

LION

Much attention has been paid to the deconstruction of female stereotypes in the mass media. In this article a masculinist approach similarly explores and questions the use of the male as an icon in current beer and cigarette advertising.

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This article is not intended as a formal argument that needs to prove certain hypotheses outside its own scope. It is rather a piece of play in the Derridean sense, and an addition to the totality of human viewpoints, another little brushstroke in the realer than real realm of discourse and theory. In a sense it may simply be seen as provocation, something a bit more Baudrillardian than Baudrillard.

The assumption on which all investigations of this nature rests, is that our behaviour and images of the self are informed by the discourses to which we are exposed. As a form of discourse advertising is unique, since it is the only one that supposedly promotes a product or service which is to be sold to a defined market. This means that

CAMEL

its creation, final form and insertion into everyday life are all determined by research done on the specific market. This research reveals the metaphoric structures in the collective mind of the market. Therefore it exposes possible ways in which the product may be metaphorised and in this manner be grafted onto the pre-existent semantic universe of the target market. Advertising therefore undeniably adds to, or modifies the semantics and grammatology of our individual universes, while using their pre-existent formats to do so. Advertising is the chicken/egg paradox of consumer capitalism.

By making the silent space of an advertisement speak for itself, it will speak to us in two voices: it will inform us as to what appropriate

behaviour entails, and reveal to us the self-concept and pre-existent behaviour of its target audience.

Andrew Wernick (Kaufman 1987: 277) comments:

By continually tapping into our dreams and identities and by integrally linking products to the wider circulation of signs, advertising has also developed into a major cultural force.

The lion and the camel

The two advertisements on which the main focus of my discussion will fall are a Lion Lager television commercial, made to coincide with the Rugby World Cup of 1995, and a cinema advertisement for Camel cigarettes.

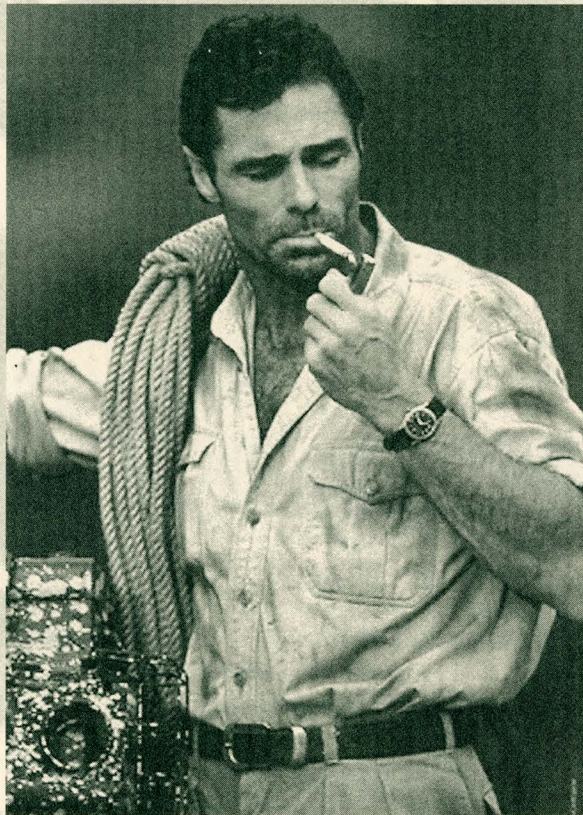
The television commercial features the Springbok Rugby team jogging through various landscapes and situations, wearing Lion Lager T-shirts and being cheered by various people as they pass on their way. In the final scene, a

group of men emerge from a bar and toast them with beer, presumably Lion Lager.

The advertisement for Camel features the figurehead of the Camel man. Here we have the third king of Camel-land: a man with dark hair, a tan, three-day stubble and characterful crow's feet wrinkles. He is dressed for adventure in basic khaki. The first shot is taken from an aircraft and shows a view of nature, obviously in a tropical part of the world. He parachutes out of the plane and starts his adventure trek. Soon there is a hint of dark presences in the background, but not to fear, our resourceful explorer soon befriends the locals and laughs as he is 'initiated' by a member of the tribe who paints tribal markings on his face. To finish off, he lights a Camel.

In the Lion Lager advertisement there is no suspenseful linear progression of theme, rather a few models of behaviour are mixed and matched in various combinations. The three basic characters in this game are: firstly, the team of sportsmen, secondly the fans who are of all races, sexes and ages, and thirdly the racially mixed, but all male, and all thirty-something peer group who emerge from the bar.

The team is unanimously supported by the other two sets of characters, yet seems to be so bent on their training that they do not acknowledge their audience. The assorted fans merely provide the object of the team's disinterest, thereby communicating the importance and reverence in which the team is held.



The peer group, however, represents a special class of actor all of its own. On the one hand, they are an echo of the all male thirty-something team - yet they are not revered, they have not vied successfully for the hand of the fair damsel, the fans. On the other hand it would be a safe assumption that they represent the target market - they are the ones holding cold beers in their hands and they are also an echo of the peer groups used in competitors' advertising, for instance by Castle and Vivo. Action in this drama works in two basic modalities: devotion to the team-as-hero and dedication by the team to factors not specified in the text itself, but winning the World Cup may be a good guess.

The jogging team-members are framed within full length scenes in every one of their appearances. The camera is chest high to them and they therefore appear physically larger and even monumental in relation to their audience. The effect is further enhanced by their repeated intrusion between the camera and other characters, as they thunder past. This effect of hugeness heightens their perceived status (Goffman 1979: 28). Functionally they are ranked above their audience, stony faced they run with-

out explanation, without start or finish in sight (Goffman 1979: 32). No doubt is left that these men have such an important task that they do not need to explain, they have been elevated above mere humans. All others in the drama willingly subordinate themselves to the team (Goffman 1979: 40), thereby giving the team's withdrawal validation and legitimacy (Goffman 1979: 57). They are allowed their arrogance since they have deserved it.

In the Camel advertisement we are also confronted with three basic players: nature, the tribe and the adventurer. In this drama, there is a linear deployment of plot involving all three characters. The adventurer arrives in nature, and joins it. He braves the unknown in the guise of the tribe, wins its trust and reciprocally has his own trust won. All is well that ends well.

The three identities are, however, difficult to separate completely. Our adventurer starts out as separate from nature, he flies over it in a magnanimous gesture of transcendence. Yet, as soon as he enters the jungle he becomes one with Brother Nature. The tribe emerges from nature, neither fully a part nor apart from it, symbolising both Brother Nature and alterity. Alterity is solved in this specific case by some quantum leap of understanding and Mr Camel is absorbed into the tribe. As a resolution of the potentially competitive relationship, perhaps in spite of it, our three players become one in spirit: Brother Butch, Brother Tribe and Brother Nature. The release of that tripartite tension allows Mr. Camel to indulge in a cigarette. He retains through that act his own identity, without losing his innate fraternity with the other players. The important aspect of this is that he neither gloats in victory, nor retreats in defeat, but withdraws in peace and friendship.

In terms of action we see the classic formula of Camel advertisements: the adventurer - always solo - is introduced, he encounters a problematic situation, solves it and seals his truce with nature by smoking a cigarette. In earlier advertisements for Camel, nature was ambi-

valent, but here - in the painted faces of the tribe - nature is personified as Brother. In the smoking of the celebratory cigarette lies a suggestion that the adventurer has attained that for which he has undertaken his journey into both interior and exterior space.

All the shots of Mr Camel throughout the deployment of the plot are framed as scenes, candidly shot through an omnipresent eye of which he is unaware. He is not performing to an audience, he is doing this entirely for its/his own sake and the viewer is turned voyeur. In the last frame, however, as Mr Camel lights his cigarette, he is featured as a glorious portrait. The voyeur has come closer, and takes an intimate and worshipful look at this undeniably attractive man. He has achieved the status of an icon, and the camera is placed respectfully below his eye level. Mr Camel is taller than the tribesmen; according to Goffman (1979: 28) this signifies his higher status, but he squats down, he voluntarily subordinates himself (Goffman 1979: 40). The lighting of the cigarette, as previously mentioned, becomes a licensed withdrawal - according to Goffman (1979: 57) an action normally reserved for women.

The alterity of the tribesmen is emphasised by their very pointed 'blackness' as opposed to Mr Camel's 'whiteness'. They may therefore represent a certain element of the Jungian shadow. Yet there is no threat - on the contrary, the tribesman who paints the tribal markings on Mr Camel's face, gives his stubbled cheek a loving and admiring stroke. The action is so electric that it shows up as a bright yellow ochre stripe. The tribesmen have accepted him as one of themselves by breaking the Western embargo on male to male caress.

In both these advertisements we are, very importantly, dealing with luxury items, and two potentially very harmful and habit forming chemical substances at that: nicotine and ethanol. In one of the few statements with which I find myself in agreement with Camille Paglia (1995: 54), she writes: 'Brand names are territorial cells of Western identity'. The brand names appear at the close

of both advertisements in an effort to graft their meaning onto the constructions of identity created in their narratives.

Is it significant that both brands use animal symbols? Probably not since their competitors Castle and Marlboro do not use animal symbols. Yet a castle is a tower of strength. Mention the name Marlboro and people are probably more likely to think of a cowboy than a cigarette or a place. The lion is fierce, big, strong and carnivorous like a winning team of players, while the camel is independent, tough, a survivor like the adventurer. The animal symbols thus lend a certain masculine *je-ne-sais-quoi* to the brand iconography. Perhaps we should ask ourselves how we would react to advertisements for Leopard brand heroin and Bull brand cocaine. Both would use 'masculine' animal icons in order to sell harmful substances to men.

The camel and the lion are slaughtered to reveal their audience

Promotion of a brand is the *raison d'être* of advertisements. An advertisement should therefore not insult the target market - that would have a negative effect on promotion, while a promise to fulfil desires, added to soothing reflections of the fulfilment of the target audience's basic needs, will have a positive effect. It should however not be forgotten that dividing the semantics of advertising into a type which echoes the market and a type which instructs the market, is much more an arbitrary decision than an analytical position. Any given sign will do both, but as a matter of degree some elements may be read as the one or the other.

Three themes have been identified for discussion: images of masculinity, escape and choice. While they are closely interrelated, they will be considered separately for the sake of clarity.

Warrior and slave

In the Lion advertisement we see the peer group looking at itself in the mirror of the team, they are happy and cheerful while the team is stern-faced, terse and tense. Rugby is after all a violent sport, men can and will be injured, sometimes very badly.

Warren Farrell (1993: 50) writes: '...we call violence against men entertainment.' And while commenting on the film *Full Metal Jacket*:

The sergeant humiliates the men, kicks them, puts their lives at risk. Why? "Your purpose is not to be individuals - but to be a machine!" (Farrell 1993: 145);

...preparation for devaluation of self is necessary to make a boy regard his life as less important than his role. First in sports ... then in an army, a company, an academic situation (Farrell 1993: 145).

Marvin Allen and Jo Robinson (1993: 6):

Our culture maintains - and rightly so - that men are more efficient workers and warriors when they are not inconvenienced by tender feelings.

Joe Dubbert (1979: 1) quotes Margaret Mead:

...maleness ... is not absolutely defined; it has to be kept and re-earned every day.

And perhaps, as previously implied, the team are actually focusing on winning their upcoming games. Would that remove the physical danger they will be exposed to? What would the general reaction be to a few team members 'chickening out'? How would those other cheering faces look? The team is left with no choice but to succeed. They are success objects (Farrell 1993: 120) - their 'wantedness' is measured purely in terms of how successful they are. It is their success that is worshipped, not they themselves.

Bruce Kidd (Kaufman 1987: 251) argues that the ideology of modern sport is an invention of the Industrial Revolution, that conceptions of sports change as societies change. Dubbert (1979: 184) argues that sport was promoted during the nineteenth century as 'character building' for boys and young men. He places it in a specific context and shows how it developed as both replacement and training for war after and during the British colonial wars, American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War.

Kidd quotes the work of Ken Dyer who showed that female athletes are gaining on male athletes at an astonishing rate: women are physically as proficient as men, they simply do not perform as well due to sociocultural factors (Kaufman 1987: 257). But Farrell (1993: 120) points out that men are taught to think of success in any external field as constituting their worth as human beings, the consequence being that 93 per cent of suicides in the United States represent this 'successful' class. Dubbert (1979: 32) condenses this dogma to one, devastating slogan: 'Life is war'.

There is yet another factor at play here: male bodies are deemed desirable when they are athletic (Tasker 1993: 78; Kimmel 1987: 29). These men are therefore, also sexually successful and objectified - as reflected perhaps in *Playgirl* magazine's offer to James Small for nude photographs (Thodardottir 1995: 28). Kimmel (1987: 38) reports that an overwhelming majority of men, from age five to age forty, regard the athletic mesomorphic body type as their personal ideal - because it is both sexually attractive and 'successful'. The male body's beauty is only sanctioned by its functionality as a warrior or slave.

Escape

Escape is another major theme identified in the advertisements, explicitly in the Camel example and implicitly in the Lion example. The term escape raises the question of from what, why and to what. In my view the question is answered simply, the escapees are escaping a situation they find unpleasant, unbearable, oppressive.

In the Lion advertisement we find a trace of an element also present, in one way or another, in most other advertisements for beer: the peer group. A good example against which to extrapolate this player is the Castle lager television commercial in which we see the character 'George' leaving his friends behind, presumably as a career move. They have a farewell beer together before he takes his leave on a train. A caption indicates that five years have lapsed when 'George' returns to the same bar, his friends recognise him immediately and everything is as it was before. 'George' has a home and tried and tested security in his circle of friends. It is this same peer group that emerges from the bar at the end of Lion commercial.

Paglia (1995: 30) writes: 'Male bonding is a self-preservation society.' That may be an interpretation from a female point of view. To some extent it only gives half a picture. Kimmel (1987: 56) quotes the athlete Willy Rios '... it brought what I really wanted - some kind of closeness'. If these men are escaping, then they are escaping that which is not present in the frame of the depicted situation: possibly/career and family. These two factors are also absent from the context of Mr Camel. From the male point of view, the two are of course interrelated. A man provides for his family by means of his career. His career therefore represents his worth to his loved ones (Farrell 1993: 18).

Men are, however, not running away from their families - a possible support structure - in fact, Farrell (1993: 33) writes:

... I asked a group of men whether they would choose to parent full time for six months to a year if they could and more than 80 percent said that being full time with their new-born child would be their preference if they were not hurting the family economically, and their wife approved.

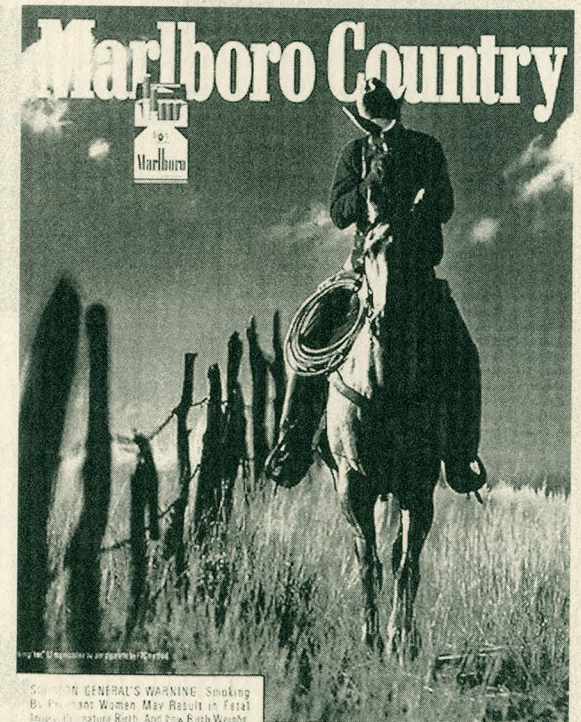
An alternative interpretation is that they are running away from a role they feel forced into, the father-as-provider or perhaps the father-as-monster/punisher. Kidd (Kaufman 1987: 281) identifies the 'bad man' as an archetype of advertising, he is a man who does not support a family and who is generally depicted in a career or situation in which he would like/prefer to be by choice and not as a matter of perceived responsibility. He cites the Marlboro man as an example. He is a loner and adventurer and enjoys his life/career. He, like the Camel man, has escaped.

In both these advertisements, smoking tobacco is portrayed as a solitary action, but in both the beer advertisements, beer drinking is portrayed as a social activity. The bonding beer-drinking peer group therefore provides a different scenario than the cigarettes' simple untainted escape. These men are escaping to something. Driessen (Gefou-Madianou 1992: 77) writes: '...their heavy drinking is the reduction of anxiety, caused by the ... father and husband role', but also: 'Drinking alcohol together creates a temporary ambience of oneness, fraternity and equality that does not exist outside the bar' (Gefou-Madianou 1992: 73).

Adrian Pearce (Gefou-Madianou 1992: 167) recounts a Swedish saying: 'Ta en sup och va som en människa!' (Take a Schnapps and be like a human being!), and later explains:

Leisure time in the company of men is another matter. Protected by the screen of alcohol a man can voice and show the emotions denied expression in the hard, cold light of regular time (Gefou-Madianou 1992: 165).

Can the same be said of female drinking? Probably, but as Gefou-Madianou (1992: 8) writes, women constitute only a small minority of the consumers of alcohol in Europe, and also cites the matrifocality of the Western household as the object of escape implied in that statistic. Le Clair Bissel (Gitlow & Peyser 1980: 35) reports that the ratio of men with alcoholism to that of women in the United States as about four to one.



The fact that escape is so important also reflects that men, at least, are aware of their oppressed position. This is supported by Peter Lyman (Kimmel 1987: 162): '... the guys described their fathers as slaves to work and women, not as patriarchs'. This was reported by a group of male college students.



In the case of both the Camel and Marlboro cigarette advertisements, we see the loner escaping into nature - even though it could be argued that the tribe in the Camel advertisement constitutes a male bonding group. A knee jerk reaction of the feminist theorist might be to interpret this as 'Man Conquering Mother Nature'. In fact many a feminist lays claim to Nature on behalf of womankind in this way. Paglia (1990: 78) argues that nature - or more specifically 'Mother Nature' - is represented by Woman and her 'chthonic nature' and that men created culture as a means of escape and self preservation. Eventually her argument culminates in the following:

Male homosexuality may be the most valorous of attempts to evade the *femme fatale* and to defeat nature. By turning away from the Medusan mother, whether in honour or detestation of her, the male homosexual is one of the great forgers of absolutist western identity. But of course nature has won, as she always does, by making disease the price of promiscuous sex (Paglia 1990: 21).

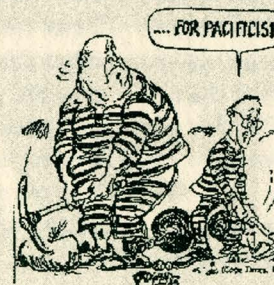
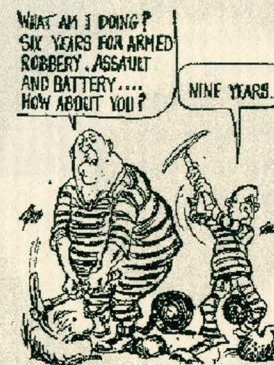
Unfortunately I have neither the time nor the resources to properly research the invention of 'Mother Nature' in the scope of this text, but I should like to suggest a few inferences. The word 'nature' (like 'hand', 'table' and 'cup') is a word of feminine grammatical gender in French (Atkins 1978: 464), Italian (Macchi 1975: 1839), German (Terrel 1980: 481) and Spanish (Gonzales 1994: 138).

'Father Nature' would thus sound silly. The word derives from the Latin 'natura' (McLeod 1957: 213) and therefore, like all words bearing the suffix '-ura', is of feminine gender. Yet, nature - as a process apart from earth - is repeatedly found in myth and religion: he is Pan, Loki, Shiva, Krishna, Apis, a Satyr, the Horned One who has been recast as Satan in Christianity. He is Brother Nature, the male peer of Mr Camel and Mr Marlboro.

Choice

The Camel man is going where he goes out of his own choice. No reason for his presence in that setting is given, he is escaping, like Mr Marlboro. Choice is the luxury awarded to the men in the above advertisements, that makes their position covetable. Do men have choice? According to Farrell (1993: 32) and Allen and Robinson (1993: 3), not.

An example closer to home, is that of conscription. Of course we could choose to resist - if we were prepared to carry the consequences - six years in jail. Significantly, the clothing of facelessness and namelessness - army browns - correlates very strongly with that worn by Mr Camel. The only difference is that of choice. Mr Camel



(Out of Step. 1989:62)

chose practical clothing for a situation in which he chose to be and because he represents himself and not a political ideology or state, he was free to choose peace with the tribe. Young South African men of the 'privileged' classes were coerced into clothes and a situation they did not choose, where peace with similar young men from a different ideology and state was not an option.

Jacklyn Cock (1994: 58) reports the following, related by a South African ex-soldier:

One time we captured a terrorist and tied him onto the front of a Ratel. Then we went 'Bundu-bashing'. We had captured him for interrogation - that was the interrogation. He didn't say anything. He died the first day. We used to pull into villages for everyone to see, as a warning sign. After a few days we took him off. He just fell apart.

She finishes off by pointing out that the people committing these atrocities are not psychopaths, but regarded as absolutely normal. She also writes: 'Notions of masculinity are a powerful tool in this process of making men into soldiers' (Cock 1994: 58). If it is taken into account that, at least some kind of psychological preparation is needed for such deeds, we must acknowledge that we are teaching the basics to our sons, brothers and lovers. The incident reported above should come as no surprise to anyone who has ever played on someone's notions of self-worth to reproduce traditional notions of masculinity - a society that creates a warrior class can only expect violence to be the outcome. Especially a society that measures loveability in terms of potential for violent performance.

Farrell (1993: 54-5) argues that love - whatever definition we choose to give it - constitutes an essential part of mental health. He points out that loss of love is so harshly experienced by men that widowed or divorced men are ten times as likely to commit suicide as women in similar situations, and eleven times more likely than men who are in formal relationships.



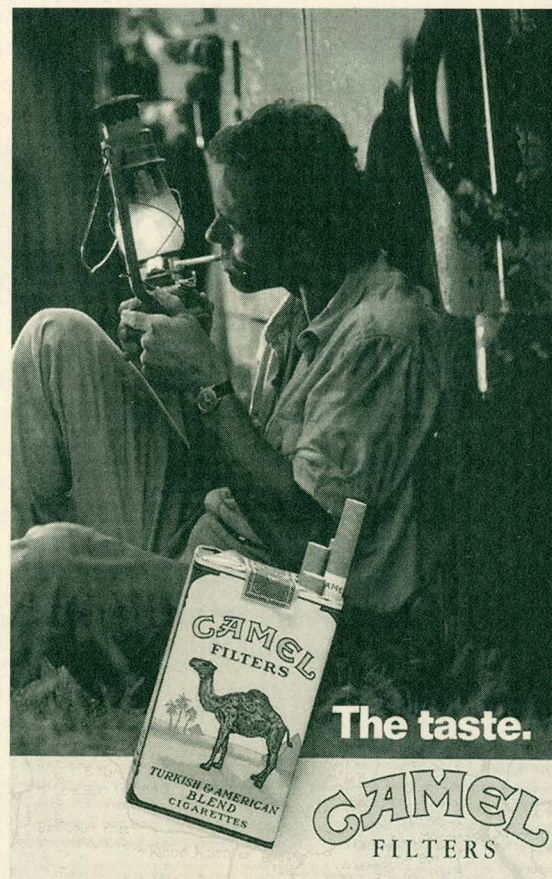
The loving caress of Mr Camel's cheek has no homosexual undertone or overtone - it is culturally sanctioned by the 'primitiveness' of the tribe. With that act of affection, Mr Camel also finally becomes initiated, not only into an all male group, but into Brother Nature Himself. It also seals his pact of peace, a peace he can afford since he has no-one to protect. In a Jungian sense he has achieved integration with his shadow - the tribe - he has achieved the resolution of inner conflict he came here for and is 'loved' purely for his own sake and not for the sake of his role or success.

Mr Marlboro is depicted - as is usual in Marlboro campaigns - with downcast eyes, an attitude that is turned inward. Mr Marlboro is in a space between autistic and autoerotic, he is ultimately independent. The absence of audience confirms that both these men are doing what they want to do - not what they are forced to do. They are icons of their suggested wholeness and inner peace, for the male market they reach. Their licensed withdrawal, as previously mentioned, a reserve of women, has appropriated self-love and self-appreciation on behalf of men who dare not do so in real life - in a way that would not discomfort the target market.

Strung out to dry

Yet I read the impact of lovelessness in the fact that both products are essentially physically harmful and at least potentially addictive. A health warning is featured prominently on cigarette advertisements - by law, we are made aware of the self-destruction implicit in the product. Potter-Efron (1991: 220) writes: 'Chemical use itself can be an expression of self-destructive anger' and

Brainwashing, which leads a person in a family to feel that he is especially responsible for problems of all others or that he is unlovable and a self-creator of the abuse that he receives, is especially influential in the establishment of patterns of self-abuse (Potter-Efron 1991: 222).



The products advertised as affording escape therefore also represent an elaborate means of slow suicide. Camel and Lion are offering men an escape from their unbearable everyday lives, offering them success without pressure, affection without price, autonomy and uncontested equality, freedom and choice - a space where they do not have to be providers, warriors or slaves. Men are willing to take it, the dangers of alcohol and nicotine notwithstanding. The market has spoken.

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