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"CONTROLLING SOCIAL ATTITUDES;
CONTROLLING MEDIA"

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In every period of history, those who have governed people have always made use of painting and statues, the better to inspire the feelings they wanted them to have, be it in religion or politics.
(28, pg18)

Introduction

A symbiotic relationship exists between the institutions of power and the media of communication. That is, the institutions of state, religion and commerce have control over, and rely on the the media to communicate for them with society. The ideas they want to convey are usually the ones that are transmitted. As long as society has no access to contradictory information, these institutions can influence social beliefs, standards, morals and viewpoints through their control of the modes of communication.

One of the best illustrations of this point is the treatment of women in the media and how this affects the way in which society regards women. This is not a 'feminist' stance but the best example of how institutions can influence society's viewpoints, by controlling the information available to society.

The modes of communication available to society have changed over the centuries, but the control of power and its institutions has historically been male and the subservience of women has been perpetuated throughout.

Two of the most influential institutions of power have been the Catholic Church and the Advertising Industry. The Catholic Church, from the Middle Ages has had a profound effect on our mainly Christian western society. Today, many of its dogmas and viewpoints are picked up and reflected by Advertising, especially in the depiction of women, as I shall discuss later.

Chapter one will look at how our society developed within social systems which were set up to maintain a masculine hegemony. Wealth and power historically vested in the hands of men ensured that only religions, customs and beliefs that enshrined their superior position evolved.

One of the social systems manipulated by men, to maintain their position of power, is the means of communication of information available to society. These means developed from the handwritten word to print, to mass media such as television, magazines, radio and newspapers. To ensure their masculine ascendancy men used these means to stress the inferiority of women. Women were viewed as secondary beings in Medieval times and today this way of seeing women still tarnishes society's outlook.

Chapter two will examine the Medieval Churches apparently contradictory attitude towards women. Its abhorrence of women as daughters of Eve on one hand, and its veneration of one woman as the mother of God's son , on the other. Through paintings the Church spread its dogmas to a largely illiterate society.

Chapter three deals with how Advertising has taken over the position of power and control over social attitudes that the Church once held, through its use of persuasive imagery.

The primary function of advertising is, we are told, to introduce a wide range of consumer goods to the public and thus support the free market economy, but this is clearly not its only role; over the years it has become more and more involved in the manipulation of social values and attitudes, and less concerned with the communication of essential information about goods and services. In this respect it could be argued that advertising nowadays fulfils a function traditionally met by art or religion. Some critics of advertising have even suggested that it operates in the same way as myths in primitive societies, providing people with simple stories and explanations in which values and ideas are conveyed and through which people can organize their thoughts and experiences and come to make sense of the world they live in.

(11,pg2)

Women are still defined in terms of their sexuality and in relation to man. The female form can be manipulated to symbolise a general ideal whereas man maintains his individuality and identity.

Chapter four shows examples, from current Advertising campaigns, of the division of women into 'Madonnas' or 'Whores', the same criteria the Church used. It examines what the present ideal of the Madonna, and how women are depicted as sexual objects, as much for sale as the products they endorse.

Chapter five addresses the question of whether there is a direct link between the depiction of women in Advertising and the way in which women are treated and perceived by society. It looks at the reality of equal opportunity and shows that women are made to feel incompetent and unambitious, and are judged as such, within a male system of values.

Chapter 1

The development of today's social order.

How power and wealth becomes the domain of men.

Social order grows out of basic human needs. In early human history these needs were quite simple: food, shelter and physical protection. To survive, ancient humans devised ways to care for themselves, creating simple forms of social organization to meet these basic needs. As methods for meeting basic needs became more sophisticated social organization changed to adapt more efficiently to changes in methods of production.

In the beginning tribes divided labour so that men cared for cattle and women maintained communal farms and cared for children and domestic chores. In this early period there were no status differentiations between men's work and women's work, both contributed to the good of the whole community.

The family is the decisive economic institution of society. It is to the hunter and gatherer what...the corporate factory is to capitalism : it is the productive organization. The primary division of labor in band economy is that between men and women. The men typically hunt and make weapons; the women gather wild plants and take care of the home and children. Marriage is the alliance between the two essential elements of production....

(16, pg62)

Early forms of trading began. Cattle became the early unit of exchange around which all other forms of trade were measured. Trade broke down the concept of work for the necessity of the community, and developed the notions of bartering and property. If one could trade something for something else, one owned what one traded. Since cattle, which were the assigned responsibility of men, became the unit of trade it followed that men became the first owners of property. This subtle shift spelled the end of communal production and the beginning of private wealth rested in the hands of men.

There was a time in human affairs when the only right of property that brought honor was that of giving it away.

(16, pg 64)

The economic development of trade slowly changed the family structure from a kind of group commune to pairing and marriage. Whereas before sexual relations were free and open within the group now strict fidelity was demanded to insure known paternity and heredity lineage. Property owned by men could not be passed down to their sons if paternity was uncertain. Women became like cattle, the property of men.

Classes emerged; men with or without cattle and women married to men with or without cattle. A difference of lifestyle developed between those who had wealth and those who were merely workers.

The superstructure of society developed around the economic base. Religions and customs developed to reinforce the emerging class society. Gradually, patriarchal and god-worshipping civilizations replaced a long standing goddess-worshipping culture

This male hegemony has survived until the present time and continues to thrive. It is an ascendancy which was achieved and survives in a play of social forces, organising private lives and cultural processes through its involvement in religious doctrine and practice and its control of information communication media.

People who live in a system of cultural meanings are committed to this system even when it subordinates and demeans them. Hence we find over and over again in the tribal world that cultural ideologies that subordinate and exclude women, extract their labor and child-bearing and rearing, and place them under control of fathers and brothers and husbands are supported as vehemently by women as by men.

(17, pg302)

The link between power and the control of the communication of information.

The relationship between the control of information and power is apparent throughout history. From the time that the Egyptians established a lunar calender to predict when the Nile would flood to the development of papyrus and the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century it is obvious that society reorganises as the forms of media and the controlling power over them change.

When the writing surface changed from stone to papyrus to paper, libraries opened religious doctrines and scriptures were written down. Schools were established to teach scribes and the arts and sciences developed. The human mind no longer needed to store everything and pass it down. Ideas could be recorded and drawn upon later. But transcribing manuscripts was a slow and laborious task, limited to the copying of important religious and state documents. With the invention of the printing press control of the medium of written documents was no longer the domain of the wealthy noblemen and monasteries. Ideas could spread more rapidly. With the publication of the German Bible the scriptures were no longer the well guarded secrets of the literate elite. The interpretations of Rome were questioned and the ideas of Protestantism arose.

Paintings as the communication medium used by the Church

The Catholic Church's power and influence over medieval society can be attributed in part to its great wealth. Through this wealth it became the main, and most important patron of art until the 18th century. The media of painting and sculpture played a very important and functional role in a society of church-goers who were, on the whole, illiterate.

In the Words of Pope Gregory the Great; 'painting can do for the illiterate what writing does for those who read'. Through paintings and sculptures the church showed its followers what its teachings were.

Advertising as the communication tool of capitalists.

Today we live in an age of mass media, mass communication. Information as a power resource and product is now rooted in these communication systems; newspapers, television, bill boards, magazines and radio.

Advertising is a pervasive and powerful element in all media of communication. As a system it is universally visible and yet is given little cultural value or significance. In spite, therefore, of its enormous economic and ideological importance, advertising is commonly dismissed as meaningless or simply untrue.

Advertising is not just a business expenditure undertaken in the hope of selling more merchandise. It has become one of the great vehicles of social communication.

The controlling power of the media; the modes of communication society uses, has passed from the Church in medieval times to the Advertising Industry which is the life blood of our Capitalist Society, today.

Without publicity capitalism should not exist and at the same time publicity is its dream. Capitalism survives by forcing the majority, whom it exploits, to define their interests as narrowly as possible. This it achieves by imposing a false standard of what is and is not desirable through the ideal imagery of Advertising.

The persistence of a male society.

Male ascendancy exists today as it did in medieval times. It is possibly easier to see and understand its operation in a society where women were defined only through men. Women were wives, mothers, homemakers, daughters or religious. There was no niche for unmarried women, no financial independence unless one became a widow. Women were confronted with the closed ranks of a masculine society governed by a thoroughly masculine theology and by a morality made by men, for men. The Catholic Church, one of the most powerful institutions in society, was, as it still is, a male only organisation.

Today as women gain financial and social independence from men it can be more difficult to see that we still live in a male culture. Surely now we are equal once more? Women have gained the right to vote, to education, to work in any field they choose. I will return to this in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2

Church and Medieval Society.

Implicitly adopting the male life as the norm, they (psychological theorists) have tried to fashion women out of a masculine cloth. It all goes back to Adam and Eve; a story which shows, among other things, that if you make a woman out of a man, you are bound to get into trouble. In the life cycle as in the Garden of Eden, the woman has been the deviant.

(19, Preface)

How the Church influenced the Medieval outlook on women.

By the 12th century Europe was an overwhelmingly Christian society which generally shared Christian beliefs which were reflected in its laws and patterns of behaviour. By this time the Church in the West was becoming increasingly clericalised, structured and hierarchical. Thus most medieval statements about women, whether expressed by church theologians or state lawyers or given concrete application by preachers, painters or sculptors, embodied what celibate clerics thought about women. This was particularly true in the 12th and 13th centuries when these clerics were the most educated class of society and produced the greatest volume of literature. Generally perceiving women as threats to their chastity, they were led to a panicky view of the strength of feminine sexuality and harboured a grudging attitude to marriage.

They fell back on the convenient stereotype of Eve's responsibility for the existence of sin in the world since this they felt provided an adequate explanation to justify women's inferior position and reinforce man's God-given right to rule over her.

Brain-washing was not a medieval term but the effect of all these sermons, denunciations, treatises, paintings and sculptures must have been to leave women with a wounding distrust of their own femininity and a tendency to feel that only perpetual chastity was an approved calling. A view confirmed by the Council of Trent (1545-64) which reasserted that the state of virginity was closer to God than the state of marriage. A good woman is a non-sexual woman, yet man does not impose such standards on himself. The good woman must act as man's guardian angel. She is responsible for keeping him good and this means sexually under control. This is her appointed power, by not tempting him. If he does falter it is woman's fault. It is an argument that woman cannot win without foregoing all sexuality and that a man cannot lose at all. It is the morality of a man's world.

Thus we can see the adoration of the Virgin Mary and the denigration of Eve, the temptress, as two sides of one theological coin. Theologians and canonists regarded consecrated Virgins almost as a separate division of humankind and felt they were exempted from women's general subordination because their destiny was determined by their consecration to Christ rather than living man.

In the glorification of the Virgin it was women-without-sin, a non-woman, the anti-Eve that was revered. Ordinary women through their sexuality, were associated not with the Virgin but with Eve, as her fallen daughters.

The denigration of women.

So what exactly does the Bible say to encourage and justify such a pious male supremacy? In Genesis 1:26-7 it says; 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.'

Yet nowhere it seems is this double creation depicted in Christian iconography. Instead, as in Michaelangelo's paintings on the Sistine chapel ceiling, (Fig. 1) Adam is first woken to life and then Eve is pictured rising from his side. This beautiful image is also a dangerous one, it permits the interpretation that woman as mans helper is his subordinate and as an afterthought of God she is not made in the divine image.

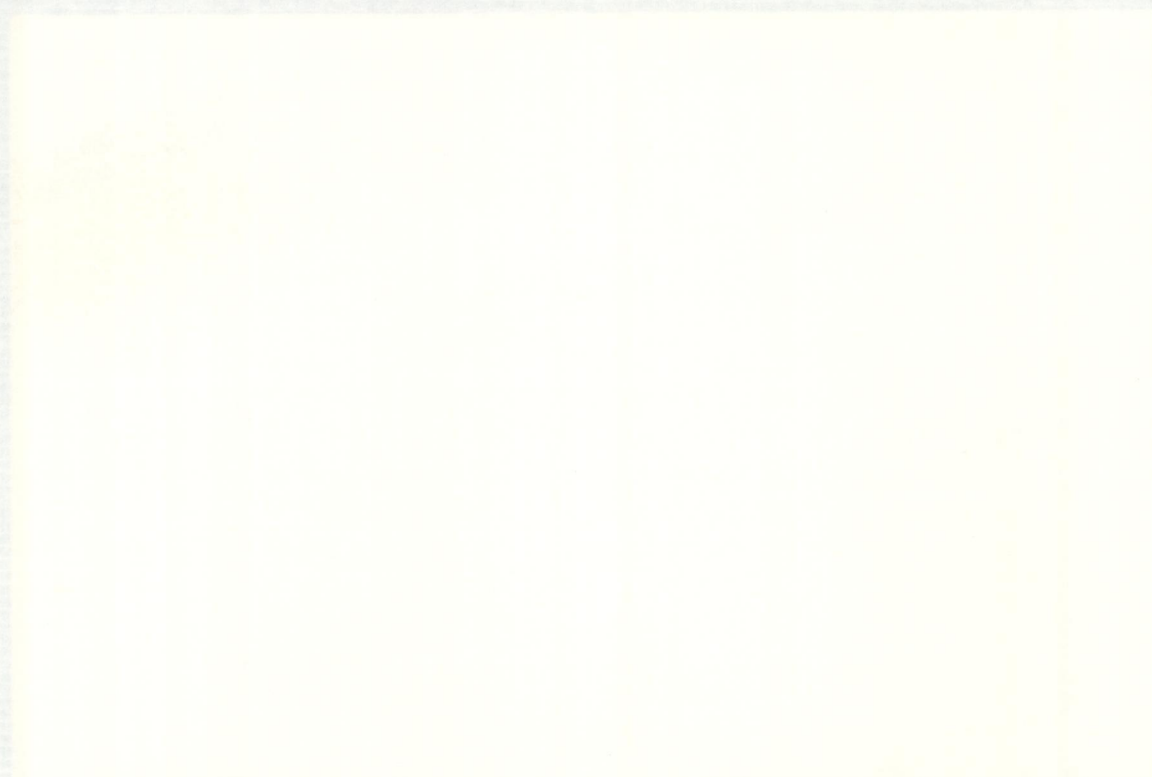
And what of woman's original sin? How did Eve cause the fall of all mankind and curse her daughters with the blame for every evil that has befallen mankind since? What was that original transgression that permits any fault or flaw of character to be placed on woman's head?



Fig. 1

'The Creation of Eve'

Michaelangelo



Eve rebelled against her, and Adam's inequality with God by seeking knowledge for them both. They were of course naked at this stage, there being no clothing in the Garden of Eden and there being nothing to be ashamed of in their nakedness until the moment when she and Adam ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Why is the first result of this act of disobedience a sense of shame at their nakedness? The original sin was not carnal. The Bible makes it clear that Adam and Eve had no sexual encounter until after they were thrown out of the Garden of Eden. It seems too that the shame of nakedness and its equation with sexual shame should work equally for both men and women. But it does not. Eve was the instigator of the act, therefore the blame is hers and once the first disobedience is interpreted as a sexual sin she becomes the lustful temptress, Adam is simply the dupe who was led astray.

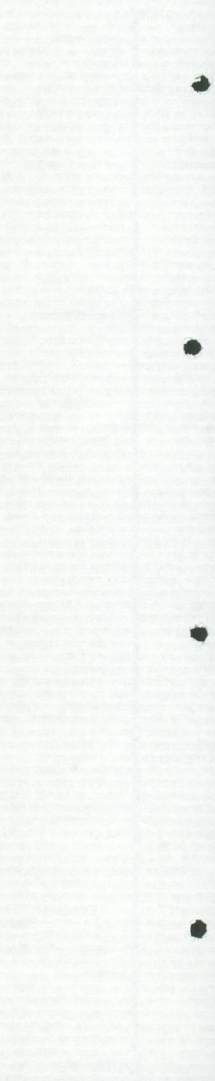
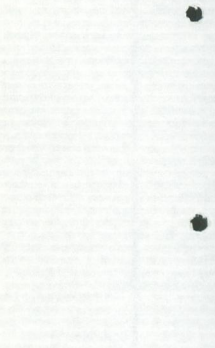
This is the Eve of countless medieval portraits of the Temptation and the Fall. She is the Eve of Van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece (Fig. 2) with the sullen face of a whore, lank stringy hair, and one hand covering her guilty vagina. In the depiction of the Temptation and Fall by the artist Hugo van der Goes (Fig 3) the biblical account becomes distorted as he attempts to compress the two episodes into a single image.



Fig. 2
'Adam and Eve'
 Van Eyck



Fig. 3
'The Temptation and the Fall'
 Hugo Van Der Goes



Eve is just picking an apple for Adam, having taken a bite already of the apple in her right hand. Yet although Adam has not eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge he already is shielding his genitals from our view with one hand while reaching to take the apple with the other. A conveniently tall iris blossom protects Eve's vagina from observation. Van der Goes has even depicted the serpent with the head of a woman, in case we try to pass the blame onto that creature, ensuring that the original source of evil, was female no matter whom we choose to blame.

And what is God's punishment for women?

I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ... and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee.

Genesis 3:19,16

For women the pains of childbearing, the whole gamut from menstruation to suckling and subjection of heart and head to the authority of the male. No wonder medieval law recognised the right of men of all classes to beat their wives so long as they did not kill them or do excessive damage! Had not God himself pointed the finger.

The veneration of virginity

So to the other side of the theological coin, to the new mother for mankind, the Mother of God and Virgin most pure. What exactly does this 'ideal' of womanhood consist of? The Bible has very little information to give us about this figure who has gained cult following. Only in the Gospel of Luke are the Annunciation and Visitation described in full. The wedding feast at Cana where she asks Jesus to help is mentioned only in John. He too is the only one to mention her presence at the foot of the cross. Yet on this scanty material, a wealth of legend and doctrines exists.

Her veneration in Byzantine art was as a hieratic figure, the Queen of Heaven. She holds her son on her lap as a sort of appendage, he is her badge of rank. Her power is in her regality, the qualities she stands for are not human but symbolic. She offers us her presence, her power not her humanity (Fig 4).

When she leaves this golden and symbolic world she also becomes a propaganda figure, a prescription for the ideal of maternalism and female obedience. The importance of Mary as a mother is coupled with the importance of her virginity and purity. Her sexlessness is stressed in the scenes of the Annunciation. Here too her supreme sacrifice, her willingness to co-operate with God for the salvation of mankind, is not seen as an heroic act but as an exemplar of female submissiveness.



Fig.4

'Enthroned Madonna and Child'

AD 1280, Constantinople



For the first time in human history the mother kneels before the son: she freely accepts her inferiority. This is the supreme masculine victory, consummated in the cult of the Virgin - it is the rehabilitation of woman through the accomplishment of defeat.
(1, pg 203)

In Fra Angelico's 'Annunciation' fresco, c 1440,(Fig 5) the Virgin Mary is not a real woman but a formula for a particular concept of femininity. His art is mystical,the colours are muted, soft, his main intention is to represent the sacred story in all its beauty and simplicity. There is hardly any movement and hardly any suggestion of real solid bodies. Yet this is not due to his lack of knowledge or ability, it is done deliberately to enhance the mysticism of the scene.

As painting grows more scientific in approach, more concerned with how to create an illusion of a real world, our experience of that real world interferes with dreamy mystical images. The ideal of perfect goodness, as personified by the Virgin, seems to clash with the appearance of the very life-like Madonna in Van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece, (Fig 6). A contemporary of Fra Angelico he paints a lovely young woman dressed in fine robes and reading a book.



Fig. 5.

'The Annunciation'

Fra Angelico





Fig. 6
'The Virgin Mary'
Van Eyck

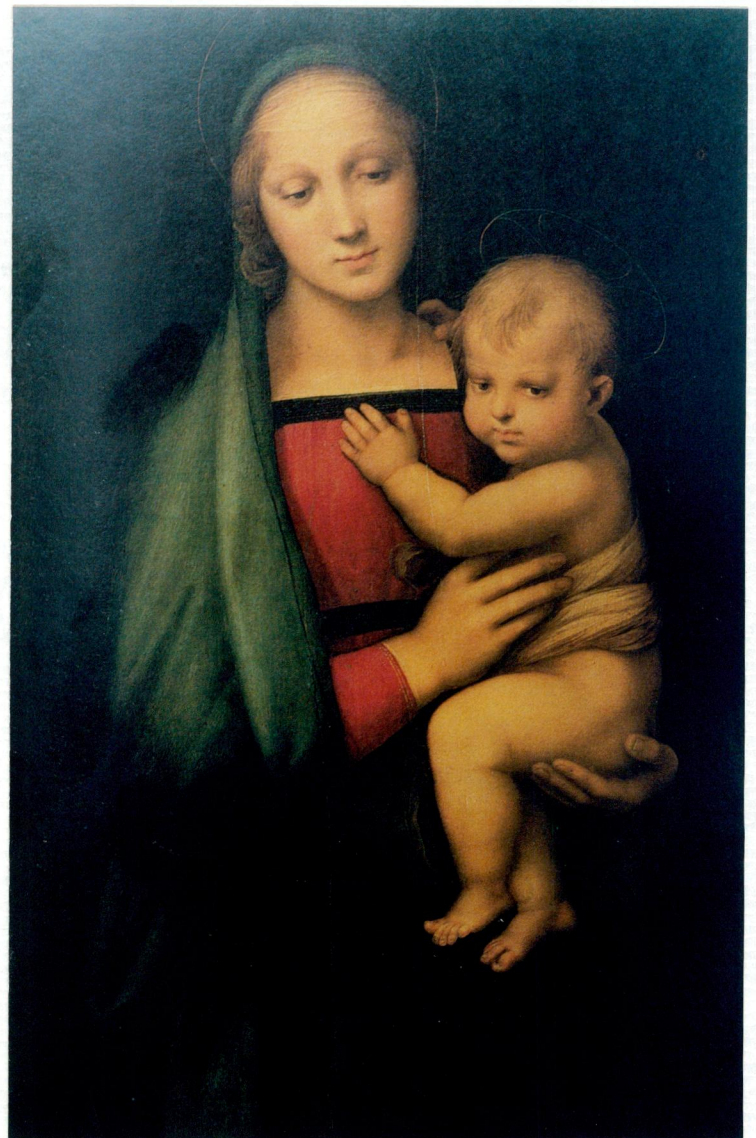


Fig. 7
'The Madonna Del Granduca'
Raphael



There is no child Jesus on her knee, or Archangel making a startling appearance. The 'ideal' Woman, the Virgin, is depicted as a sexually attractive woman who does not seem a likely candidate for a virginal eternity in heaven. She is not just the embodiment of purity any longer, but the physical personification of beauty.

How could any woman achieve this confusing ideal of virginity, motherhood, submissiveness and beauty, as depicted by Raphael (Fig. 7)? Yet not to do so, is to admit to being a daughter of Eve. The two sides of the coin of the Christian view of women, the contempt and hatred evident in the interpretations of the Creation and Fall, and the idealization of the 'christian' submissiveness of Mary, join together as a combined statement on the inferiority of the female sex. The Virgin Mary and Eve were identified through their sexuality and in relation to men.

Chapter 3

How Advertising has taken the place of painting, which was controlled by the Church in Medieval times.

To be born a woman has been to be born within an allotted and confined space into the keeping of men. The social presence of women has developed as a result of their ingenuity in living under such tutelage within such a limited space. But this has been at the cost of a woman's self being split into two. A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself.

(2, pg 45-46)

Given the prevalence of the female image in our modern, capitalist, western society it is hardly surprising that woman is constantly aware of her own image. Walking down the street, watching television, opening a magazine or entering an art gallery we are confronted with an ideal of femininity. This ideal forms a debate on what it means to be feminine in our culture. A debate that affects us all, men and women. These images set out to tell us how to look, how to behave and how we might expect to be seen and treated by others.

We no longer live in a society where the images of Church art are our main contact with the standards and doctrines which society expects us to live by. Today it is no longer the Catholic Church with its 'heaven and hell' teachings that gives society its most influential role models. Advertising now shows society what is and is not acceptable behaviour.

The Virgin Mother and Eve, the temptress, still colour our views of womanhood. Without Eve there would be no page-three girl, no pornography shops, no strip shows. Without Mary the Virgin where would be the ideal of motherhood depicted in so many adverts have sprung from?

How Advertising persuades us, and sells us ideals of femininity.

Advertising is the main perpetrator of the images we are bombarded with each day. And the images it uses are some of the most striking we ever encounter. Through them it is suggested that the only way to social success and happiness is through private acquisition. The implicit message of most ads being 'this is the way to live, to look, to dress, and if you buy this product this is what your life will be'.

Advertising no longer appeals to the common sense but to emotions and impulses. We are bombarded with images associated with a product until, in our subconscious, the image and product become synonymous. We no longer buy a product but an image of how we will be transformed and enriched by having bought it. Then we, like those enviable, 'perfect', people in the ads, will be envied. We look at ads and envy ourselves as we will be.

Products are personified. Procter and Gamble have given their soaps personifications. Ivory becomes the symbol of the Mother and Daughter relationship, it is purity itself. Camay exemplifies a glamorous, sophisticated woman. People buy the image they see themselves or want themselves to fill. Therefore it is the brand that fills this image that the person remembers. This is a vital factor as it is the product that has made the highest penetration on the brain that wins the consumer's choice.

Sexual undertones are used to further aid the product's appeal to the decision maker, as in Clairols 'does she, doesn't she?', and Smithwicks, 'Some girls do' (Fig. 8). Inanimate objects become endowed with sexual qualities, the car being the most obvious example.

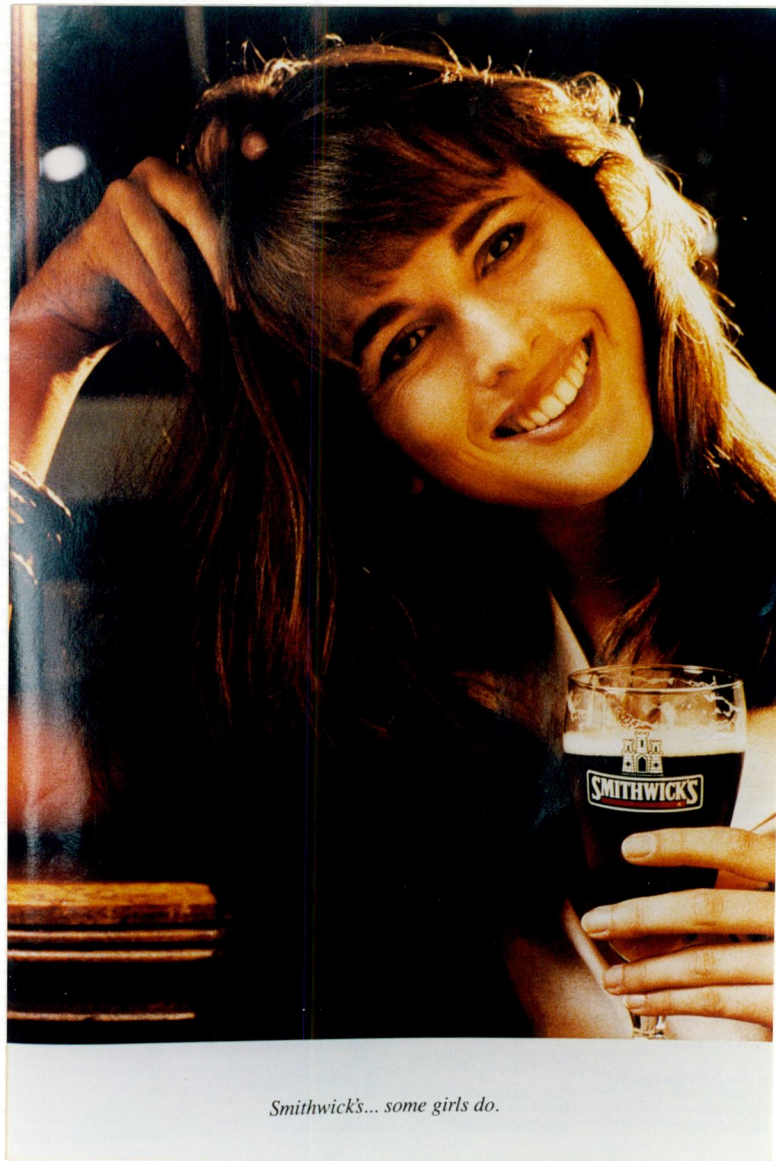


Fig.8
'Some girls do'
Smithwick's Commercial



This new commerce invites women to buy products by offering them sexually attractive images of themselves. The role of the consumer brings out the contradictions for women in the kind of imaged offered in modern advertising and fashion... Women are sold their imaged in the forms of commodities.

(3,pg 13)

In offering women this sexually attractive 'you', advertising has infiltrated all areas of woman's body. Everything from hair colour, nose shape, thighs and toe nails can be made 'attractive'. The 'ideal' woman is a complete rejection of the natural features. A new beauty culture has surpassed and replaced religion. Magazines offer Diet Sheets, step-by-step Make up Charts advertisements for hair colour, liposuction and breast enhancement. This fashion and beauty ideal defines women in terms of physical appearance. It is the ideal of the frail and beautiful woman as established in medieval times through depictions of the Virgin Mary.

How women are defined.

Femininity, as defined in western culture, is bound up very closely with the way in which the female body is perceived and represented. There is a long history of imagery in religion, in literature and in art, which links feminine qualities and characteristics with what was supposed to be the frailty and capriciousness of women's bodies. Whereas men are more frequently judged by their social status, intellect or material success, women are commonly defined in terms of their appearance and relationship to men as a glance through any current newspaper still shows.

(3, pg 7)

Woman is defined in terms of bodily attributes and her relationship to man as she has been from the depictions of Adam and Eve, to the Madonna and Child, through the wide array of Susannahs, Bathshebas and Venuses. Eve stood for the evil sexual temptation of women, Mary for complete sexlessness and submission. Man's right to a voyeuristic view of woman's naked flesh is celebrated throughout.

She appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her. she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute - she is the other.

(1, pg 16)

Men's bodies, on the other hand have never stood simply for sex. They have represented a wide spectrum of emotion and experience from suffering to strength and power, (Fig. 9 and 10).

The female form tends to be perceived as universal and symbolic, the male as individual. The female form has stood for liberty, justice and freedom even when women did not enjoy these 'privileges'. Justice is not spoken of as a woman, or appear in the semblance of one above the Old Bailey in London because women were thought to be just any more than they were considered capable of dispensing justice. Liberty is not represented as a woman because women were or are free. Although Delacroix depicts Liberty as a woman in the 19th century, the French Republic was one of the last European countries to give its female citizens the right to vote.

The female form was perceived as a vehicle of attributed meaning at the very beginning of the world, according to the myths that lie at the foundation of our lives, ever since she was made in all her allure as man's fatal partner. Eve did not have the power of naming in the garden; if she had been granted such a power, then Adam himself might have become subject matter and the form on to which Eve could have projected meanings as she wanted.

(28, pg225)

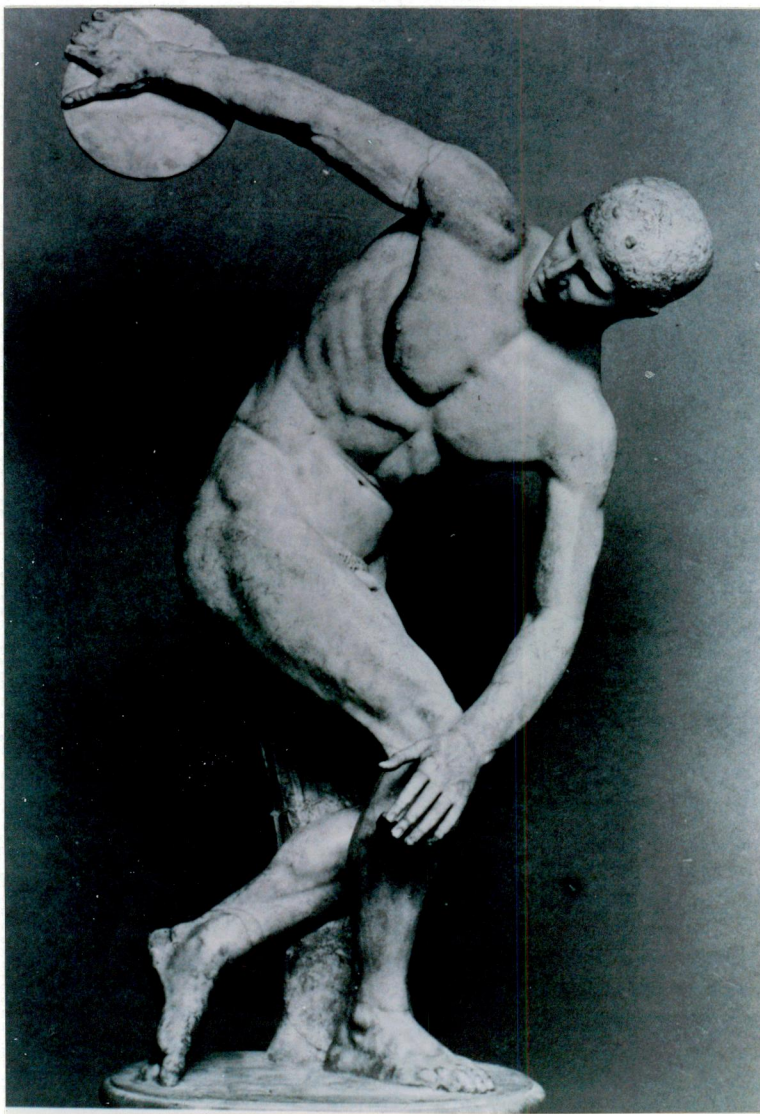


Fig. 9
'Discus Thrower'
Roman copy of a
statue by Myron

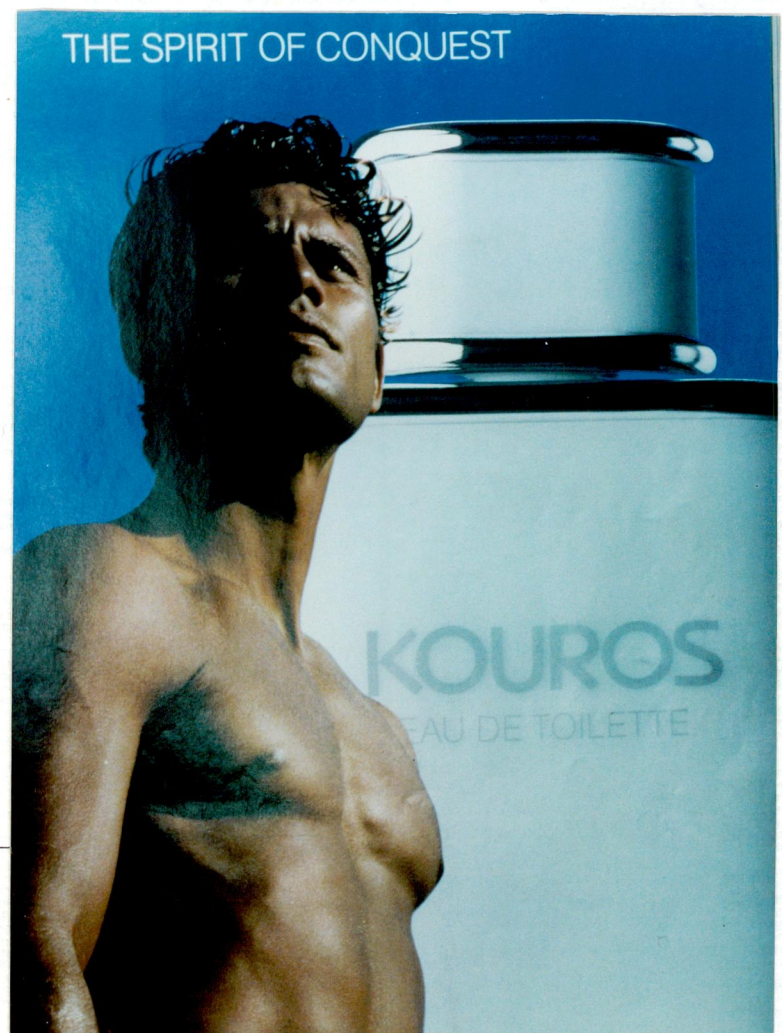


Fig. 10
'The Spirit of conquest'
Kouros Advertisement





Fig. 11

'The Virtues'

Strasbourg Cathedral

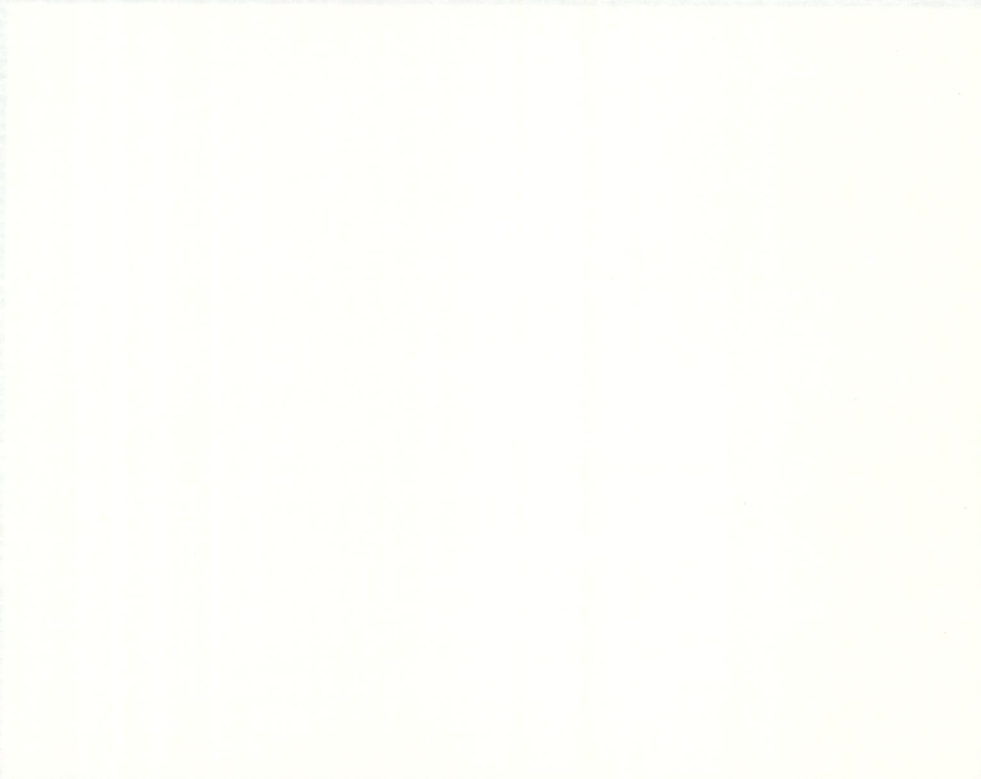




Fig. 12
'The Motherland
Rallying her Sons'
Evgeni Vuchetich



Fig. 13
'Liberty Leading the People', Eugene Delacroix



Chapter 4

The modern Mary and Eve.

This chapter will look at the new versions of the 'Madonna' and 'Whore' stereotypical images of women. It will do this by examining current advertising campaigns and how they depict women.

The ads mentioned in this chapter were all transmitted on Sat. Jan. 25th 1992 between four and seven pm on RTE 1, Network 2, HTV or Channel 4.

The Modern Mary:

How do you remember life's necessities?
How do you know the things they all prefer?
What tells you what to do to make them warm to you?

(Cross and Blackwell, Beef Stragonoff, Casserole Mix Ad)

There is a glut of happy family ads on T.V., all directed at the Mother, she who is responsible for taking care of all the family, children and husband alike. The home is seen as the domain of women by the Advertising industry and male society as a whole. Therefore 'she' is targeted to buy the cleaning products, food and electrical appliances. Portrayed as the happy housewife, her success with her husband, children and friends is due to her 'wise' decisions in the supermarket.

'Happy family' adverts like the Cross and Blackwell ad quoted above all imply that if the female viewers' everyday life isn't as happy and harmonious as that portrayed in the advert then the short-comings are in some way due to her inadequacy in fulfilling the functions of a good wife and mother. The problems of the family unit, frequently socially determined, are thus individualized and converted into a consumption-directed effort which is allegedly capable of reinstating the agreement between the ideal image and experienced life.

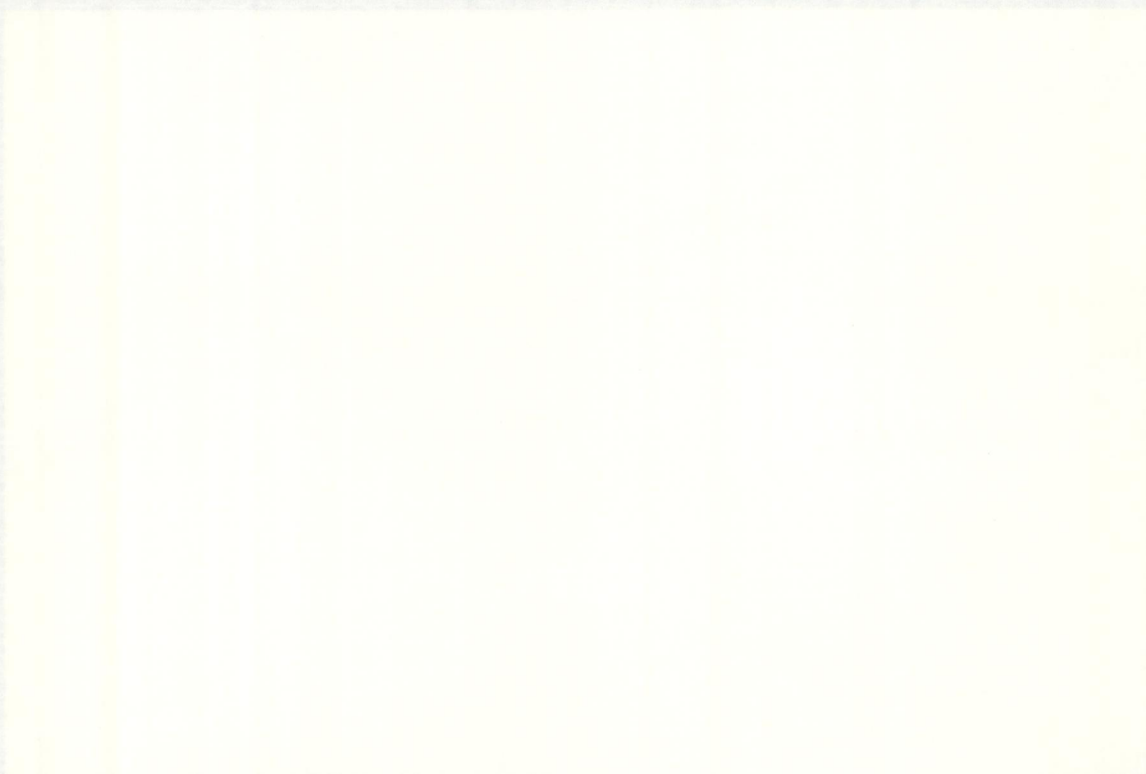
What are the functions, characteristics and qualities of the 'ideal' mother? In the Cross and Blackwell ad (Fig. 14), quoted above, the mother is shown firstly opening the curtains with a smile on her face, she then waves the children off to school, reminding her daughter of her forgotten ballet shoes.

Then off she goes to the open-air market to buy the best and freshest food which she uses, along with the casserole mix, to serve the evening meal, to her husband and children. Combined with the words sung over, as quoted above, what messages are conveyed about the role of wife/mother? It would appear that the role involves taking care of all the needs of all the other members of the household.



Fig. 14

'Cross and Blackwell Advertisement'



Another major source of this message is the multitude of soap powder adverts. The latest advert for Ariel Liquid depicts two rows of houses back to back, each equipped with a housewife and a line of billowing washing. Is it a women's place to stay at home to wash everyone else's clothes?

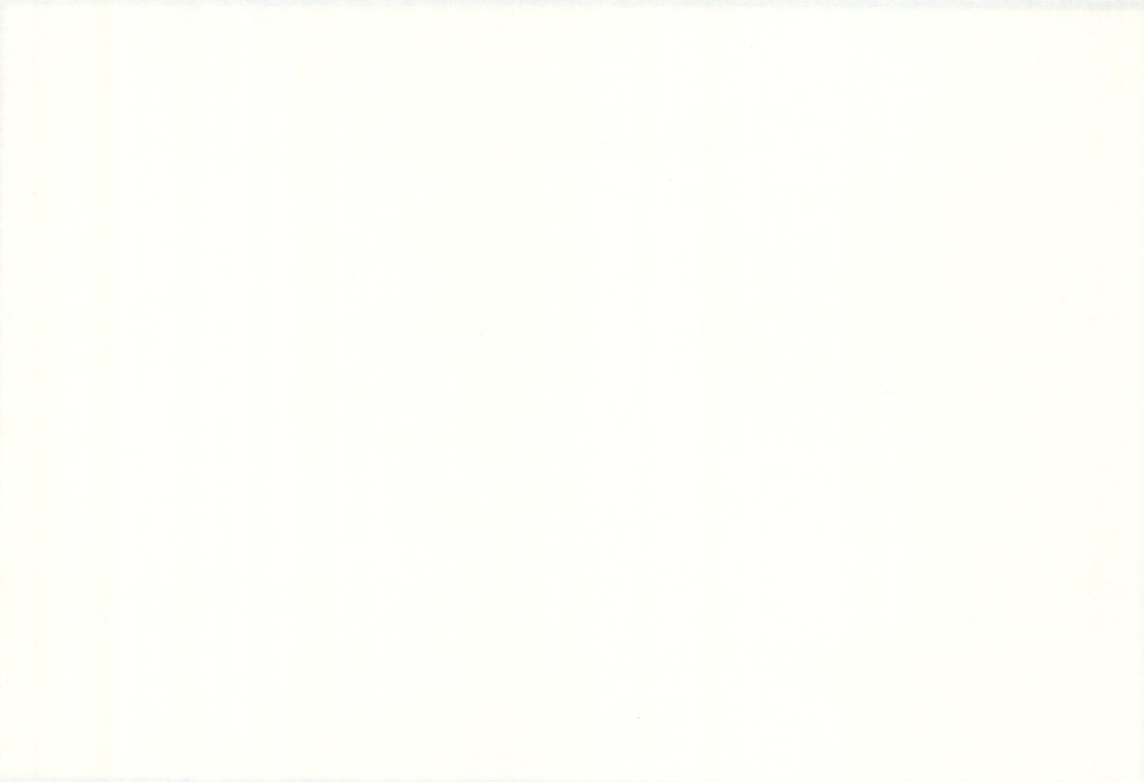
The Birds Eye campaign for Menu Masters latest ad (Fig. 15) depicts a Mother and daughters enjoying a day in Covent Garden. Home from their expedition the girls dash upstairs as Mother takes Menu Master frozen meals from the freezer. As she sits opposite her husband the girls return giggling. 'I hope you've made yourselves useful today', says the husband. 'yes', say the girls, 'we helped mum around the Garden.' The look of relief on the mothers face implies that it would not be all right to tell the husband of their day out. This combined with the campaign's previous slogans; 'allows you time to do a spot of baking', and 'so you can do the beds', it seems women can only take time out for their own pleasures if they don't get caught neglecting their household duties.

Children too are depicted as having the right to demand Mother's servitude. The Oxo gravy granules ad has children yelling from the T.V. room, 'any chance of dinner before the Movie?', as Mother ironically says; 'Thank goodness for commercials.'



Fig. 15

' Bird's Eye Menu Masters Advertisement'



The ideal of motherhood, as in medieval times, is a mother/wife who sacrifices her needs to meet the needs of those around her. The only concession to this domestic bliss ideal is the few adverts that acknowledge that women are wage-earners outside the home also. One of the Whirlpool adverts depicts a woman dressed as a professional, smoothly operating her kitchen while her child sits on the floor playing with his teddy. This faces the fact that although women have become a major part of the labour force, the bulk of household chores and childcare are still regarded as their responsibility.

Advertising also suggests that products can solve the problems created by this role. The ads do not address the roots of the issue but encourage the woman to rely on the product, eg. Anadin extra, to cure the symptoms of the problem, ie. headaches caused by too much stress. Advertising avoids creating an awareness of the factors ultimately responsible for this increased pressure on women.

The Modern Eve:

With its 'ideal' imagery dream world Advertising would not depict a naked ugly woman as the epitome of fatal female sexuality as Van Eyck did (Fig. 2, Chapter 2). Eve today is the mistress, the temptress, the openly beautiful, sexually alluring woman.

That this sexuality has caused the downfall of man is no longer the point, this sexually alluring woman is the woman you can have or be, by purchasing whatever she symbolises.

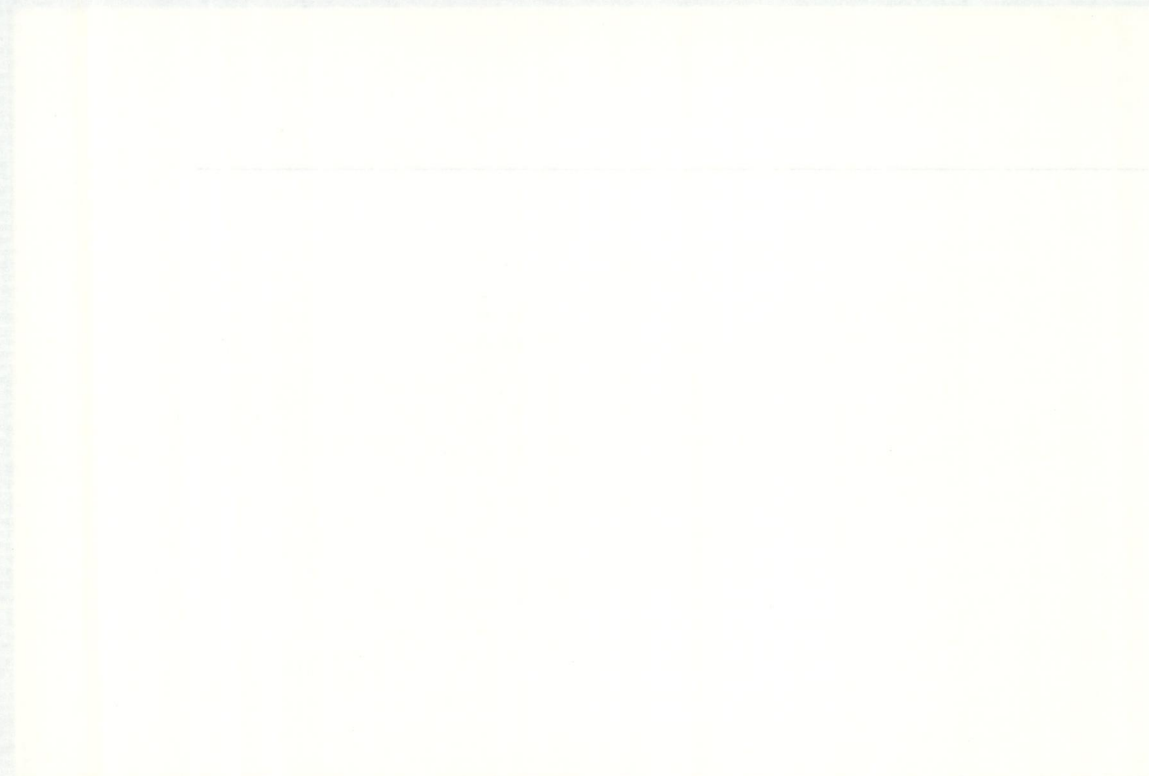
Women are used to sell everything, usually through sex. Any bit of a woman, be it an eye, leg or hand which is represented, primarily signifies sexuality. In the Chambourcy chocolate mousse advert a woman's face is depicted, focusing on the lips and eyes as she puts a spoon of mousse into her mouth and delights in the taste. She takes the spoon from her mouth and purses her lips against it in a 'shhh' motion. The voice over adds; 'strictly for grown ups'. What is one to think?

The Chambourcy advert is almost identical to the Cadbury's flake ad (Fig. 16) in the associations which they both make. In the flake ad varying fragments of a, presumably naked, bathing woman's body, such as her toes caressing the tap, are depicted. She is seen unwrapping a flake and as she begins to enjoy the pleasure of eating it the bath overflows and the bathroom door excludes the viewer's gaze. If the spoon and flake are regarded as phallic symbols the women's looks of pleasure and the overflowing bath take on very different connotations to the simple pleasures of eating and bathing.



Fig. 16

' Cadbury's Flake Advertisement.'



The Alberto Balsam Conditioners advert (Fig.17) also plays on women's sexuality. Its catch phrase 'I'm one' begs the question, one what? Perhaps these beautiful women are referring to their sexuality, are they virgins or whores? The former is given credence by the bride getting into her white dress, who is 'one'. It is further confirmed by the naked woman getting out of bed, draping a crumpled sheet around her asserting; 'I used to be one.' The mystery is then solved. They are actually referring to the level of conditioner, that they use for their hair.

Magazines are a major source of the modern Eve, the sexually alluring woman. Women model clothes in stances that could only mean; 'I'm all yours whenever you want me.' Their poses harken back to the thousands of oil paintings depicting women as Venuses, Bathshebas and nymphs. Paintings that have contributed greatly to the assumed right of men to a voyeuristic outlook on women.



Fig. 17

' Alberto Conditioner Advertisement.'





Fig. 18

'Wolford Tights Advertisement.'



Chapter 5

This chapter asks the question, is there a relationship between the portrayal of gender stereotyped roles, as seen above, and roles filled by different genders in today's society?

The stereotyped roles presented by society.

Advertising invites men and women to engage in an almost theatrically self-directed sex role behaviour, most explicitly sexual for men, who are accorded an uncontrollable sexual instinct in our culture,' more indirectly sexual for women...

In the archetypal division of women into madonna...and whore... the advertising ideal of a 'natural' woman comes closer to a modestly liberated version of the madonna; still gentle and passive, but sexually attractive (though not aggressive).

(26, pg 108)

Although images of men and women in ads are considered to be mythic rather than real do ads themselves constitute a reality? As such do they have an effect? Advertising, in the way in which it deploys images of women, constructs and reaffirms stereotyped and limited views of women's lives and capabilities.

Representations of women in ads therefore work to produce or at least reinforce social meanings about appropriate gender roles.

T.V. commercials clearly portray sex-role stereotypes. The British research suggests that advertisements are not even approximately accurate in reflecting the real nature of sex roles. In 1978, for instance, 41 per cent of all employees in the U.K. were women. In the sample of British ads women comprised a mere 13 per cent of central characters portrayed in paid employment.

(11, pg 109)

In the sample of ads observed on Irish and British T.V. stations on Saturday, 25 January 1992, the same trend was observed. Women are still mostly portrayed occupied with household chores, even though Irish women make up around 30 per cent of the labour force, (Appendix 2).

If women are supermums then men when depicted in the female domain of household chores are treated trivially. A man is often the adviser on household matters, as the male voice overs in the majority of soap powder ads testify, but it is never depicted as his proper place to do these domestic jobs. Therefore 'Mr. Muscle' is shown as a wimp, the 'Findus pancake' Dad can only manage frozen food, and the 'Fairy' Dad is chastised by his daughter for using Mum's washing-up liquid. Dads aren't supposed to have soft hands.

How society views women today.

Are women 'natural' mothers, wives, cooks and housekeepers? Is the feminine personality not suited for positions of authority? The 1988 Mc Carthy report points to, 'Societal attitudes towards women...as a significant reason why women are treated in a stereotypic and discriminatory manner.' While men are considered to be relatively independent, rational, adult, active and productive, women are considered childlike, passive and nurturant. Therefore it would seem logical that men should make the decisions of import.

Women were viewed like dependant children, low in motivation, low in ability, uninterested in opportunities to develop their skills, or to undertake higher level jobs and responsibilities. In contrast, male employees were viewed as open to learning, change and growth..."Women's place in the home" has been internalised by societal members as the only viable cultural role for women.

(21, pg6)

The areas where women regularly assume authority are considered unimportant and are sex-typed 'women's work.' the low status of women who work full time in the home reflects this traditional standard. How strange to allocate virtually total responsibility for raising the next generation to women and then exclude them to the point where women perceive themselves as having no status or value.

In the public sphere where women are either missing or operating outside the influencing and decision making circles, the meaning of language is the meaning that those with power give it. Policy making for people is more often policy making for men - which is why there are imbalances...

(10, March '91 pg 3)

The fairness of judging from a male viewpoint.

Women are found to be less ambitious, less competitive, less committed only because they are judged from a male viewpoint. Most Irish industries have no policy on supporting the re-entry of older women to the work place. Legislation on maternity leave was introduced to Ireland only in 1981. It guarantees a entitlement to 14 weeks paid leave. (Maternity Protection of Employees Act,1981,4). There is no provision for nursing breaks and time taken off to attend ante-/postnatal care can be considered as absenteeism.

Paternity leave is still only an informal arrangement for most Irish companies, according to the Mc Carthy Report. Mostly it is viewed as two days unpaid leave. The involvement of fathers in caring for their children is not viewed by Irish management as part of an equal opportunity programme.

As for parental leave to care for sick children, as one semi-state company stated; 'Sick leave is for employees, not their families'. (21, pg 35). Thus employees must use their holiday leave, their own sick leave or compassionate leave. The latter is usually an arrangement that mothers agree to with their employers.

The Working Party Report on Childcare Facilities (1983)(16) found that 23,9% of the mothers interviewed reported having an arrangement with the employer, while only 9% of the fathers studied had such an arrangement.

Unless future legislation and working conditions incorporate measures to cope with sickness of children, married women's absence rates will be higher than other members of the workforce, i.e. married men, who are not yet expected to take responsibility for family contingencies. Where married women's absentee rates exceed those of men or of single women, they are typically evaluated as not being committed employees.

(21, pg 35)

Without the importance of Childcare, Maternity and Paternity leave, career breaks and re-entry policies for older women being realised, women will continue to be judged by a male yard-stick and will 'appear' less committed, thus affecting their chances for promotion and development.

What if people who worked outside the home saw their role as a support to the full time parent or carer rather than the other way around? The arbitrary sexual division of labour used to justify male efforts and dismiss female efforts would be refuted. What would the term menial work refer to then? Surely not the dishwashing, clotheswashing, vacuuming, shopping and similar activities that take up the waking hours of so many women acting as full time homemakers. A 1984 T.U.C. Report on the portrayal of women in the media found that women account for 40 per cent of the people in paid menial labour.

The masculine hegemony as seen in medieval western society has persisted until today. It is still embedded in our religious doctrines and practices, wage structures and mass media content. Women are still barred from the priesthood by the Catholic Church and the ideal of the Supermum started by the cult of the Virgin is now upheld by the Advertising Industry. Women in Ireland still earn only an average of 67 per cent of the wages of their male counterparts, (Appendix 1). 'Women's work' is still a derogatory term invoking Hoovering, washing, childminding. Women may account for 75 per cent of clerical workers but only 20 per cent of office management staff are women. Women may account for 65 per cent of those working in the caring services but only 22 per cent of doctors are women(16). It is not that they lack the knowledge or skills but they are held back by their own lack of self confidence.

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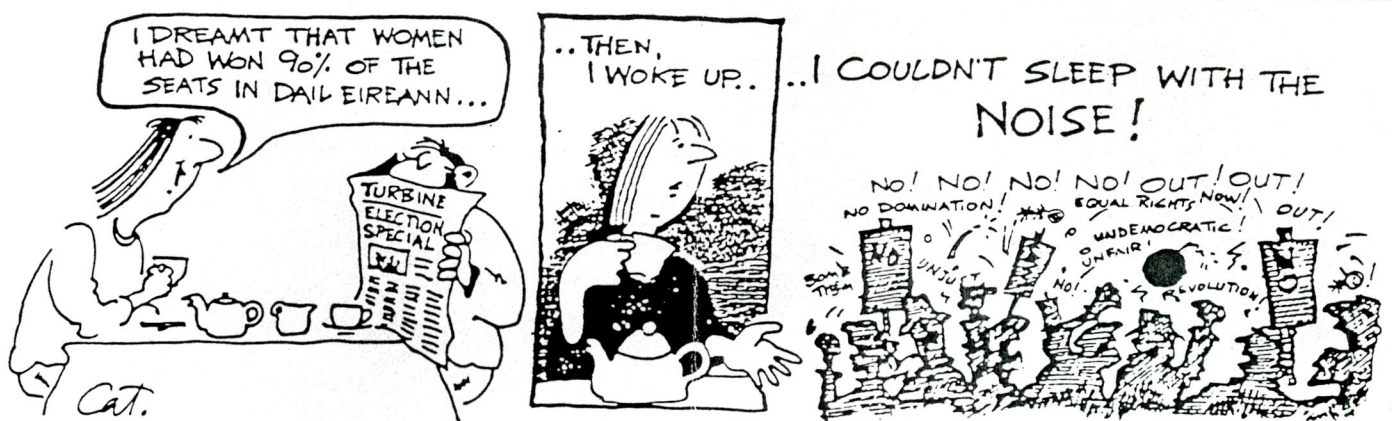
1890

..The attitudes and images that girls assimilate at school are crucial to their chances of achieving equal opportunity at work.

(21, pg 22)

The Mc Carthy Report pinpoints the medias use of stereotyped role models as one of the factors contributing to the low perception women have of themselves; 'In particular change should focus on ...-the use of acceptable female as well as male role models in media advertising'.(pg 26)

If women are treated as second class citizens, if they are continually portrayed and seen in the mass media as housewives and sex objects rather than workers, this not only reinforces the unequal treatment of women elsewhere in society but saps the confidence of those women trying to break down the barriers and enter traditionally male dominated areas of employment.



Conclusion

The persistence of a male ascendancy, with the control of power and the communication media, has ensured that the best interests of men have always been served in the information transmitted to society, either through the paintings commissioned by the Catholic Church from the time of Pope Gregory the Great, or through the policies, doctrines and laws implemented by men, or through the imagery of Advertising. As in the medieval times of Church authority women are still perceived by male standards as inferior.

The result of the paradoxical theology of the Catholic Church's attitude to women, was the denial of women's sexuality and the denigration of women to secondary beings. Women's existence in medieval society was suffered only because of the necessity of their role as mothers. The clerical fear of women's sexual powers resulted in the blame for all the evils of the world being traced back to women, through Eve. As the most educated and literate class in medieval society, the cleric's attitude to women is reflected in all aspects of medieval society's treatment of women.

Advertising, in its replacement in the social order of society, of the Catholic Church in Medieval society, continues to manipulate social values. It urges people to consume more products and thus maintain the status quo within a capitalistic male culture.

Advertising still defines women, as the Church did, in terms of their physical attributes, sexuality, and in relation to man.

Advertising uses women as selling points, as vehicles of attributed meaning. The criteria for assessing women have not changed.

They are still classed as 'Madonnas' or 'Whores'.

Advertising continues to ignore the real nature of men and women's lives today and the roles they play. Women are hardly ever depicted, in the media, in paid employment and men are treated trivially when depicted in domestic roles.

If, however, there was true equal opportunity and a more representational depiction of women in the media, society would benefit from the resources of the half of its members which have been repressed for too long, to hold up a male ascendancy.

It [Advertising] is a powerful tool of existing economic and social relations and as such has to purvey the values which perpetuate and endorse the current socio-economic structure - a structure which frequently pays scant regard to alternative values such as a fairer redistribution of resources and power in society, and the ways of achieving this; ways which could be more humane and democratic and less wasteful of valuable resources.

(11, pg 14)

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Appendix 1 Comparison of men's and women's wages
Blackwell Report, 1989.

Appendix 2 Women in the Work Force
Blackwell Report, Jan., 1990.

Table 6.5 Average Earnings by Women and Men Industrial Workers (Adult Rates),
March 1988

Industry	Average hourly earnings			Average weekly earnings		
	Females (F) £	Males (M) £	Ratio F/M	Females £	Males £	Ratio F/M
Non-metallic Mineral Products	4.41	6.32	.70	162.13	264.75	.61
Chemicals, etc.	4.11	6.63	.62	158.73	307.95	.52
Industrial Chemicals	(a)	7.11		(a)	357.70	
Pharmaceuticals	4.00	7.19	.56	156.85	333.50	.47
Chemicals, rem. (incl. man-made fibres)	4.23	5.53	.76	162.03	239.05	.68
Metals and Engineering	4.03	5.26	.77	157.07	221.48	.71
Metals	4.25	5.41	.79	145.56	227.43	.64
Metal Articles	3.54	4.91	.72	134.67	204.84	.66
Mechanical Engineering	3.89	4.83	.81	156.52	200.94	.78
Office Machinery	4.70	5.55	.85	190.24	235.78	.81
Electrical Engineering	3.87	5.09	.76	150.60	214.45	.70
Motor vehicles	(a)	5.31		(a)	224.43	
Other means of Transport	(a)	6.27		(a)	265.85	
Instrument Engineering	4.11	5.87	.70	157.22	258.65	.61
Food	3.79	4.84	.78	138.19	204.26	.68
Meat	3.55	4.47	.79	131.51	152.97	.86
Dairy Products	4.17	5.18	.81	161.21	247.03	.65
Grain Milling, Animal & Poultry Food	(a)	4.75		(a)	230.53	
Bread, Biscuit & Flour						
Confectionery	3.39	4.26	.80	124.50	185.04	.67
Sugar, Cocoa, Chocolate, Sugar						
Confectionery	4.42	5.89	.75	149.18	249.74	.60
Other Foods	3.78	4.98	.76	141.93	219.06	.65
Drink and Tobacco	4.82	7.53	.64	167.27	336.99	.50
Drink	4.55	7.71	.59	166.28	354.10	.47
Tobacco	4.97	6.25	.80	167.79	235.69	.71
Textiles	3.25	4.91	.66	124.29	205.18	.61
Wool	4.03	4.96	.81	150.49	204.90	.73
Knitting	2.80	4.60	.61	107.92	185.50	.58
Other Textiles	3.90	4.98	.78	148.92	210.64	.71
Clothing, Footwear & Leather	2.97	4.09	.73	111.54	160.29	.70
Leather & Footwear	3.11	4.20	.74	115.84	156.03	.74
Clothing	2.96	4.04	.73	111.22	162.27	.69
Timber & Wooden Furniture	3.31	4.10	.81	136.24	171.43	.79
Paper & Printing	4.16	6.75	.62	168.98	291.06	.58
Paper & Paper Products	4.18	5.59	.75	165.65	251.13	.66
Printing & Publishing	4.16	7.23	.58	170.53	306.65	.56
Miscellaneous	3.69	5.43	.68	140.67	224.03	.63
Processing of Rubber	4.18	6.05	.69	158.46	246.53	.64
Processing of Plastics	3.59	5.22	.69	136.13	215.52	.63
Other Manufacturing	3.55	4.88	.73	136.24	202.03	.67
Manufacturing Industries	3.72	5.48	.68	141.88	232.60	.61
Mining, Quarrying & Turf	3.52	5.72	.62	139.13	242.40	.57
Transportable Goods Industries	3.72	5.49	.68	141.88	233.19	.61
Electricity, Gas & Water	4.04	6.04	.67	116.63	257.25	.45
All industries	3.72	5.54	.67	141.67	235.26	.60

Note : (a) Data not published for confidentiality reasons.

Source : Statistical Bulletin.

Table 3.1 Overview of the Labour Force, 1987, 1988

Thousands except where %		
	1987	1988
Population aged 15-64		
-total	2,142.3	2,149.1
-women	1,061.4	1,064.4
-% of women to total	49.5	49.5
Labour force (LF)		
-total	1,319.2	1,309.8
-women	407.7	339.5 399.5
-% of women to total	30.9	30.5
Married women in LF (a)		
-total	161.6	164.8
-as % of female LF	39.6	41.3
Employment		
-total	1,087.6	1,091.2
-women	352.5	350.5
-% of women to total	32.4	32.1
Unemployed		
-total	231.6	218.5
-women	55.2	49.0
-% of women to total.	23.8	22.4

Notes: The labour force consists of those who are employed together with the unemployed. The unemployed include those who are looking for a first regular job.

(a) Includes separated and divorced.

Source: Labour Force Survey 1988 (LFS 1988), Tables 1,11. (Note: here and elsewhere, reference is given only to the source for the 1988 data).

Table 3.2 Population Aged 15 and Over Classified by Principal Economic Status, Marital Status and Sex, 1988

Principal Economic Status	Thousands			
	Females			Males
	Single & Widowed	Married (a)	Total	
At work	196.9	153.6	350.5	740.7
Unemployed, having lost or given up previous job	24.7	11.0	35.7	146.7
Looking for first regular job	13.1	0.2	13.3	22.9
Total unemployed	37.8	11.2	49.0	169.6
Labour force	234.7	164.8	399.5	910.3
Students	137.3	0.9	138.1	136.5
Home duties	154.5	523.9	678.4	3.4
Retired	38.4	6.0	44.4	154.9
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	15.9	2.3	18.1	43.9
Total not in labour force (b)	352.0	533.6	885.6	344.9
Total	586.7	698.4	1,285.1	1,255.2
Unemployed as % of labour force	16.1	6.8	12.3	18.6

Notes : (a) Includes separated and divorced.

(b) Includes the small numbers in the "other" category.

Source: LFS 1988, Table 11.

APPENDIX 2

