



Abuse of Women in the Media

Consumers' Association of Penang

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CONSUMERS' ASSOCIATION OF PENANG

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The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is a non-profit organisation which fights for the rights and interests of all consumers through research, educational and representational activities.

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*"I've slept with them all.
But only The Aristocrat
is worthy of my body."*

Aristocrat.
Luxury Pocket Spring Bedding.
An unprecedented standard
of bedding luxury.

Aristocrat. Luxury par excellence.
Luxury that's underlined by advanced
spring technology. More comfort through
extraordinary support. And a complete
luxury that's reflected in superb
craftsmanship and attention to fine detail.

And of course such unabashed luxury
and craftsmanship is only attainable at the
discretion of its owner.

To sleep with the Aristocrat is to have
exceeded the very best.

Independent Belgian Pocket Springs.
Napalm provides to your natural
curvature.

It supports only on direct pressure
Chromium an aristocrat.

It has, in its pocket, support.

Belgian Bonington, Luxury Covers.
No other can offer
Luxury in luxury.

Polyurethane Lining.
It's the only
Bedding.

Natural Fibres.
Protection for inner springs.



Pressure on one coil does not affect
others; each coil moves independently.

Belgian - True-Mat Bonington
Luxury - A.G. Amsterdam

LUXURY POCKET SPRING BEDDING
Aristocrat
The privileged way to sleep
Another quality product from the creator of Dreamland

As this book was going to the press, a public controversy occurred over this advertisement which had the following caption: 'I've slept with them all. But only The Aristocrat is worthy of my body'.

After CAP complained to the Advertising Standards Authority, the Company was asked to withdraw the advertisement from the newspapers.

FOREWORD

In our fast changing society, where women have become wage earners, professionals, indispensable home-makers and leaders, the media has denied them of their rightful place and contribution outside the home and family. In the media, women are still portrayed as the inferior lesser half of humanity and as objects of sexual pleasure. Even worse, marketing strategies have helped to reinforce the fantasies that beguile women into accepting their role as ornaments of beauty and sensuality, which degrades and denies women of their self respect, dignity and their humanity.

This view and attitude towards women has been deeply ingrained in our consciousness and has left in its wake a callous absence of sympathy, human compassion and sensitivity towards the position of women.

Thus, to change this state of affairs is no easy task. It requires the joint responsibility and efforts of all the male and female members of our community, to work towards the upliftment of women and to right the wrong which has been perpetrated against them. The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) appeals to all men and women, to all groups in our society, women's organisations, the media, educators and planners, to seriously dedicate their efforts to bring about a better understanding of the plight of women which will be both sympathetic and just.

This booklet is CAP's contribution to the understanding of women's problems and roles in our society. It has been expanded from a paper on 'The Use and Abuse of Women in the Mass Media' by Evelyne Hong. It was first presented at the Seminar on Consumer Education for Women organised by CAP and held in Penang on October 30 — November 1, 1981.

As this booklet points out, women must regain confidence in themselves and question the image that society and the mass media has so long assigned them. They must work towards redefining their roles and break the stereotype images so that they can be

regarded as human beings (capable of healthy, normal, intelligent and humane relationships) and become full fledged citizens contributing to the betterment of our society.

I hope by publishing this booklet, both men and women will become more aware of the problems and work together hand in hand towards the attainment of true dignity and sensitivity for all women.

S.M. Mohd. Idris, JP
President
CAP

INTRODUCTION

If one were to ask: what is today's most powerful vehicle in the moulding of beliefs, attitudes, values and lifestyles, we would say it is the mass media. The mass media has reached every home, town and country. It has invaded even the most remote communities living in the backyards of modernising societies. It has become one of the most important tools in the so-called modernisation process, transmitting ideas and aspirations and bringing about a shrinking world with the speed and scope of its communications network. Mass media has become the purveyor of a global culture.

This global culture of mass consumption has had deleterious effects on traditional societies and communities all over the Third World (including Malaysia). It has led to the breakdown and rejection of community values and ties, displacing traditional forms of community entertainment and expressions of culture and a pattern of consumption which homogenises consumer tastes as it is totally alien.

This 'homogenising of consumer tastes' has been so successfully achieved due to the special nature of the communication technique of the mass media. Because the mass media is the 'one-way only' communication, it has the ability to process, filter and unify information so that readers, listeners and viewers become passive participants, i.e. mere vessels of information. It is precisely this ability that makes mass media so pervasive and penetrating.

This magnitude of the media to influence and to mould opinions, tastes and ideas can be gauged from the fact that the mass media is an oligopolistic system.

It is no secret that this news and information system is owned and controlled by western multinational agencies and corporations. Western and American films and television (TV) programmes form the bulk of the daily viewing in most Third World countries. In

Malaysia, Paul Harrison, author of *Inside the Third World*, has found that 71 per cent of the programmes are imported.¹ Over 90 per cent of the foreign news carried by the world's newspapers are provided by four news agencies namely, United Press International (UPI), Associated Press (AP), Reuters and Agence France Presse². Not surprisingly then, this media is biased and partial, tailored to suit western self-interests.

Thus, the mass media has come to embody the interests and values of an alien and dominant culture which promotes not only a western brand of consumption and lifestyle, it also projects an image of women which is both discriminatory and oppressive and male-oriented. This book attempts to show how the media has been used to portray women as passive inferior beings, intellectually, emotionally and physically dependent as wives and mothers and how it has been used to reinforce stereotypic images of women as sex objects; how this treatment of women has become a global feature and how this other half of humanity has been ignominiously under-represented and ignored.

The discussion is divided into eight parts namely, the use of women in advertising, pornography, sex tourism, women's magazines, women in novels, women as portrayed in humour, women in TV and films and newspaper coverage of women.

USE OF WOMEN IN ADVERTISING

Time and again in our advertisements, women are depicted as vain and seductive, as sex commodities, dull-witted, in constant need of approval (almost always by men) and ultimately best left in the home or kitchen.

Sexist advertisements appear to be the norm with industry and advertising agencies whereby they are reaping huge profits at the expense of women. What does one mean by a sexist advertisement? When it depicts half of the human race as inferior; when it discriminates, degrades and humiliates one sex in relation to the other. This form of advertising has become the most important tool in the perpetuation of male western culture. It is here that women are most exploited in terms of their sexuality and physical appearance. This conclusion of women's role in advertisements has been well substantiated by studies on marketing research. According to Alice Courtney and Sarah Lockeretz, who have conducted studies on marketing in the USA, 'men regard women primarily as sex objects. (This is indicated) by the plethora of decorative roles assigned to women more than men. The effect is also heightened by showing men and women sharing recreational activities but not work and by showing women in relatively few working roles'.³

Stark reminder for the Press

KUALA LUMPUR: Nude, half-naked and revealing pictures of males and females, including those in advertisements, are not allowed to be published by the Press.

In a reminder issued to all Press by the Home Affairs Ministry yesterday, it was stated that the existing guidelines prohibited the following:

- Pictures of naked men and women;
- Pictures of men wearing only 'G'-strings.

Prohibitions issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs which are repeatedly broken by the mass media.

In another separate study done by a man, Trevor Millum, he noted that 'most women were captured in pictures which tended to emphasise "mannequin" and "dummy" expressions.... In terms of expression, women most often demonstrated a "catalogue" that is, "dummy-like" expression devoid of personality while men most often demonstrated a "thoughtful expression" implying some intellectual processes'.⁴

Local media appears to be no different. Time and again, in our advertisements, women are depicted as vain and seductive, as sex commodities, dull-witted, in constant need of approval (almost always by men) and ultimately best left in the home or kitchen. Some of these examples can be seen below:

Swing to the beat!

With hi-powered hi-fi from National anywhere, anytime.

When you're out having fun, add more excitement. With thumping stereo from a National Radio Cassette. Big power output. 'Live' sounds. And a heavy beat. For a really swinging time. Every time!

National Radio Cassette

THE GREAT JUBILEE CO.

National Radio Cassette Advertisement

This advertisement appears in the daily newspapers. It purports to advertise a radio cassette. There is a scantily dressed woman with flowing long hair, swinging in a hammock with a radio

cassette leaning at her side. The words on top of the picture read 'Swing to the beat! when you're out having fun, add more excitement.... for a really swinging time. Everytime!' These words take on a double meaning and the promised 'fun' and 'excitement' message also refers to the woman in the hammock. There is no other information about the product. The picture of the woman, half reclined and smiling, dominates the advertisement. She has a soft expression on her face and is obviously very relaxed. In fact, her overall expression is an empty look (near dumb-like). She is doing nothing in particular and looking forward to enjoying herself — to a 'swinging time'. This advertisement is definitely aimed at the male consumer. The 'fun', 'excitement' and 'swinging time' refer to none other than the woman in the picture.

There are many of these advertisements portraying scantily dressed women advertising for motorbikes, cars or radios, products which bear no relation to the figure of the women in these advertisements.

Anchor Beer Advertisement

This advertisement can be seen hanging on the walls of coffee-shops all over the country. 'A Man's Taste' proclaims this **Anchor** beer poster. But anyone looking at it can only see a bikini-clad young, seductive woman kneeling suggestively on an anchor and a 'come-hither' look on her face. She is very sure of herself. The beer bottle is placed at one corner of the advertisement overtowered by the semi-nude woman. In fact, the woman's curves titillate the viewer to drink-in this carnal scene.

Is there a clearer example of how a woman is promoted to men as a mere commodity, with her value rated according to her face, figure and age?

This commercialisation of the female body, as objects to be feasted upon and consumed by eager male eyes, is no better seen in the semi-nude and nude pictures of women in suggestive poses and revealing big breasts on calendars advertising cigarettes, tractors, paints and machinery. These examples of soft porn is an open secret. As the year approaches its end, many big companies com-

A Man's Taste



男子稱頌口味，稱讚啤酒，具有啤酒的風味。

ANCHOR THE ORIGINAL TASTE OF BEER

mission agents to prepare these calendars which will be given out to favoured clients. These days, the calendar manufacturers have even taken the initiative to advertise their glamorous products in the newspapers 'with an exotic lady on each page', complete with

an order form.⁶ See below:

AVAILABLE NOW

Act fast, the top quality printing job we provide requires that you place your order not later than 7th October 1981.

glamour

1982

CALENDAR

- Measures 24 x 16 inches (Aprox. 61 x 40.5cm)
- 128 gsm fine quality Swedish Art Paper • Metal rimmed
- 4 colour printing (6 calendar sheets) with metallic base for the dates and 2 colour (Fly sheet)
- Attractively designed and produced at a price you can afford

The commercial calendar was started as a product of Victorian enterprise. Soon enterprising businessmen became aware of the values of goodwill and took to the idea of the calendar.

Calendar glamour is for package publicity for the sponsor in a form which gives pleasure to its recipients and, moreover, it serves as a seasonal gift and of functional value the whole year round.

Here's how the offer works

- The calendar comes in 6 sheets with an exotic lady on each page along with 2 months on the 1982 calendar.
- The blank space on top of each page, 3 1/4" x 16" is let for your company name and other message.
- You can order any number of copies over a minimum order of 300 see the price schedule below.
- Once you have decided the number of copies you need, complete the order form, send it to us along with your company name (in proper typeface), your company logo and slogan, any special message.
- If you like, our art department will do the layout, otherwise, please submit a rough sketch of how you want your name positioned.
- Please enclose a cheque for 40% of your order price as downpayment made payable to FOTO TEKNIK SDN BHD

3 1/4 x 16 inches blank space for your company name, logo and message

1982 Standard Calendar: Nett Selling Pricelist

No. of Copies	FJB Port Klang/Subang
300 (min Order)	Unit Price \$4.70
400-3,000	— \$4.20
5,000	— \$4.10
10,000	— \$3.90
15,000	— \$3.70
20,000	— \$3.47

The above prices inclusive of Artwork and Overprinting of Company Name, Logo, Address etc. in one colour (Black). Every additional colour, there will be an extra charge of \$0.20 to each calendar. Delivery charges on all outstation clients to be borne by clients account.

Order Form

I wish to order _____ copies of the 1982 calendar.

Enclosed is my cheque for \$ _____

being 40% down payment for the above order.

Company Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No. _____

Date _____

Company Chop and Authorised Signature _____

For further information please call or write **FOTO TEKNIK SDN BHD**
23, Jalan Mesul, Kuala Lumpur, 50-10, Malaysia.
Tel: 03-417173 & 03-410840

*Calendar manufacturers advertising their glamour
'which gives pleasure to its recipients'.*



Sissons Calendar

In this 36cm x 61cm pin-up calendar, the glossy female is loosely clad in a 'see-through' shawl falling loosely from her shoulders. Her body is partially exposed, revealing her breasts. She wears an empty look on her face. This woman is selling herself just as much as she is selling the tin of **Sissons** paint.⁷



Winston Calendar

This is a cigarette advertisement by **Winston** (an imported brand from the USA) found on a table calendar. The woman in the advertisement is draped in a wet, clinging blouse to accentuate her 'flavour'. The blouse is unbuttoned, revealing the frontal view of her in a bikini. This advertisement is not only distasteful but blatantly contravenes government regulations forbidding the appearance of people in cigarette advertisements.⁸

In recent years, advertisers have become more daring in their portrayal of local women as can be seen from the example below:



Industrial Agricultural Distribution (IAD) Calendar

This is another table calendar directed at men, advertising a company called IAD, which distributes hardware. The model is a local woman and the background is a rubber estate. She is standing very self-assured on a ladder which rubber tappers use when they tap the trees. The woman is posing for the photograph with her saree blouse unbuttoned and exposing part of her breasts. The presentation of local women in a local setting makes use of a subtle psychology that associates local women as potential sex objects. In the eyes and minds of our local men, our local women have this ability to fulfil sexual pleasure and satisfaction. (See also example below).



The incredible all-new Ford Laser!



Guess Laser's 2 exciting body shapes, win the car!

The incredible Laser from Ford Japan is here — right in your nearest Ford Showroom. Come on in, pick up an official entry form, answer 3 simple True or False questions ...and you could win an all-new Ford Laser. The only qualification you need is a valid driving license. Hurry, find out more from the Ford salesman.

Here's a hint to help you.
Ford Laser comes in 2 exciting body shapes: — 4-door Sedan and 5-door Hatchback with unique rear quarter window. What's even more incredible, Laser delivers outstanding fuel economy and high performance to match.

More prizes must be won!
First Prize:
Ford Laser 1.3 GL Hatchback.
5 Second Prizes:
A Nippondenso car air conditioner each.
Third Prize:
A set of four Dunlop 175 x 70 x 13 Formula tyres.
60 Consolation Prizes:
Quart bottle of Hennessy V.S.O.P. Cognac each.

Closing date 29th March 1981.
This contest is valid in Peninsular Malaysia only.

YOUR FORD DEALER:

KL Ford of Malaya (M) Sdn Bhd Lot 1, Jalan Puchong, Puchong, Selangor	JB Ford of Malaya (M) Sdn Bhd Lot 1, Jalan Puchong, Puchong, Selangor	MP Ford of Malaya (M) Sdn Bhd Lot 1, Jalan Puchong, Puchong, Selangor	PP Ford of Malaya (M) Sdn Bhd Lot 1, Jalan Puchong, Puchong, Selangor
SH Ford of Malaya (M) Sdn Bhd Lot 1, Jalan Puchong, Puchong, Selangor	TP Ford of Malaya (M) Sdn Bhd Lot 1, Jalan Puchong, Puchong, Selangor	WP Ford of Malaya (M) Sdn Bhd Lot 1, Jalan Puchong, Puchong, Selangor	YP Ford of Malaya (M) Sdn Bhd Lot 1, Jalan Puchong, Puchong, Selangor

Laser **Ford**

LOWE 1

In this advertisement, the body of the woman here is equated to the body of a car. Like the Ford car, the girl is portrayed as a mere possession to be equated with manhood and prowess.

reduced to something which was for the benefit and titillation of men'.⁹

These portrayals of women are both dehumanising and humiliating to womanhood. Are these not examples of a more sophisticated version of prostituting a woman's body?

Do You Enjoy Your Love Life?
Do You Feel Safe And Comfortable?
Do You Enjoy It With A Romantic Feeling?



Popular Taiwan T.V. Star Miss Law Siew
Yuen can give you the answer

Superlite

Its

Playboy



condom which is soft, thin and highly elastic. The World's most Technically advanced condom developed by scientific experts to make your life more pleasurable.

Available at all retail outlets, Pharmacies, & Chinese Medical Halls & Supermarkets.

But the award for the most distasteful advertisement of the year will probably go to the **Playboy** condom advertisement which

features a popular Taiwan television female star under the heading:

'Do you enjoy your love life with a romantic feeling? She can give you the answer'.¹⁰

The distortion of women, as objects of sexual desire in our advertisements, only reinforces male sexist attitudes towards women as playthings of pleasure and male satisfaction.



Enjoy the game with

mister 003

SUPERIOR QUALITY

TOHTONKU SDN. BHD.
 17, Perlis Road, Penang.
 Tel: 24468, 364665, 364765

An advertisement for a condom implying that women and sex is 'fun and games.' This blatantly goes against the guidelines set by the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding advertisements.

Advertisements making use of women usually fall under two categories: those that treat them as sex objects, and those which convey the stereotype that women's place is only in the home and kitchen.

While handsome men are portrayed as successful professionals and important decision-makers, women in advertisements are cast as housewives who busy themselves and keep happy with rice cookers, washing machines, sewing machines, floor polish or household insecticides. Men are seldom, if ever seen, sharing household chores whilst women are beaming with pride and happiness with the latest household appliance being advertised, as if housework necessarily and always equals women. Such advertisements deny the growing trend of women engaging themselves in occupations and activities outside the home and imply that their



Sew easy with SINGER

There's nothing so easy as sewing things that a Singer Sewing Machine makes so easy. You can make dresses, blouses, aprons, bedspreads and even rag dolls! In fact, a Singer Sewing Machine makes your sewing so easy.

See the full range at your nearest Singer Sales Centre and be sure to ask about our exclusive Easy Payment Plan.

These two women are looking lovingly at the sewing machine advertised with such extraordinary pride and joy.

being house-bound is the natural order of the things. The growing acceptance of the idea that men should also share in the tasks of housework is entirely absent.

In the traditional extended family system, 'housework' was integrated into the economic activities of the household which involved members of the whole family. Housework combined both work on the land, in the fields, production of handicrafts like weaving and matting, the preparation and processing of food and the attainment of necessities for daily sustenance. Women here actually contributed to the subsistence and the economic production of their families and the community. 'Housework' was creative and meaningful. A woman's work gave her dignity, self-respect and confidence in her true worth.

With the coming of the modern nuclear family unit, housework becomes confined to the four walls of the home. Women no longer participated in economic production which was now solely shouldered by the husband who left the house to earn a living, a wage. Housework became unpaid work. Housework was no longer dignified labour. There is no monetary and productive value attached to housework. The contributions of housewives do not appear in computations (Gross Domestic Product) in our modern national economy. Hence, the services of women at home are not given their due recognition in our society. Housework is hard, backbreaking and important, but the crucial role it plays and the essential contribution it makes to society is denied because housework is identified only with women. It is precisely because of this role in the domestic economy that women occupy the lowest ranks of social status and economic importance in our modern society. In the words of two American researchers who did a study on the 'Portrait of American Men and Women in T.V. Commercials', 'Even the reality of her labour is denied in T.V. wonderland. Although she is surrounded by mountains of laundry, T.V. ads show her how she can dance through wash day with good cheer'.¹¹

This typical image of women as housewives is also found in our local advertisements. Take for instance this advertisement below which is found in our local dailies:

This lady is busy washing clothes.



National Washing Machines present a great way of getting your clothes washed.

With a National Washing Machine, you can forget about washing problems.

Just pile your clothes in, choose the programme, press the start button and then you can forget about washing your clothes.

The superbly designed and easy to use National Washing Machines will wash your clothes thoroughly and completely by themselves.

After which, the National Washing Machines will spin-dry the clothes for you. The National Washing Machines will do all this so perfectly, so quickly and reliably — through every day of the week.

And through the years ahead. Come rain or sun.

Without you having to worry about laundry chores anymore. Or even the

cost of washing. The National Washing Machines are unique. They do not need an electric water heater because with their powerful motor and specially designed washing programmes your clothes come out beautifully clean.

Drop in at your nearest National Dealer. He will show you the complete range of National Washing Machines available and make all the necessary arrangements. So that you can relax on all your clothes-washing chores.



NA-1800 NA-1800i NA-1820



National Home Appliances

Malaysia Sales & Service Sdn. Bhd.

Washing Machine Advertisement

The advertisement reads: 'This lady is busy washing clothes'. The picture, however, shows a lady in frills and bows, leisurely applying cutex on her toe nails. The impression given is that housework can be easy, fun and even glamorous. The advertisement is projecting the myth that housework is leisurely satisfying thus distorting the reality for most hardworking housewives. Instead, what more can a woman ask for with such leisure makers

(i.e. the washing machine) at their disposal. Even more damaging, the advertisement conveys and reinforces the image of women as vain, dull and empty headed. All she is interested in is painting her toes and looking pretty. Such trivialities find their happiest abode in women.

One would have thought that washing machines and other gadgets would be needed most by working career women who would not have as much time for housework as non-working women. But women in advertisements and commercials are always shown housebound. According to two female researchers, 'while the time-saving products that are extolled as reducing labour are probably desired most by working women who are time-harried, the purchasers in these ads are not working'.¹²

And in the words of another female regarding advertisements on TV, 'television turns us into Mrs Mop-its, dusting and vacuuming and polishing and washing, feeding the man meat, rejoicing in oven cleaners and clothes brightness'.¹³

Another female has this to say about the denial of working women on American advertising: 'A woman's place is not only in the home, according to most copywriters and art directors, it is in the kitchen or laundry room'.¹⁴

One, therefore, almost never sees women as skillful professionals or in positions of authority. In our commercials, the busy executive rushing to the board meeting in a helicopter, is invariably a man; the owner of a credit card is a man (with a female companion); and very often it is a **man** or a male voice who tells our housewives what products is best for their homes and families.

Besides portraying women as the most natural dependable housewives, advertisements are stereotyping people into sex roles. What does this create in the minds of young children? Since women are always washing clothes and plates, scrubbing and polishing floors and table-tops, preparing breakfast in our commercials and advertisements, children will always associate mother with these menial chores. What about father? He is always seen driving the

car to work. His meals are always prepared for him when he comes home. He is the bread-winner and the head of the household.

NEW! **ZIP** NOW, in a bright new pack. Improved for faster, easier cleaning.

LEMON LIQUID DETERGENT

NEW FLIP TOP CAP
Specially designed for modern housewives. Easy one-hand operation.

POWERFUL YET GENTLE
Grease-cutting lemon power.

Another quality product of **LAM SOON**

ZIP - Cleans Faster - Cleans Easier

Sex role stereotyping in our advertisements. Little girls identify with mother, the loving, self-sacrificing and devoted servant of the home and family. Should not fathers and brothers help out too?

Similarly, doctors, engineers and managers as shown in advertisements are always male; and nurses, teachers, typists, receptionists, salesgirls — jobs which comprise the lowest professional category — are always occupied by women. This sex role stereotyping is also seen in the children who appear in the advertisements themselves. Boys are always soiling their clothes (not to worry,

mother will make them whiter than white), camping, playing games or engaged in outdoor activities. Girls are always playing the piano, dancing, dressing-up dolls, and playing 'masak-masak' (housewife). They are dainty and 'feminine'.

This socialisation of the young by the advertisements in the mass media will have far reaching effects that manifest themselves in adulthood. Boys will thus identify with father who has everything done for him at home as depicted in the commercials and who is strong, dependable and clever. As for the girls, they will learn to identify with mother, the loving, self-sacrificing and devoted servant of the home and family.

Many advertisements portray women not only as servile and passive, but also devoid of intelligence. Women are often shown to be madly in love with housework. One can find commercials which show women in ecstatic postures at the sight and smell of certain objects. Thus, they can be seen gently and lovingly caressing and inhaling the fragrance of clothes and towels washed with a certain detergent, plates cleaned with a particular cleansing liquid and floors polished with a special brand of polish. This is not only far-cical, it is insulting to our sensitivities and intelligence. In the words of author Jane Trahey, who observed an advertisement on a wax polish, as follows: 'It shows a woman who has gone quite bonkers over her dining-room table waxing job. She sits at one end of the table and rubs it lovingly. If her husband found her this way, he most certainly would either return her to her mother or, if he were kind, suggest a shrink'.¹⁵

The portrayal of women as being empty-headed and silly does injustice to the important role which they play in our society. As the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women has recognised, 'Women work twice as hard as men'. Women have become wage-earners, professionals and homemakers as well, making many if not most of the major decisions in family life and a substantial portion of decisions in working life.

About 1.2 million Malaysian women today are employed in industry, agriculture, the professional and educational sectors.¹⁶ At the same time, they carry out multifaceted roles as homemakers, cooks, mothers and economical consumers, budgeting the family

income and doing most of the shopping. The complicated responsibilities of women surely demand them to be more intelligent, resourceful and dependable than they are typecast by advertisements.

Another major trait of modern advertising is its projection of women as being preoccupied with cultivating the 'glamour' of her face and body. These advertisements define the characteristics of 'femaleness' in terms of glamour, coyness, figure and fashion. To be a 'real woman' is to be 'alluring' in these advertisements.

Advertisements such as this exploit the self-confidence and femaleness of women and distort their personality.

How can
you feel like
a woman...



if you shave like a man?

You shave your legs? How ghastly, how...manly! To feel like a woman, take it off like a lady.

With Immac.

Immac creams away hair.

Creams away hair like it never was there.

No razor stubble trouble, no razor nick-knocks. With Immac, nothing shows but smooth, sleek leg.

You'll feel like a woman.

Ask any man.

Immac
TRADE MARK

Available as cream,
lotion and spray.



Take for example the advertisements on anti-perspirants, deodorants, pimple creams, cosmetics, costume jewellery,

underwear, hairsprays, clothings and hair dryers, slimming foods and sanitary towels. The women in them are never ugly, they are always beautiful, always glamorous, and highly successful with men. These are all women's products. These products all appeal to

A pretty pair.
Introducing matching
bras and panties
from Wacoal
that look nice
and feel great.

Wacoal
Tokyo

Available at Wacoal Corner, Metro Jaya in the Pertamina Complex.

*Wacoal is Japan's leading brand and one of the world's top three manufacturers of women's underwear, as ranked by retail sales.

WACOAL INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

*Beautiful, seductive
and coquettish women
in the advertisements
who will always be
highly successful with
men.*

women's psychology about themselves and how others view them. According to Rosemary Scott, it is these products that find the 'greatest potential for the exploitation of woman in terms of her self-confidence and her femaleness, ranging from the devious and sneaky strategy of the vaginal deodorant manufacturers to the open and self-delusive strategies that men employ in the marketing of cosmetics and slimming products'.¹⁷ It is in products such as these that men manipulate the personality of women. In our commercials

and advertisements, it is the women (not men) who are ultra dependent on these so-called 'beauty-aids'. For instance, take this advertisement for a slimming food presently prominently advertised in our local newspapers.



**Get slim, stay slim.
With Dietvite.**

Dietvite is the quick, effective way to achieve your ideal weight or simply maintain it. It's a dieter's meal replacement that's nutritionally balanced with carbohydrates, protein, vitamins and minerals. Simply add water to Dietvite and you've got a delicious, satisfying meal in a glass.

Dietvite's balanced formula helps keep you active while you slim. It also has an ingredient that stops hunger pangs between meals. And you'll be reassured to know that Dietvite does not contain drugs.

Drink Dietvite in chocolate, strawberry or vanilla flavours in place of your regular breakfast or lunch — until you achieve your optimum weight. You'll like what you stand to lose.

Dietvite. What have you got to lose?

Another international product from 

Dietvite

The words on the advertisement says, 'Get slim, stay slim with **Dietvite**'. There is a picture of a slim, healthy, active woman in the arm of an equally macho male. Both are lost in their own world of love and happiness with eyes only for each other. What exactly are the advertisers selling? The last line appeals to the reader once more with the words '**Dietvite. What have you got to lose?**' The message conveyed is that with **Dietvite**, a girl has everything to gain —

health, beauty, and most of all love and happiness. The advertisement is really selling hope, promise and fulfilment. 'Dieting and slimming and being slim are a particularly female phenomenon and have been exploited unconcernedly by manufacturers.'¹⁸

What is the effect of images such as these on most ordinary, plain women who have been less endowed by nature? Inevitably, a deep sense of inferiority, guilt and inadequacy is created among the so-called unfortunate women, the 'Plain Janes'. So we try to hide our ugliness and look like those female goddesses on the screen and the glossy pages and some of us spend our entire savings and a fortune in the attempt. For example, a CAP survey has shown that factory girls who earn only low wages spend a large part of their income on clothes, cosmetics and shoes, stinting on good food at the expense of their health. Women have thus been conned into buying such packaged promises. They are made to feel that manufacturers of such glamour and happiness are actually doing them a favour when they sell them such products. They are making their wildest dreams come true. These are dreams peddled by men to make women buy products which they do not need. Buying the product is not going to transform a woman into the star she sees in the advertisement. But she most certainly believes she will, by the marketing men who have actually sold her the aura that goes with it. This 'irrelevant fantasy, perpetuated in so many cosmetic advertisements, comes directly from men. The marketing men in the beauty companies and often the creative men in agencies have become convinced they are selling glamour and promise'.¹⁹ So in the process to attain this elusive beauty, we not only compete with each other to outdo one another (for sexual attention from men) in sophistication and seduction, we lose confidence in ourselves and our true worth.

Yes, we have allowed some faceless male fashion designers, hair stylists, beauticians and marketing men in the capitals of Paris, New York or Rome to tell us our worth and what to do with our bodies, and ourselves. To quote an example, Christian Dior, the famous French couturier of the rich, whose styles are copied in cheap imitations for the poor, is said to have the power to raise the skirts of fifty million American women overnight or lower them, or both!²⁰ How this 'sexual sell' is achieved, by appealing to women's

self-image and femaleness, is told in the worlds of a marketing man:

'Properly manipulated — if you are not afraid of that word — housewives can be given the sense of identity, creativity, the self-realisation, even the sexual joy they lack — by buying things.'²¹

What does this tell us about the marketing men — the advertisers themselves? It shows very clearly what most of them view women to be:

'Most men in advertising think of women as having low intelligence. They believe that across the country, women are really children. You can't say anything too fancy to them. Conversations with doves in kitchens, giants coming out of washing machines, crowns magically appearing on heads when a certain margarine is used. Even the calibre of day-time television soap operas doesn't approach the idiocy of commercials. I think it's a security thing — they want to think of women as having very few interests — that her life really does begin and end with clean floors. You could substitute "women" for "mentally retarded" and they say, "it sells, doesn't it?" That is their principle argument. That this low level fantasy sells. They always show a woman in the kitchen so they always show a woman in the kitchen. They want the same old stuff because it worked the last time.'²²

The above observation of men in the advertising profession was made by Franchielli Cadwell, President of the Cadwell-Compton advertising agency, a woman. And this view of women is the prevailing view in the advertising world because the advertising industry is still very much a men's world. In Britain, at least two-thirds of the members of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising are males, of the females who make up the remainder, the majority were women secretaries with little administrative responsibilities.²³ In Malaysia, the situation can be no different when we consider the fact that the largest advertising agency is American.²⁴ Because of this control, advertising and marketing men have been able to project this sexist image of women, moulding and reinforcing this image they have to themselves. At the same time, it also 'reinforces men's concepts about women's place and women's

role — and about their own roles. It makes masculine dominance legitimate'.²⁵

The power of the advertising men can be summed up in the words of Rosemary Scott: 'Men have always had images of women and there has never been a reason for this imagery to concede to women's reality, when women, as the inferior sex, have been effectively taught to conform with it. Woman is mother or whore, succouring or sexy, respected or reviled, and the advertiser, more than any man, has the chance to re-affirm these images continually through his work'.²⁶

More crucial, the portrayal of women in the mass media is but a reflection, albeit a distorted reflection, of how women are regarded and made out to be in a consumer society:

'Women are not manipulated by the media into being domestic servants and mindless sexual decorations, the better to sell soap and hair spray. Rather, the image reflects women, as men in a sexist society force them to behave ... The real evil of the media image of women is that it supports the sexist status quo. In a sense, the fashion, cosmetics and "feminine hygiene" advertisements are aimed more at men than women. They encourage men to expect women to sport all the latest trappings of sexual slavery — expectations women must then fulfil if they are to survive.'²⁷

What about those of us who have not the means to fulfil these expectations, to keep up this facade? We are made to feel worthless and unwanted, even unloved. We may hate ourselves as human beings, as women and curse our misfortune. We create such untold misery, unhappiness and bitterness for ourselves. We have actually become enslaved by the mass consumer culture which exploits and makes victims of all women.

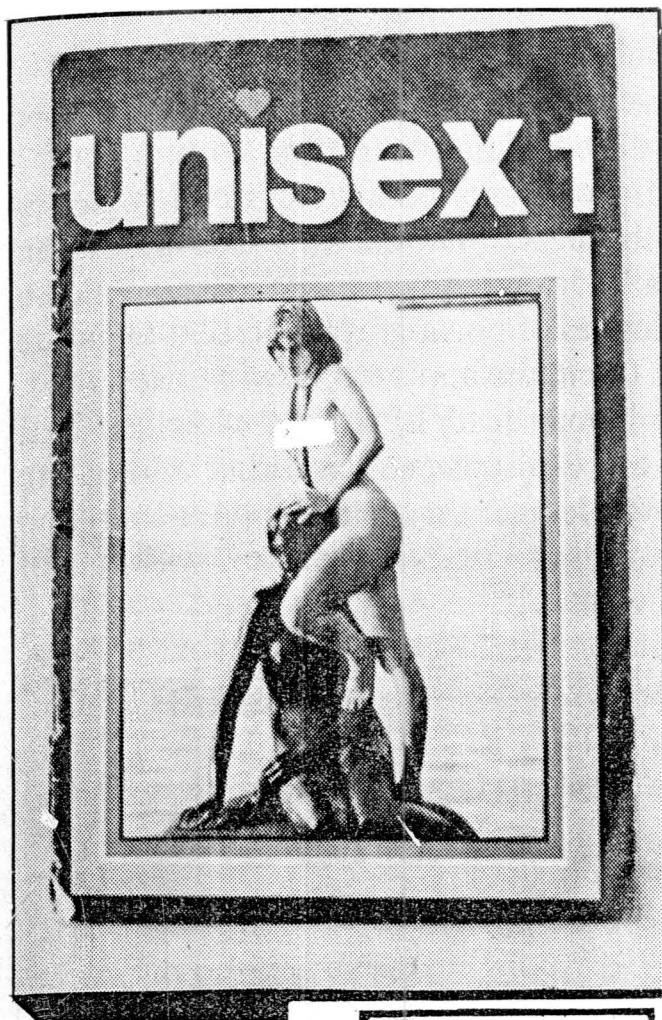
PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is the packaging and presentation of women as sex objects, as objects of male pleasure. It is the depiction of women as the natural possession of men.

Pornography is the biggest 'entertainment' business today. It rakes in US\$4 billion in a single year in the USA which is more than the combined revenue from the movie and music industries.²⁸ It takes the form of male magazines, movies and the live-sex shows. In USA alone, there are more than 165 monthly male magazines bought regularly by 18 million men, which account for nearly half a billion dollars of the yearly profits in the industry and porn films gross more than US\$365 million a year.²⁹ Porn videotapes are now marketing the fastest profit-making attractions, out-selling videotapes of Hollywood films at a rate of three to one.³⁰

All these forms of pornography portray women. In fact, pornography is the packaging and presentation of women as sex objects, as objects of male pleasure. It is the depiction of women as the natural possession of men. This is a most distorted and pernicious representation of women's sexuality because it glorifies male domination and male power. According to Rich Snowdon, co-founder of Men Against Sexist Violence, an American organisation that is fighting sexual violence against women in the media, 'pornography promotes violence against them (women) because they are less powerful than men There is a recurrent theme in men's magazines that women enjoy pain and that the man inflicts pain to remain the master. This is the worst male culture'.³¹

Sadistic themes in the media that portray women as victims, can also be found on record sleeves and advertisements as well. For example, the record album 'Dream Police' by Cheap Trick, featured on the cover, four men with guns and a chain-saw looking dazed after hacking up a female manikin. In another album, 'The Tubes', the cover showed a sexy model with a pained-look as a tube squashes her breasts.³² In one American magazine, the advertisement for subscription showed a gun pointed at a woman's head with the heading, 'subscribe or we shoot'.³³



One of the many porn magazines widely circulated locally.

A billboard advertisement of a film recently shown in cinemas all over the country which depicts sexual violence against women.



(Air-Conditioned) Penang

OPENS TOMORROW
DAILY 4 SHOWS at
1.00-3.30-6.30-9.15pm
No Free List

Somewhere
in the depths
of Space...

A Horrific
Nightmare
is about to
become a
Reality.



Sir Run Run Shaw presents

INSEMINOID

A FAR FROM HUMAN BIRTH!

Robin CLARKE • Jennifer ASHLEY • Stephaine BEACHAM • Judy GEESON

'This glamourised violence against women seen in the media is a form of brainwashing that moulds them (men) into cold power seekers and abusers',³⁴ said Snowden. According to him, men's magazines degrade and vilify women's bodies rather than glorify them as claimed by the publishers.³⁵ Dr Samuel Grange of San Diego University, says that pornography can be detrimental to men. 'The pictures and dialogues of pornography present an image of men who are always on the make and getting what they want. They always perform super-human feats of sex and violence. That tells men they're supposed to be all-powerful and that one way to get power is to be aggressive. Men get the idea they have to live up to this image of someone who's in complete control, with lots of money, fast cars, beautiful women.'³⁶



Newspapers exposing video-porn and porn movies in Malaysia.

Pornography is thus the fantasising of sexual aggression towards women. As Adrienne Rich, the American poet and educator puts it, the message of pornography is: 'This is what you are; this is what I can do to you'.³⁷ According to Dr Samuel Grange, 'These stereotypes of women as a victim and man as an

animal do have an impact on people ... screening pictures of women being abused tends to reinforce the feeling that that's the way it's supposed to be. It's just natural to do it'. He added that reading men's magazines can reinforce the feeling of rage when men cannot measure up to the image of the role models in such magazines. 'When the male doesn't have the power he feels he should have, he may become violent with women and children.' He then went on to give the example of a man, whom most people thought of as a pillar of society, who beat and raped his wife and who later disclosed that he spends one night a week at X-rated films, also read porn magazines, which always portrayed a man in bed or about to go to bed.³⁸



Sex and violence portrayed in comics from Hong Kong which are avidly devoured by our school kids.

It is thus not surprising that many women see pornography as the root of sexual violence, the culmination of which is the rape.³⁹ In the words of Dierdre English, it is 'a bastion of sexism (something men rarely rebel against)'⁴⁰ and 'fully in harmony with any culture in which it flourishes'.⁴¹ Thus, according to Roxainne Claire of *ISIS*, the quarterly publication of the International Women's Movement based in Geneva, 'we can see connections between violence in the media against us and the violence aimed towards us in everyday life, between violence towards us and the propaganda that we are no more than objects.'⁴² Thus, to question pornography is to question male attitudes towards women. That to examine pornography is to realise that it both glorifies the forms that male domination over women takes (even speaking cross-culturally) — rape, wife beating, incest, genital mutilation, enforced prostitution and expresses the underlying value system of those societies in which it is found'.⁴³

In an *Asiaweek* report in 1980 on 'Sex in Asian Moviedom', a South-east Asian police source was quoted as saying, 'We've had a good number of assault and rape cases linked with pornography of one kind or another.'⁴⁴ The report also carried a story of a sex crime committed by a 14 year old schoolboy. He had bound his neighbour's hands (a 10 year old girl), raped her at knifepoint, then slit her throat. The panel of judges who presided at the boy's trial, concluded that he had committed the crime while under the influence of a film called 'Akibat Pergaulan Bebas' (The Effects of Free Love).⁴⁵ Referring to the current sex boom in some Asian countries, this article attributed the surge in screen eroticism to the French production of a film 'Emmanuelle', which took Asia by storm several years ago.⁴⁶ This had unleashed a string of Asian versions of the French original like 'Tokyo Emmanuelle', 'Black Emmanuelle', 'Hongkong Emmanuelle' and 'Yellow Emmanuelle'; and another version from Philippines called 'Emmanuelle Goes East', was also planned.⁴⁷ This will give one an idea, of where our Asian movie makers get their screen ideas from. Not only are such films becoming local box-office hits, they are increasingly made for international release as well.⁴⁸ In Thailand, sex starlets have been known to 'lend their bodies to foreign — especially European — pornographic productions'.⁴⁹

Reissue New Print

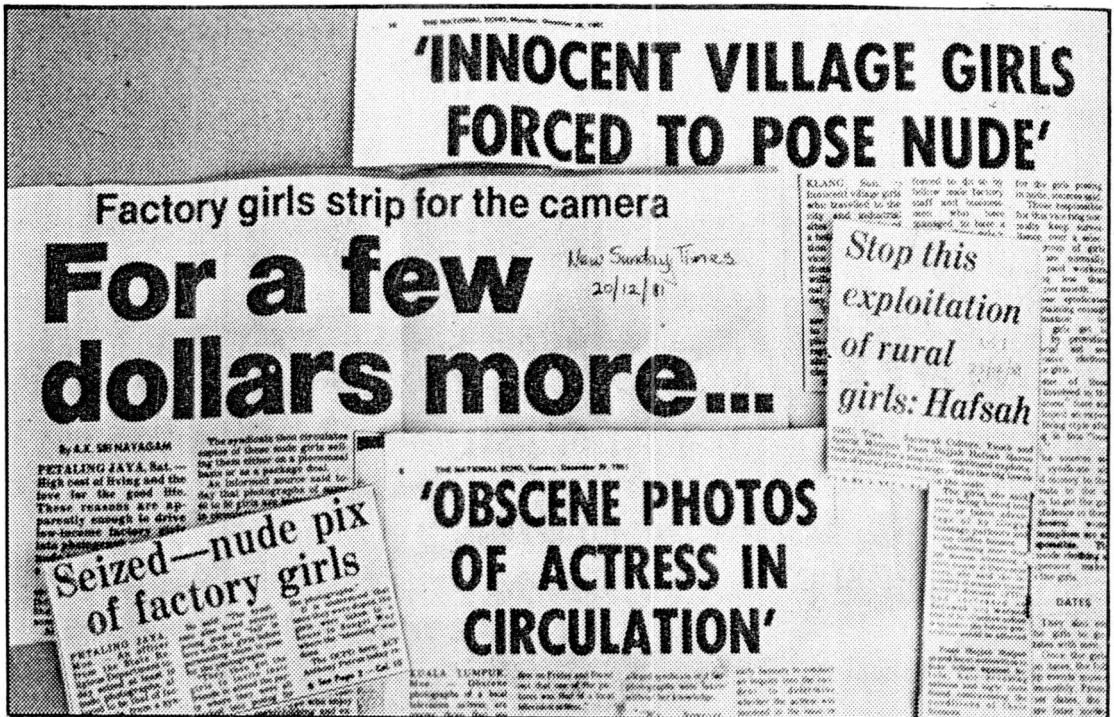
TODAY 5.30 & 9.30



**THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL AND THE
BOX-OFFICES HIT BY HONG KONG
SEX BOMB, HONG KONG "EMMANUELLE"
MISS DEBORAH with B. M'sia Subts.**

*A Hong Kong sex movie (with Bahasa Malaysia subtitles)
shown in our local cinemas.*

Although in Malaysia, censorship of screen sex (though not violence) is strict, this has not prevented the screening of blue films. In recent years, since the mid-70's, videotape-porn has however, overtaken the 8mm blue movies in popularity. The video-porn trade in Malaysia is a multi-million dollar concern. According to Mr Francis Knight of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), 'video duplicating and the pornography business went hand in hand'.⁵⁰ With several original porno videotapes, a syndicate can produce several thousand duplicates. Films, like 'Last Tango in Paris', 'Deep Throat' and 'Emmanuelle', to hard core porn have been duplicated and circulated locally.⁵¹ According to a newspaper probe, the porn videotapes come from all over the world including Denmark, Sweden, Holland, USA, Germany, South Korea, Hong Kong and Thailand.⁵² Video-porn in Malaysia, is



Newspaper reports on local girls 'lending their bodies' to 'porn productions'.

screened on sets in high-class brothels to the most 'respectable' middle-class homes. Porn is now made for home consumption with the arrival of video-porn.

In 1981, a Kuala Lumpur afternoon daily uncovered sex magazines for sale and in circulation among school-children. These included: 'dirty pictures, books, erotic novels and even sex aids'.⁵³ These books are mainly imported from the Scandinavian countries; and Mandarin versions come from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The investigation also found 'a series of erotic Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language) books on open display'. According to them, 'These dealers in smut do not appear to be discriminating in their choice of customers; school-children were served just as enthusiastically. Boys in school-uniforms frequent such shops in broad daylight'.⁵⁴ Earlier in September last year, a newspaper report said that cigarette-sweets, bearing 'obscene photographs' were being sold outside school-compounds.⁵⁵

The above account only goes to show how pervasive the porn culture has become in our society, violating and depraving our young and innocent minds. Sexual license of this nature goes against our cultural values.



Newspaper reports on pornography being circulated among our children in schools.

Pushing pornography to kids has reached a very disturbing level on the cinema and TV screen. This, according to a newspaper report, is cruelly turning America's children 'into mindless, sex-crazed perverts by money-mad T.V. and movie producers who are out to make a fast buck'.⁵⁶ Films, like 'Taxi Driver', 'Pretty Baby', 'Foxes', 'The Blue Lagoon' and 'The Little Darlings', are said to 'encourage children to be sexually adventurous and downright depraved'.⁵⁷ All these films were acted by girls, ranging from 11 to 17 years of age, in which they played child prostitutes and self-destructive young people living in endless sex orgies, drinking and taking drugs. 'The movies portray self-destruction and vile promiscuity as romantic, desirable and grown up.'⁵⁸ Giving an example, 'When a pre-teen sees Jodie Foster and her drugged, sex-crazed friends frolicking with sickening perverted men twice their age, the child will quickly begin to see herself as a sex object also and will act and dress her part'. In the words of Doris Milman, a psychiatrist in New York, 'we are pandering to adult perversity making it legitimate'.⁵⁹



Exploitation of child stars and models who play promiscuous roles in films and sex magazines. Local schoolchildren learn to emulate and identify with them.

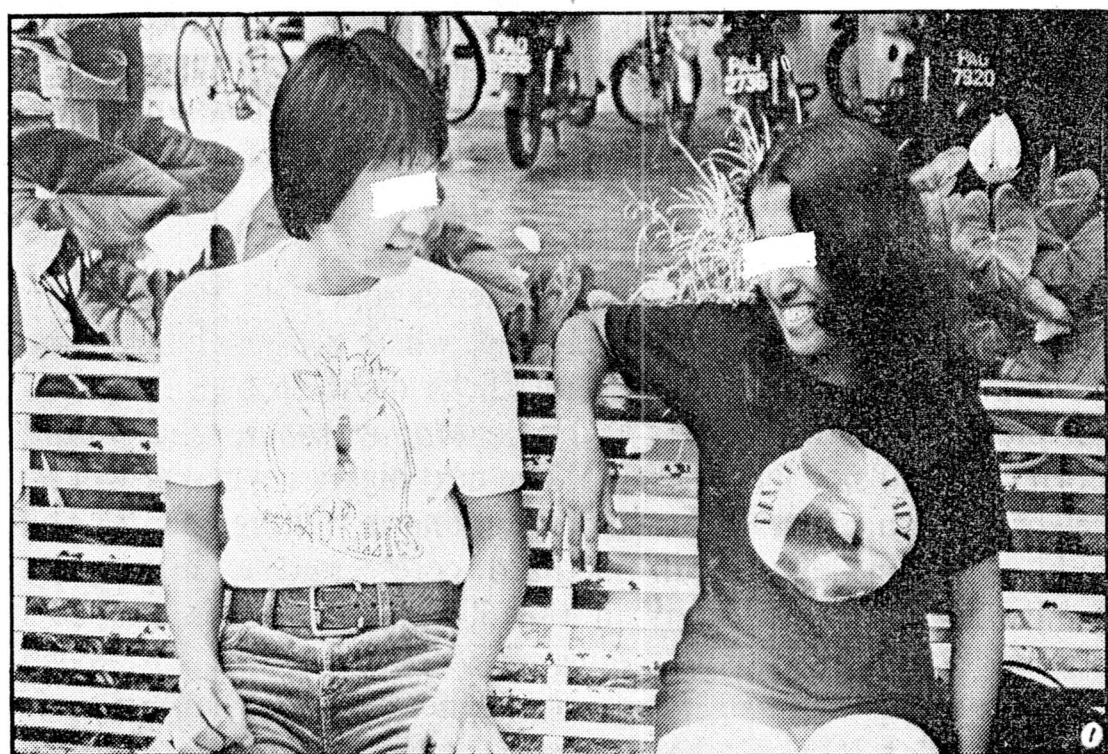


The article also mentioned that the director-producer of 'The Blue Lagoon', which had recently been playing locally to packed cinema halls, had actually admitted that the film was geared especially to impressionable youngsters.⁶⁰ Boasted the co-star Christopher Atkins, who plays Brooke Shield's lover, 'This movie is more sensual than anything you've seen on a screen'.⁶¹ The report also stated that television programmes, in an attempt to grab the biggest share ratings, have been using children in promiscuous roles, resorting to 'some of the most outrages sexual couplings imaginable'.⁶² The article also noted that Charlene Tilton, the teen-actress who plays Lucy Ewing on 'Dallas', was shown being promiscuous with a number of older men in the series.⁶³ According to gynaecologist Corrine Devlin, who has carried out research on sex, 'Have sex and you'll be happy, that's the message in movies, T.V. and advertising' which is 'repeated over and over'.⁶⁴

This same message is being flashed across our TV screens in our homes and in our local cinemas, where school-children are flocking to see child-sexploitation flicks on their own. When a director of a porn-film was asked by *Mother Jones*, what would porn in the 80's be like, he said, 'The next big moneymaker will be celebrity porn. That is the porn everyone is waiting for'.⁶⁵ 'The only direction left is full-tilt hard core', said another porn publisher, 'It was *Playboy* in the 50's, *Penthouse* in the 60's *Hustler* in the 70's; and now *Puritan*, which is a sensational, lavish hard-core magazine, is getting onto the newstands. What's in store for the 80's? It won't be a step backwards; that's for sure'.⁶⁶

Pornography is no longer confined to backlanes and red-light districts, it is no longer shown only to the lewd or perverse male, it has become family entertainment in our sitting-rooms as well. In the words of a New York porn producer, who was explaining its mass popularity, 'Look, we live in a sick society that is totally perverse. Only one thing is pure; all things are divisible by the Almighty Dollar. Especially people. That's why I'm into porn'.⁶⁷ Pornography has become part of the consumer culture that condones, enjoys and even thrives on it. It is, as Roxainne Claire puts it: 'not something that we can close our eyes to and remain unaffected by. As the women from Forum Against Oppression, a

women's organisation in India, state in their newsletter: 'What is the good of protesting (against rape), if at the same time we turn a blind eye to the daily barrage of propaganda against women in so many films, magazines, pornographic advertisements — propaganda which builds up a mass culture and mass psychology which is rapist through and through? So long as such a culture exists, atrocities against women and girls will continue to occur. To fight against the oppression of women must include fighting against this culture'.⁶⁸



T-shirts with nude women – on sale and being used in Malaysia.

SEX TOURISM

Sex tourism is the most dehumanised form of sex and economic exploitation of Asian women. It has its roots in a decaying, western-urban life, where society is so alienated and deculturalised, and where the need to consume has become compulsive and devoid of any real meaning.

In many Asian countries, especially Thailand, South Korea, Philippines, Taiwan and Indonesia, foreign male tourists are flocking in large numbers in search of 'sun, sea and sex'. Sex tourism is the



The marketing of Asian women as flesh for sale reported in the local newspapers.

ugly side of tourism. Hundreds of thousands of women in these countries, forced by socio-economic circumstances, have been sexually exploited working as prostitutes, social escorts, massage parlour girls, sauna-bath attendants, performers in sex shows, dance-hostesses and waitresses in nightclubs and cocktail lounges. International press reports have revealed that 1.5 million Japanese men go on holidays to South-east Asia every year on 'sex tours', organised by tour operators and large corporations. In Manila, there are 2000 prostitutes catering for Japanese tourists alone.⁶⁹ But the 'Haven of Eroticism', must surely be Bangkok, where there are about 100,000 women engaged as prostitutes.⁷⁰ And Japanese male tourists are not the only foreigners who come to Bangkok to look for sex. European travel agencies are cashing in on this lucrative trade as well. Western sex-magazines abound with the tales of exotic sex and travel to the East, for a pittance. Albert Stol, editor of a Dutch magazine, *Onze Wereld*, gives an example of an advertisement about Thailand by a travelling agency, 'Rosie Reizen' (Rosie Travel) in Germany, which reads as follows:

'.... Thailand is a world full of extremes and the possibilities are unlimited. Anything goes in this exotic country. Especially when it comes to girls. Still it appears to be a problem for visitors to Thailand to find the right places where they can indulge in unknown pleasures. It is frustrating to have to ask the hotel receptionist in broken English where you can pick up pretty girls. 'Rosie' (the travel agency) has done something about this. For the first time in history you can book a trip to Thailand with erotic pleasures included in the price.'

'.... Breakfast in the Royal Hotel, rest of the day free. In the coffee-shops there are many girls available. You can take them to your rooms of course After breakfast, possibility to take a private taxi for three hours including the girl of your dreams. Here too the coffee-shop is full of willing girls.'⁷¹



Local women soliciting for clients in a 'red light' area.

In another travel agency, 'Chick's All-in Trips', this was being advertised:

'For those who want more than just bed and breakfast,

we are offering you with this all-in-trip, a carefully planned vacation, varied from day to day.

A trip in which we offer you the opportunity to get acquainted with the other sex, through our organised cocktail parties and visits to exclusive night clubs, tropical beaches, etc....⁷²

According to Stol, 'Neckermann', the German travel agency which brings sex-tourists, is bringing 'Neckelmanns' (the Thai term for tourists brought by the agency) in greater frequency, 'spurred on by advertisements and photos suggesting an erotic paradise'.⁷³ A woman prostitute in Thailand is 'a number, literally in the dozens of massage parlours which Bangkok abounds in'. These girls sit behind a huge one-way window from where a prospective client, can have his pick without them noticing. Each of the girls wears a number on her breast, which corresponds with her experience. The client makes his choice by handing in a number. The numbers are noted in advertisements, complete with discount coupons.⁷⁴ These massage parlours have been described by 'Christoffel' travel agency as: 'And these things can happen between you and the masseuse'.⁷⁵



*Masseuse behind the one-way glass window
waiting to be picked (Time photo).*

This marketing of women as flesh for sale, has reached a global scale with the export of Asian women. Newspapers in Germany have been known to advertise foreign tours and honeymoon for German bachelors: 'For around M\$14,300 it guarantees three weeks of sand, sun and sex and at the end of it all, a slender sweet-natured spouse'.⁷⁶ Various marriage bureaux in Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, West Germany and Holland exist for those who would like to pick out a Thai wife from coloured catalogues in the comfort of their homes.⁷⁷ But very often marriage can mean forced prostitution in Europe for these Thai brides. According to the Thai Embassy in Bonn, 2000 women are imported annually and of these 1000 are working as prostitutes.⁷⁸ This has led to the establishment of a slave market in Frankfurt and in Holland. Dutch papers have also reported Thai women working in Dutch brothels.⁷⁹

Besides the sex-marriage-prostitution trade, many Asian women have been enticed to Europe with the promise of employment and sold to sexual slavery. According to a newspaper report, there are about 1000 go-go girls from Third World countries performing in Switzerland. These girls are held as near slaves by their employers. They are forced to perform nude dancing acts and deprived of all personal rights. The report also quoted a 19 year old Filipino dancer, who had quit her job as a Manila salesgirl after she was offered a job in Zurich for a monthly pay of 2000 to 2500 Swiss francs (US\$2530 to \$3000).⁸⁰

Not only are Asian women the sole victims of this trade in flesh. Increasingly, children are being used as well. In an *Asiaweek* report, it was found that more than a hundred girls under 18 were sold to each of two teahouses in one district in Bangkok. 'These teahouses are built like massage parlours with girls sitting in a large glass box as they await choosing by customers. The difference lies in the service rooms — unlike the massage parlours, that of a teahouse has no bathtub but a small bed and table with a pot for boiling water. Naturally, sex and not tea-sipping is the order of the evening in the 2 x 4 metre cubicle.'⁸¹ Child prostitution is on an increase in many other South-east Asian countries as well. In Indonesia, thousands are made victims of the flesh trade by the age of 10.⁸² In the Philippines, police statistics show that child prostitution is on the increase and now constitutes Manila's latest tourist

attraction; in fact, a guidebook is available in French (and soon in English) on where to find them, how much should they be paid, and how to approach them.⁸³



Increasingly, sex tourism is helping to create a generation of exploited, dehumanised, sexual perverts among the children of South-east Asia.

Although sex tourism in Malaysia is nowhere near the scale of Bangkok or Manila, it also does exist. In Europe, Malaysia was once described as a sex haven by a tour agency.

A newspaper article also reported that Japanese male tourists in Malaysia are attracted more to 'those activities that go on behind closed doors' than in the traditional tourist attractions such as the National Monument or Batu Caves. The report also quoted a receptionist at a leading Kuala Lumpur hotel as saying: 'After checking into their rooms, the first thing they will ask for is a map of the city. You are then asked to circle out where the girlie bars, massage parlours and red light districts are'.⁸⁴

D-Amour

Thrilling! Exciting! Enticing!

Words that describe the exotic repertoire of songs and dances from this amazing duo-D-Amour!



GRAND OPENING
6th JANUARY

"UNISEX"

The Fabulous

Exotic and enticing. The fabulous "Unisex" brings you a variety of dances, a combination of the best of both worlds, the East and West.



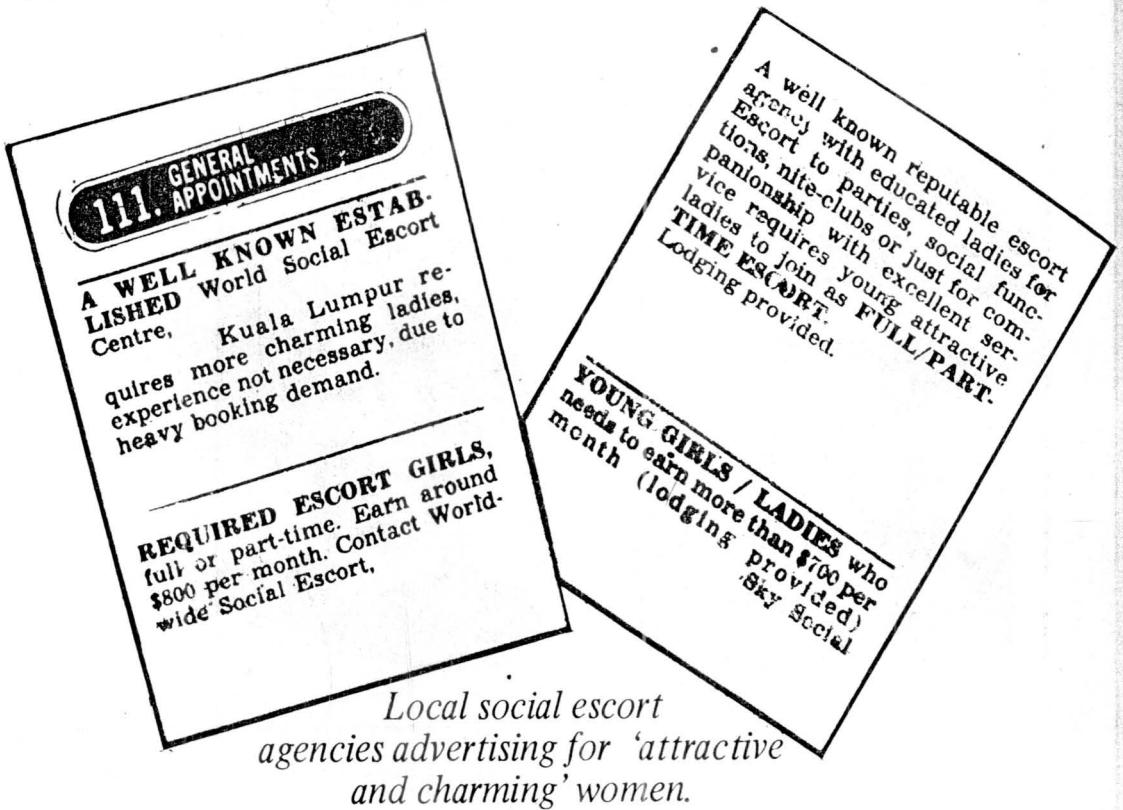
Advertisements of sexy floor shows performed in local nightclubs. They are an attraction to tourists and Malaysians alike.



Hong Kong sexy film star will be performing now. Beauties from Thailand, Philippines are in the show too.

Show Time: 7.30p.m.
9.30p.m.
11.30p.m.

On a separate occasion in December 1980, a CAP staff was told by a guest in one of the beach hotels in Penang (owned by an international chain), that the management had put up notices in all the guest-rooms, warning Japanese tourists not to bring 'girls' into their rooms.

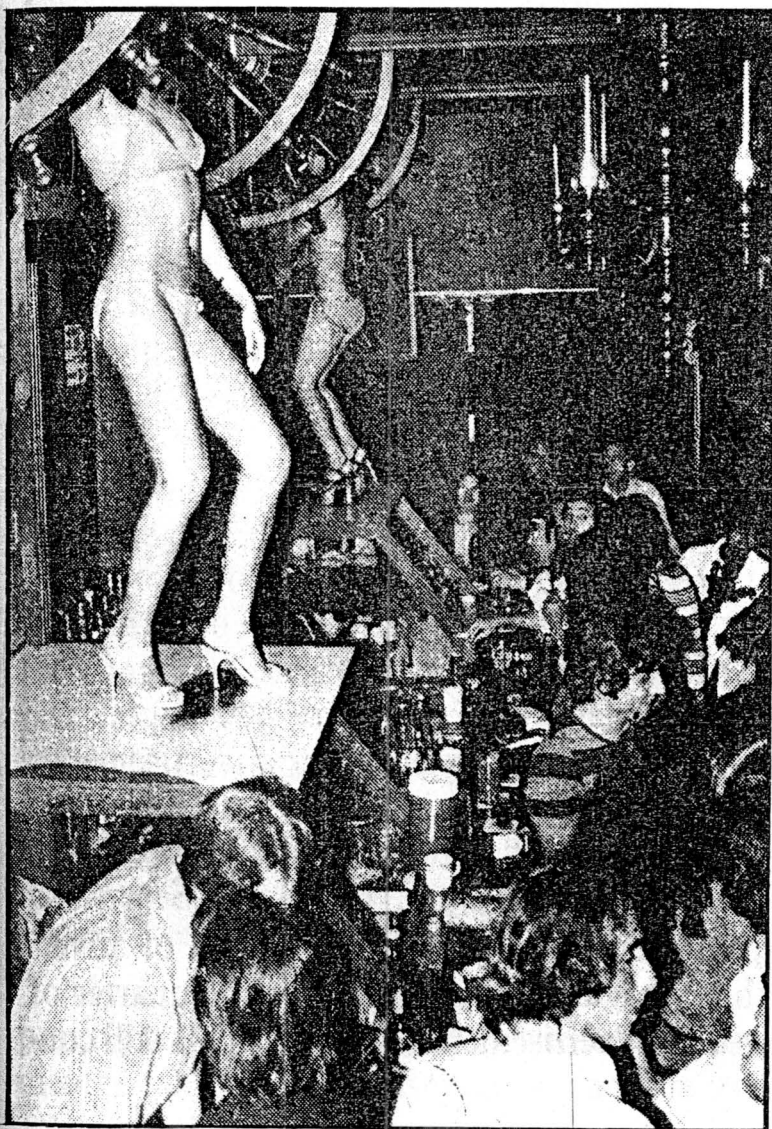


This 'sex-haven' image was also revealed in a CAP investigation in 1980.⁸⁵ In fact, a tourist interviewed by CAP said that, 'in his experience, Penang comes second only to Bangkok in the easy availability of girls'.⁸⁶ This can also be seen from the numerous advertisements put up in our local newspapers by social escort agencies, advertising for social escorts and advertisements inserted by European, American and Australian men, inviting our local girls to apply to them for marriage or friendship possibilities.

Sex tourism is the most dehumanised form of sex and economic exploitation of Asian women. It has its roots in a decaying, western-urban life, where society is so alienated and deculturalised, and where the need to consume has become compulsive and devoid of any real meaning. Hence, new stimulations, distractions and excitement have to be sought to give one continued satisfaction and what can be better than the fulfilment of sexual

fantasies. This barren existence is best typified by this young carpenter from Amsterdam, who returns yearly to Bangkok on the sex tour: 'It's really unbelievable, all the gorgeous dames here. This is the third year I've come here and I swear that in all these times I haven't seen anything else except this bar. They drive you wild and for a few guilders you can pick the most beautiful of the beauties. This is something else, at least, than lying on your back in Spain to get a little tan. You're the king here and all for a few rotten pennies'.⁸⁷ This is also how much Asian women are worth.

It is the consumer culture and crass commercialism, where competition and the drive for profits override all other considerations, that human beings, particularly women have been reduced to mere commodities of flesh to be sold, exchanged and manipulated. Through sex tourism, the industrialised developed countries export their sexual alienation and perversion to the Third World.



*A 'tourist bar'
in Bangkok
(Asiaweek photo).*

WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

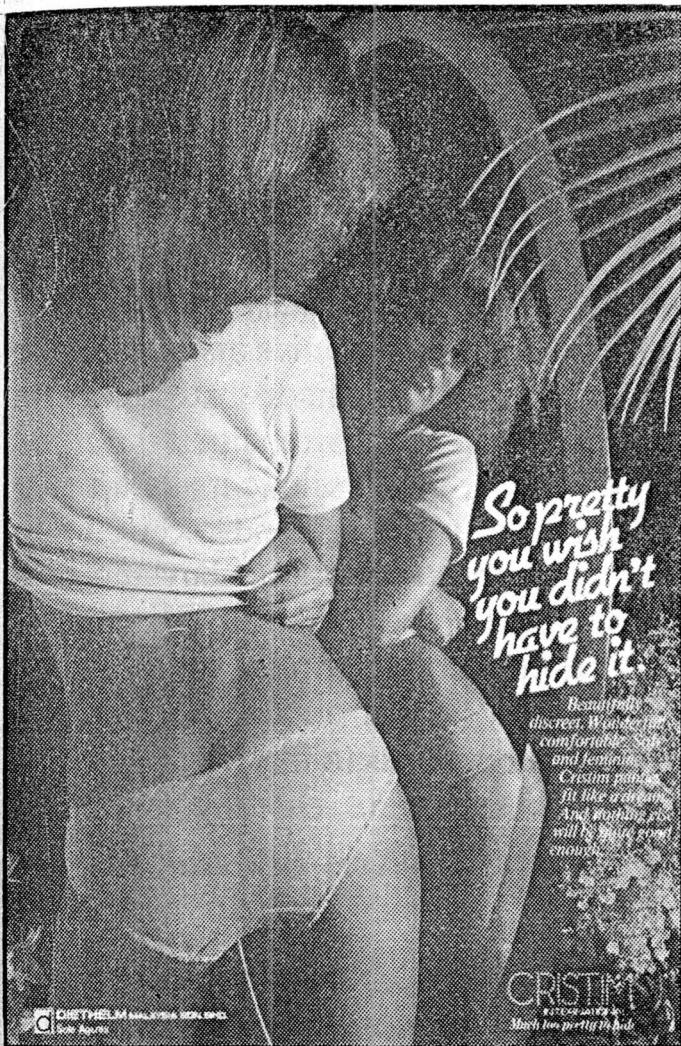
Women flipping through these pages cannot but feel that they have to do what the articles tell them These magazines are selling us a view of what we should be and what we can do to achieve this.

In the first place, why are there special magazines for women and none for men (except the girlies ones)? Why do we need women's magazines? Are they really 'for women'? How are women defined in these magazines? How are these magazines packaged? The first hint comes from the cover itself. Usually they are very colourful, glossy and artistic in design. They always feature a woman. She is always beautiful, glamorous or famous. Sometimes she has a winning smile, other times she has the soft-misty look, all the time she looks desirable. All these women, that front the covers of these magazines, represent the 'ideal woman' — the woman, whose looks, figure, clothes and lifestyle, personifies the 'perfect woman' of male fantasy. In other words, these magazines are selling us a view of what we should be and what we can do to achieve this.

Going through these magazines, one is struck by the amount of glossy advertisements. For example, out of the 148 pages of the September 1981 issue of *Her World*, 81 pages are devoted to advertisements. This is 54 per cent or more than half of the magazine. In the September 1981 issue of *Female*, advertisements amounted to more than one third (34 per cent) of the total of 144 pages. The Malay language women's magazines carried fewer advertisements: May 1981 issue of *Keluarga* which had 94 pages, carried 19 pages of advertisements, May 1981 issue of *Jelita*, which had 96 pages, carried 21 pages of advertisements. However, *Wanita* of September 1981 which had 104 pages had 36 pages or 35 per cent of advertisements. Although these magazines had less than one quarter of its total contents devoted to advertisements, the amount is still con-

siderable. What do these advertisements sell?

These advertisements are for perfumes, deodorants, cosmetics, soaps, toothpastes, brassieres, panties, sanitary towels and tampons, household appliances, liquid cleaners, detergents, cutlery, crockery, mattresses, food spices, baby foods, and milk products for the family. These are all geared to making her fulfil the role of the perfect woman, the perfect wife and the homemaker. Apart from this, the women in them are usually portrayed as seductive sex objects. In a newspaper interview with some men on why they read women's magazines, one of them replied, 'What it boils down to is sex'. He went on to explain the pictures: 'Yeah, you know the ones advertising bras and underwear and things for dames to apply to various parts of their anatomy'.⁸⁸



An advertisement for underwear in a local female magazine portraying the female as a seductive sex object and exhorting women to look beautiful and desiring.

Even the household appliances in the advertisements are appealing to her need to look beautiful. For instance, the advertisement on Moulinex household gadgets in *Her World* June 1981,

shows a beautiful pair of eyes in the background and a lovely face partially covered by the household appliances. On top of the picture reads: 'Why most French women look so good? Moulinex make their housework so simple. Give them so much more time for themselves'.

And the advertisements are placed so that they complement the articles in the magazine. For example, in June 1981 of *Her World*, a feature on ladies casual-wear is juxtaposed with an advertisement for leather bags, wallets, belts, scarfs and sunglasses by Balenciaga of Paris, which supposedly would go well with the sporty fashions. In another article featuring tea-time recipes, in the same issue, the next page exhorts one to eat **Nestle** biscuits.

The main theme running through these magazines is 'beauty' and attraction, with the emphasis being heavily placed on women's fashion and beauty care. Most of the articles on beauty-care give tips on how to remain beautiful, (the magazine version of course) what to use for the skin and on the eyes and how to care for them. Women flipping through these pages, with the message directed at them, cannot but feel that they have to do what the articles tell them, if they are to become beautiful and attractive and desired. In fact, they are made to feel ugly, ashamed and inadequate if they do not. So they read and follow the instructions religiously and, of course, buy the lotions, creams, conditioners and make-up that have to go with it. Women are thus browbeaten and deceived into keeping up with this fashion and in the process, they buy and consume, further reinforcing the images they see in the advertisements. But good looks and good figures remain incomplete without good clothes to go with them. A random survey of some of the women's magazines showed the following with regards to fashions:

Her World, September 1981 : 10 pages of fashions, with foreign models comprising the majority.

Female, September 1981 : 9 pages (from Dior).

- SHE*, September 1981 : 17 pages, with 14 devoted to Paris fashions.
- Jelita*, May 1981 : 6 pages using local models.
- Wanita*, September 1981 : 6 pages, which included hair styling.
- Keluarga*, May 1981 : 4 pages of western fashions.

The fashions are aimed at the women, so that they will try to copy and look as glamorous and saleable, as the models who wear them. Women must tailor their clothing, body and behaviour such that they can become desirable, distracting and passive objects, the kind that men desire and dream of. The main thing that one notices about the women in these fashions are their poses. They are obviously showing off their clothes and themselves, for one thing. When a male model is pictured with a female, what strikes us is the postures of these women — they are always submissive, seductive and clinging (to the men's legs or shoulders). And the men are always in a higher, more dominant position, as in page 72 of *Her World* June 1981, where the woman is posing, sitting at his feet. Most of these fashions are designed by famous European fashion-houses run by men. They are fashions by men, who want to see their women beautiful, well-dressed and sophisticated. Women's fashion is 'male-oriented'. 'The good looks and good grooming of a wife are as important an asset to a husband, as is her good cooking.'⁸⁹ So our women try hard to emulate the Caucasian models and the clothes they represent.

But how many of us can really afford these clothes? How real are they for the majority of the readers? It remains a mere illusion, a relief for most housewives from their daily drudgery. And it is precisely the ability of these magazines to offer vicarious enjoyment that enable housewives to forget their reality, that they are so popular. Thus, we can also find interviews and features about VIPs and their wives, what parties they are attending, where they take their European holidays and what local stars and starlets are up to. For example, reading about Prince Charles' Wedding (*Wanita*,

September 1981), Lady Diana's Haircut (*Female*, September 1981), Princess Margaret and the Queen (*Jelita*, May 1981), The Secrets of John Lennon by his Wife (*Keluarga*, May 1981), Hollywood Stars and their Love Life (*SHE*, September 1981), Will of Peter Sellers (*Keluarga*, 1981), lifts them from their problems and household confinement, to something they can dream about and seek temporary escape and refuge in. The lives and the 'worlds' of these famous people are so remote and so glamorous from their own. It is stories like these that become food for the fantasies of a housewife.

Women's magazines are incomplete without the smocking patterns, recipes and the way-to-better-cooking tips. These range from sumptuous dinners, mouth-watering desserts and sweets to cakes fit for royalty. These glossy and spectacular dishes beckon to the imagination, motivating women to channel their resources and skills towards converting the photographed food into the real thing.

Thus, women's magazines promote the conventional notion that a successful woman is one who manages to look attractive, sew



Pages from our women magazines highlighting beauty, fashion, exciting cooking and good housekeeping.

nice clothes and prepare new and mouth-watering dishes and cakes. Appearances are stressed — how to look and **act** glamorously, rather than how to be a good or considerate person who cares for others. Exotic rather than nutritious food is promoted. Fashionable rather than useful things are made to be desirable. There is an absence in these magazines of serious articles creating an awareness among women of the principles of proper nutrition, good health and human values. Ironically, the image projected of the sexy female stereotype may well have caused stress and mental complexes in more than a few women who try but fail to live up to this image. Studies in the west have shown that girls who try to fashion themselves after the attractive female stereotype have been known to suffer from 'anorexia nervosa' (a serious nervous condition in which the patient loses her appetite and systematically takes only little food, so that she becomes greatly wasted away, sometimes leading to death).⁹⁰

The other popular feature in the women's magazines is the 'horoscope'. We devour this column every month to find out our fate. What is in store for us, what is written in our stars? Women have the tendency to explain their misfortunes and problems by their horoscope. They begin to accept their lives, problems, dissatisfactions and misery as pre-ordained. They become fatalistic.

Women are also made responsible for the right, proper and harmonious relationship with men. These can be seen from the questions women are made to answer on dating, dealing with and treating husbands, with a rating for the scores (*Female*, September 1981); or the quizzes on personality (*SHE*, September 1981); or how good a lover are you (*Her World*, September 1981). These questions and quizzes, are used to make women behave in a correctly feminine way, acceptable to the male. Women are made to negate their impulses, likes and dislikes. Women are made to live up to the male definition of beauty and sexuality. They are made to feel selfish, unwifely and unfeminine if they do not.

These then are the contents of women's magazines. These are the things that are supposed to cater to our needs. The need to look decorative and desirable, the need to please, the need to be self-sacrificing and the need to amuse ourselves and to deny the drudgery and misery of housework. This then is what the

'magazines for women' is all about. In a male conversation, it was quoted that 'if you **tried** to base your conclusions purely on them (magazines) you'd end up thinking women were only concerned with trying out new recipes; sewing tablecloths; growing hyacinths; having it on their own terms and achieving infinite orgasms'.⁹¹ This eloquently sums up what female magazines are, even through the eyes of men. What is the effect of these magazines and their message on most women?

'When the mass media tells us it is our pleasure and privilege to act all the roles of earner, wife and mistress to husband, cook, sweeper, cleaner, interior decorator, surrogate teacher and fond mother, hostess, entertainer and shoulder for everyone to weep on, we begin to feel there is something wrong with us if we cannot feel any pleasure in these roles.'⁹²

But are these magazines what we really need? Are these the things that are supposed to, according to the men who read them, make us tick? More than anything these magazines stunt women's intellect. The roles described above do nothing to cater to and fulfil her intellectual needs. Most of all, they do not make her a thinking individual. This can be seen from the superficiality of these magazines, where the articles are primarily for 'light reading' and to entertain. This does not encourage one to develop one's power of concentration to think for oneself. This emphasis on romantic short stories, fashion and beauty care reduces women, to unthinking, uncritical human beings, who never analyse whatever they read, who actually lose this ability over a period of time, when the mind is only fed with women's magazines. Current events and issues are hardly covered. The impression is that, women are not interested in such matters. The assumption is that, the present level in the contents, is good enough for her intellectual understanding. Even if they do focus on the women who have made it intellectually, the prime focus would be on her role as a wife, mother or daughter, roles in which women are made to identify with and relate to. Women everywhere have been conditioned to accept the roles, views and values that the magazines have defined for them. It is no coincidence that female magazine are the same the world over. It is the consumer culture that makes women the prime target of manipulation, that keeps women distinct and separate and exploited.

WOMEN IN NOVELS

**The stereotyped portrayal of submissiveness,
the fairytale depiction of romance,
love and sexuality deny women as individuals
who are intelligent, self-reliant,
possessing strength of character and
capable of genuine warmth and love.**

Each generation has its paperback romance, which is exchanged and passed around between friends, classmates and mothers. For over seventy years, thousands of women the world over have lived in the dream-world of the romantic novel, popularly called Mills and Boon (M & B). Today, there are 1500 of these novels in the market, with 80,000 to 120,000 copies of each of these titles being sold.⁹³ Their world-wide popularity has seen translations into several languages, including Spanish, French, Dutch, German, Tagalog and Bahasa Indonesia.⁹⁴

In Malaysia, M & B publishes about 15 titles every month, of which eight may make it to the best-seller list. This indicates that M & B has a very large following locally, in fact, even capturing 'a substantial corner in the romance-market'. According to a local survey in a female magazine, so popular are these magazines, that a local publisher is even embarking on translating several M & B titles to Bahasa Malaysia.⁹⁵ This can be seen from the popularity of the Bahasa Indonesia version at the moment.

Why are M & B paperbacks so popular? What kinds of stories do they sell? More important, how do they portray women in these novels? According to Barbara Cartland, one of the best-sellers of romantic fiction with over 300 books to her name, 'All my heroines are good, pure and very very womanly, tender and sweet; all my heroes are sporting and very very dominating, but honourable because that is what a woman wants'.⁹⁶ In fact, the women in her novels are always young (18 or 19 years of age usually), beautiful and non-aggressive, almost passive. Even when they are created as strong characters with a mind of their own, they always succumb to the will and power of the men in the end and live happily ever after. In fact, the same theme runs with 'clockwork regularity' in all the stories. 'Romance storylines are predictable', says a local



**Heir to a fortune... but only if
she stays married to a man she detests.**



Elizabeth married Dugald by the terms of Dugald's grandfather. While married they would inherit considerable property — if not — there would be nothing. What was the solution? Read *Meeting at Midnight* and see for yourself.

No man of her own

There was no man in Dominique's life for she was going to become a nun — and live for others. But why did she find Candice's brother-in-law Precidio so disturbing?

Duelling fire

Alone in the world after father's death, Emma was glad to accept Aunt Harriet's invitation to become her companion. Soon there were problems — the enigmatic Jude. Who was he?

Apple Island

Paula accompanies her friend Rosalind to Tasmania where they are met by Dr Chris Deane. Having been jilted recently, does Paula really want this handsome Australian to know how much he means to her?

Dance of the snake

Dr Jessica wanted a challenge and took a small town job in Northern Transvaal. She got rather more than she bargained for in the cynical Dr Dane Trafford. Jessica could do nothing right, so it hurt when she realised she was falling in love with him.

The new pupil midwife

The moment pupil-midwife Sally Ashford meets Matthew Tregonna, sparks fly. She thinks him supercilious, arrogant and rapidly loses her sunny sense of humour. So, how did she fall in love with him when she didn't even like him?

Sight of a stranger

Blinded in an accident, then deserted by her fiancé Rick who caused it, Shannon felt that life had ended. Then Blaise whirled into her life, ordered her to pull herself together and stop wallowing in self-pity. It worked — then Rick renewed his interest in her.

Home to morning star

With a shock, Miranda learnt that her mother's death had left her penniless. For years her cousin Blake Seymour had been paying the bills. Now she would have to go to Blake's outback home.

How could she bear to be so near

this overpowering man?

Price **\$3.95**
at your Bookseller now.

Mills & Boon

TIMES DISTRIBUTORS
Singapore: 1 New Industrial Road, Singapore 1953
Kuala Lumpur: 87 Jin Mega Marudung, Kompleks Baidar,
5th mile Klang Road, Kuala Lumpur
• * 140 Penang Plaza (1st Flr) 126 Burma Road, Penang



Times

*Paperback romances
aimed at adolescent
girls in a newspaper
advertisement.*

*These novels pro-
vide the first in-
delible lessons
about love and
romance and very
often become the
only reading that
young girls thrive
upon.*

survey, 'formula fiction at its best — girl meets boy, they hate each other on sight, after a series of tormenting emotional strains, she finally realises how hopelessly in love she is with him while he maintains a rather 'standoffish' attitude. It is only in the final pages that they realise that their feelings are mutual'.⁹⁷

The women in these stories are always either poor or having to make a living. They are either typists, secretaries, nurses, teachers (the lowest rung of professionals), or companions to old, rich widows, air-hostesses and the like — occupations which are extensions of the traditional female-roles namely, houseworker, maternal and childcare, hostess, cleaners and houseminders. The

heroines may be orphans or women with no family ties. The impression is that she is all alone, vulnerable, in need of protection and love. The men are either very rich, in positions of authority or high-born aristocrats. If he has a career, he will always be socially more superior to her and more powerful. He is either the doctor, (she the nurse) or brilliant industrialist (she the secretary). According to the local survey, 'Heroes are often portrayed as cynical, cold and bitter with devastating good looks, fine stature, sometimes arrogant, very masculine and always with a cool glint in their eyes. They are usually raven haired, dark-complexioned or ruddily-tanned, steel-grey or pewter eyed and have unusual but macho names, like Jake Seton, Knight Ramsey, Justin Garon, Vargen Gilev, Blaise Thorran, Bryden Kane, Breck Iallon, while the heroines have classical features, dewy enchanting eyes, generous lips, spun-gold or chestnut haired, slender, always inexperienced, exquisitely beautiful and with characters to match'.⁹⁸ In fact, she is always the personification of all the feminine virtues, loyal, self-sacrificing, the long-suffering, martyred and misunderstood saint which all women should live to become. Their matching characters can be seen from his will to dominate and her desire to submit to him. Thus, he may be openly having an affair with another woman, while she strongly defends and protects her virginity, eventually to succumb to his dominating passion.

Love triangles are also part of the romance recipe. The third person, the villain of the piece, is invariably a female. A vain, brazen slut. Always older and experienced with men, sexy, glamorous and ruthless in getting what she wants. She has sophisticated names like Gloria, Evonne, Vanessa or Valerie.⁹⁹ She exemplifies the anti-mother, anti-wife image. She cannot stand children, servants and anything that smacks of wifely duties and responsibilities. In fact, she is selfish, self-centred, spoilt and possessive. She cheapens herself by running after men or throwing herself at their feet. She is the antithesis of the good, submissive, passive, helpless, self-sacrificing woman — the epitome of femininity. Women are thus either virtuous and maternal, or cheap and whorelike. There can be no in-betweens.¹⁰⁰

What is the effect of such stories on women?

It creates stereotype models, which women tend to identify with, thus reinforcing these images of women. Thus, women must always be pure and chaste; while men can maintain double-standards womanising. And no matter how much a woman values her independence, she must give it up because ultimately the man is the lord and master and she, as the loving, faithful wife, must obey and serve. In fact, these stories feed the fantasies of our young, adolescent school-girls. For most of them, their first 'brush' with romance and love are from these paperback novels. These novels are full of sexual-flights of fancy. For example, the hero and the heroine may never talk much to each other, but somehow they are 'attracted' to each other, sexually of course. Sex and love mean the same thing in these novels. In fact, according to one, who has done a critique of these novels, 'sex is alluded to and described in such euphemisms': 'His mouth sought hers and it seemed to her as if the whole world was swept away from them and they stood alone above the clouds in the glory of the sunshine which had something divine about it.' Sexuality is both physical and romantic beauty like 'she had a subtle quality, a smouldering fire somewhere', or 'for an instant he had glimpsed a fire burning behind the screen — the sensuality of her budding womanhood in the lovely long line of her throat and small curving breasts', or even more poetic, 'Just for a moment their mouths touched: the petal of a flower against the petal of a flower'. These lovers tremble deliciously or 'quiver with an ecstasy like wine in their veins'.¹⁰¹ Young girls reading these descriptions are sold a view, that the world of romance and sex is so beautiful, so pure and innocent, the perfect fairy-tale.

In keeping with the times, these romances have become bolder. For example, in a recent advertisement entitled, 'Are you ready for love?', with a picture of a girl in the arms of a man, the new romances were described as 'stories of love and passion of seduction and elopement'.¹⁰² Some of the titles described included:

Pamela's Passion — 'From a life of poverty and boredom, Pamela Marston is plunged into a whirl of glamour, adventure and intrigue in Paris and London.'

Beloved Capture — 'Seranne Hussey, trapped between the jealous passions of the 2 brothers, one her true love, the other her

husband.... only to be offered as a courtesan to the highest bidder.'

Fallen Woman — 'From a slum girl enmeshed in poverty and vice, Jane Mac Gregor defied all the conventions by marrying Gerard, Lord Mac Comleigh to become the star of high society.'

A Maid Called Wanton — 'Cruelly treated by her husband, Wanton realised her carefree life was over, and she waited with both dread and longing to meet again the dark gypsy....'

Love Song — 'Alyce was sixteen when she married Hubert, Lord Ilemy and learned that married bliss meant a brutal attack by a husband who only wanted to beget heirs....'

Are you ready for Love?



If you are, you're ready for *Mirrored Images*. A new series of novels, stories, and plays, each a masterpiece of romance, passion, and love. Stories of love and passion, of seduction and of desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire.

Don't miss these sensational *Mirrored Images* titles!



Pamela's Passion
A new series of novels, stories, and plays, each a masterpiece of romance, passion, and love. Stories of love and passion, of seduction and of desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire.



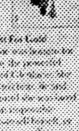
Beloved Captive
A new series of novels, stories, and plays, each a masterpiece of romance, passion, and love. Stories of love and passion, of seduction and of desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire.



Fallen Woman
A new series of novels, stories, and plays, each a masterpiece of romance, passion, and love. Stories of love and passion, of seduction and of desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire.



A Maid Called Wanton
A new series of novels, stories, and plays, each a masterpiece of romance, passion, and love. Stories of love and passion, of seduction and of desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire.



Love Song
A new series of novels, stories, and plays, each a masterpiece of romance, passion, and love. Stories of love and passion, of seduction and of desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire, of the heart's desire.

Distributed by



Distributors Sdn Bhd

100, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Singapore 259500

Available now at leading book stores. Only \$1.95 per copy.

The love and passion in story books can be the real thing in life too — this advertisement seems to say.

Little girls growing up with these paperback fantasies, learn to believe that this can be the real thing in life. They are brain-washed into expecting it and making it happen, if they become like those good, submissive and martyred heroines in these stories. They are drugged from an early age to adopt such role-models as their own. Not surprisingly, these novels continue to be read by the same following, when they become middle-aged married housewives.

More than anything, these flights of fantasy act as an escape valve for these bored, overworked housewives. The happy, idyllic endings provide an escape for most of them, who can thus pretend and dream that marriage means life happy ever-after, instead of the daily drudgery and mundane existence of domestic confinement. These novels act as an opiate, which dulls them into accepting their present lot and live with it. She (the housewife) comes to believe that her life and problems (unlike the eternal 'marriage is honeymoon' in the novels) can never be solved or changed for the better, and she will have to bear with them. She might as well learn to live with them. Reading these novels become the only happy relief (from the daily stress and strain) they look forward to in their lives. That is why, 'romance novels will maintain their own readership', says Johnny Ong, a romance paperback distributor. 'You will find some very faithful followers who start as young as 13 and continue devouring them till middle-age'.¹⁰³ Romance never dies, it retains an eternal quality with women.

And the writers and publishers who produce this 'food' in paperback reap millions of dollars of profits from addicted women readers.

The stereotyped portrayal of submissiveness and the unrealistic depiction of romance, love and sexuality in these novels deny the existence and potential of women as individuals who are intelligent, self-reliant and possessing strength of character as well as capable of genuine warmth and love.

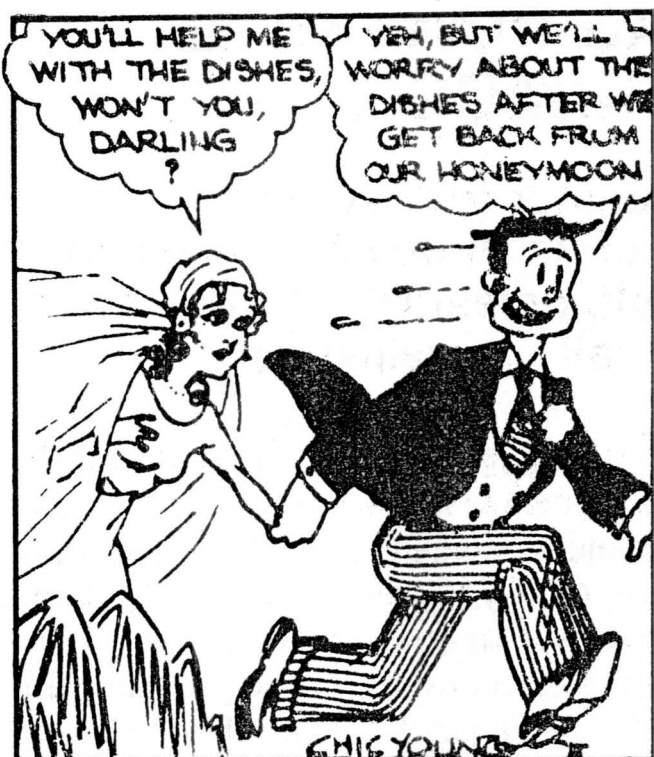
WOMEN AS PORTRAYED IN HUMOUR

It is in jokes and humour that we realise what men actually think of us. Humour is meant to humiliate, insult, defeat where rational arguments fail against us.

There has been many a truth said in jest. Nothing can be nearer the truth than the humour about women in magazines and comic strips in our dailies. Women are the oldest laughing stock in history. They have been described in jokes as dumb, frivolous creatures, husband bullies, squanderers, incessant naggers or insatiable nymphomaniacs. Let us take some cartoons which are popular with local readers, like 'Blondie', 'Gambols' and 'Bringing Up Father'.¹⁰⁴

Blondie is a scatterbrain and can only comprehend and do simple things like cooking and gossiping on the phone. She leaves the complicated affairs to her husband, such as fixing-up and repairing things in the house, and taking care of the bills. If she tries adding up the accounts, they would just never balance. She is silly and fickle. At the shoe store, she tries on so many pairs of shoes because she cannot make up her mind about any one of them. The whole floor is strewn with shoes. The attendant is obviously very exasperated.

Finally, she chooses a pair that fits comfortably and which she likes very much. The salesgirl is so relieved. But it turns out to be her very own pair of shoes. Is that not silly? And 'just like a woman' to be so! And 'Just like a woman, she loves to go shopping — it is an integral part of her life and being — buying things she does not need, always flocking to "sales" and "aftersale sales" and gullible enough to be taken in by "attractive offers".' How disorganised she is, can be seen from the things in her handbag — umbrella, torchlight, address and notebook, pens, purse, scissors, penknife, safety-pins, plasters, envelopes, tissue paper, handkerchief, headache-pills, comb and her make-up kit — everything except the missing car keys. Women are thought of in the most inferior and intellectually degrading terms.



A frame from Blondie cartoon which first appeared in 1933. The image of Blondie, the cute frivolous woman with the mind of a sieve has been perpetuated for 49 years.

It is in jokes and humour, that we realise what men actually think of the housewife, and mother, so glorified in romance and the advertising media.

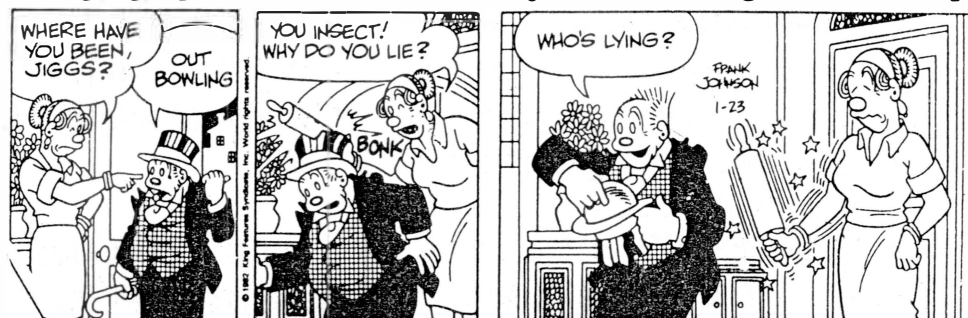
In the 'Gambols', George the husband is a meek and harmless man. He earns the bread and constantly worries about the bills and IOUs, while Gaye the wife has no compunction about spending the money. She goes from department to department in her shopping while 'poor' George has to pay for the things and carry them to the car.

How true are the images that portray women as spendthrifts, when in real life they are the ones who have to stint and save, to keep the house running on the meagre amount that is doled out to them? It is women who always do without the luxuries, foregoing whatever necessities for themselves so that the children can have them; while the men cannot do without their cigarettes, their drinking and gambling. He comes home from work and expects dinner to be ready and his satisfaction is her reward for all the shopping, cleaning, washing, cooking, sweeping and polishing. She is not expected to do anything more, except try out new recipes, keep herself pretty, buy new dresses, watch her weight, and keep in touch with the latest gossip.

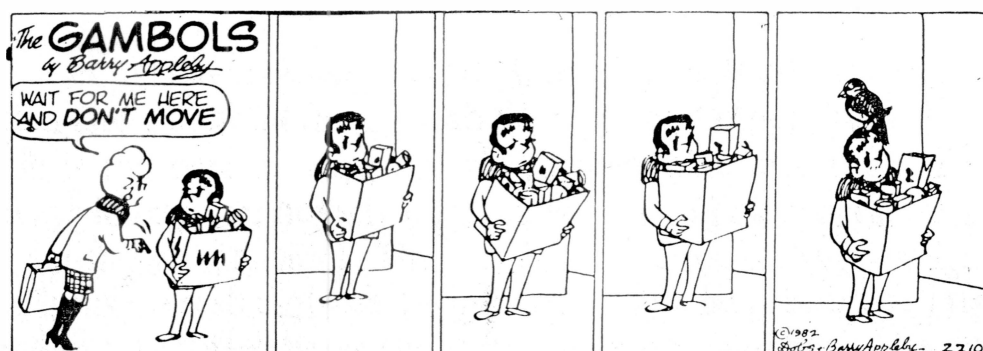
Many of these jokes show her as the bully and the tyrant. For example, Mrs Jiggs in 'Bringing up Father', is the head of the household. She orders her husband about and throws rolling-pins at him when he makes a blunder. Her pet dog means more to her than any human being. She is fierce and a loudmouth. She calls him 'insect', 'stupid' and blames him for her discomforts and frustrations. She can also use her womanly rules to take advantage of him, like stealing his wallet to buy a new mink coat, jewellery, or redecorating the house in order to vie with her circle of snobbish friends. She spends her time in dressing up, shopping, playing the piano or bridge, walking her pedigree dog and attending operas — a very expensive and ostentatious lifestyle complete with butlers, and a large house. She loves being invited to parties of distinguished friends, seen in their company and having her name mentioned alongside theirs. Snobbery, status and wealth are the only things that women marry for.

Bringing Up Father

By Bill Kavanagh & Hal Camp



A common feature of the series is to show what a loathsome tyrant and husband-bully the wife of Jiggs is.



George the meek and mild husband who is always at the wife's back and call. How true is this in real life?

We also have our local brand of jokes which view women in a similar fashion and as a peculiar specie of humanity.¹⁰⁵

There are of course the sexual jokes, that keep reminding us that we are nothing but mere bodies for the pleasure of men, and the 'dirtier' brand of jokes which are reserved only in the company of men. 'Obscenities in all languages are a means of verbally raping and attacking us.'¹⁰⁶ When men and women express their anger, very often it is by abusing their female ancestry. Young boys learn these jokes and abuse, as part of the process of becoming a man. It is no wonder then, that contempt for and of women is so ingrained, when boys have been taught to view women as such, from an early age.

It is an undeniable fact that most humour and jokes directed at women are written by men. Equally, the same stereotyping has left its mark on women as well. We tend to view and categorise ourselves in similar terms — the 'promiscuous bitch', the 'shameless hussy', the 'jealous wife', the 'scheming mother-in-law'. Humour is no joke, it is 'meant to humiliate, insult, defeat where rational arguments fail, to destroy our sense of self and that is how it is consciously being used against us'.¹⁰⁷

Sexist humour oppresses women who are made to feel inferior, aids and abets male solidarity and justifies the oppressors' need to feel more superior. It 'is used to avoid, to impede, or to decide the possibility of free equal relationship between men and women'.¹⁰⁸ It denies the humanity of women.



WOMEN IN TV AND FILMS

Women in these films also reinforce the roles, values and expectations that they are expected to perform Women watching these movies will come to believe, that this is their pre-ordained role in life and nothing can change it.

TV is increasingly becoming the major leisure activity for women and their families.

Even in TV, women are often portrayed as sex objects. According to research in the USA, it was found that American TV programmes carried the typical images of women in advertising and other media. They were always young, never beyond fortyish, and well-groomed. They were thin, tall, attractive and well-dressed. Men could be fat, short, unattractive and bald. Women were consistently concerned with their appearance. 'In interaction with men they were seen as sex objects whose bodies and appearance would be judged, commented on and rewarded.'¹⁰⁹

In Malaysia, the favourite TV shows include 'The Monte Carlo Show', 'The Rockford Files', 'The Waltons', 'Eight is Enough', 'Dallas', 'Vega\$', 'WKRP in Cincinnati', 'Happy Days', and 'Laverne and Shirley'.¹¹⁰ All these are American shows. Some of them like 'Dallas', are hot family favourites and the main topic of discussion in offices, neighbourhood parties, and over the dining-table.

Let us take a closer look at 'Dallas' ourselves. The Ewings are a rich and powerful family with their sex and other problems. Miss Ellie is the perfect mama, always dependable in a time of crisis, always loving and homely (she is always strolling around the ranch or Southfork mansion). There is Jock, the tough, ruthless head of the house, master of the Ewing home and petrobillions. His two sons are as different as the opposite poles. Bobby is the goody, goody, decent-family man; JR the villain, the wife-thief. Their wives are two beautiful bodies. Pamela, Bobby's wife is the typical newlywed wife, smothered with husbandly attention and yearning for some freedom. She is also independent and that is where she en-

counters problems with Bobby. They quarrel often, because she is neglecting Bobby for the sake of her career. Sue Ellen, JR's wife is the bored, passive, insecure alcoholic. She is bullied and neglected by her husband. She is a mother too, who is only seen carrying her baby from the cot and back to it. She is also a mistress, who always gets the short-end of the stick. And of course, there is her 'bitchy' sister Kristin who sleeps with JR. Television series like the paperback novels, offer another escape route for women in the home. Compared to the routine chores of the women who watch the programme, the 'Ewing women' seem to have such exciting lives. Thus, the women viewers can imagine living their own lives through the adventures of 'Dallas'.

There is also a new breed of women now appearing on TV programmes. In contrast to the submissive, dependent female, the new women are bright, independent and even authoratative. This is best exemplified in the series 'Charlie's Angels' where the girl 'detectives' unravel criminal plots, in the out-scheming, out-fighting and out-gunning the evil (usually male) crooks. Far from promoting a new healthy image of women, however, Charlie's Angels is just an unashamed and unsubtle means of attracting the male audience, which it has done very successfully. The 'angels' have the stereotyped qualities of beauty and are usually dressed seductively. The plots are as standard and shallow as they come, and are clearly designed merely to put the girls in situations where they can exhibit their charm, guile and bodies. Nobody in the audience can take them seriously as anything approaching real detectives, and the series is obviously just a set-up on which to latch on the showing off of the beautiful girls. The independent and aggressive 'angels' thus ironically cater more to the male fantasy world than the more demure and helpless women on other programmes.

Where films are concerned, we have already discussed at some length how the female body is exploited (see section on Pornography). However, there are also very popular 'love stories' in the movies which merit discussion. Romantic plots, often involving the eternal triangle, are very popular in the Chinese, Tamil or Indonesian language films imported from abroad. One popular theme of these films is the portrayal of a basically good man torn between two stereotypes of women — the virtuous and pure girl

who loves him and the scheming, avaricious woman who lures him astray. Invariably all will end well, because the man will realise his mistake, and his loving, forgiving fiancée or wife will take him back. In this type of movies, the good woman is one who loves her man totally, dissolving into tears when he leaves her, but ever ready to wait for him and to take him back gratefully when he decides to return. This situation is portrayed as quite normal and natural. Thus, the man is able to enjoy his freedom and come back to the loving girlfriend or wife. The reverse (i.e. a woman coming home to a forgiving husband after a fling with other men) is rarely found. If the woman betrays her man, the man is expected to be furious and reject her forever. Thus, the prevalence of double standards in this type of films. It can be argued that this situation actually exists in real life and the movies merely portray this situation. However, by depicting the situation as normal and as expected in society, the film media condones it and plays a major role in making ordinary people accept the situation. What is needed therefore are films which portray a different type of woman who will not accept such situations submissively but fights for her rights.

Another major theme of the love movies is that of the broken-hearted self-sacrificing wife and mother who endures all the ills and tragedies of life, uncomplaining and without fighting back. The message is that a woman's fate is often bitter, but she must accept and suffer it the best she can. For example, in one popular local movie, the woman was deserted by her husband. She works hard and sacrifices to put her sons through their education, enduring poverty and humiliation only to receive ingratitude in return. She dies a lonely and heart-broken woman.

In another imported movie, the heroine works hard to support her family after their father neglects them. She turns down marriage after marriage and, in fact, destroys all prospects for marriage because of her dedication and devotion to her family.

Perhaps many women in the audience can identify with these themes, but the movies serve then to perpetuate the situation by telling women that to be self-sacrificing and long suffering is their noble lot and fate, rather than showing them how to fight against the situation. These films only reinforce the roles, values and expectations that women are expected to perform, and the obedient

and submissive relationship that wives must have with their husbands, so that harmony and happiness is maintained. Women watching these movies will come to believe, that this is their preordained role in life and nothing can change it.

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF WOMEN

The fact that there is a women's page in our newspapers testifies to the complete marginalisation of women's news. They are somehow not as important, they are not newsworthy enough to be given prominence in the front page or headlines.

In recent times, there have been excellent articles related to women, which have been highlighted by the newspapers, such as the dangers of contraceptives, the agony of breast cancer among women and the problems of the modern housewife.

However, there is still much room for improvement in the daily coverage of news on women. A random survey of the newspapers still show, that women become newsworthy often when they participate in beauty contests and fashion shows. For instance, the winner of the Miss Malaysia/World contest was described in terms that described her attire and her body. 'One of the factors that won Callie Liew, the Miss Malaysia/World title, was the stunning, figure-hugging gown that she wore.'¹¹¹ It would appear that this was the only item worth reporting about the winner. This kind of reporting only further aids women readers to see themselves and their sex as objects of decoration and male titillation.

In fact, the degree and prevalence of this image of women can be seen from a street poll conducted by a daily on beauty contests, as to whether they were culture shows or cattle shows.¹¹² A total of 23 people from a wide spectrum of the populace were interviewed out of which 13 were men. All but one agreed that beauty contests were good so that, 'Asians will know we have wonderful girls with beautiful shapes here' or 'it is nice for the men'. Another male interviewee reasoned: 'After all, ladies are well known for their charming appearance and perhaps because of these qualities the world is a brighter place'. Beautiful girls were likened to such stereotypes as: 'A beautiful girl musn't be too tall. She must also have a good figure like 36-24-36 inches' or 'A beautiful girl would use more

make-up and have good fashion sense. She must also be of moderate height and have a nice figure like a guitar'.¹¹³

Nine out of the ten females interviewed agreed that beauty shows were good and that they were talent shows. 'Everybody has a right to show off her beauty. Women are vain also and like to show off.' Another opined that, our beauties 'can promote our name in the West', and besides providing entertainment, it 'gives our young girls the opportunity to indulge in such healthy things'. This only goes to show how deep the female stereotyped women by themselves has sunk into our consciousness. The common belief that beauty shows also build up confidence, poise and sophistication is a male-oriented view because these are standards of sophistication to cater to the new breed of professional men who are not just satisfied with beauties who are dumb. They want women who can make an impression. By this, is meant the art of making conversation (often pretentious and orchestrated), to crack the right jokes and engage in tasteless wit so that men will be proud to show off their talented female companions to their friends and associates. All of them who were for beauty contests, had the impression that these were good for the country because they put Malaysia 'on the world map' and promote 'the country, the people and their culture', they even help to sell 'our country otherwise people in other countries do not know we exist'.

The idea that our beauty queens are our country's ambassadors says something very significant, about the minds of most people, male and female, where women are concerned, that is, that women can give the nation pride and prestige, honour and fame only as 'beauty queens'. Even when a woman has made it in a man's world, she is still seen in terms of how 'feminine' she is. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, sister of India's first Prime Minister, and President of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1953 was said to have remarked: 'When my public activities are reported, it is very annoying to read how I looked, if I smiled, if a particular reporter liked my hair style'.¹¹⁴ Women as intelligent, exceptional and individuals in their own right is never possible. This further alienates women from any meaningful social, economic and political participation and national life. Women are only capable in the realm of the home and the family. They could not be interested in social and national issues of the day.

Through beauty shows, manufacturers are not only reinforcing these role-models for women to aspire to, it is one of the best forms of advertising to create and widen the market for their products. It is thus no coincidence that 'a lot of money is spent and invested in it', according to one male interviewee. 'You can't say such contests are mere cattle shows', according to another. 'If they are then I don't see any reason why there is so much glamour and money attached to it. Don't tell me this is done blindly or the people who are involved are stupid.'¹¹⁵ This is exactly how advertising works. By selling glamour (in the image of the beauty queen), advertisers are selling a particular image of women — the consumer image of beauty and attractiveness. And through the beauty shows, they are really telling both men, that these are the women of their wildest fantasies, and the women, that this is the kind of female men fantasize about. In an advertisement for the Miss Malaysia contest, girls are told that 'You could be our next Miss Malaysia ... Do you think you deserve to be the one to receive the adulation of thousands as the most beautiful girl in Malaysia? If you do, then you might be that someone special to become Malaysia's premier beauty queen....'¹¹⁶ It becomes the duty of all women to attain this glorified image. Thus, women are encouraged to compete with one another to see who is the fairest of them all. In this manner, the consumer culture isolates women from one another, because they are made to believe they can only relate to men. As such, women are made to perceive each other as threats. 'The self-view and aspirations of women are shaped through such devices. We are taught to feel that only those women who fulfill male-set standards of "attractiveness" and "womanliness" get honour and recognition.'¹¹⁷

Women only become 'celebrities' if they are beauty queens. This can be seen from the vast amount of newspaper coverage on the Miss Asia Quest Pageant which was held in Kuala Lumpur. The New Sunday Times carried a supplement on the event.¹¹⁸ Another paper had an interview with the men responsible for it.¹¹⁹ Yet another paper had a full colour centre-spread of the finalists.¹²⁰ And the show was telecast live to the Philippines. In September this year, the Miss Malaysia/World contest also received the same amount of publicity. One paper had a centre-spread special of the coming event, with photographs of all the beauties vying for the title and how they will be judged, namely, facial features, poise,

figure, legs, dress-sense, suitability of hairstyle, posture, walk, conversational ability, tact and commonsense and oral IQ test.¹²¹ This was followed by another two-page special in the same paper on the winner.¹²²

Apart from fashion and beauty shows which excite so much of interest, the other news concerning women are the rape trials and rape reports. News items which carry headings such as 'they robbed and raped me' or 'I was gang-raped' only go to show how these issues can be sensationalised. This kind of reporting speaks only to men and reflect the reality of women as men see it. How do women feel when they read such reports? Inevitably a sense of hopelessness and vulnerability, terrifying women into realising that they should not go out alone, they are always in need of male protection, that this is a problem that all women have to live with. At best, this kind of reporting will engender pity and moral indignation from men. At worst, amusement or even perverse admiration for the hero rapist. This indifferent projection of rape in the media, encourages rape to be seen as a crime of a sexual-pervert and not a crime against all women.



Rape reports reported in our daily newspapers.

Another case in point as to how women's sexuality can be sensationalised by the press was a recent murder trial involving the murder of an ex-beauty queen by her husband-to-be. This news was the talking point of the nation for as long as the inquiry and the subsequent trial lasted. Her love life was deliberately singled out in the press reports. In Penang, an international diplomat, who happened to be in town, was said to have gone round the town to read the night edition of the next day's paper. It appears that this is the only area in which they have been seriously acknowledged as the 'creators of news'.

Some of you will say that this is not a fair presentation of the press. After all, we even have a weekly page devoted solely to women in almost all our daily newspapers. Let us examine some of the articles featured on this page.

An eleven-week survey of two of the English dailies over August, September and October 1981 has shown striking similarities in both. Both these papers often highlighted fashions and beauty tips. Many of these were news features syndicated from the foreign press, for example, Italian fashions,¹²³ Pierre Cardin special,¹²⁴ Hong Kong fashions,¹²⁵ 'Keeping young 10 minutes a day',¹²⁶ 'Hair care',¹²⁷ 'Dress code for the office',¹²⁸ 'Looking good face exercises',¹²⁹ and 'Beauty foods'.¹³⁰ One paper had a letters-column where women who had problems wrote in to the editor for help. The problems were usually about women emotionally involved with married man, teenage girls who were worried because they had no boyfriends or suffer facial skin problems, love triangles, problems with sex and teenage infatuation with older married men. This paper also had good exposures on problems of a breastfeeding mother,¹³¹ women alcoholics in Malaysia¹³² and a feature on the World Conference for the UN Decade for Women, which was adapted from a foreign article. It could have done better if it did its own investigations on the conditions of local women regarding their health, work, education and the issue of divorce.

The other articles were generally geared towards the educated, middle-class elite. But this could be due to the fact that the readers were English educated. However, many of these articles were again foreign adaptations, like etiquette and modern manners;¹³³ and the

participation of the family when the mother gives birth,¹³⁴ which may be culturally out of place. Others featured domestic problems which were again peculiar to the West like what children think of divorce, which was adapted from the New York Times.¹³⁵

There were also profiles on women personalities, namely, a racehorse owner, an artist who paints motifs on dresses and a government bureaucrat.¹³⁶ There was a feature on local wives whose husbands were national celebrities — famous footballers.¹³⁷ Women on this page were more often than not stereotyped. The articles were aimed at a very exclusive readership. This is far from a realistic portrayal of women in the country. For a start, this page could be used to highlight articles and features related to Malaysian women on a more regular basis. For example, women as mothers, women as managers of the home and family, women as the most important consumers of health care, maternity and child-health, housework is important work, the need for good nurseries for working mothers, the need for incentives for working mothers to breastfeed and so on. The page should be used as a platform for raising the awareness of Malaysian women on issues which affect them and their families, like the problems of venereal disease (VD) on women and children, harmful effects of drugs and contraceptives, sexual harassment at the work-place, sex tourism, sexist advertisements, pornography, bringing up children as a shared responsibility and the role of the state in bringing about a better status for women.

However, there is the danger that confining women to one page in the media, will lead to a compartmentalisation of women's needs and issues. The very fact that there is a women's page in the mass media testifies to the complete marginalisation of women's news. They are somehow not as important, they are not newsworthy enough to be given prominence in the front page or headlines. News concerning women have been highlighted by the press, for instance, issues like wife battering and rape but these have been treated in a rather isolated manner. There has been very little attempt made to question why these are problems in our society. There is very little analysis into the socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions that give rise to these phenomena. In the final analysis, problems of women are not and cannot be considered pro-

blems peculiar to women. They concern all of us who are truly committed to see an improvement in the status of women.

Women in journalism have an important role to play. They have an opportunity to write seriously about real issues confronting Malaysian women, and in doing so raise the level of awareness of both men and women. Fortunately, there are now signs that this challenging task is beginning to be done, as issues like rape, divorce and the problems of combining work and home have been seriously treated in a few newspapers and magazines. In time to come, it is hoped that this serious treatment of issues pertaining to women will take more and more prominence and eventually eclipse the still dominant sex-object treatment of women in the newspapers.

CONCLUSION

In this book, we have tried to show how the media has characterised the participation of women primarily in terms of consumer values. This problem is compounded by two main factors, namely, that advertising media in Third World countries like Malaysia, is mainly western controlled and that cinema and TV programmes are heavily imported. The image of women displayed and projected by these media has led to the moulding of attitudes and perceptions, both in men and women, which are at variance with positive values in our culture. Women are stereotyped as housewife, mother and the consumer of goods. They are always packaged as attractive, demure, passive and submissive as either mothers or sex-crazed women, whereas the qualities of dominance, power, intelligence and double-standards of morality are emphasised in men. Women are made to consume fashions, cosmetics, household goods, western tastes and values in the consumer society, with the help of magazines, radio and TV, women's pages, novels and films.

At the World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico in 1975, it was recognised that 'the full and complete development of any country requires the maximum participation of women as well as of men in all fields, the under-utilisation of the potential of approximately half of the world's population is a serious obstacle to social and economic development'.¹³⁸ It has been recognised that the role of information both economic, social and cultural, is crucial to the developmental process and to this end, the important role of the mass media is beyond doubt. It is also known, however, (though rarely mentioned) that information structures are male dominated. In the final report of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (The Sean McBride Report), it is stated that: 'Attention should be paid to the communication needs of women. They should be assured adequate access to communication means and that images of them and their activities are most distorted by the media or in advertising.'¹³⁹

All traditional societies have had their own systems of communication through social activities, religious gatherings, through

song and folklore in which socialisation took place. With the advent of modern mass communication, this role has not only been taken over, it has put the control of the mass media solidly in the hands of men.¹⁴⁰ This has also meant 'severe under-representation of women on all levels of media organisation except for the very lowest (i.e. clerical and secretarial). Women are almost completely excluded from key decision-making posts'.¹⁴¹ More important, it has meant that serious media coverage on women is virtually absent.

The situation is no less different in Malaysia. This would have far reaching consequences on the government's development plans, especially when it is realised that the government relies solely on the mass media to convey its policies and plans to the people. If the needs and aspirations of women are to be realised, it is therefore crucial that media must not only be responsive to the needs of all women, especially the less advantaged women in our society, it should enable women to communicate with each other about their lives and to share their experiences, it should give women truthful information they need to make choices and decisions, which will not 'distort, demean, degrade and belittle us or confine us to stereotype behaviour and roles'; it should enable us to 'participate and share in determining the content in media, in decision-making and control'¹⁴² and it should be based on values which are appropriate to our culture and society. In a developing society like ours, where the traditional role of women is undergoing profound changes, it is right and fitting that we ask ourselves as women, whether the image of ourselves as shown by the mass media honestly reflects our true worth and role in a changing society and how this image contributes to our betterment and our progress as women.

Given the gross distortion of the role and image of women in the mass media, CAP makes the following recommendations:

CAP'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Women's groups and women's organisations should campaign against the sexist portrayal of women in local advertisements,

calendars and the other mass media. (This would include all forms of pornography as well).

2. Women journalists in the press, radio, TV and magazines have an important role to play in the full intergration of women in the nation's development process. They should increase the media coverage on women's issues like sex tourism, dangerous drugs and contraceptives affecting women, the effects of VD on women and unborn children, and health safety of women workers and how these affect their biological functions, family nutrition and child and maternal health-care in the rural areas.
3. The mass media should also work for a better image of women in the press, to try and change the stereotype images that the public have and the image that women have of themselves. They should also highlight women's contribution to the home and family.
4. Women's groups could also do their own investigative reporting on women's issues within their realm of experience, and publish newsletters and magazines. They could also set up an information network within the country, to share and exchange information and experiences that can bring women together and work towards a plan of action.
5. The government must take a more committed role to raise the status and dignity of women and their image as portrayed by the mass media. It must ban all advertisements, calendars and product-displays which make use of women as sex objects.
6. The Ministry of Education and the Curriculum Development Centre must make every effort to review the present books used in the primary and secondary curriculum, which depict women in an inferior or discriminating manner and to make sure that these are removed, and replaced with images that show women in a favourable light.
7. The media should impose their own restrictions and standards on advertisements, comic strips and stories which humiliate and discriminate against women. Women working in the media

should exert pressure on their management to restrict the use of such materials.

8. Education has a primary role to play in the re-education of our young girls. Girls should be taught to read non-sexist literature, and to differentiate between good novels and pulp.
9. Women writers and programmers can make every attempt to write positively about women in their articles, novels and programmes.

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The mass media has come to embody the interests and values of an alien and dominant culture which promotes not only a western brand of consumption and lifestyle, it also projects an image of women which is both discriminatory and oppressive and male-oriented.

The *Abuse of Women in the Media* traces how the media has been used to portray women as inferior beings and as sex objects in the areas of advertising, pornography, sex tourism, women's magazines, paperback romances, in humour, in TV programmes and films and in the newspaper coverage of women.

This book by the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) seeks to highlight the problems of women both locally and in some Third World countries.

Women's image in the mass media must be questioned and redefined. Women must regain confidence in themselves and break the stereotype images so that they can be regarded as human beings. This book hopes to increase awareness among men and women on this issue so that together we can work towards the attainment of true dignity and sensitivity for all women.



The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is a non-profit organisation which fights for the rights and interests of Malaysian consumers through research, educational and representational activities.

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