towards de-emphasizing the industrial origins of consumer goods.

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Marion Boyers publishers 1983.

## Acknowledgments

My thanks to the following:

Mr Jon Mc Culloch of the Bailey Gibson design firm for information concerning packaging print techniques.

Mr John Conlon (Manager, Superquinn, Blanchardstown) for information concerning Green Force and Ecover products.

Ms. Margie Bach for information concerning the Green Party.

Dr. Francis Ruane for helpful advice and criticism.