

Lipstick Protest: Why do we have to see ourselves through Men's Eyes?

Women and Media Now

Patricia Adkins Chiti

The media – newspapers, magazines, television, advertising – plays an important part in shaping what it means to be male or female. At any time of the day or night, on television, in newspapers and magazines, on street hoardings, we, our children and grandchildren are confronted with many different male and female role models. Sitting in waiting rooms, at the hairdressers, traveling on an intercity train, or a plane, we receive a variety of newspaper supplements and magazines to read. During your next “indepth immersion in a magazine” instead of doing the crossword puzzle, try mentally listing how many different women are shown in the advertisements, the editorials, the culture and fashion sections. Although at a first glance these different women appear to be varied – they represent different age and racial groups, professions, possible income levels - we should ask ourselves if they really represent the women that we know, live and work with in normal every day life, and that we interact with on the street, in shops, offices and public institutions.

Unhappily the women we are shown are merely variations on a stereotype that have become sub-stereotypes in themselves. By adopting role models and parading them through the media as “people it is desirable to be”, there is no doubt that the “media merchants” are limiting the individual potentialities for growth and development of all those who watch, read and pass the advertisements and are sending subliminal messages to our youth and children.

According to the *Women and Media Plan of Action* of the United Nations “advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviour, especially of children and young adults.....The continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communications - electronic, print, visual and audio - must be changed. Print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world. In addition, violent and degrading or pornographic media products are

also negatively affecting women and their participation in society. Programming that reinforces women's traditional roles can be equally limiting. The world- wide trend towards consumerism has created a climate in which advertisements and commercial messages often portray women primarily as consumers, and target girls and women of all ages inappropriately..... Women should be empowered by enhancing their skills, knowledge and access to information technology. This will strengthen their ability to combat negative portrayals of women internationally and to challenge instances of abuse of the power of an increasingly important industry. Self-regulatory mechanisms for the media need to be created and strengthened and approaches developed to eliminate gender-biased programming.In addressing the issue of the mobilization of the media, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programmes.”

The changes in women's roles in western society during the last forty years have been enormous yet media representations of women remain worryingly constant. What should this be telling us – that, according to the Media Gatekeepers, the status of women has not really changed at all, or that the male-dominated media gatekeepers do not want to accept the changes? The way in which women are represented in European media and in that of our neighbours in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, is decidedly one of gender¹ stereotyping: women (preferably young, vacuous and under dressed) are represented as sexual objects of desire (in shows, television publicity, advertisements, and in magazines for adult women, but also in those for teenage girls)², as a potential consumer (slim young testimonial for “yoghurt” which is the panacea to all of life’s evils, the smarmy mother who spends free time playing “Bingo”, new homeowners searching for “whiter than white” for laundry as if on quest for the Grail, and lets not

¹ **Gender** refers to the social differences between women and men that are learned, changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. – “A guide to Gender Impact Assessment”, European Commission, Employment and Social Affairs, October 1997

² I quote here an advertisement described by Researcher Nada Savkovic in Serbia; under the slogan: "I do not know how to cook, so what!" (said by a young girl in her underwear) there is a series of advertisements for KUHMO GUMS.

Other phrases are: “Adaptable on any basis” and “Please, run me over softly” with the young girl in bikini.

Another popular advertisement for water softener shows a policeman telling the scantily clad woman “Let me tell you how I can make you softer”.

A national telephone network, MOBTEL has a slogan saying: Mobtel gives you double. The Ad shows a young man with two young girls: he goes into his hotel room, to his bed - the two young girls enter the room and lay on the bed on either side of the boy. The voice over says: Mobtel gives you double.

forget the storybook grandmother), and as objects of conflict (middle aged and older women depicted as homemakers without interest in culture, politics or social involvement). When women are shown with jobs these are either in friendly caring environments (where their success is based on their ability to think quicker than their boss, or where they charm their students), or in unlikely conditions (when did you last see a Rig engineer looking like a top model on the runway?). Advertising moguls seem to believe that all women will be reduced to a state of bliss with biscuits, chocolates and, according to the age range, smaller size tampons, meltable cheese or dental glue. Let us never forget the effect that all of this has on small children, who spend a considerable amount of time glued to the television screen – and when we think of children lets also think about the way in which they and their mothers are manipulated by the advertisements for “children’s snacks” and “children’s chocolates” .³

This misleading and debasing way of presenting women on television, especially in the field of popular entertainment (the main money-maker and opinion leader for many networks), has accustomed the public to expect little else. The effect on adolescent girls, whose only television role models are starlets, under dressed nymphets - “veline”⁴ and “dumb waitress stage presences” can already be seen in their statistically researched changing ambitions and in the rising number of girls for any kind of audition or Beauty Parade⁵ where, like the aspiring “operatic primadonnas” described in Benedetto Marcello’s⁶ *“Teatro alla Moda”*, Venice, 1720⁷, they turn up with their mothers, boyfriends, photographers etc. What Marcello wrote about the young women wanting a career in the theatre, is easily transcribed and used to describe the girls of today, who, accompanied by their mothers, flock to every casting call:⁸ *“The mothers of the girls*

³ This study is about the way in which are depicted in the Media and cannot deal in depth with the problems of advertisements aimed at children. In some countries parents can programme the family TV so that advertisements are not shown.....This could be one way of protesting on behalf of our children.

⁴ Queste Figure Femminili di “successo” hanno una ventina di sito web che presentano, principalmente, fotografie delle ragazze nude, o quasi.

⁵ “Miss Italia” is still a big money business involving local, provincial and regional auditions before the well publicized Final Choices on Prime Time National Television each year, all aided and abetted by special editions of popular magazines and newspaper inserts.

⁶ Benedetto Marcello, Venetian composer and societal observer 1686 - 1739

⁷ “Teatro alla moda, o sia metodo sicuro e facile per ben comporre ed eseguire l'opere italiane in Musica all'uso moderno. Nel quale si danno Avvertimenti utili, e necessari a Poeti, Compositori di Musica, Musici dell'uno e dell'altro sesso, Impresari, Suonatori, Ingegneri e Pittori di scene, Parti buffe, Sarti, Paggi, Comparsa, Suggeritori, Copisti, Protettori, e Madri di Virtuose ed altre Persone appartenenti al Teatro.

⁸ “MADRI delle Virtuose anderanno sempre con le medesime, restando però in disparte per atto di civiltà

*will always accompany them, standing politely to one side if the girls are accompanied by a man **⁹ When the girl is auditioned by the Agency, the mothers mouth their words as well, suggesting steps, sounds etc, and when asked about their daughters' ages, immediately take off ten years"*

This situation is considered "almost normal" in many European countries, so that it appears that the real social and cultural growth and evolution of women is ignored. The resolution of this problem, beginning with public awareness, requires a complex strategy involving legislative and legal experts, opinion leaders, researchers, the media and the national associations working on behalf of women, children and consumers. In the UK the BBC runs a web site and on-line information service about "*Role Models*" and "*Gender Representation in the Media*" is an examination subject for the British end of school graduating examinations. Many of the magazines for adult women are devoting space and reportage to the problems described above – but the road to change is a long one.

In 1999, Cardinal Paul Poupard, President of the Vatican Pontifical Council for Culture, underlined that "The first Areopagus of the modern age is the world of communications, which is unifying humanity and turning it into what is known as a "global village". The means of social communication have become so important as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behaviour as individuals, families and within society at large ... it is particularly striking that culture is becoming more and more global, under the influence of mass media and information technology.....the merchants of violence and cheap sex, omnipresent in video cassettes and films as well as on television and the *Internet*, risk prevailing over the educators.¹⁰

ADVERTISING ON TELEVISION – MYTHS AND MAGIC

quando le Figliuole siano accompagnate co' Protettori. Quando le Ragazze si fanno sentire dall'Impresario, moveranno la bocca con loro, gli suggeriranno li soliti Passi e Trilli e, ricercate dell'età della Virtuosa, gli scemeranno per lo meno dieci anni."

⁹ The term "protettore" in the seventeenth century referred to a man who lived on the earnings of the aspiring singer he represented.....could we call them "press agents" today??"

¹⁰ "Towards a Pastoral Approach for Culture", Pontifical Council for Culture, 1999

In the everyday world women slightly outnumber men, and when in the second half of the last century social and working conditions for European women saw significant improvements, the same period coincided with that in which television became the most popular form of entertainment. The one question that we should constantly ask ourselves is “how are women really shown on television in today’s world where social change in attitudes is occurring?”¹¹

According to Dow (1995:200, cited in Holtzman 2000:80)¹², 'one of the reasons why television is resistant to the messages of feminism... is that they (sponsors) view those messages as conflicting with woman's desire to consume.' Margaret Gallagher, in the paper for the Division for the Advancement of Women, of the United Nations, December 1995, explains very clearly how and why television advertising revolves around women giving the following example. Tor Hansson, managing director for Universal Media in Norway, declared that 'the most sought-after demographic group in Norway is women between the ages of 25 and 45 - and especially professional and middle management women. When television advertisers in Scandinavia complained that they were not getting through to the women's market they wanted to reach, Kinnevik media group launched TV6 - Scandinavia's first channel targeted solely to women - in April 1994. Three weeks before its launch, all advertising spots for TV6 had been sold out.'¹³

The average person sees between 400 and 600 ads PER DAY-that is 40 million to 50 million by the time s/he is 60 years old. One of every 11 commercials has a direct message about beauty or fashion or personal hygiene, another one out of every 11 is about a “prestige product” (ranging from cars to liquid detergents). The media promotes and reflects the current mainstream standards for body shape or size and beauty. The women seen most often in the media are fashion models, pop stars (singers) and actresses, who are seriously underweight, diet and smoke. Italian television shows a number of advertisements using Olympic level sportswomen which highlight the

¹¹ Paul T Harper - The Portrayal of Women on Television – article on www.

¹² Holtzman, Linda, 2000, *Media Messages, What film, television, and popular music teach us about race, class, gender and sexual orientation?* New York: M.E.Sharpe

¹³ Margaret Gallagher ““LIPSTICK IMPERIALISM AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER: WOMEN AND MEDIA AT THE CLOSE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY”” Paper prepared for the Division for the Advancement of Women, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nation in December 1995

athletic capabilities and power of the female body, but, which also emphasize the sexualization of the athletes' bodies through photographic techniques focusing specific attention on body parts. These “fantastic women” are tanned, pristine, their bodies glowing, the most important parts of the bodies are rear ends and bosoms.

Repeated exposure to the underdressed, Hollywood, Bollywood and Barbie Doll ideals seen in the media can lead to the internalization of this ideal by young and even not-so young women because advertising renders these images achievable and real. Until women are confronted with their own mirror images they will continue to link what they see on screen (and in magazines) to symbols of prestige, happiness, love and success and end up by measuring themselves against an inhuman ideal. Representations of women across all media highlight the following: beauty; size/physique; sexuality as expressed by the above; emotional as opposed to intellectual dealings; relationships as opposed to independence/freedom.

The BBC World News has run articles about the dangers of plastic surgery for teenage girls who see this as a totally acceptable way of improving their image – with many parents willing to pay in order to make their daughter happy. There are no official statistics but many cosmetic surgeons and clinics, interviewed for a Five Live report (a Sunday programme), say they're seeing ever greater numbers of teenage girls asking for procedures ranging from bigger breasts to better noses. Some teenagers go into debt to finance the surgery by taking out a bank loan or other credit, but it's no surprise that most of them want mummy or daddy to come up with the money.¹⁴

The on-line essay *"Beauty and the Beast of Advertising"* by Jean Kilbourne describes a sex object as being a "mannequin" whose only attribute is conventional beauty. She is tall and thin, with very long legs, perfect teeth and hair, and skin without a blemish in sight. Underneath the surface, there is nothing. The mannequin's beauty is merely superficial. She is used to advertise cosmetics, health products and anything that works to improve the appearance of the body”. But at the same time “in a large number of advertisements women are shown as housewives married, usually with children, and obsessed with cleanliness and alpine fresh scents. Her daily activity revolves around

¹⁴ BBC News World Edition, Friday, 21 November, 2003, 18:13 GMT

products that will make her house dust-free, germ-free, and dirt-free. Knowing that cleanliness of the house is her job, she usually does it with a smile, providing that she has the latest product to give her a helping hand”. Television advertisers do not want to present a liberated woman because this new woman does not want and thus will not buy their products. For this reason the advertisers’ homely woman image lives on.”¹⁵ An advertising classic is that of the husband walking across a newly polished floor in dirty shoes. His behaviour is tolerated by his tired wife who gives a loving smile to her children.....¹⁶

In “*The Portrayal of Men and Women in TV Ads*”, Danielle Limpinnian underlines that “from the images inflicted upon us in the patriarchal mass media that surrounds us, it is assumed that we have been encouraged to mould ourselves into a set ideal. For a woman, that means having beauty, elegance, passivity and good domestic ability and for a man that means being tough, ‘rough n’ ready’, competitive and business minded. Today, women are frequently self-reliant and career focused whereas many men ‘feel they have the right to self-expression and self-indulgence, to love and be loved’ (Barthel 1992:148).¹⁷ The new man and new woman might be present in today’s society but to what extent are television advertisements an accurate account of this new lifestyle?”

MAGAZINES AND PRINTED MEDIA

In Margaret Gallagher’s “*Lipstick Imperialism and the New World Order: Women and Media at the close of the twentieth century*”, in the chapter dedicated to “The Aspirational Culture and Images of Women”, she points out that “Whether or not the world actually has a growing appetite for ‘non-political entertainment and sports’ is largely irrelevant. In a global information and communication system whose corporate managers characterise their output as ‘product’ (rather than content) and view people as ‘demographics’ (rather than audiences), appetites and aspirations can if necessary be created.... ‘Polish women have been crying out for a magazine like this’ insisted advertising manager Jack Kobylenski at the 1994 Polish launch of the glossy fashion

¹⁵ Danielle Limpinnian “The Portrayal of Men and Women in TV Ads”, on line article

¹⁶ BBC World News, Friday, 2 September 2005, 12:55 GMT 13:55 UK

¹⁷ Barthel, Diane, 1992, ‘Men, media and the gender order when men put on appearances. Advertising and the social construction of masculinity’. In Craig, Steve, *Men, Masculinity, and the Media. Research on men and masculinities*, Sage

and beauty magazine Elle, owned by French publisher Hachette. Of course no woman in Poland ever took to the streets to 'cry out' for Elle, but the Polish version of the magazine is now the third biggest edition, second only to France and the USA. “

The 2003-2008 World Outlook for Teenage Magazines is a market research report published by the Icon Group International covering the world outlook for teenage magazines in more than 200 countries. For each year reported, estimates are given for the latent demand, or potential industry earnings (P.I.E.), for the country in question (in millions of U.S. dollars), the percent share of the country in that part of the globe. Using econometric models which project fundamental dynamics within each country, latent demand estimates for products which may be advertised in Teenage Magazines, and on television for the young, are created. The report does not discuss specific players in the market serving the latent demand, nor specific details at the product level, nor does it consider short-term cyclicalities that might affect realized sales.¹⁸ Claire Briney, analyst for Euromonitor, has underlined that marketing to teens is the result of the shift in age demographics bringing about a significant growth in 10 to 14-year old consumers. “Consumption by teenagers in the U.S. cosmetics and toiletries market is estimated to amount to up to 20% of total value sales.” In several European countries, the numbers of 10- to 14-year old consumers are starting to rise, including Germany (+1.1%), Italy (+0.2%) and the UK (+2.7%). According to Mintel’s report “Teenage Cosmetics & Toiletries UK,” young consumers’ interest in cosmetics is fuelled by reading teen magazines, swapping ideas and recommendations with their peer group and watching what their mothers use.

Another significant group of young consumers are 8 to 12-year old girls who typically emulate the fashions of teen consumers and buy into products aimed at this older demographic. These magazines ¹⁹ account for more than half of all reported reading of

¹⁸ [The 2003-2008 World Outlook for Teenage Magazines](#) Market Research Report, October 2002, ICON Group International

¹⁹ Italy has a large number of magazines for “tweens.” Like magazines for adult women they portray scantily clad women, expensive clothes and TV reality show personalities. Most have diets – clothes advice – columns for the lovelorn. Here follows a list of the magazines which are most bought by teens in Italy: BIG CHI CIAK CIOE’ COMIX DEBBY FOCUS JUNIOR FRIENDLY GLAMOUR INTIMITA’ KISS ME LOOK LOVE MARICLAIRE MAX POPS PRINCIPESSA

adolescents in Europe. Each country has its own list: many of the titles are syndicated from one part of the EUC to another. A study of the contents of three syndicated publications (France, Italy, Spain) showed that in all issues the largest percentage of pages were devoted to articles about appearance, love and popular music. According to the definition given by *Wikipedia*, [www.encyclopedia](http://www.encyclopedia.org),²⁰ “Teen magazines” are usually filled with gossip, news, posters, fashion tips and interviews of the month's most popular stars. A concept started in United States and England during the 1950's, the magazines are now produced worldwide, and in different languages. They have always been popular vehicles for marketing young stars and magazine exposure means higher cd or ticket sales.” Whilst some concentrate almost exclusively on music, television, and film, a few usually for the older end of the teens, talk about lifestyle (how to decorate a bedroom) or psychology (horoscopes for boyfriends, coping with insecurity and the writing of short text mobile telephone messages) and in some cases are junior editions of magazines for adult women. Teen magazines are aimed almost exclusively at girls. Boys, like adult men, usually buy magazines related to specific activities that they are interested in, such as motor vehicles, sports and pop music. When we use the term “media” teenage magazines are rarely taken into consideration. Instead we should be looking at what is printed and read because sooner or later these young girls will be working and building the future of our countries, unless they are convinced, by the magazines, to only run households and worry about matching colours in their bathrooms. Some very empiric research undertaken in Rome (capital city) and in a country village (with families dependent upon Tourism and Agriculture) in the course of one week involving the acquisition of every magazine for teens on the Italian market, reading the contents and talking with those actually selling the magazines, showed that younger girls buy the publications because they are inexpensive (usually €1,00 per copy), and because they are accompanied by gadgets.²¹ The magazines, like those for older women, propose role models emulating the scantily clad nymphets on national television, love (and dating), and status. Most give space to the young men seen on “reality programmes”, singing in bands, or making their way as football players – one

PRINCIPESSA STELLINA PSYCHOLOGIES RAGAZZA MODERNA STREGHE TOP
GIRL TWEENS VERA YOUNG

²⁰ [Wikipedia](http://www.encyclopedia.org), the free encyclopedia.

²¹ In the week of the 1st September 2005, gadgets given without extra cost, included 1. A complete set of coloured beads for Piercing, 2. A wrap around sun top, 3. A Love Horoscope, 4. A pair of pink ballerina slippers, 5. A miniature designer handbag, 6. A coloured T shirt with a pop singer on the front, 7. Pale Blue bathroom flip-flops and 8 Striped bikini pants.

Italian magazine calls them “Sexy Boys”. No wonder so many young girls want to become “veline” (showgirls) on national television, or see themselves marrying a football player or racing driver. Some magazines do go beyond instructions for SMS messages to boys to include sections on “Numerology”, the choice of professions (Dj; fashion stylist; nurse), inquests (for and against Paris Hilton;) and cooking (“10 quick menus for a Date”). However, with a few rare exceptions, most target girls without a personal income, and have no difficulty in including ads for “technoshoes”, designer jeans, jewellery, toiletries and cosmetics, while some of the “junior” partners for women’s magazines include publicity for outrageously expensive handbags and underwear. This is more than alarming because it places a priority on material things that are often unobtainable, even for those making a high salary, and take away the importance of investing in books, training courses, computers and education.

In the United Kingdom all magazines aimed at teenage girls are regulated by the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) with strict guidelines. TMAP's members, all parents, include two doctors, a professor of psychology and a barrister. One of the most recent adjudications regards an issue of *Sugar* which helped readers obtain free condoms through Marie Stopes International UK. The original article was the result of research confirming that among 11 to 15 year olds, *Sugar*'s core readership, four readers out of ten believed it was illegal to buy them. The TMAP rejected complaints about the article and emphasised the need to remove any stigma from condom use. In the opinion of the Panel any kind of age-stamping would be counterproductive and impractical since teenagers can buy any adult magazine or newspaper, watch any TV programme, and access sexual material on the internet, and would be prevented from buying a magazine with appropriate and accurate content.²²

Women and Media – The Status Quo

Although the presence of women working within the media has increased in all world regions over the past two decades, real power is still very much in male hands. Non governmental women’s and media advocates push for a gender-planning approach to

²² Independent on Sunday: Why mags like 'Bliss' are not ignorant
By Dave Thomas, 11 April 2004 - The author is head of public and legal affairs, Periodical Publishers Association (PPA)

the development of "Information Society" policies and programmes, but very often they are not "heard" by the relevant commissions in parliament. Women's networks like the European Women's Lobby have highlighted the nearly complete absence of gender-planning approaches in national, regional and international Information Society policies. Gender planning and gender perspectives, though sometimes acknowledged as a need in policy planning and sometimes sought, is often seen as an "add-on" with women's groups being asked to contribute on policy planning well after the conceptual framing stages.

Unprecedented media mergers have become the norm in Western Europe and media ownership has become both concentrated – with fewer groups holding more and more resources – and convergent, so that the same entity holds interests in print, television, and the Internet, often combining ownership of content (newspapers, television stations, portals) and container (presses, cable, telephone or wireless networks). Eight out of nine of the world's largest media conglomerates are based in Europe or North America. This is obviously a threat to the freedom of the press and in fact, is marginalizing women even more. European affirmative action rules, which encouraged radio stations to show a preference for female ownership, have not worked nor are there many women media owners, controllers or gatekeepers. Once the conglomerates have control of the media, women are the last of their concerns. The AMARC European Women's Network notes that the use of community radio has been an effective tool in providing an alternative voice to the "distorted and stereotyped" voice of mainstream media. *Women make up 46% of the heads of community radio stations in Western Europe*; this figure is far lower and decreasing in Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, although there is a myriad of laws and regulations covering the use and allocation of broadcast frequencies for community broadcasting at a national level, there are no European programmes "specifically targeting community media". In spite of this community radio is becoming a common tool for women's groups to disseminate information and develop their activities.

The Global Media Monitoring Project 2000 shows that, in Europe, where women were 19% of newsmakers, their exclusion from "hard" news, such as European politics, cannot be explained by lack of opportunity. The GMMP points out that, "although most of these stories provided ample opportunity for the inclusion of women's point of view

and perspectives, coverage in most media relied almost entirely on male authorities and spokespeople”. This is despite the fact that both the European Commission and the European Parliament, sources for much of the news commentary, include substantial numbers of women in authoritative positions. Throughout the EUC there are now organisations which lobby exclusively for women working in the media. The most energetic are in Germany,²³ Italy,²⁴ and France.²⁵

Clearly we must convince and force the media to project a more accurate image of modern woman (including those in the various ethnic communities present in our countries, the professions and occupations that we are engaged in, and our involvement in the daily life of society) and her achievements. Education brings the child through adolescence to maturity. It begins within the family, which is always the best context for education. Surely it should be possible to convince mothers to investigate what their children are watching, and for teachers to discuss, in the classroom, what their students are reading in bars, caffè's and at the hairdressers? What they are doing and reading on the Internet? According to a study released this summer by marketing researcher team Jupiter Communications/Media Metrix, the number of teen girls aged 12 to 17 who surf the Web more than doubled from nearly two million in 1999 to 4.4 million in 2000. Most of the sites for teenage girls combine an appeal to pop culture trends with themes of empowerment and education. For many the Internet is a tool with which to discover their own voices, and identities. Young girls, often loathe to risk non-conformity, can participate in discussions, play games, visit controversial sites, produce art, music, online magazines, diaries, and ideas without leaving home and without having to say who they really are.²⁶

To overcome the distorted images we see every day we, as members of the Civil Society, should be “lobbying” for positive means and practices to change the way in

²³ The “Media suitcase” was developed by the German Association of Female Journalists as a prototype. It is aimed at providing media observation groups with the tools needed for the critical examination and analysis of media content, and ways and means of making complaints and comments better known.

²⁴ Ancorpari – Associazione Nazionale delle Consigliere di Parità, Italy undertook a large-scale observatory on Women and Media and their findings can be seen on their web site.

²⁵ Les Penelopes in France has developed an interactive TV programme “Cyberfemmes” with accompanying online discussions and background texts to elaborate on the context.

²⁶ Copyright © 2005 by The American Prospect, Inc. Preferred Citation: Alyssa R. Rayman-Read, “Lipstick and Politics:”, The American Prospect Online, Dec 26, 2000.

which men “represent” women. One such proposal could be the creation of Regional and National “Awards for advertising agencies, the media and programmes which stand out for their commitment to the equality of opportunities between men and women.”²⁷

Today, women constitute about 55% of the world's population. Why is it that according to what we see in the media there are always more intelligent, socially involved responsible men than women? If one of the great achievements of the 20th century was that women gained access to all fields of economic, commercial and intellectual activity, one of the major challenges of the 21st century is to ensure that women gain equal opportunities of access, advancement, recognition and above all, a fitting image and representation in the media where we are shown through “our” eyes and not just through those of the men running advertising agencies and media networks.

²⁷ “Good Practise Guide to guarantee equal rights in procedures”, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Institut de la Mujer, Spain, 1998

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