

# Free critical thinking on advertising analysis

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Choose a print advertisement that has been used within the last 12 months from a popular American magazine that illustrates what Tuchman terms “pictures of perfections and goals of happiness” and then answer the following questions in a single unified essay. You must include a copy of the ad with your essay.

The advert I have chosen is the Carls Jr Super Star Burger with Cheese. It shows a woman dressed in a seductive form, practically half naked (and a blonde at that) alongside the burger packed with all sorts of ingredients imaginable. The subtitle ‘it’s gonna get messy’ adds a certain crudeness to proceedings which demonstrate that sex does sell after all

The Americans invented the burger so one should not be surprised that artists such as Mel Ramos have used it to convey another of his most successful sculptures. The aesthetics of the piece are quite brilliant, here we have another nude woman who seems to be enjoying the tease as she covers up her bare breast and private parts with her knees. It is a juicy sculpture and the tones of the body also demonstrate how Ramos understands the female body. The burger is also very aptly described with the cheese falling out of the burger and the actual meat quite juicy and succulent. One can almost be expected to eat the burger there and then! However Ramos has a tendency and a knack of creating erotic expectancy in the way he portrays the women who are always in some sort of provocative pose and this Lady Burger is no exception. This compares intriguingly with McDonalds adverts of the 1960’s especially in the manner with which the woman is portrayed yet again and the accuracy of the burger reproduction. It is also an intriguing comparison with the advert in question and displayed

here.

The advert's core argument is to promote the sales of a rather unhealthy looking cheese burger which may taste well enough but is probably extremely harmful to your general health. There aren't any real claims to make for this advert although it can be described as sexist in the extreme since it portrays a woman in a sexy bathing costume holding the cheese burger in her hand and enthusing ecstasy with her eyes closed. This implies that the burger is something sexual and the added line 'she'll tell you size doesn't matter – she's lying' confirms that the sexual innuendo is as clear as possible. The claim cannot really be said to be that plausible since there is absolutely no correlation between a half-naked woman and a fat cheeseburger. The advert's core argument is definitely not helpful since there is no link between a burger and a half naked woman. And they can be described as being harmful since they create a link in one's mind between women and the burger which absolutely does not exist.

The target audience is undoubtedly the young male sector of the population since there is nothing more attractive to that sector than a woman who is half undressed and waiting for satisfaction. It is quite easy to tell that this is the type of audience for which the advert is intended since there is no woman who would fall for such a sexist advertisement even if she were a lesbian. The fact that the woman is blonde also demonstrates a certain affinity with the maxim that sex sells and women who are ready to go half naked to advertise a burger are always going to be labelled and stereotyped.

The theme of the advertisement remains that sex sells and that the burger is

almost a phallic object in the woman's hands. She is portrayed almost in ecstasy as she grasps the burger and her sexually alluring bathing costume is most definitely attractive to the male audience. As indicated beforehand, the stereotype revealed in the advert is definitely the blonde bimbo. There isn't much of a controversy in the way the woman is portrayed since this type of stereotype is generally accepted in American society and nothing is seen as being really wrong with it. The advert does not really impact any particular sector of society since it is targeted towards the male sector of the audience and women generally do not feel that short changed when a beautiful model is portrayed half naked to promote a foodstuff. The short term effects cannot really be quantified accordingly since they are just that – short term impressions but the long term effects are actually quite substantial since the fat cheeseburger is equated with a half-naked woman and this is morally quite reprehensible for society. Society becomes more permissive and cheaper with such advertising while the individual tends to become morally corrupted with such blatant sexist advertising.

The underlying message to consumers is that sex sells and there are no bones about it. The advert seems to imply that a half-naked woman is enjoying a fat cheeseburger and the phallic association remains at paramount levels. It says a lot about American culture which is decadent and without any sort of moral standards – advertisers and companies will go to any length to sell their wares without taking any notice of the lax moral standards and permissiveness they create. The same argument can apply to beliefs which revolve around the maxim that sex sells. 7. Using the ad you have selected, locate and analyze as many of the 15 Basic Appeals

mentioned by Jib Fowles in the handout “Advertising’s Fifteen Basic Appeals”. Which do you think are conveyed in your advertisement? Explain. How do they function to communicate the ad’s core argument.

The advert does portray a need for sex according to Fowles’ 15 Basic Appeals since the woman is quite amply described and there is a direct reference to size in a phallic sense. Affiliation is also an issue here since young males will want to affiliate with the blonde woman in the ad. One can eliminate nurture and guidance from the equation since the ad certainly doesn’t convey such instincts. There is a slight need to aggress in the ad since the woman does appear to be an aggressive sexual animal and she looks pretty dominant also. Prominence is also an issue here since the advert seems to concentrate much more on the woman’s attractions than the burger, in fact your eyes will instantly turn to the woman when viewing the ad. Naturally there is also a need for attention since without it the ad is quite worthless. Aesthetic sensations are also present in the ad although how effective this is is quite debatable. The psychological need for sex is also very unsubtly portrayed in the ad which is as ‘in your face’ as possible. The advert’s color is striking and effective since it is also on a black background and there is substantial contrast between the burger’s strikingly loud colours and the woman’s swimsuit. The image is a powerful one and is also very well placed in layout portraying the image that sex sells. The text is also pretty crude but effective in the sense that it appeals directly to the animal instincts of the male sex.

## **The maxim of sex sells – Mel Ramos' works**

Heinz tomato ketchup remains to this day one of the most popular sauces for anything to do with meat and chicken. Mel Ramos saw the potential of the way the bottle is shaped to create another of his fantastic sculptures which also demonstrate his heady thoughts as regards the female sex. The way Heidi is hiding her breasts and private parts with the plastic bottle also creates a subtle tendency for eroticism and the black hair style which dates back to the heady 1960's is also instructive. As in previous sculptures, one marvels at the way Ramos portrays the female figure and skin which is pretty erotic to say the least. Heidi appears to be beckoning one to take off the bottle and reveal her in her full frontal nudity. Ramos again has a knack for getting to the heart of the matter with the use of simple colours which do not rock the artistic boat but which also demonstrate a certain knack for directness.

Another brilliant aesthetic sculpture by Ramos is the Headingly titled Martini Miss. Here we do not have a bottle of Martini to brighten up the day but a glass which is usually used for that ubiquitous drink together with an olive spiked by a toothpick at the bottom of the sculpture. Our martini Miss is pretty sexy, she's erotic in the best sense of the word as she holds up her beautifully long legs in the air and holds her thighs with her hands. She looks very sultry and intensely wanting, this lady is definitely not for turning in any sense. Her hairdo is also typically 1960's and yet again Ramos manages to convey the soft parts of the female flesh with an uncanny alacrity and beautiful intensity. Aesthetically the sculpture recreates all the emotion and intensity of the 1960's, you could almost see the vision as an advert – I'm

popping out of your Martini glass or something like that. It is probably one of Ramos' best works in the sense that it creates a sense of heady tension, you'll probably be thinking of Miss Martini as you sip your drink next time. AC Annie is another great Ramos painting, actually a lithograph created in 1972. It shows an innocent looking female model staring at the viewer in almost hapless intensity showing her fascination with the AC sparking plug, another erotic connotation. This time, the aspect of the painting is different since we have a frontal view of Annie's buttocks with the bikini markings also in full view. The way the AC logo is almost obliterated is also instructive and shows a certain fetish for logos which was also part and parcel of Mel Ramos' art.

I compared Mel Ramos with this burger advert to demonstrate that the idea of putting half naked women as advertising ploys is nothing new.