

WOMEN, AGING, AND ADVERTISING

Judith Posner

La publicité reflète, et renforce, l'attitude négative de notre société envers les femmes âgées. Dans cet article l'auteur nous montre que, lorsqu'il s'agit des femmes, la publicité porte sur leur corps, et alors que pour les hommes, elle porte sur leurs accomplissements.

Popular advertising does much to reflect and aggravate the particular stigma of aging for women in our society. In fact, a majority of aging-related products are specifically directed at the female vis-a-vis the male. Grecian-formula hair colouring is one of the few aging-camouflage products that is directly equally toward men and women. The following ads are excerpts from a slide show on the topic of women and aging in advertising.

A major theme in the aging literature is the double standard of aging — a phrase first coined by Susan Sontag in 1972. She writes: "In a man's face lines are taken to be signs of 'character.' They indicate emotional strength, maturity — qualities far more esteemed in men than in women. (They show he has 'lived.') Even scars are often not felt to be unattractive; they too can add 'character' to a man's face. But lines of aging, any scar, even a small birthmark on a woman's face, are always regarded as unfortunate blemishes. In effect, people take character in men to be different from what constitutes character in women. A woman's character is thought to be innate, static — not the product of her experience, her years, her ac-

ME GRAY?



NO WAY.

My grey looked so awful, it made me look older than my husband. For two weeks I looked old, but then we did I want to look young again. Until I found Living Care Color Toner. It's not like most hair colorings. It's gentle. Because Living Care has no peroxide. And no peroxide is no damage. It's not like most hair colorings. It's gentle. Because Living Care has no peroxide. And no peroxide is no damage. It's not like most hair colorings. It's gentle. Because Living Care has no peroxide. And no peroxide is no damage.

and now. All I do is wash out my grey and wash in my own natural color. And I look like "me" again. But that's one of the great things. My hair's a super shape now. It's got body. And shine. I can't believe how full it is. Living Care is actually good for my hair. My hair's never felt better. And neither have I!

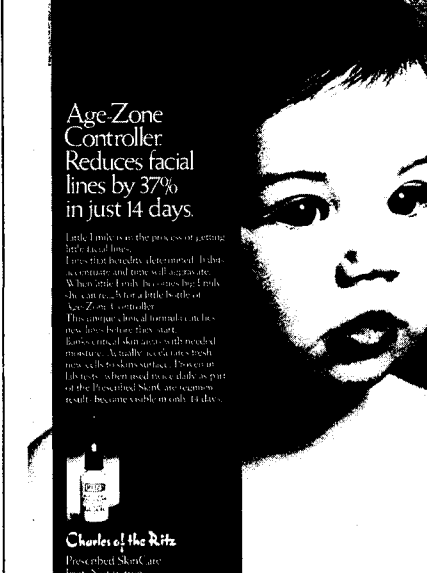
You're too young to look old!

Living Care

1▲

2▼

Age-Zone Controller
Reduces facial lines by 37% in just 14 days.



Look! I only see the process of getting better facial lines. Fine lines have disappeared. I don't age anymore and my skin is so soft. When my face becomes so young, I only see wrinkles. After a little bottle of Age-Zone Controller. This unique chemical formula in the new Age-Zone Controller. It gives your skin a fresh, new, youthful appearance. It's not like most skin care products. It's gentle. Because Age-Zone Controller has no peroxide. And no peroxide is no damage. It's not like most skin care products. It's gentle. Because Age-Zone Controller has no peroxide. And no peroxide is no damage.

Charles of the Ritz
Prescribed Skin Care
Face Nocturne

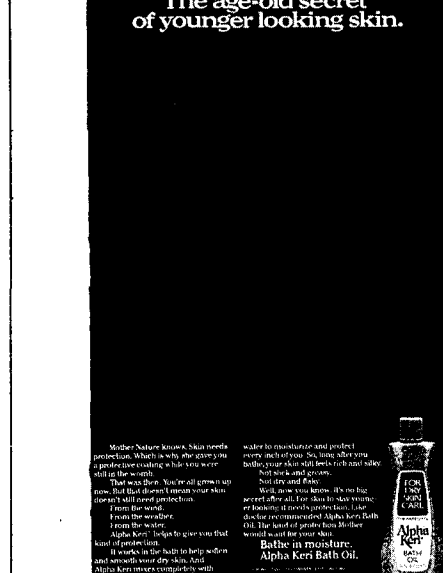
tions. A woman's face is prized so far as it remains unchanged by (or conceals the traces of) her emotions, her physical risk-taking. Ideally, it is supposed to be a mask — immutable, unmarked." (See Ad No. 1)

In short, aging for a woman is essentially more pejorative than for her male counterpart. This is because women are their *bodies* and men are their *accomplishments*. Such a discrepancy is reflected in a variety of conceptual dichotomies in feminist literature, i.e., passive/active, object/subject, being/doing, etc.

The double standard of aging is exemplified by the theme of infantilization. Ad No. 2 is a dramatic example of this theme. Here the ideal female is explicitly likened to an infant. In Ad No. 3 the ideal female is infantilized still further back to the

3▼

The age-old secret of younger looking skin.



Mother Nature knows skin needs protection. Which is why she gives you a protective coating while you're still in the womb. That way then, you're all grown up now, but that doesn't mean your skin doesn't still need protection. From the weather. From the sun. From the water. Alpha Keri. Helps to give you that kind of protection. It works in the bath to help soften and smooth your dry skin. And Alpha Keri makes your skin so soft.

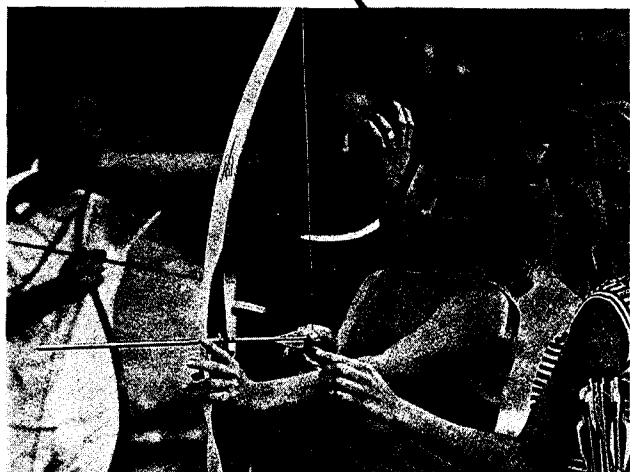
water to moisturize and protect your skin. So, when you're in the bath, your skin still feels rich and silky. Not dry and cracked. Work as you know. It's no big secret after all. For skin to stay young, it needs to be protected. Like the skin of a baby. That's why Alpha Keri. The kind of gentle skin lotion that would be used for your skin. Bathe in moisture. Alpha Keri Bath Oil.

Alpha Keri

How did
31-year-old
Mrs. Garey



pass as a
19-year-old?



Your little boy drew your
picture in school today.
He didn't miss a wrinkle.

skin physiologists puts moisture
back in those cells. They call it
CEF for short. It's what
2nd Debut is all about.

Good as an under make-up too.

A good idea is to smooth
2nd Debut over your face and
neck before applying your
make-up. For nice soft lips, use
2nd Debut on your lips at the
same time. Also use 2nd Debut

at night, before sleep.

Try 2nd Debut with
CEF 600 or with CEF 1200,
if you're over 40 or
more impatient.

Be assured of com-
plete satisfaction or
return for your money
back.

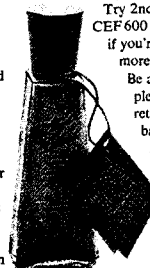
Also look for
2nd Debut at
better drug and
department
stores.

He calls them wiggly lines.
You call them wrinkles. And you
wish you could erase them.

Now you can do
something about wrinkles. With
2nd Debut, a specially formulated
beauty discovery that's been
proven to make wrinkles fade,
even disappear.

No woman can escape it.

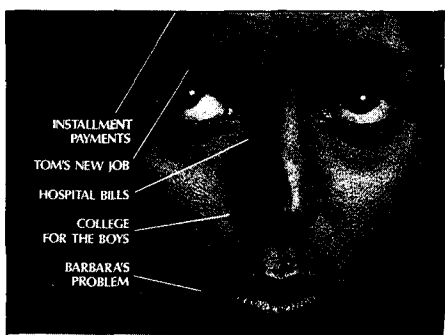
As you get older, the cells of your
skin shrink. This happens to
every woman. The more the cells
shrink, the less moisture they
hold. That causes wrinkles. A
discovery by a group of European



Once if you got a wrinkle, you had it for life. Until 2nd Debut.

◀ 4

▲ 6



Every Wrinkle tells its story

You first noticed that one on your
wedding anniversary, that one when your
husband got his promotion, that one when
and on. But why use your face as a
calendar? Skin scientists in
Europe have now isolated the
skin's anti-wrinkle ingredient that
helps smooth and lift out those
aging lines and dry skin wrinkles
that add years to your look. This
ingredient known as CEF (Cellu-
lar Expansion Factor) has been
blended into a cosmetic lotion
called 2nd Debut. 2nd Debut is
available in CEF 600 for the
younger woman and CEF 1200

for the more mature woman in a hurry.
Ask for 2nd Debut at your favorite cosmetic
counter and enjoy the
wonderful feeling that comes
with looking young again. For a
convincing trial sample of 2nd
Debut (with CEF 600) send 50¢
to 2nd Debut, Dept. CLK-26,
Acton, Ontario.

It works.
You can tell by the look
on your face.

2nd Debut
WITH CEF

Products That Place Beauty Before Age

Follow the ingenious beauty plan created by
famous dermatologist, and you can actually

Wipe Years From
Your Face In Just
3 Minutes A Day!

Proof — once and for all — that you can look
years younger than your real age . . . that
you can make dry, rough, wrinkled skin
smooth and supple in just minutes a day,
RIGHT AT HOME.



Which way do you prefer to look? Cover the left
side of this picture, then lift and cover the right
side. That's the difference this beauty plan can
mean for you in just 3 minutes a day!

◀ 5

▲ 7

fetus. These metaphors are clearly
reminiscent of Germaine Greer's
discussion of the female body in *The
Female Eunuch*: "The rationale of
depilation is crude. . . . In the popu-
lar imagination hairiness is like fur-
riness, an index of bestiality . . .
women shave or pluck their pubic
areas, so as to seem even more sex-
less and infantile" (italics mine).

In short, all parts of a woman's
anatomy are potentially stigmatizing

with age. Ad No. 4 suggests that
even the hands may "give us away,"
reminiscent of the infamous Pal-
molive commercials with Madge the
beautician. And there are a variety
of ads which map out the deficient
areas in a woman's body or face that
reveal her unwanted years (Ad
No. 5).

Ad No. 6 is an especially dramatic
example of "below the belt" psychic
manipulation which explicitly dis-

parages the older mother.

Finally, Ad No. 7 shows a gro-
tesque advertising image which
makes specific symbolic connection
of aging with death and depicts, of
course, a female.

*Judy Posner is chair and Associate
Professor of Sociology at Atkinson Col-
lege, York University. She does a vari-
ety of slide shows in the community on
images of women in popular culture.*