The Technologization of Femininity:
The Perfection of Ageing Through Science

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Introduction

There has been substantial research on the portrayals of gender roles in advertising. The position of women reflected in advertisements has been attacked by feminists as a result of narrow descriptions. In the 1960s, the rise of the women's movement had highlighted the portrayals of women in the mass media, and it also raised the profile of the study of representation of women in the academic field. The portrayals of women in advertising are the most particular interest and the main attention of criticism. Much research on the portrayals of women and advertising in television, women's magazines, and newspapers has noted that women are mostly shown in a limited number of social roles, either as caring mothers/ happy housewives at home, subordinate to men, or as alluring sexual objects. For example, Courtney and Whipple (1983) in *Sex Stereotyping in Advertising* showed that gender portrayals in print advertisements between 1958 and 1978 were conventional roles. In particular, women are placed in the home setting because women are primarily associated with housework and personal beauty. In addition, the role of women is mostly displayed as incompetent and decorative, who rely on men.

In addition, Soley and Kurzbard's *Sex in Advertising: A Comparison of 1964 and 1984 Magazine Advertisements* (1986) employed a content analysis to examine sexual portrayals in magazine advertisements during 1964 to 1984 and concluded that female models were more likely to be rendered as partially clad or nude than male models over the twenty-year period. Ferguson, Kreshel and Tinkham (1990) found that *Ms.* Magazine had increasingly presented women as alluring sex objects, although it had a stated policy to prevent advertisements or products that were harmful or insulting to women. However, in a field in which so many aspects of gender roles are recognized, debated, de-constructed, re-constructed, and challenged, the subject of ageing seems to remain relatively unexamined. It is useful to explore the major themes concerning ageing expressed in magazines advertising for skincare products.

Over the last decade, the rapid rise of an ageing population has stimulated an intense competition in the anti-ageing market, particularly in the skincare industry. The use of ingredients and the evidence from the laboratory experiments to sell skincare seems to be increasingly important in the actual content of the advertisements. Therefore, the study attempts to address the following questions:

1. What are the constructions of ageing in the advertisements for anti-ageing skincare products?
2. What are the constructions of science in the advertisements for anti-ageing skincare products?

The preliminary results of my study reported here are an attempt to identify how the skincare industry, especially in the anti-ageing market, is instrumental in shaping 'ideal femininity' in the era of the advertisements that allow for innovation in its technologized mode of address. I contend that the novelty of advertising lies in the combination of the development of a woman-centered and explicit scientific discourse that promises a dream come true of the 'ideal femininity' for women. Its distinctive appeal arises from its ability to accommodate the familiar forms of advertising with the legitimacy of science. My research tries to answer the above research questions by formulating two research hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that the concept of ageing is constructed negatively as a problem for women. The second hypothesis is that the concept of science is constructed positively as a solution to ageing for women.

The Market for Anti-ageing Skincare Products and Baby Boomers

Alongside these trends an anti-ageing skincare category in Britain is continuing to show significant growth, a fact that is reflected by the number of new product launches that are cramming shelf space. According to a study done by Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) Social Research, The TNS Care report (cited in Parry, 2004), the market for skincare products had a total market value of £804m in Britain in the year to March 2004. Sales of anti-wrinkle creams had experienced total growth of 43 per cent and sales of firming creams had increased 34 per cent. The evidence of the growing demand for anti-ageing product becomes clear. This suggests women in Britain have a desire to remain youthful looking.

As far as the skincare industry is concerned, the market for anti-ageing is a niche skincare market in Britain. According to TNS Care report (ibid), there are two factors contributing to this. First, TNS Care report showed that women in Britain use the lowest amount of anti-ageing products within the five European countries of Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. British women are only one fourth as likely as French women to use anti-ageing products. Second, the use of anti-ageing products is relatively uniform across all age groups. This suggests though British women use the lowest amount of anti-ageing products, women between 25 and 74 are already showing their interest in using these products in the quest for youthful skin. Therefore, to the skincare industry, this suggests a potential and emerging market for them to explore. How the skincare industry can increase the amount of anti-ageing products among women showing their interest in using these products becomes the most important issue when they advertise the products.

Women aged 35-to-54-years old using anti-ageing products to look young are the growth area of the market, according to TNS Care (ibid). Young women under 35 are another lucrative market for the skincare industry to target. This section will consider the market for baby boomers.

Baby boomers are usually defined as the generation born after the Second World War between 1945 and 1965. According to Census 2001, there are about 17 million baby boomers in the UK, accounting for 29% of the population (National Statistics, 2001). As the relatively large numbers of people born after the Second World War and during the 1960, baby boomers contribute to this ageing population. During the first half of the century, the number of elderly people will continue to increase. Continued population ageing cannot be avoided. People expect to live much longer than in previous generations, and want to remain active members of society in later life. The main business industries realize the older members of the population are a force to be reckoned with, especially with the size and power of such

'grey people'. Hence, it is essential that the business providers understand the needs and opinions of older members of society. Today, the over-50 group of consumers demands a better quality of life and all the other trappings associated with it. As Huber and Skidmore (2003) indicate in *The New Old*, "today, the baby boomer generation overall is the most economically powerful section of UK society" (p.36). As a key consumer group, their economic power and importance cannot be ignored.

Mr. Robert Diamond, managing director of marketing consultancy Diametric, illustrated the implications of this group for the beauty industry in *In-Cosmetics Industry Trends Presentations* held at Fiera Milan, Italy in June 2004 (Matthews, I., 2004). He indicated that people naively assume that when older consumers age, they throw away their personal care habits. However, the fact is that they still take their health and beauty habits with them. In addition, Claire Briney of market research consultancy Euromonitor commented, "as more baby boomers turn 50, the more they want to defy the ageing process" (Matthews, I., 2004). Diamond also pointed out that marketers should have a better understanding of older consumers' needs because older people tend to seek intelligent marketing instead of new, sexy or celebrity-driven adverts. For instance, in recent years, products delivering their benefits by scientifically proven results have been marketed to consumers successfully (Briney, 2002). As Huber and Skidmore (2003) put it, the baby boomers today, the pioneers of the consumer society, compose "a unique generation of what we might call 'smart' consumers" (p.36). The relationship between the baby boomers and the brand has been maintained as rational and practical.

In recent years, the UK's population profile reveals that the median age of the population is moving upwards. According to the *National Statistics* (2005b), the median age has risen from 34.1 years in 1971 to 38.4 in 2003 and is estimated to rise to 43.3 in 2031. According to the *National Statistics* (2004), the percentage of people aged 65 and over grew from 13 per cent in mid-1971 to 16 per cent in mid-2003, whereas people under 16 dropped from 25 per cent to 20 per cent. In other words, older people constitute a growing proportion of populations. The impact of this shift and the transition to an ageing society has become a worldwide trend, which has characterized developed countries throughout the twentieth century.

For the skincare industry, female consumers are still the main market to target, though male consumers have been targeted in the grooming skincare market. For population aged 50 and over in UK, according to *National Statistics* (2005 a), the number of women is greater than the number of men. There were 18 percent more women than men aged 50 and over in 2002. This implied a lucrative market for the skincare industry.

When we talk about older people, issues such as providing a proper pension scheme and offering social care services are what people are usually concerned about. Dependence, crisis, disaster, and burden are words that are present in many of the recent publications about the increase in the number of older people in society. For example, the story by Segars on 4th January 2005 from BBC website is titled 'Pension Crisis: will anyone fix it?' An ageing population has been painted in a negative light. In recent years, research, public commentary, and policy makers have constantly highlighted the construction of an ageing population as "problematic" (Correll, 1999). Pickard (1999) suggests a current or potential burden of an increasingly ageing population on the declining number of the younger, productive people of society, to support. The label of 'old people' seems to be problematised and they have become a stigmatized group. Such negative portrayals of old people seem to have become the

stereotype of 'ageing'. As van Zoonen (1994) argues:

> In research on stereotypes it is thought that children and adults learn their appropriate gender roles by a process of symbolic reinforcement and corrections .… In research on ideology a process of familiarization with dominant ideology is assumed leading finally to its internalization and transformation into common sense (p.29).

Today, we are bombarded with the advertising campaigns of large companies telling us that the ageing process can be slowed down or made less visible. Billboards, slogans, and pictures of those beautiful people project an image of what we are not. Such symbolic reinforcement and corrections of ageing gradually shape the perceptions of 'ageing'. For example, according to the skincare company *Olay*, the definition of ageing is seven separate 'signs' which they have very conveniently identified for us, including appearance of lines & wrinkles, skin texture, skin tone, skin dullness, appearance of pores, appearance of blotches and age spots, dry skin (Olay, 2005). *Olay*'s range of skincare products, the Total Effects range, promises to reduce the appearance of the seven signs of ageing for visibly younger looking skin. The claims made for most of anti-ageing products are to convince us that these so-called anti-ageing creams are the key to staying young and everlasting beauty. It seems that, as far as the skincare company is concerned, looking young is good and looking old is bad. Beauty and youth cannot be 'divorced'. This is the kind of the message of ageing we are presented. In other words, if we do not look young, we are not beautiful. And if we are not beautiful, we are not happy and not confident.[1]

Femininity and the Culture of the Commodified Femininity

Femininity refers to "the attributes that are conventionally associated with the condition of being female within a specific culture" (Macdonald, 1995, p.224). Within the consumer culture, the messages of youth, firmness, smoothness, and being line-free from the advertisements, and so forth, have become the 'required' femininity for a woman. As Williamson claims "advertisements are one of the most important cultural factors moulding and reflecting our life today. They are ubiquitous, an inevitable part of everyone's lives" (1978, p.11). Advertising not only intends to provide meaning for our lives, but also informs us what is right or wrong, appropriate or not appropriate, good or bad.

It is hardly surprising that ageing appearance is viewed so negatively-an unwelcome reminder of bodily deterioration, by the skincare industry. As Dr. Eileen Bradbury, consultant psychologist, said in an interview by BBC on-line News on June 9, 1999, "we are very fixed on the idea that youth is connected to not just beauty but to being powerful, being strong, healthy, energetic, having the best jobs and having the most money." That is to say, ageing has become associated not only with physical appearance but worthiness as a person, women in particular. Ageing is perceived as a 'war' women should combat or fight against. Consequently, a wide audience is encouraged to take beneficial strategies to combat ageing. Under the influence of an expanding promotion with its propaganda for commodities, one of the most common beneficial strategies consumers choose is to spend money on commodities, such as anti-ageing skincare products to prevent or solve ageing in order to give an acceptable impression and appearance. Shilling (1993) points out that

> Commodification is the mode through which contemporary Western societies seek to

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[1] The focus of this paper is on the market for baby boomers. In my larger study, I also will look at the growing market for anti-ageing products for young women and men.

ensure a minimal continuity in how people present themselves. That is, the means for managing the self have become increasingly tied up with consumer goods, and the achievement of social and economic success hinges crucially on the presentation of an acceptable self-image. (p.92)

For Shilling, the term, commodification, is considered as the means of winning recognition or confirmation in society. The skincare industry constructs an ideal form of femininity as an achievable goal through the commodification of the woman's body. With the abundance of anti-ageing skincare products on the market, most of us have realized that the different products advocated have a scientific and pseudo-scientific claim to assure consumers of the efficacy of the products. For example, *76% reported a visible reduction on expression line* from L'Oréal's *Wrinkle De-crease with Boswelox^TM* (Marie Claire, April, 2005). To combat the problems of ageing, the business industry has spent billions testing on the most effective anti-ageing products in the laboratory. A lot of scientific research or evidence has been employed as a guarantee to secure the legitimacy of advertising claims that a product will deliver on its promises. Such general ideas about science have become the central part of the advertisement content to deal with ageing. The attributes of femininity such as youth, firmness, being wrinkle-free, are delivered as something 'technologized' by the skincare industry through the use of science in its advertising. That is, science is the resolution to ageing.

Why has the discourse of science become such an influential mode in advertisements to convince women of the products? What is the importance of science in society? The next section will discuss this in detail.

Authority and Importance of Science

With the advent of science and technology, nearly everything around us can be transmitted immediately, can be heard and watched live; for example, bombings in Baghdad, famine and pointless wars in the underdeveloped world, and earthquakes in Japan. The spread of viruses, such as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), can also be carried all over the world within 24 hours. The evidence for the influence of science and technological innovations on our society is so obvious and well known that all human activity is based on it. From the news we read in the newspaper or see the news reported on the TV, statements like 'scientific research shows …' or 'a scientific paper reported …' or 'scientists believe …' have been used to justify many statements from the health dangers of obesity to the superiority of particular brands of cosmetics, sports equipment, and so on. Images of science, scientific information and scientists are used to imply a symbol of authority for science and its practitioners in the minds of many. Why do science and scientists have such social standing and authority in our culture?

Stanley Milgram (1997) in the early 1960s conducted an experiment to examine the extent to which people would like to punish others on the order of others. The findings of this experiment showed that twenty-six out of forty people obeyed orders to give the shock of 450 volts to another person. The subject explained that they could not violate the command of the experimenter, that was, the scientist. Therefore, it can be seen that most of the authority exerted by the experimenter came from his role as a scientist, as a symbol of being qualified and capable to be in charge of the situations in the laboratory. In the experiment, the authority of a scientist was recognized by the subjects. As a result, the subjects were very obedient to the person they perceived as a scientist.

Milgram's results reveal the behavior of subjects and the effects of authority. More importantly, the implications of his experiment are the trust and authority endowed in the role of scientists and the subjects' obedience to their demands for action conducted. As regards the social standing of scientists today, as Barnes put it, "given what we can see around us of the current standing of science and of general attitudes to it, it seems plausible to suggest that the extent to which science is trusted and its authority accepted today is entirely comparable to that at the time of Milgram's experiments" (1985, p. 80). In the twenty-first century, science, coupled with industry and technology, has come to have its present high social and cultural status and impinges on people's everyday lives in major ways.

After looking at Milgram's work and the social standing of current scientists, the following question is: where does the authority of science come from? Is it something that science has obtained accidentally? Is it something that the public has endowed it with?

In *The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion,* Turner (1978) revealed the strategies used by scientists to acquire cognitive authority. One of the strategies was to establish a notion of the nature of knowledge to legitimate science and to question religious dogma. Based on this, it was declared that observation and experiment should be the two essential aspects of knowledge. The other strategy, the most important one, was to try to enter the educational institutions. "Penetration of the educational system at both the secondary and university levels would insure the dispersion of scientific knowledge and eventually lead to broader applications throughout the society" (ibid, p.372). To gain positions as teachers or academics, scientists had to fight against the religious groups in control of the educational system and guide the curriculum: this involved

> attacking the sufficiency of strictly literary training, calling for removal of theological tests in the universities and informal requirements in the public schools, opposing denominational control of the school boards after the Educational Act of 1870, and demanding that the science taught be science as defined by professional scientists (ibid., p.372).

As it can be seen, the indication of Turner's work is that the authority of science was not simply obtained by accident. Neither did the public bestow this. It was the professional scientists that situated themselves high in a hierarchical society on the basis of authority by fighting for it.

Our current society is expert-dominated and tends to have more and more levels of specialization. The advancement of science has helped business, economics, people's everyday lives and even politics. In other words, the cognitive authority continues to have an 'intimate' relationship with specialized knowledge. When we benefit from the advantages of specialized knowledge, we implicitly involve faith and the acceptance of the authority of the source of the specialized knowledge.

In the discourse of advertising, science has become a crucial component to launch a product. The use of science is intended to produce descriptions and evidence of the product, and to lay claim to authority in providing facts about the product. In general, the public understanding of science is an activity, involving theory choice, testing, and inference, which can offer objective and unbiased knowledge of the world. Science is often associated with objectivity, trust, fact, truth, and reliability. Increasingly, science has become an efficient advertising tool to reach people. On the one hand, the legitimacy of the claims and justification of the advertisements is pledged by science, which makes it easier for consumers to understand the indication given. On the other hand, Raser believed that the integration of

science in advertisements plays a part as it "further legitimizes the value of the advertising function among members of the business community" (Kreshel, 1990, p.52).

The Role of Science in Advertising

In everyday life, we talk or write in order to achieve something. Woodward and Denton Jr. (1996, p.20) classify three types of communication: pure information, pure expression and pure persuasion. Pure information refers to information-giving that relates to facts or information where the communicator's concern is mainly with the receiver's understanding. Pure expression involves a desire to speak one's mind rather than have others agree or disagree, act or not act. Communicators of pure expression may want to unload their anger, joy, anxieties or fears only because of the release it provides. The third type of communication, pure persuasion, is more complex than information-giving and expression. A new dimension is the interest in how the ideas or actions will influence others. The purpose of the persuasive message is intended to change the way others think, act and feel.

Nevertheless, there are some overlaps among these forms of communication. For example, *76% reported a visible reduction on expression line* from L'Oréal's *Wrinkle Decrease with Boswelox^{TM}* (Marie Claire, April, 2005), '76% on the reduction of expression lines' in the advertisement indicates the efficacy of the cream. In a simple sense, this number is a piece of factual information from the experiment in L'Oréal's laboratory. In another sense, it is easy to assume that the advertiser uses it with the intention of persuading the potential consumer into buying the product. "A good deal of persuasion occurs under the pretext of information-giving" (Woodward and Denton Jr., 1996, p. 21). More importantly, it can be argued that advertisers are aware that such scientific information can reinforce women's existing views on security and safety of the product and the brand, especially beauty products, in the advertising campaign. Therefore, Woodward and Denton Jr. define persuasion as "1. the process of preparing and delivering, 2. verbal and nonverbal messages, 3. to autonomous individuals, 4. in order to alter or strengthen, 5. their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors" (1996, p. 23).

The discourse of advertising, the most notably discourse type of consumerism, has a high profile and has established models which are widely drawn upon. As we know, the basic result of advertising is to sell products to us. Dyer explains that the word 'advertising' means "drawing attention to something, or notifying or informing somebody of something" (1982, p. 2). The adoption of scientific discourse in advertising is one of the advertising strategies to seduce consumers and catch their attention. It intensifies not only the public's perception of the 'magic' of science but also people's belief in the usefulness of science.

Research Methods
Procedures

Since this is only an exploratory study and a work in progress to examine the current positioning concept of ageing and science offered by the skincare industry, a semiotic analysis of anti-ageing skincare advertisements in five popular monthly women's magazines in April 2005 was conducted. These magazines comprise *Cosmopolitan*, *Maria Claire*, *She*, *Harpers & Queen* and *Good Housekeeping*. I have chosen these magazines because they are the most recent issues available for analysis and therefore demonstrate an up-to-date representation of the constructed discourse of ageing and science in our media and society.

The inclusion criteria of selecting the magazines in this study were: (1) total average

net circulation per issue on the basis of Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC, 2005) and (2) median age on the basis of National Readership Survey (NRS, 2005). The criterion, median age, is an important factor for selecting the magazines. Because the range of anti-ageing products, as discussed above, has been across all the age groups of women, the median age from 28 to 51 (see Table 1) was chosen to look at the advertisements targeted at the different readership of women's magazines. According to the age of readership data defined by NRS (2005), the age range for deciding the women's magazines is 15- 17; 18- 24; 25- 34; 35- 44; 45- 54. However, the advertisements in teenage magazines and young women's magazines of the age range between 15-17 and 18-24 are mainly about makeup products or hair products such as styling or dying. As a result, the readership of women's magazines aged between 15-17 and 18-24 are not included.

The total average net circulation figure per issue of each magazine chosen in this study for the period 1 January, 2004 to 30 June 2004 issued by Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC, 2005), an independent body supported by advertisers, advertising agencies and advertising media owners to collect and collate audited circulation figures, is shown below in Table 1. In addition, the median age for each of these magazines is shown in Table 1 as well (cited in EMAP advertising, 2005).

Table 1. Readership of women's magazines

Age range	25-34		35-44		45-51
Magazines	Cosmopolitan	Marie Claire	She	Harpers & Queen	Good housekeeping
Publishers	The National Magazine Company Ltd.	European Magazines Limited	The National Magazine Company Ltd.	The National Magazine Company Ltd.	The National Magazine Company Ltd.
Median Age	28	33	37	44	51
Total Average Net Circulation per issue (01-01-04 to 30-06-04)	456,447	380,760	181,228	97,756	417,893

Samples

The samples consisted of 25 advertisements for anti-ageing skincare products. Some of the advertisements were put in more than one magazine. Therefore, the number of the samples was 15. Table 2 is the list of the advertisements analyzed to examine the current positioning concepts of ageing and science.

Table 2. List of advertisements

	Brand	Product	Magazines (median age)
1.	Clarins	Total body lift	She (37)
2.	Clarins	Eye revive Beauty flash	Cosmopolitan (28) Marie Claire (33)
3.	Clinique	Repairwear extra help serum Repairwear day SPF15 intensive cream Repairwear intensive eye cream	Harpers & Queen (44)
4.	Clinique	Superdefense^{TM} Triple Action Moisturizer	Marie Claire (33)
5.	Dior	Capture R60/80^{TM} Créme Correction Rides Ultimate	Marie Claire (33)
6.	Dior	Capture Sculpt 10 créme fermeté lifting lifting firming creme	Harpers & Queen (44) Good Housekeeping (51)
7.	Estée Lauder	Perfectionist [CP+]	Marie Claire (33) Harpers & Queen (44) Good Housekeeping (51)
8.	Lancôme	Primordiale Optimum	Cosmopolitan (28) Marie Claire (33)
9.	Lancôme	Rénergie Morpholift active re-defining treatment	Harpers & Queen (44) Good Housekeeping (51)
10.	L'Oréal	Wrinkle De-crease with Boswelox^{TM}	Marie Claire (28)
11.	L'Oréal	Wrinkle De-crease with concentrated Boswelox^{TM}	Marie Claire (28)
12.	Nivea Hand	Age Defying Q10^{PLUS}	Cosmopolitan (28) Marie Claire (33) She (37)
13.	ROC	Retin-Ox Correxion^{TM}	Marie Claire (33) She (37) Good Housekeeping (51)
14.	Sally Hansen	Age Correct retinol hand crème	Marie Claire (33)
15.	Sisley Paris	All day all year essential day care	Harpers & Queen (44)

Main Findings

Categories of Ageing

After the semiotic analysis of these samples, it is found out that the current constructions of ageing from the skincare industry can be grouped into three categories: (1) symptoms of ageing, (2) environmental effects of ageing, and (3) lifestyle of ageing. The category of *symptoms of ageing* refers to the description of signs of ageing such as fine lines, wrinkles, sagging skin, age spots, and so on. The category of *environmental effects of ageing*

refers to the causes of ageing from the environmental factors, such as UVA/ UVB rays and pollutions. The category of *lifestyle of ageing* refers to the causes of ageing from the factor of lifestyle, such as late nights and the stress of modern life. Based on the data, the manifest concept of ageing is s*ymptoms of ageing*. In other words, fine lines, wrinkles, creases, under eye puffiness, sagging jaw lines are interpretations of ageing the skincare industry thinks women would associate with. This suggests that physical appearance of women from age 28 to 51, either eye, face or body, is still the main appeal of the skincare industry to women. It could be argued that physical appearance is still tied up with a woman's self-esteem, worthiness and happiness. More specifically, taking care of her appearance, herself, has become part of a woman's lifestyle. As Betterton states, "a woman's character and status are frequently judged by her appearance" (1987, p.7).

Categories of Science

As for the constructions of science from the skincare industry, they can be grouped into three categories: (1) medical authority of science, (2) procedures of science, and (3) statistics of science. *Medical authority of science* is defined as any reference to the medical profession such as dermatology and ophthalmology. *Procedures of science* means any description or association of the manufacturing of the product, from raw ingredient to the final product. *Statistics of science* means any description of the percentage. At this point it is worth mentioning that these categories are based primarily on their relevance for this study and are not to be considered as an exhaustive list of categories as there may be other categories as well.

It is found out that the category of *Procedures of science* is the significant advertising appeal to persuade women into buying the product. On the one hand, information such as the ingredients of the products, the traits of the products, the results of the products, as well as the experiment of the product, I would argue, are what rationalizes the advertising message, making it a more efficient advertising tool. On the other hand, I would argue, these are the security, assurance, fact, faith and dependence women are looking for when it comes to taking care of themselves.

To sum up, the concept of ageing has been presented as so un-welcomed that women are kept in a state of chronic anxiety. The scientific claims made by the skincare industry lay the emotional foundation for the insistence of the advertising industry that women's youthful look, their emotional satisfaction, and their worthiness all depend on consumption of the anti-ageing lotion, cream or serum.

Conclusions

In his book, *The Culture of Narcissism*, Lasch argues that "advertising manufactures a product of its own: the consumers, perpetually unsatisfied, restless, anxious, and bored. Advertising serves not so much to advertise products as to promote consumption as a way of life" (1991, p.72). Advertising has an active part in stimulating and shaping the content of our lives and becoming a participant in the construction of meaning in our lives. The preliminary findings from this study suggest that the advertisements for anti-ageing skincare products have now stressed the importance of ageing related issues, even though some of them are not all themselves anti-ageing products. The small sample may not necessarily represent the unequivocal notions of ageing and science. As this is a work in progress, the researcher believes that the findings could be enhanced further.

A story, *Who will be beautiful in future?* by Jenny Mathews on BBC on-line News on 1 December 2004, shows that Britons are spending 225m a year on cosmetic surgery and other anti-ageing procedures like Botox, about half of which are concerned with trying to look young. This is the UK cosmetic surgery market. If we connect it to the skincare market without going under the knife, this suggests that the desire for a youthful look is an epidemic today. This paper has identified and examined the notions of ageing and science as it is being highlighted in the advertising campaigns for anti-ageing skincare products. I have argued that the novelty of advertising lies in the combination of the development of a woman-centered and explicit scientific discourse that promises a dream come true of the 'ideal femininity' for women. Key implications for both the concepts of ageing and science constructed by the skincare industry have been identified, such as the lifestyle of women, the guarantee of science, as well as the encouragement of critical understanding of advertising's messages.

Finally, I conclude with addressing some questions for future speculation and research. How will the role of science be involved with advertising in the near future? As the population ages further over coming years, is it possible that society will start accepting old looks and seeing old as beautiful?

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