

Branding of Feminism: The Masquerade of Media Generated Post Feminist Subjectivity

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Abstract

The focus in this paper would be to critically examine the politics of representation and the ideological currency of feminist values in the postfeminist popular media with special emphasis on advertising. This discussion becomes important as it gives the scope to understand how popular imaginings of feminism gets constructed in the media and therefore in the everyday life. Through this popular imagining of feminism there is a distorted representation of feminism and feminist activities, which needs a critical analysis. Certain ads make an effort to portray gender sensitive issues however in the process portray and create new kinds of normative femininity and stereotype. Popular culture overlaps signifiers of femininity and feminism creating newer commodified feminine images. Postfeminist ads and popular media masquerade regressive feminine ideals through various manifestations of cultural power of feminism.

Keywords: Femininity, Feminism, Post-Feminism, Popular Media, Commodification.

Aim of the study

is to provide a critical analysis of the postfeminist media representation of women and delve into how feminist political movement has been commercially appropriated to sell regimes of ideal femininity. The idea is to highlight the correlation between masquerading of feminism in popular media and the rising new femininities in neoliberal era.

Introduction

Type or copy and paste your complete paper including heading mentioned on page number - 2 Both pro and anti-postfeminist scholars have worked on the representation of postfeminism in popular culture. These texts substantiate their positions on postfeminism by interpreting television shows, cinemas, advertisements, popular icons and popular novels. Projansky (2001: 16) while making an attempt to read rape in a postfeminist cinema 'draws on the poststructuralist assumption that public discourses have material effects' while also highlighting the 'significance of representation in popular culture'. According to Williamson politics is the intersection of the public and the private life and in advertisement the politics emerges in the public realm which has an impact in the private lives (1978: 10). The politics of representation in the postfeminist popular media controls the personal lives of the women and therefore shapes what Power calls a 'one dimensional woman' who enjoys her being in consumer culture (2009). It must be noted that this kind of representation also has an impact in the popular imagining of feminism in the public realm.

The paper firstly looks at the complex relationship between feminism, postfeminism and popular media. Here, I elaborately discuss the mechanism of appropriating feminist themes or principles or ideas by the postfeminist popular media. With a special emphasis on advertising I give a critical analysis of postfeminist ads where feminism gets commodified in order to sell products in the market. Next, I discuss the form in which feminism has become a marketing strategy. However there would be overlaps in the ways in which feminism gets marketed by the media. I discuss how the media appropriates feminism as power rhetoric in order to recreate the regimes of beauty myth and also how the postfeminist idea of power feminism is used to challenge the very normative ideas of femininity and gender roles.



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**Feminism, Post-feminism
and Popular Media**

It has been noted that since the beginning of the second wave feminism, feminists have been critical about the sexist and misogynist media for portraying women as passive subjects, as sexually objectified objects and into stereotypical roles. Gender ideology is the foundation for media representation as it reproduces the power dynamics of gender roles and reframes traditional stereotypes. Second wave feminists have strived to free women from the shackles of 'traditional' feminine roles of patriarchy and so they have encouraged the representation of role equality in the popular media in an attempt to 'break through the oppression of women' (Skinner 2009: 9, Mack-Canty 2004: 157). They wanted an egalitarian representation of women in media and advertising accompanied with texts that could compliment women's intelligence. Steinem and her editors at Ms. Magazine explained, 'We don't spend half our money on makeup and the other half on food we also buy cars, books, airline tickets and the many products that aren't usually directed to women at all' (as quoted in Howard, 2010: 139). The new wave of feminism encouraged women to own their femininity, 'reappropriate their girlhood' and claim their individuality as a means of rebel and empowerment and this idea formed the modern female consumer (162). The media especially advertising was proficient enough to respond to both feminist criticisms, and the female consumers who were furious for being framed as objects of desire. This was done by appropriating feminist sensibilities into brand identities (Dyer 1982; Goldman 1992; Williamson 2003).

The whole political economy of the media depends on advertisements as it occupies a major part of newspaper, magazine, worldwide web content and television, which has made it the most consistent body of material in the mass media (Leiss et al. 2005: 2). Williamson (1978, 11) asserts that 'advertising is the superstructure' of the mediascapes and its messages form the root of ideology which influences consumer's lifestyle, ways of thinking and also frames how the individuals imagine their own identity/existence. It is a medium designed not only to sell commodities but also philosophies and ideologies in an attempt to add value to the product and create social meanings that might have no role in the exchange value of the product. There is a vast amount of scholarship on the idea that advertising manipulates consumers by creating false consciousness and false needs (see for instance, Berger 1972, Berger 2001, Goffman 1976, Jhally 1997 and Williamson 1978). The aim of the postfeminist ad is 'tailored to the demands of the commodity form' in order to corner the feminine market (Goldman, 1992: 30). Next, I will discuss the mechanism through which postfeminist media celebrates, attacks, manipulates and appropriates feminist themes.

The ideological currency of feminism is no longer depicted as discrete politics rather it has been transformed into a 'generalised brand' (Banet-Weiser 2004: 123). This occurs because the media appropriates the liberal and the equal opportunities feminism while neglecting radical feminism which is concerned with social criticism rather than with individual progress. It is important to explore how feminism is packaged and sold to media consumers in the form of commodity or in the form of popular cultural product. Through the case study of the sexual product businesses like Toy Box by Loe (1999) and stores like Smitten Kitten and Babeland by Heineken (2007), the authors try to understand how feminist capitalism functions and how feminist ideas are feeding into capitalist profit making goals. These stores used the political arguments of pro-sex feminism in order to sell products like vibrators and female oriented sexuality books in the name of sexual pleasure and empowerment. Also popular magazines like Elle, Ms and Cosmopolitan in the west and Meri Saheli in India are aiming to brand feminism in popular culture while selling hegemonic femininities in terms of fashion, beauty and interior designing (domestic femininity). For instance Meri Saheli launched by the popular actress HemaMalini uses the idea of 'sisterhood' as propounded by a Delhi based women's crisis intervention centre named 'Saheli' to raise campaigns against dowry deaths, domestic violence, rape and other forms of oppression. In order to understand the branding of feminism one must critically examine the ways in which the products gets manufactured, distributed and purchased by attaching political meanings. This shows that feminism is sold in the market through the process of co-optation where there 'is an appropriation of ideological principles and practices of movement' (Thomas & Zimmerman, 2007: 361). It is through this process that scholars have

critically analysed the ways in which feminism has been depoliticized, decontextualized and deconstructed by the capitalists^[1]. In a similar fashion Goldman (1992) says that feminism undergoes a process of co-optation in advertising where feminist ideas and agendas are extracted to produce a signifier of feminism which is devoid of any political content. This process is called commodity feminism where media as a cultural space of postfeminism aims to incorporate, modify and adopt ideas of feminism.

The cultural representation of feminism in popular media can be understood through semiotic analysis. Semiotic analysis is defined in terms of a signifier and a signified where the signifier is the object or the commodity that is sold and the signified is the abstract sign of feminism (see works of Goffman 1976, Goldman 1992, and Williamson 1978). Feminism in the popular media is reduced into emptied signs in terms of a look or a style or in the form of rhetoric. This form of representation of feminism is depoliticized, dehistoricized and decontextualized from the actual feminist agenda, politics and activism. In this process the mental image of feminism is detached as a form of collective struggle and attached to a product/identity with the message that feminism or being a feminist can be achieved by consuming a particular product. However, in few cases the depoliticized form of feminism has been appropriated to create an anti-feminist message with an intention to attack the feminist politics and movement. Virginia slims (feminist tobacco) promoted an image of feminist independence, "You have come a long way baby" in order to sell a highly addictive cancer causing product (see works of Williamson 2003, Goldman 1992). The product attracted female consumers with the promise that its consumption would lead to weight loss as nicotine was understood to suppress the appetite. It is important to note here that the imagery of a feminist gets juxtaposed with a hegemonic form of femininity. So when the consumers (female) thought of Virginia Slims they thought of feminism and when they thought of feminism they thought of Virginia Slims and other similar products. The process of appropriation of feminism is not in absence of manipulation. Feminist ideas gets manipulated by producing visual cliques or visual rhetoric; for instance the imagery of a confident, successful and independent woman in ads like Virginia Slims and others gets overused and thereby loses the original meaning. This way of turning 'feminist social goals into individual lifestyles' is a consumerist agenda (Rapp, 1988:32). In this process feminism is abstracted which means it is emptied of its content, of any human purpose or aim and thereby eventually loses the connection with the larger feminist agenda.

There is an overlap of the signifiers of feminism with the signifiers of femininity. This postfeminist femininity is the 'double entanglement' of normative and newer imaginings of femininity (McRobbie, 2008: 12). The normative form of femininity that is celebrated is the delicate femininity which includes the passive appearance of the female body as well as the practice of traditional femininity that would include domesticity, beauty practices etc. Newer forms of femininity include appearance of the female body which is active, sexual, in many ways negotiating with masculine forms of femininity as well as celebrating women's engagement in work culture. I include body as a form of femininity because in the postfeminist media portrayal, body is the mediating link between feminism and femininity. Popular postfemininity is a popular media friendly, commercialized and consumer oriented discourse. The various manifestations of this cultural power of feminism needs to be discussed while substantiating it with the postfeminist ads.

Power Feminism

In this section I will discuss the various forms of appropriation of feminism by the media as a marketing strategy which aim to celebrate feminism and not attack feminism in the manner described in the previous section. Here, female subjects are endowed with power and self-confidence as the new woman is portrayed as successful and independent. The woman knows what she wants and attributes herself power by exercising her right to consumerism. It's interesting to see that the female subject takes control over her life and relationships through the commodified appearance of femininity. The popular feminist rhetoric like independence, freedom, right, choice etc. are packaged in the popular culture by depoliticizing and deradicalizing feminism. I would substantiate this through beauty and sports advertising where the subject incorporates feminist signifiers of emancipation and empowerment by producing what Lazar calls 'power femininity'

**Power Femininity
Reclaiming Traditional
Femininity**

(2007).

Although the second wave feminists considered the norms of beauty to be highly oppressive and patriarchal (see for instance Brownmiller 1984; Bordo 1995; Kilbourne 1999) the advertisers could successfully associate feminist themes with products that promoted beauty regimes. This was also helped by the fact that in the 80s beauty practices were rationalized by scholars like Valerie Steele (1985), Rita Freedman (1986), Louis Banner (1983) and others. Scott even argued that 'nearly all the founders of major cosmetics in America were women: Elizabeth Arden, Helena Rubenstein, Estée Lauder, Dorothy Gray and others' (1993: 150). She uses the postfeminist narrative where she attaches individual female success with feminist activism to claim that the cosmetics are not products of patriarchy but a result of entrepreneurial success. Postfeminists consider beauty to be a medium to attain power, be independent and be autonomous that women have as consumers and as producers (154). Thereby, these ads neither place beauty in opposition to feminism as a pre-feminist practice nor beauty products are marketed as an anti-feminist product. Rather its practices are negotiated in ways that would appear to be less oppressive and more empowering. Empowered beauty is about embracing beauty practices in the project of self without associating it with patriarchy.

Lazar (2011) notes that advertisers in the postfeminist era have successfully linked the normative practices of beauty with an emancipated identity and she calls it 'entitled femininity' (38). The visual imagery in these ads celebrates the revival of a strong and powerful womanhood with the return of femininity. As Lazar (2011: 41) mentions the campaign for Slimming Century 'Fight for your right to own the perfect body', the campaign for Olay and Pantene 'you have the power to transform'. Here terms like right, fight and power are associated with battle against patriarchal norms in the second wave. However in these ads women's body becomes the battle site with the motive to attain an ideal and perfect femininity. Revlon introduced the fragrance named Charlie (Faludi, 1991: 205) that celebrated the independent single woman who made her own decisions. This was the outspoken woman who was not only confident and witty but also feminine. This liberated professional woman would sign her own cheques, would go for nightclubs and would invite men for dance. This liberated postfeminist woman has the ideal feminine body of the model. Charlie became a symbol of lifestyle feminism where the young women were encouraged to be anything that they wanted to be. Similarly the early Fair & Lovely commercials in India would show women acquiring a husband or boyfriend by attaining lighter skin. Twitchell (1996: 152) goes on to say 'the face of the woman has been a commodity for some time'. However, recent commodity feminist ads with catchphrases 'A vision to make dreams come true' portray women acquiring employment in male dominated professions like television anchors in cricket^[2]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3L-y12KeLc>. In recent Fair & Lovely commercial the father insists his daughter to get married to a suitable groom. The female subject gains self-confidence after using the product and insists on having a house, a job and a financially independent life before getting married. What remains supreme in these ads is the message that though women are actively participating in male professions, their engagement in beauty practices is what makes them successful <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDMT9e5Wb2Y>. Freedman, a postfeminist scholar points out, 'Looks do count, in love and in work' and that one 'must begin with this premise, in order to meaningfully challenge the beauty myth' (1986: 230). She further argues that many women who describe themselves as feminists today 'regard looking pretty as part of feminist mandate to project confidence, utilize assets and to feel good about oneself' (1986: 231).

Power femininity within beauty advertising is associated with celebrating femininity where the female subject engages in pampering and pleasing the self. Postfeminists like Walter (1998) and Wolf (2002) celebrated beauty practices as a source of pleasure where the engagement in discursive beauty practices are not about looking beautiful for men but about the pleasure derived by women upon achieving the beauty ideal. Female subjects in such representations are self-absorbed, self-confident, hedonistic and narcissistic on achieving the hegemonic beauty ideal through commodity consumption^[3]. Charlie's success inspired Max Factor's Maxi 'when I am in the mood there is no stopping me',

**Sporting Femininity
Challenging Normative
Femininity**

Chanel's Cristelle 'celebrate yourself' and the Babe perfume 'the fragrance for the fabulous women you are becoming' (Faludi, 1991: 216). In a similar fashion, Estee Lauder came up with the caption, 'Feel the power with color so potent, so creamy, it seduces every curve of your lips' (Lazar, 2009). In other words, women were invited to experience power by wearing Estee Lauder's sensually delicious lipstick. This has been appropriated by brands like Clarins 'luxurious pampering, just for you' and L'oreal 'because you are worth it' and Olay 'Fight seven signs of ageing'. L'Oreal Paris Commercial in India launched its product as 'revolutionary hair care range' where it vouched that the beauty expert gives 'solution' to the hair problems. Ashwarya Rai the brand ambassador of L'Oreal appears in commercials, billboards and other forms of media advertising. One can say that she celebrates her femininity with power and portrays a narcissistic, hedonistic and self-absorbed imagery. She imagines herself as 'being transformed into an object of envy for others, an envy which then justify her loving of herself' (Berger, 1972: 134). This kind of celebratory femininity produces new postfeminist consciousness where women are portrayed as confident, smiling and endowed with power after gaining ideal hegemonic feminine beauty.

Contrary to the ads for beauty products, brands like Nike, Adidas and Reebok entered the market by directly appropriating feminist criticism of beauty practices in order to sell well-toned feminine athletic body. Reebok came up with catchphrases 'I believe high heels are a conspiracy against women' that uses the second wave criticism of fashion industry (Danaher and Mark: 2003, 86). Nike came up with similar rebellious catchphrases like 'Just do it'; 'Is it possible that we are more beautiful in motion than standing still?'; 'Strong is sexy'; 'Girls can do sports' with the motive to connect feminism, sports and rhetoric (see works of, Dworkin & Messner, 1999; Messner 2002, Cole & Hribar, 1995). Nike started "Make Yourself" campaign where the manifest purpose was to 'inspire and motivate women everywhere to achieve their goals and become best versions of themselves'. The campaign used athletes as role models where it displayed sportswomen or parts of their bodies along with a blank slogan 'MAKE YOURSELF__'. While suggesting that women fill in the blank it imposed words like proud, strong or fit to put it as endings of the sentence. Here we see how the rhetoric of power feminism is associated with sporting femininity. In the recent 'Check Out My Game' ad launched by Star Sports on women's day in India the female athletes were shown in feisty form playing their respective games as the voice over sarcastically asks the men 'if they want to check her out they must Check out her track flick in hockey, the long range shot in basketball, her neck grip in wrestling, her upper cut in boxing, her takedown in martial arts, her speed in running, the number of skips while skipping, her dive in swimming, her serve in tennis and her bulls-eye in shooting'. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRmIFzxrYfU>> The ad makes a bold statement against eve teasing as it continues to say when you look at a woman, try to see the hours of work that have gone behind becoming what she is today. Check out her failures, her black eye but also check out her achievements, her medals and trophies. Further proclaiming to watch out her power, her determination, her strive and her will while warning men not to check her out. In a similar fashion JSW came up with an campaign 'Will of Steel' where it featured the life of journey of Geeta Phogat explaining how she overcame societal norms, broke myths and became successful after winning the gold medal in 2010 through her inner strength and self-belief <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bK04dGgGLY>.

Women are represented as aggressive in gesture; muscular and well-toned in bodily appearance which is also a strategy to use the girl power rhetoric. The Cadbury Bournvita Adatein advertisement celebrates girlhood and female empowerment by representing a confident boxer girl whose sexuality gets revealed in the end <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMliuSdgIPQ>. The use of the term "thunder thighs" is to signify feminist criticism of anorexic images of models in the media but it is derogatory and sexist in its own ways. Feminists have criticized the fetishization of women's body parts where certain parts like legs, lips are chosen for sexual excitement rather than the whole body. Connell (1987) and Hargreaves (1994) assert that if women are featured in the media, the images are not always positive because they are limited to traditional sexualized representations that emphasize preferred forms of femininity rather than athleticism. The athletic body

represented in these ads is a postfeminist body where the focus is on self-discipline and self-regulation through the regime of exercise. In this process there is stigmatization of the body that is not in shape. The entitled femininity where emancipation is associated with beauty is replaced by masculine femininity where emancipation is associated with physical exercise. Bordo (1989) argues that in the postfeminist framework women are expected not only to be physically slender, fragile and beautiful but are also supposed to adopt masculine qualities like being 'tough', 'hard', 'muscular' and must take challenges as they enter male dominating space amounting to 'double bind'. She says that on the surface the body building image of a woman can be considered to be a form of feminist resistance from the image of an anorexic body as the subject is 'building the body up, not whittling it down' (Bordo, 1995: 151). However on a closer analysis one sees that there is a similar drive for perfection which is achieved by self-control and self-discipline. By linking girl power with sports these ads make an attempt to juxtapose masculine femininity with the empty rhetoric of feminism. It must be noted that there is a use of militaristic discourse associated with dominant masculinity not only in context to physical exercise but also while selling cosmetics and other forms of normative feminine practices. However, in case of women's engagement in physical exercise it is seen that for women to be powerful she must be like a man and incorporate hegemonic masculinity through body building. The irony lies in the fact that the site of battle is women's body and these hegemonic masculine metaphors are used to create new hegemonic feminine ideal. This has become a common postfeminist strategy in advertisements, though it's interesting to see how the same strategy is used to re-create femininity. While it may be argued that these ads are 'feminist' I would not consider them so because firstly, the real female bodily experiences of women are neglected and undermined and secondly, the representation of the muscular athletic body derived from hegemonic masculinity can be seen as form of male oppression in so far as it sets up the male body as ideal.

Author's contention here is that these ads are recreating norms of ideal femininity in response to earlier forms. I would relate to Schwichtenberg's (1993) description 'a doubling back on femininity in a masculinity that is feminized' (135). The mere replacement of femininity (defined through creams, lotions, lipsticks) with the femininity (defined through physical exercise, health and athletic body) is not a progress rather another discursive project associated with body politics.

Conclusion

The chapter discusses in great detail how feminism can be used and misused for selling a product in the market. It is through the representation of postfeminist ads that the feminist values gets co-opted and manipulated in the media. I have argued that the mere co-optation of feminism does not make an ad 'feminist' as the agenda is primarily selling the product that side lines the larger social, political and structural changes. The use of active, assertive, confident and individualistic tone of these ads is not a progress from the earlier passive representation; it is rather a strategy to corner the female market. Advertisements in the postfeminist framework make an attempt to connect feminism with consumerism and in this process ignore the hostility that has existed between feminism (Marxist and Socialist) and capitalism. Earlier femininity was commodified to sell products in the market whereas now in the postfeminist/neoliberal frame advertisements commodify both feminism and femininity in order to attract female consumers. The popular media not only misuses women's movement for marketing its product in the form of popular films or products but would also produce a backlash culture against feminism by asserting that the fruits of that movement is also dismantling women's physical appearance. This produces multiple consciousness of feminism that oscillates between anti-feminism, traditional feminism and power feminism. Postfeminism and the media have a complex and a symbiotic relationship as on one hand by attacking or celebrating feminism in advertisements a common/popular understanding of (post) feminism is created, whereas on the other hand the postfeminist aura is appropriated by advertisers in order to create new consumer lifestyles. This shows that the new stereotypes in gender representation have not displaced the older ones; rather there is an existence of the older with the new and femininity produced in the neoliberal phase is a synthesis of the old and the new.

However one must rethink the politics of postfeminism in context to advertisement

as ads can send some larger gender sensitive messages to the consumers. The most significant ad that I can think of is the recent Ariel campaign 'Share the load' that tries to question gender normative roles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJukf4ifuKs>. In the ad the father makes an apology for setting a bad example to his working daughter as he, much like his son-in-law, never volunteered to participate in household chores. The ad is symbolic of concepts like 'double day', 'double duty', 'second shift' or 'double burden' where feminists have critically analysed how working women carry most of the unpaid domestic labour spending around 15 to 13 hours a week extra on these activities (Corrin, 1992; Hoschchild, 1990, Lee & Waite 2005). The ad gives a very important message unlike the Airtel Boss ad where the wife who is also the boss of her husband goes back home happily to prepare food <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9BIl9nhqTE>. It is a romantic portrayal of a superwoman who manages the demands of job and home that gives shape to new stereotypes. While analysing the ads it is important to decode the manner in which new stereotypes in gender representation are produced in the process of dismissing the older ones. The recent Raymond ad where the husband decides to stay back as the child needs care whereas the wife goes to the office reverses the stereotypical gender role and inverts the whole structure giving space to an idea of a 'house husband' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hv42havE4w>. Other ads like the Bharat Matrimony where the in-laws question the daughter in law's engagement with outside work and the husband seems to be highly supportive. Also the Tannishq ad that portrays a second marriage of a 'dark skinned' woman where the husband is shown loving and caring towards her daughter from the earlier alliance are few examples of gender sensitive ads^[4].

In the above few examples gender sensitivity is achieved by portraying a postfeminist man who is sensitive, caring and most importantly takes responsibility of feminism. Due to the paucity of space I could not study the changing representation of men in ads. This does not mean men are not represented under hegemonic masculinity (also commercialization of male bodies) however in parallel to this there is a portrayal of sensible fathers, caring husbands and emotional men which is different from the cliqued form of masculinity^[5]. There is also a market for men that caters for their grooming regime, although this space is seen to be feminine there is a claim for masculinity as these products are promoted specifically for the male body and skin. This way we see how new forms of masculinity is produced in the media and advertisements. One could study the representation of masculinity in the postfeminist frame where men are also represented as masculine effeminate. Postfeminist sensibility is also defined by the portrayal of male bodies within feminist principles. There is a portrayal of brand conscious male figure who engages in self-fashioning and other narcissistic forms of bodily engagement. The men in the postfeminist frame are atleast pro-women if not pro-feminism, narcissistic, anti-sexist, self-absorbed, sexually attractive and consumer driven.

This is the limitation of this study as it could trace the representation of men in this framework. Also while tracing new forms of femininity in the postfeminist frame I could not underline the impact of such representations on women. One could bring this as a form of primary research in order to understand how women in general are affected by these ads by taking into consideration the response of the female consumers as to how they would associate themselves in these ads. Also how these representations have shaped their popular understanding of feminism and in turn have even affected their relationship with men. One could even study the shift in advertising in different contexts for instance I do trace certain ads in India while dealing with the various manifestations of postfeminism, however one could trace the shift in advertising in a postcolonial space like India. For instance how the imagery of a chaste woman does exist in parallel to the self-obsessed career woman. The portrayal of a traditional homemaker exists in tandem with the modern job oriented woman and both these imageries of Indian women is consumer oriented (Chaudhuri 1998). The dominant discourse of state feminism/traditional feminism works alongside the western discourse of postfeminism and in this process there is a creation of a model of womanhood who performs ideal traditional femininity; participates in freely individualised lifestyle or is a combination of both.

Chatterjee (1993) talks about how in the colonial period women and her body became the site for defining what constituted India's tradition and culture. Chaudhuri (1996) asserts that Indian woman has an image in the popular culture whereas the man does not as she is the cultural emblem of the national whereas he is the national. With colonialism and postcolonialism there was production of new forms of femininity. The female empowering images exists in tandem with the tagline 'ajkinaari' a representative of a modern woman yet traditional in many forms and this portrayal has nothing to do with the larger woman's movement but is a strategy to manipulate female consumers through faux feminism.

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End Notes

1. *The various forms in which co-optation occurs are: popular feminism (Hollows 2000, Brundson 1986, Farrell 1998)/commodity feminism (Goldman 1992)/consumer feminism (Zeisler 2008)/celebrity feminism (Cole and Hribar 1995) /feminist consumerism (Johnston and Taylor 2008)/corporate feminism (Messner 2002).*
2. *Power feminist narrative is also used to challenge existing gender roles in society. Here women are portrayed as confident, self-asserting, rational, independent and Can-Do feminist. Companies have started selling cars and two wheelers to women with the advertising vocabulary where women are put on the wheel. Hero Scooty ad with the catchphrase 'Why should boys have all the fun?' features celebrities like Priyanka Chopra and Alia Bhatt who celebrate their personal freedom to roam around in the public space without any restriction <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z44vMNZwPeA>. Such descriptions are oblivious to the violence inflicted upon women in public space in the form of sexual harassment, eve teasing and rape. In the Delhi December rape case a woman's mobility was interrupted by gang rape <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y97kLwoN9ag>. The popular narrative was to place responsibility upon the girl for the consequence as she accessed the public space in late hours.*
3. *This idea where women engage in the process of self-regulation and self-monitoring in order to attain the hegemonic aesthetic beauty, bears resemblance with the idea of 'panopticon'. It is term applied by Foucault (1979) for the prison inmates as they engage in self-disciplining their own movements.*
4. *However the products sold in these two cases are questionable as on one hand the Bharat Matrimony is a platform for an arranged marriage which has always been reproducing caste and gender based inequality and on the other the Tannishq product that sells gold jewellery and is representative of hegemonic femininity in India. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2r4o537do30><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P76E6b7SQs8>*
5. *For instance see the Raymond ads with the tagline 'The Complete Man' where there is a portrayal of new men who are romantic husbands, understanding fathers, caring son-in-laws, loving sons and most importantly emotional men. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EUzfY7hiDwh><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNZcaNv7iZY><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=179N9yCO9xM>*