‘I Like Just to be Me’: Women’s Work and Cadbury’s Flake Television Advertising

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Abstract

Academic scholarship on the representation of women in British screen advertising from 1955 onwards has focused on issues related to the housewife, domestic labour and gender stereotypes. Taking Cadbury’s advertising for its chocolate bar Flake as a case study, this article asks whether the hypersexualisation attributed to the late twentieth century television commercials was inherent in the brand’s first television campaign of the 1950s. It finds that it was not, and the sexualisation of the ‘Flake girl’ arose both from the development in the late 1960s of a cluster of production companies and directors in London emulating American film styles, and from the merger of Cadbury with Schweppes in 1969. The article examines representations of women’s work in the early chocolate television commercials of both the Quaker companies Rowntree and Cadbury, and finds that, contrary to popular assumption, they offered representations of female identity and value aligned to the early advocates of women’s rights, economic independence, and freedom from domestic labour.

Keywords

Television commercials, British advertising, women in the media, chocolate marketing, women’s work

Biography

Emily Caston is Professor of Screen Industries and director of PRISM at the University of West London. Previously a board member Film London (2008-2015), Emily has produced over 100 music videos and commercials, and was previously Executive Producer of Black Dog Films for Ridley Scott Associates. She is a member of BAFTA and contributes regularly to the Sky Arts television Series *Video Killed the Radio Star*. Her books include Celluloid Saviours: Angels and Reform Politics in Hollywood Film (2009) and *British Music Videos* 1966 – 2016: Genre, Authenticity and Art (2020), as well as forthcoming books on the history of screen advertising for the BFI's Screen Stories series, and the history of independent screen production in Soho for Routledge. In 2018 she curated the Thunderbird collection "Power to the People: 200 Landmark British Music Videos" (2018).

Article

For Generation X, Cadbury's Flake is synonymous with the erotically charged television commercials of the 1980s and '90s. In this article, I argue that those hypersexualised adverts have little in common with the first Flake television commercials broadcast on British televisions between 1959 and 1969, an overlooked but highly significant collection of commercials which offer a corrective to contemporary assumptions about the representations of women and work on television in the post war period. I argue that the first Flake commercials produced by Cadbury 1959-1969 presented British audiences with an important, but as yet, under-recognised identity for women independent of *domestic labour*. This was in part because Cadbury's advertising in the immediate post war period was still driven by Quaker ethics, influenced by women's rights, and was versed in late nineteenth century rural idyllic visual advertising culture. After Cadbury merged with Schweppes in 1969, that advertising,

which had been rooted in a marketing strategy that had evolved within a staunch framework of stakeholder Quaker capitalism (Cadbury 2010), was displaced by what Collier (2018) terms shareholder capitalism. This transition and the factors driving this change are important for our understanding of the representation of women in television advertising in the late twentieth century as a whole.

Scholarship on post-war advertising has been dominated by an analysis of women's domestic labour and the role of the housewife. Nixon tell us not only that 'the housewife' "emerged within British TV advertising as a recognizably English-British social type" (2013, 7), but that, "the housewife was post-war advertising's key consumer target, being associated with some of the most heavily advertised goods" (2013, 189). Illustrating his point, Nixon draws on the early laundry detergent testimonials for OMO and Persil, in particular Persil's 'Mum' campaign 1958-1960 which suggested love and social status would compensate for the extra work women were taking on. He also cites the 'slice of life' Katie campaign for OXO which, like 'Mum' was devised within the US originating agency J Walter Thompson (JWT). There now exists an emergent literature highlighting the myriad other ways in which women's work and women's identity was represented in advertising in the 1950s and '60s (such as Tinkler's research on cigarette advertising, 2001). But as Beaumont says, "[t}he iconic image of the 'ideal 1950s housewife' has proved hard to excise from the historical record and the public imagination" (Beaumont 2018, 147). The pre-eminence of the housewife in the early British television advertising was reinforced in the four-part documentary series *Washes Whiter* (BBC, 1990).

This article proposes that by dint of its emergence from within Cadbury's Quaker idealisation of nature and humanity, the Cadbury's Flake commercials of the 1950s and 1960s provide valuable evidence of ways in which women were invited to become active consumers, but that this shifted from the 1970s onwards as a result of the decrease in women's employment in advertising and the merger of Cadbury in 1969 with Schweppes. The commercials have received little or no attention in existing scholarship: academic attention has focused solely on

the later hypersexualised spots of the ‘80s and ‘90s. Yet these commercials provide evidence of the ways in which women were being offered identities outside of paid work and independent of housework to engage in consumption. Whilst this is not radical by today’s standard, it is not a perspective on post war advertising often read in the literature and is part of an emergent body of scholarship focusing on women’s “leisure time” in cultural studies and the role of social class in twenty-century advertising. It comes alongside evidence, not only that advertisers in this period were targeting working class women through depictions of paid employment outside the home, but increasing evidence of middle-class women being depicted in paid work in the public sphere in the commercials of Rowntree, Birdseye, Surf and Horlicks. The picture becomes more complex when a new generation of film advertising directors emerged in the 1970s.

This article is based on research undertaken for my forthcoming book in the British Film Institute’s (BFI) *Screen Stories* series partially funded by a British Academy small grant (2020-2022). The Cadbury screen archives were analysed on the History of Advertising Trust (HAT) database which is publicly available online. Additional archival material was accessed on site at the HAT archives in Norwich, the archives of the trade magazine *Campaign*, and both the British Film Institute (BFI)’s Commercial Break collection and Yorkshire Film Archive Kit Kat Archives which are free to access online. I have drawn extensively on primary research into the marketing work of Cadbury and Rowntree by Hindson (2023), Fitzgerald (2005), Dellheim (1987), French (2017), Cadbury (2011).

The Cadbury Flake Girl and Women’s Work

Within popular culture, the Cadbury ‘Flake girl’ is often epitomised in the hypersexualised commercials ‘Hotel’ (1987, Kinsman) and ‘Bath’ (1991, Lewin) created by a then young art director named Kate Stanners and her creative partner Tim Hearn at the advertising agency GGT (Gold Greenlees Trott). Today, Stanners is one of the most influential and acclaimed

women in British advertising, serving both as Chairman and Global Chief Creative Officer of Saatchi and Saatchi and the Director of the History of Advertising Trust Board. 'Bath' was voted 'all time sexiest advert' in a 2008 poll according to Stevens and Ostberg (2020, 398) who argue that the spot draws a parallel between secret female food consumption and 'sexual surrender' with an erotic and suggestive narrative (2020, 398). The 80s and 90s erotically suggestive Flake girl commercials are frequently said to have been originated by Kate's father, creative director and copywriter Bob Stanners, along with his art director, Norman Icke, at Leo Burnett (the agency that held the Cadbury Flake account from 1969 until it was moved to GGT in 1987) (*Campaign* 1999). The spot showing the girl artist in a poppy field is the earliest Kate recalls her father had written and features the score and lyrics of Ronnie Bond. 'Gypsy Caravan' (1981) and 'Grotto' (1984), both directed by Barry Myers through Spots Film Services, were also created by Stanners and Icke with the Ronnie Bond music. So embedded in popular culture was the Flake girl that both her revival by Publicis prior to her retirement by Fallon were covered by *The Guardian* newspaper as items of national news (2007, 2010).

The commercials on which this article focuses, however, preceded these. They were created between 1959 and 1969 by the London Press Exchange (LPE) for Cadbury before it was taken over by Chicago agency Leo Burnetts in 1969; LPE was, then alongside JWT, one of London's primary research-based agencies. Cadbury was a prime mover in television, airing its first commercial on the opening night of ITV in the London area on September 22nd, 1955, with a spot promoting its Drinking Chocolate (Bradley 2011, 3). At that time Cadbury's advertising focused mainly on its 'moulded' chocolate products such as Dairy Milk. But Cadbury quickly realised that television advertising was better suited to the 'countlines' products targeted for single-person consumption such as those produced by its competitor, Rowntree, for the Kit Kat bar. By 1959, Bradly tells us, "Television was already accounting for 64% of all chocolate advertising" (2011, 3).

Cadbury identified its Flake bar, first developed in 1920, as a prime contender to compete against Rowntree's countlines on ITV. Cadbury quickly corrected some 'deficiencies' in order to strength its allure. In 1959, they dropped the reference to 'Dairy Milk' previously used in the Flake marketing and replaced the bar's see-through packaging with a bright yellow wrapper (Bradley 2011, 3). At least one of their early 1960s spots explained the technical elements rendering it 'anti-social' and best consumed alone in private: the bar's intense flakiness rendered it too messy to be eaten in public or shared. 'Lightness' (30 secs) was a single instructional commercial centred around an animated exposition of the 'rotation flotation' technique using animation. The strapline, 'For a lightness of taste that the others can't give you' was delivered by a voice-over (VO).

The Flake girl was launched with the strapline 'All by yourself, all to yourself'.[1] HAT holds two thirty-second spots dated to 1961, donated by the BBC from the researched collection assembled for their 1990 *Washes Whiter* series. In 'Blinds' and 'Curtains,' the strapline 'All by yourself, all to yourself' is used to end a live-action narrative showing a solo woman taking a private moment indoors away from the demands made by others in both the domestic and public sphere. The male VO describes the bar as 'sixpence worth of heaven,' before repeating the strapline 'All by yourself, all to yourself.' The most striking issue of these representations is that the women are engaged in *no task whatsoever* other than enjoying the Flake. They are serving no-one. They present an identity for women independent of paid work, domestic labour, and relationships. The new Flake campaign was, says Bradley, "an immediate success" (2011, 3).

The importance of the female voice is evident in the second group of spots held by HAT, also dated to the 1960s. LPE and Cadbury decide to locate the action *in a rural setting*. Each of the thirty-second black and white spots 'Garden', 'Riverside' and 'Meadow' opens with a shot of a woman walking outdoors whilst her projected VO says 'Sometimes, I just like to get away from everybody. I like just to be me.' The woman repeats the words 'heaven' and 'heavenly'

several times to describe the texture of the chocolate. The phrase ‘I like just to be me’ is suggestive of either of an existential stance in which the women does not play a ‘role’ on the patriarchal stage of life or that she wants to ‘get away from work’, i.e. engage neither in housework, being a wife, mothering, or paid employment. Echoes of Virginia Wolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) are felt. Much advertising in this era was dominated by male voice-over artists issuing instructions to women. The Flake spots are slightly more complex and ambitious in film craft terms, containing several edits, and subtle non-diegetic music.

A slightly later set of spots extend both the rural and outdoors settings and female voice by removing the male voice-over completely. ‘Riverbank’ (1962), ‘Country Lane’ (1965), ‘Swan’ (1960s), ‘Ruins’ (1967), ‘Countryhouse’ (1960s), ‘Donkey’ (1960s), and ‘Lighthouse’ (1960s) each depict a young woman alone enjoying a peaceful moment in the countryside. Stylistically they are quite distinctive for the era because they contain no edits, music, and no pack shot. They are single-shot films, with a sparse soundtrack constructed solely from diegetic sound effects (such as the donkey’s hooves). Not only is the VO female, but absolutely minimal, interrupting the visuals only in the last few seconds with the words ‘Flake, Cadbury’s Flake … Cadbury’s Flake: sixpence worth of heaven.’ Unlike the later hypersexualised spots, the ads contain no close-up of the flake being eaten but hold confidently on a very wide shot of the woman in her rural setting, seemingly completely unaware of the camera (and unaware of the male gaze). The thirty-second spots finish with the superimposed text: ‘Cadbury’s flake 6d’.

These spots are redolent of the health-focused marketing strategy that had been in place at Cadbury since the late nineteenth century. In her analysis of the Bournville factory, Hindson reminds us that, “[the social reform energies that had directed Quaker businesses towards cocoa as an alternative to alcohol continued to reverberate in the advertising strategies that sustained Cadbury’s diversified, expanded operation”. From Cadbury’s Drinking Chocolate onwards, the firm’s cocoa products were advertised as containing “health-giving properties.” “The fresh air that surrounded the firm’s [Bourneville] factory became a symbolic, invisible

ingredient" in Cadbury's advertising (Hindson, n.p.). Cadbury's earliest marketing was built on images of nature. In 1905, William Adlington Cadbury (1867– 1957) had commissioned Art Nouveau artist, designer, and poet George Auriol (1863– 1938) to produce the first Cadbury's logo, an image that depicted a stylised cocoa tree in bloom. From 1911, Auriol's stylised tree became a central image in Cadbury's expanding visual advertising culture vernacular of open fields, resplendent skies and English countryside creatures. The spots are also typical of a larger trend conceptualised as the 'commodified authentic' by Elizabeth Outka (2009): nostalgic images of an idyllic, pre-industrial past that had 'swept across Britain' in turn-of-the-century consumer culture and advertising. Chance describes this "commodified nostalgia" as "a contradiction of authenticity in a modern setting of mass production" (Chance 2019, 2).

These adverts articulate a paradigm of women's social status rooted in Cadbury's Quaker work practices. By the mid 'fifties, the Cadbury's Bourneville factory had established a framework strongly supportive of women's rights. Cadbury's Quaker employment practices recognised women not only as paid workers outside the domestic sphere, but as creative and artistic personalities within the theatrical leisure environment created at the Bournville factory for the firm's workers and families. Hindson tell us that "[a]ctive support for women's rights was prominent at Bournville, and first wave feminism was to continue to be a key area of activity at the firm after the vote was won" (Hindson, n.p.) During the 1920s, for example, Cadbury's promoted their Bournville cocoa line in *The Women Teacher*, the National Union of Women Teachers' (NUWT) magazine with the line: 'If you have the strain of evening studies a cup of delicious Bournville Cocoa comforts the nerves and often prevents fatigue' (4 November 1927, 1 quoted in Hindson n.p.). The NUWT campaigned for professional esteem, equal pay, pensions, and career opportunities in senior leadership roles for women.

In his analysis of the impact of Quaker beliefs on the running of Cadbury, Dellheim tells us that women were supported as leaders within the Cadbury family. Dorothy Cadbury, who became one of the Managing Directors of Cadbury in 1919, was one of the few female directors of a

major British firm. Having begun her paid career at Bournville as an ordinary pieceworker, Dorothy was committed to promoting the position of women in industry (Dellheim 1987, 23). Under her leadership, Cadbury operated separate lines of command for men and women in order to increase women's opportunities for advancement. Earlier, Cadbury's business and management policy at Bourneville had been influenced by Fabian member Edward Cadbury's research on women's labour undertaken in collaboration with M. Cecile Matheson. Published as *Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City* (1906) was based on interviews with some six thousand women in paid employment from social work to management, and recommended unionization and minimum wage legislation to protect women's employment rights. Whilst some documented parities between feminism and the nineteenth century Quaker movement have been questioned (see O'Donnell, 2014), particularly around the clash between the individualism of 'rights' discourses and the collective conformity of Quaker culture, there remains considerable evidence that women benefitted from many aspects of the culture in Bourneville created and maintained by the Cadbury family in the first half of the twentieth century.

The concept of the leisure 'break' in Quaker firm Rowntree's marketing for Kit Kat also articulates women's identity independent of work. Rowntree, like Cadbury, was an early adopter of television advertising. When TV advertising began in 1955 Rowntree was ready with a £50,000 budget, increasing to £650,000 by 1957, half of its total advertising budget (Chrystal 2012, 135/6). In their first, 1955, television advert, housewifery is clearly presented as *work*. A woman, having finished doing the washing up in her kitchen, turns to the camera and says, "That's half the morning's work done! This is where 'Mum' takes a few minutes off to enjoy herself." She leans down to open a concealed drawer beneath the kitchen table: "Now for my secret treasure … my private hoard of Kit Kat." The spot forms part of a 1955-1959 black and white 35mm collection of Kit Kat commercials held in the Yorkshire Film Archive, available online in a 14 minute 36 second reel. Initially launched in 1935 as Rowntree's Chocolate Crisp, and renamed Kit Kat Chocolate Crisp in 1937, the product was

re-branded after World War II as just Kit Kat. The ‘break’ concept utilised in 1955 spot, had first been used by Rowntree in 1937, but it was not until 1957 that it would be used in the strapline “Have a break. Have a Kit Kat” after it had been written by JWT’s Donald Gilles (*Creative Review*). “In 1960 Rowntree’s were spending £2.8 million on advertising, just behind their rivals Cadbury and Mars – and seventh in the advertising league table” (Chrystal 2012, 135/6). According to Crystal, KitKat contributed about 20% of all Rowntree’s revenue” (2012 135/136).

Rowntree used women’s paid employment to launch this new strapline in its 1957 campaign. Four of the five 15 second spots held in Yorkshire Film Archive present paid women workers: ‘Afternoon Break’ (30 secs), in which two female typists pause for a cup of tea and Kit Kat in the office; ‘Office Break’ in which a sole female worker has a Kit Kat break in her office, ‘Driver and Clippy’ in which two bus conductors / ticket collectors, one of whom is a woman, enter a café to order tea and Kit Kats for their break. In ‘Factory Break’, a woman tea lady serves tea and Kit Kats to two male workers. In the next group of six 1958 spots, all black and white and 15 secs, which again were likely produced together, Rowntree targets children, teenagers, women and main largely in leisure activities such as ice skating and playing table tennis with the same tagline ‘Time for a break, time for a Kit Kat’, although one, called ‘Char Ladies’ shows office cleaners in their late 20s with vacuum cleaners. Another, called ‘Shop Assistant’, shows two thirtysomething women working in a woman’s dress and shoe shop take a break. These adverts are significant because they are clear evidence that the Kit Kat was marketed to working women. Despite Britain’s Marriage Bar which was not abolished until 1946 (1972 for the Foreign Office), the rates of married women in paid employment continued to rise from 44% in 1951 to 50% in 1957, 53% by 1959 (Beaumont, 2018, 159).

Quaker Capitalism and the Representation of Women

What caused such a shift from Cadbury’s health-focused adverts of the 1960s and the eroticised films of the 1970s - 2010? A number of crucial changes occurred within Cadbury.

First, the decision was made to float Cadbury on the stock exchange in 1962. This converted the previously family-owned firm into a publicly limited company traded on the stock exchange. From this point on, decisions would be made in the interests of shareholders who probably had no connection with the employees of the company or the founding family's Quaker ethics. Previously, the company had been family run. Launched in 1824 by John Cadbury, the firm was run initially by his sons George and Richard from 1879 to 1899, then by George Jnr, during which time it became a private, limited liability company (Dellheim 1987, 21); from 1922 it was run by Barrow Cadbury, from 1932 by Edward Cadbury, and from 1944 by Laurence Cadbury. Until the late 1960s, the Cadbury family remained very influential in company policy, having established early on the primary of marketing to their core activities in the 1920s. It was easier for a firm to control its own advertising when it was a family-owned firm of the kind that Cadbury had been in the first half of the century.

Deborah Cadbury describes the way in which the firm was run prior to being floated on the stock exchange as 'Quaker Capitalism,' a system of production in which profits were spent on the welfare and wellbeing of its stakeholders – the employees, the local community and its loyal consumers. The Cadbury family used commercial television not only to market its products, but to advocate for its specific form of ethical capitalism. Cadbury specifically targeted television for this 'prestige advertising.' When commercial television was launched in the Midlands a few months after London, Cadbury had the first spot: Paul Cadbury used it to introduce a cut-down version of the company's own film, *The Bournville Story*. Later that year, the company "commissioned a series of 13 one-minute films, each describing in a travelogue style the harvesting of an ingredient used at Bournville. The series premiered on August 31st, 1957, when the entire interval of "Sunday Night at the London Palladium" was booked for Adrian Cadbury, a grandson of George and future chairman of the company, to be interviewed about the venture." (Bradly 2011, 3). But after the merger, Deborah Cadbury writes that, "[t]he shareholders in Cadbury Schweppes … were increasingly made up of investors who had no direct personal links to the business and its values, and whose priorities were purely to

monetise profit. The Quaker voice no longer held sway in the boardroom.” (2011, 281). This opened the company to “unprincipled advertising and promotion”.

The second change was brought by Adrian Cadbury as Chair of Cadbury when he took over in 1965 after his father, Laurence, stepped down. Adrian Cadbury had made it clear to his family prior to being offered the role of Chair that Quaker business ethics would not be the primary guiding principle of the business were he to assume the role of Chair (*Desert Island Discs* 1995). Once appointed, Adrian Cadbury moved very quickly to a merger with Schweppes in 1969. The new company, Cadbury Schweppes, built a confectionary and soft drink international conglomerate with its acquisitions of Canada Dry (1986), Trebor (1989), Bassett's (1989), Dr Pepper and Seven Up (1995) and Snapple (2000). The shift in Cadbury’s management was perhaps a long time coming: Adrian Cadbury had studied secular economics at King’s College Cambridge under Maynard Keynes and was determined to bring classical economics theories about the growth of firms to expand the business. Previously, Quakers had not attended university due to the conflict with religious vows, but Adrian Cadbury’s father had already broken this tradition. Laurence Cadbury attended Eton and King's College Cambridge, where he studied economics, and later became a director of the Bank of England. The merger with Schweppes had been controversial due to the Quaker prohibition on alcohol.

The shift is also caused by the emergence of a new generation of television advertising directors. The sale to Schweppes occurred the same year that the London Press Exchange was purchased by Chicago-owned advertising agency Leo Burnett and the London industry consolidated into a number of new, specialist screen advertising production companies. The Flake commercials that emerged after 1969 were the creation of this fledgling cluster of production companies. Foremost was a generation of male directors either concurrently directing feature films or with ambitions to direct them in Hollywood such as Alan Parker and Dick Lester (Caston, 2023). North American cinematographic styles were particularly popular

amongst these directors (Petri 2018, 214-5). The film styles of Nic Roeg and John Cassavetes became fashionable; these were styles in which internal dramatic states with whip pans, stark cuts, wide shots, and POVs dominated; all were techniques used in the '70s Flake spots. This new generation of new male directors aspired to the status of "auteurs," hailed mainly from Britain's art schools, and displaced the public-school elite of male directors who had largely dominated industrial and corporate filmmaking until then.

Nowhere is this stylist change in Flake filmmaking more evidence than in Ridley Scott's 1971 commercial for Flake titled 'Ski.' Scott had launched his production company, Ridley Scott Associates, in Soho, London in 1968 with his brother, Tony. 'Ski' is one of the first group of colour commercials made for Flake which used the new Ronnie Bond score with the lyrics "Only the crumbliest, flakiest milk chocolate …". Scott instituted the male voice-over which Flake had previously dropped and introduced a set-repertoire of highly suggestive close-up shots of female anatomy: erotic close-ups on the woman's mouth as she bit into the Flake (I counted four extreme close-ups in the thirty-second spot), and a number of other erotic close-ups notably a close-up of the woman-skier's bottom and a close-up shot of her crotch through her legs from the front. The other two spots in the group using Ronnie Bond's new score are 'Transported – Punting' (1960S, B&W) and 'Transported – Punting' (1970s, Colour). Gone is the woman as a subject of the commercial, articulated through her own female voice. She has been replaced by a sexualised object viewed through the male gaze with her desires spoken by a male voice.

The Ronnie Bond commercials developed the premise of the earlier spots. That premise was that by eating the Flake, a woman could be transported to a stunning place of nature such as a waterfall. The tagline of this was 'A Heaven All of Your Own' denoting the internal dramatic state triggered by the Flake. The black and white thirty second spots are called 'Transported – Lake' (1960s), 'Transported – Waterfall' (1967), 'Transported Waterfall' (1967) and 'Transported – Castle' (1968) In these spots, as the women bites the flake, dramatic music

cuts in and the film cuts to shots of the dramatic exterior – and then on a wide shot reveals that as a result of biting into the Flake, she has been magically transported to that exterior. However, in these late '60s spots, the VO is still female. The music is dramatic, and there are many more edits than the early sixties' campaign, following a standardised dramatic structure absent from the earlier spots. The Flake Girl continued as the mainstay of Cadbury's advertising at Leo Burnett, then GGT, TBWA, Publicis and Saatchi and Saatchi, with some of her most memorable spots aired in the 1990s.

Alison Payne's research suggests that the restructuring of creative departments and the creative supply chain that followed the launch of television advertising in 1955 had very negative effects on women's employment in advertising – effects which took about ten years to manifest in the types of scripts written. Clampin's research suggests that WWII advertising presented a much more varied representation of both men and women's work and social roles (2014, 184-8). My own research on British advertising shows that it was in this period that the proportion of privately schooled, and university educated men staffing advertising agencies declined, and working-class state educated men from British art schools increased. Payne found that the proportion of women copywriters declined from nearly a quarter of all writers in 1957 to less than a fifth by 1968, and the proportion of artists declined from 14% to less than 10%." (2018, 86). Rather than just being part of a trend affecting most British industries, Payne believes this was specifically due to the emergence of television advertising, the adoption of creative partnerships which mitigated against women because it was believed that same-sex partnerships were best, and the rise of egotistical difficult-to-manage male tv-directors such as Schlesinger, Alan Parker and Ridley Scott. Sean Nixon analyses these dynamics in Part 3 of his book 'Advertising Cultures', looking specifically at tropes of masculinity in creative work and in creative partnerships (2003).

The corporate turbulence that shook Cadbury's Quaker business ethics in the 1960s, struck again in the 2000s, when it was announced in 2010 that Cadbury's was to be purchased by

Kraft Foods. The takeover was taking place whilst Saatchi & Saatchi was already in the process of commissioning a new Cadbury's Flake commercial *without the Flake Girl*. Kate Stanners and her creative partner Paul Silburn had invited the acclaimed film director Jonathan Glazer to create an entirely new campaign for Flake. The strapline was to be 'succumb to the crumb'. Glazer had shot two features Sexy Beast 2000, and Birth 2024 at this point, as well as award winning music videos and commercials such as Jamiroquai's 'Virtual Insanity' (1996) and Guinness 'Surfer' (1999) Based around the theme of temptation, the ad saw a woman tempted by a devil-like character: the narrative is driven by the woman's agency and sexual desire, constructing her as the protagonist of the story. Glazer's managing director, Lizie Gower, reports that the agency travelled with them to Italy to shoot the commercial, where they enthused over the directing and performance, "They said it's great it's fantastic and were laughing at the most provocative and dramatic bits, the girls doing their very provocative movements, and then the hand over the male parts. We got back and they saw it and went 'wow'!" (Gower, 2024)

But the spot's portrayal of female sexual agency proved too much for Cadbury's new owners. Gowers continues, "this was the time that Kraft's was taking over Cadbury's. Saatchi's Creative Director had to show it to the American Kraft guys. He called me afterwards and said, 'Oh my god, they went mental, they hated it and said it cannot be shown'." Kate Stanners concurs, "Cadbury's were being sold to Mondelez. It was seen as too risky and therefore never aired" (Stanners 2024). Gowers' was instructed not to release the advert, and booked transmission slots were cancelled. There were protests by past and present workers at Cadbury's Bournville site, who feared that this would inflict the final death blow to the Quaker vision that had driven not only the Bournville Town, but also the Bourneville Factory (Morris 2010). The sale went through. Cadbury's "ended up doing a safer spot with our sister agency Fallon by creative directors Richard and Andy" reports Stanners (2024). In 2012, Kraft was renamed Mondelaz.

All of this rather suggests that Cadbury's was rather out of its depth with representations of gender and sexuality in the early twenty-first century once it moved out of the health-focused, dignified spots of its early Quaker visual culture. The rapid shifts arising from social media, activists, politicians, and consumers rendered her representation difficult to control. An Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) reported study from 1983 suggests that in the early '80s Cadbury had Leo Burnett trial an alternative advertising campaign not based on the Flake girl (IPA, 1983), and which did not target women. Cadbury was seemingly aware of the risks of its gender-specific marketing by this point, and eager to explore alternatives. Premising chocolate sales on a target market to a single gender, at a time when society was questioning the very concept of gender, proved profoundly damaging to the brand.

Women's Work in British Television Advertising 1955 – 1969

What are the implications of this discussion? As the Curator for Advertising and Publicity Films Steve Foxon at the BFI writes, "whilst [w]omen have all-too-often been patronised and objectified by a male dominated advertising industry", we need a re-assessment of the representation of women's work and identity in television advertising because

> "screen-advertising also tells (and sells) a more positive story of social progress for women, with increasing social and economic independence … [the] "Bournvita: Other Women's Lives" (1952−54) mini-documentary portraits of real British working women, using their real names (and addresses!), made for Cadbury's, saw busy mothers and wives juggling long busy days of labour with intimate home lives, capped off with a therapeutic cuppa before bed. This collection is distinctive because it has received less attention than the "Oxo Family—Life with Katie" or Persil "Slice of Life" commercials explored by Nixon (2016). (Foxon, 2023, 94).

The significance of the Cadbury's Flake commercials broadcast on ITV between 1959 and 1969 is that they support Foxon's concern that large collections of Britain's television commercials have been overlooked in the zest to identify The Housewife as the predominant representation of women at work in the post War era. Early Flake advertising shows us that women's identities outside work were being represented in ways presentient of twenty-first century screen advertising. It tells us, moreover, that advertisers had either identified among middle class women a reluctance for their identities to be reduced to that of a permanently available on-call housewife at home (All by yourself, all for yourself, / I Want Just to Be Me), or were part of a creation of that position. The Flake commercials contribute to the picture of women's leisure time one which historians such as Claire Langhammer (2000) have already begun to document. The Rowntree 'crunchie bar' was marketed in the fifties as an active sports bar that could help women skaters and their female professional coaches maintain their energy because it was "91.3% glucose and sugar."

Evidence elsewhere that the middle class housewife was dissatisfied with the portraits offered of the housewife and housewifery comes from the trade publication *Commercial Television News* which carried a piece by Irene Hazel in 1956 criticising the absurd soap powder commercials based on 'whiter than white' in which women were lectured by men who had no experience of working with soap powder. Hazel argued that she would rather purchase Surf because the expert featured in the Surf adverts was a properly qualified housewife known as 'Mrs Bradshaw'. 'Surf' was a brand which appears to have been targeted not at middle class women, but at working class women (HAT contains a series of 12 spots featuring Mrs Bradshaw, some 60 and others 30 seconds). The agency was Lintas. For landlady Mrs Bradshaw, housework was a paid job, reimbursed by rent from her tenants. Theatre director Joan Littlewood made it absolutely clear who held authority in the house, that housework was not always joyous, and that women quite often preferred not to do it in her two spots for 'go to work on an egg' campaign from 1964 (60 and 90 secs, BFI) when mum 'Sheila' decided that she didn't want to get up and make breakfast, leaving her husband to make the breakfast

instead. Gable (1980, 116) tells us that in the first ten years of television advertising, the presenters of the testimonials and ad mags were just as likely to be women as men - despite a suggestion in much of the post war documentation on advertising to the contrary.

Rowntree's Kit Kat was far from the only company representing women's paid employment outside the home. Despite the marriage bar, the wide range of representations of women's work in early television tells us that many mothers held paid employment outside the home. Birdseye Fish Fingers, in particular, were targeted at working women who did not have time to cook complex meals from scratch. Rather than a male expert, 'Birds Eye also interviewed a housewife about the merits of fish fingers when they first launched the product in 57/8. In one of the early Birdseye spots, the reporter interviewing the housewife is a woman. In another, a young mum fetching her children from school explains that she buys fish fingers because her paid job outside the home limits her time. One Hotpoint commercial form the end of the fifties – and in twenty-five years of Independent Television one of the most amazing sixty seconds' worth there has been – used a new angle for its 'no tangle action', USP (unique selling point), and had a presentation from a laboratory that handled radioactive material. The woman presenter, wearing an obligatory white coat, introduced viewers to another of Hotpoint's tests to prove that 'Hotpoint washes cleaner because it cannot tangle clothes'. (Gable 1980, 116). In 1962, Beecham ran a Horlicks commercial that showed two women taking part in a motor car rally – one driving, one navigating. They win the race, and the last shot is of the driver holding aloft the trophy" (Gable 1980,116). Gable concludes that,

> 'Whatever faults the first ten years of television commercials may have had, they were not only more truly reflective of women but also of womanpower. Independent Television started just ten years after the end of a war which placed great value on the female contribution." (1980, 116)

In conclusion, there is no doubt that some of the television commercials shown between 1955 and 1970 represented women as housewives, but not to the exclusion of representing women as paid workers or as active leisure-time consumers whose identities were not based on the prescribed role of 'the housewife'. The representation of women's work was far from homogenous. It was skewed by social class targeting as well as age specific marketing and contained important examples of the creation of 'leisure time' and 'non-work' based identities. The relationship between the business ethos of corporations such as Cadbury and the impact on its advertising of public flotation, mergers and acquisitions is an important future area for research. The HAT archives and BFI National Archive both hold significant collections worthy of further research in order to build a more complete picture of the complex representation of women's work on early British commercial television.

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Notes

1 Unless otherwise stated, the Cadbury's Flake spots 1959 to 1969 are free to view at HAT, were shot in black and white, and lack metadata identifying the director. Although Bradley (2011, 3) and *The Guardian* (2007) tell us that she was launched in 1959, the Cadbury website states that the Flake Girl was not launched until the 1960s.