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**Are Disability Images in Advertising Becoming Bold And Daring?
An Analysis of Prominent Themes in US and UK Campaigns**

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Abstract

Advertisements featuring disabled people have become more noticeable in the United States (USA) and Great Britain/United Kingdom (UK) in the last decade. The focus of this article is to qualitatively analyze a selection of these advertisements since 1999 to understand how disability currently is being used

within advertising messages. The goal of the analyses are to understand whether advertising images remained static in their messages or are expanding their messages to show a variety of disability images. The findings revealed that some improvements have occurred in advertising images of disability, such as the themes of empowerment (Cingular) and the themes of disability pride and inclusion (Doritos, Marks & Spencer, and HSBC). However, several ads still embrace antiquated themes that continue to stigmatize disabled people, such as the Nuveen, HealthExtras, and Bank of America ads. These themes convey underlying messages that disabled people are broken and in need of repair, are awash in tragedy, or are Supercrises, who are put on pedestals for just living their lives.

Keywords: advertising images of disabled people, TV advertising, print advertising, Christopher Reeve, British advertising images, Super Bowl ads

Introduction

Advertisements featuring disabled people have become more noticeable in the United States (US) and Great Britain/The United Kingdom (UK) in the last decade, according to our previous study about disability images in ads from 1984-2000 (Haller & Ralph, 2001). This paper extends that article. As recently as summer 2005, quadriplegic rugby player and star of the 2005 documentary *Murderball*, Mark Zupan appeared on billboards in New York City and Los Angeles as a model for Reebok's "I am what I am" world-wide advertising campaign (Krawitz, 2005). Business publications usually notice new advertisements featuring disabled people (Voight, 2006; Prager, 1999; Quinn, 1995; Sagon, 1991). Although these images do not dominate advertising in the US and UK, they are becoming slightly more visible in print and on television (TV). Below we qualitatively analyze selected advertisements since 1999 to understand how disability currently is being used within advertising messages.

Advertisements persuade "through their symbolic articulation of a society's ideas and desires" (Hogan, 1999). They encapsulate the consumption values central to a capitalist society (Schudson, 1984). Disability is one of the many areas, like ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and national identity (Chasin, 2000; Hogan, 1999; O'Barr, 1994; Hall, 1992), advertising helps to construct. We argue that it has a major role to play in raising public awareness of disabled people.

A few studies have undertaken quantitative content analyses of advertising images of disability (Ganahl, 2001; Ganahl & Arbuckle, 2001; Ganahl & Kallem, 1997), but they illustrate the inefficiency of quantitative methods in trying to analyze such a tiny segment of advertising content. Advertising messages that feature disabled people are still a small segment, difficult to unearth. For this article, the uniqueness of disability images in advertising guides our methodology. Because it is still "news" when an advertiser chooses to use a disabled person in an ad, articles in the business press directed us to many of the most recent examples. In addition, groups in the UK have begun pushing for more disability images in advertising, which provided additional advertisements for analysis. For example, in 1999 the

UK's Leonard Cheshire charity created a VisABLE campaign to find disabled models and encourage British companies to use them in ads (VisABLE, 2000).

Previous research (Haller & Ralph, 2001) showed that advertisements that use disability images have moved away from past pity narratives of charity; modern images seem to show disabled people's integration in society, as part of a movement to feature more diversity. That research also illustrated that businesses were incorporating disability images into their advertising due to a capitalistic desire for profits and a goal to better represent the diversity of US or British societies (Haller & Ralph, 2001). Therefore, we will analyze the messages and themes embedded within advertisements that feature people with visible disabilities. Our goal is to investigate whether advertising images are remaining static in their messages (focusing solely on the integration of disabled people into the ads) or are expanding their messages to show a variety of disability images.

Methods and Messages

Qualitative assessment is a rich and context-based analysis of content (Altheide, 1996; Jensen, 1991; Christians & Carey, 1981). It helps reveal the media frames and themes used to characterize disabled people, allowing us to look at what themes are appearing in recent advertisements featuring disabled people. As Altheide (1986) says, this type of analysis documents and illuminates the communication of meaning between the media text and a culture. This is crucial regarding ads featuring disabled people because both the US and Britain are trying to become more inclusive societies.

Advertisements lend themselves perfectly to a qualitative approach, because of the interplay among visual images, words, and the overt persuasive message. For visual images, Knoll (1987) has developed 83 interpretive categories for use in qualitatively assessing the photos of disabled people. Based on Knoll's criteria, one might look for whether the disabled person is shown as a charity case or is shown as "one of the gang," interacting equally with others. Thomson (2001) proposed a taxonomy of visual rhetorics of disability: the wondrous (Supercrip images), the sentimental (telethon and charity images), the exotic (early freak photography), and the realistic (documentary photography). She says, "the conventions of realism govern the images of disabled figures in the world of commerce, the visual component of which is advertising. . . . contemporary advertising casts disabled people as simply one of the many variations that compose the market to which they appeal" (p. 368).

But before analyzing the selected ads, it is important to contextualize a societal understanding of disability images within advertising. Historically, advertising's emphasis on beauty and bodily perfection led to exclusion of disabled people in the images, according to Disability Studies scholar Harlan Hahn (1987). Also, the nondisabled audience members' fears of becoming disabled and viewing images of disability made businesses hesitant to use disabled people as models. Hahn says that disabled people's "inability" to ever fit within a context of beautiful bodies rendered them invisible. He explains that advertising promotes a specific

"acceptable physical appearance" that it then reinforces. These advertising images tell society who is acceptable in terms of appearance and that transfers to whom it is acceptable to employ, associate with, communicate with, and value.

However, Hahn saw signs of hope in changing societal perceptions of disabled people through advertising and other forms of mass communication. He cites many historical examples in which societal perceptions of physical appearances/attributes changed over time. Therefore, in the modern understanding of diversity as a profitable undertaking for businesses, the cultural meaning of disability imagery in advertising has been changing for the better (Haller & Ralph, 2001). As Hahn predicted, some social attitudes changed, and advertising that features disabled people became associated with profitability because of the audience's desire to see "real life" in images. For example, Dickinson (1996) reported that households with a disabled person (49%) and those without one (35%) valued accurate advertising images of disabled people and were likely to buy products and services that showed sensitivity to disabled people's needs.

In Great Britain, the process of integrating disabled people in advertisements occurred recently. UK Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, said that Cheshire's VisABLE campaign was "a lead we should all follow" and that government departments would be encouraged to use more disabled people in their advertising (1999, p. 5). The campaign, which coincides with the government initiatives to raise awareness about disability issues and the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act, was created in conjunction with the National Disability Council (Stirling, 2000). The VisABLE campaign did not ask advertising firms to spend extra money on additional campaigns, just to plan their campaigns to include disabled models. To do this, businesses needed access to disabled models. Cheshire Charity launched a modeling competition and attracted 500 disabled entrants. Rosemary Hargreaves, press and public relations officer for the charity, said, "ad agencies and businesses claim there are no disabled models available, so we set out to challenge this perception by finding a pool of disabled models" (Stirling, 2000, p. 11).

Based on the use of disabled people in prominent advertisements in the US and the UK, we sought examples of ads that appeared from 1999 to 2002. As noted, we found them primarily by reviewing US and UK business publications. Others were found through the US disability community's, publications and Internet sites discussing ads that feature people with disabilities; and through the British VisABLE and SCOPE campaigns, which draw attention to ads with disabled people. We located 71 television ads, 28 print ads, 4 radio ads, and 1 film ad featuring disabled people between 1984 and 2002. We chose ads for one of two reasons. First, if they could be found via corporate web sites, print publications, or in the collection of a disability group (for example, the American Foundation for the Blind in New York has collected ads that feature blind people). Secondly, they were chosen due to notoriety about the advertisement in the disability community or in broader society. From a qualitative standpoint, this allowed us to analyze the societal discussion surrounding specific ads. A limitation of our method is that any local ads and some national ads might have been missed. Our goal, however, is

not to quantify the ads but to critically analyze how disabled people are being used in them and what themes can be found. We selected ads from seven companies, transcribed them, and analyzed their themes.

Analysis of selected ads using disabled people: USA

Cingular Wireless

Description: This TV ad, shown during the 2001 Super Bowl, begins with an image of artist Dan Keplinger painting on a canvas on the floor with a paintbrush in his headstick. Religious choral music plays in the background throughout. The advertisement mimics the communication style of the Academy Award-winning documentary (Hadary & Whiteford, 1999) featuring Keplinger by having courier typeface captions at the bottom of the screen for Keplinger's words. Caption one says: "There is an intelligent person inside this body." Caption two says: "Art gives me a way to express myself." The ad flashes to shots of Keplinger continuing to paint with his headstick and then to a headshot of him in front of one of his paintings, making clear they are self-portraits. Caption three, which is under a split shot of Keplinger painting and his brush alone moving on the canvas, says: "Most people think 'gimp' means lame walk." Caption four then says: "Gimp also means fighting spirit," which is under a split screen of an overhead long shot of him painting a large canvas and a close-up of him moving his head and brush. Keplinger then rolls through the studio with a joyful smile on his face and the ad cuts to shots of his paintings, which feature smiling faces. Caption five reads: "I am an artist" and is placed under an image of him sitting in his wheelchair in front of four of his paintings. It is shot from below and then transitions to an eye-level shot. The next image is the advertising message: "There is no force more powerful". . . . (next shot): "or beautiful than self expression." The last two shots are a split screen of Keplinger's clasped hands and a head shot, as he speaks the words: "I'm unbelievably lucky." The words are typed out as he says them. The final ad message reads: "What do you have to say?" and then the logo for Cingular Wireless appears.

Theme: Empowerment

Analysis: Dan Keplinger was the subject of the Academy Award-winning documentary "King Gimp." (Hadary & Whiteford, 1999) The use of Keplinger was a brave step for the images of disabled people in advertising. He has a severe form of cerebral palsy that affects both his speech and mobility. Keplinger is not a usual disabled model, because traditionally advertisers choose disabled people whose bodies are not perceived as upsetting to the audience. So the spot begins by confronting the audience's mistaken impression of Keplinger and his abilities. The words Keplinger uses in the ad are crucial because they confront those who would dismiss him because of his disability. For example, after illustrating his talents as a painter, he says with gusto: "I'm unbelievably lucky." Thus, he challenges those who would pity him. A severely disabled person has told one of the largest TV audiences of the year he feels lucky, happy, and proud of who he is. The ad has the potential to shake the worldview of many nondisabled people, who believe

disability is a pitiable millstone hanging around someone's neck. Keplinger's image and words construct an alternative belief system. "Too often the media depict people with disabilities as a disability, not a person," said Keplinger in Cingular press materials. "The Cingular ad, however, is about me as an artist and that's who I am."

Keplinger's message, embraced by many in the US disability community, is not about changing who he is, but reveling in how fortunate he feels. "There are just so many things this ad does for us - but the most important is to show that disability in and of itself is not bad," says Cyndi Jones, a wheelchair user who is director of the Center for an Accessible Society in San Diego, California. "After all - I am unbelievably lucky" (Haller, 2001). This ad illustrates that advertisers are willing to show the diversity of human bodies. It showed millions of TV viewers that accurately depicting the human spirit is the best advertising image of all.

However, even with all the positive implications of the Cingular ad, it is still "using" a disabled person to draw audience attention, and it should be noted that if an ad features a non-disabled person, it would never have a statement such as "There is an intelligent person inside this body." Although the ad is playing off the stereotypes of disabled people it infers the nondisabled audience has, it is also embracing a potentially "Supercrip" message by emphasizing Keplinger's "fighting spirit" and artistic accomplishments.

Nuveen & HealthExtras

Description: The TV ad for Nuveen, an investment management company, aired during the Super Bowl in 2000 with Christopher Reeve (the actor known for the "Superman" role, paralyzed in an equestrian accident in 1995). In the ad, Reeve is shown as cured of his spinal injury. The scene is an auditorium of the future and a group is assembled for a ceremony. The paralyzed actor rises up from his wheelchair and walks across the stage to present an award for research that cures spinal cord injury. His ability to walk was made possible using computer animation in which Reeve's head is placed on the body of a man wearing a tuxedo. The narrator states: "In the future, so many amazing things will happen in the world" (Farache, 2000, p. 1).

Theme: Disabled equals broken.

Analysis: In the controversial Nuveen ad, the problems caused by trading on tragedy can be seen as dangerously misrepresentative and off putting. In a frightening turn of events, many people around the world misunderstood the Nuveen ad and thought spinal cord injury had been cured when they saw Reeve "walk." Chris Allen of Nuveen said the message of the ad was "to inspire a dialogue on money, to have a new dialogue and get away from buying bigger boats and bigger cars and think about the impact that money can have on the future" (Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 1). The executive director of the US Spinal Cord Injury Foundation said it received numerous calls from paralyzed people and their loved ones who wanted to know how to be cured like Reeve in the ad. The ad inspired a false hope of a quick cure for spinal cord injury. "When you go out with an

advertisement like that, you tread a very, very narrow line between trying to be creative — and being misleading," he said (Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 1). Reeve responded to criticism of the ad with his same rhetoric of hope that a cure will be available if enough time and money are spent. Many disabled people criticized Reeve's singular focus on a cure. As William Stothers (2002), a wheelchair user and director of the Center for an Accessible Society, said of Reeve's quest:

I don't object to research to find ways to restore damaged spinal cords or causes of other diseases. But I am deeply offended by any implication that disability is an abnormal condition removed from the reality of the human condition. Human beings come in an immense variety of sizes, shapes, talents, and functional abilities. We're all over the map in differences in what we can and cannot do. The limits in what we can do are often found in obstacles and barriers created in and by the environment, natural, built and attitudinal. Finding a cure for those barriers, now that I can buy into (p.1).

Reeve also starred in a series of ads for a disability insurance provider, HealthExtras, which emphasized the personal tragedy idea. The spots have more validity because of their connection to disability insurance; however, they teeter on the edge of using scare tactics, underlining for viewers that what happened to him could happen to anyone. *Advertising Age* criticized Reeve and the ad because it said Reeve's "victimhood is for rent" and it becomes "the commercialization of personal tragedy" (Garfield, 2000, p. 101). Reeve was a good-looking, wealthy actor who probably shared little with the ad's audience but with his actor training he had a "command of tone and expression to charm, to touch. To persuade" (2000, p. 101). To continue to use the personal tragedies of disabled celebrities is a particularly offensive direction for advertising to take in selling products, Garfield explains (2000).

Doritos

Description: The TV ad begins with two young men playing an aggressive game of one-on-one basketball on a park's basketball court. Matched in height, both are wearing shorts; one is black, the other white. The shot begins from above, then takes the perspective of one of the players and then the other. The shots cut to their legs often, revealing that the white man has a prosthetic leg. The legs appear equal in the shots. That is, the prosthetic leg is shown as equal to the young man's other leg and those of his opponent. After a few seconds of play, the ad cuts to a British gentleman standing next to a desk outside. His voiceover states: "Yes, my friend, you are bold, but are you daring?" which related to a pitch for Doritos corn chips: "for the bold and daring." The British gentleman then crunches a Dorito in his mouth and the ad cuts back to the young men playing basketball. The black man prepares to shoot a basket and then he arches and shoots. The camera cuts to the basket as the ball approaches and then out of the corner of the shot comes the prosthetic leg being held in the white man's hand as he uses it to block the ball from going into the basket. The British gentleman's voiceover says: "New Doritos extreme, a bigger chip with an extreme taste. Only for the bold **and** the daring." In

the final scene, the white man is shaking hands with the British gentleman and has his prosthetic leg on the basketball. Clapping can be heard in the background as if to indicate that the young man has passed the test for being bold **and** daring.

Theme: Disability Cool/Disability Pride

Analysis: Casey Pieretti, the amputee in the ad, is a well-known inline skater who lost his leg while in college, having been hit by a drunk driver. This ad, showing a vigorous disabled person, sends a strong message of pride. Pieretti is competing equally on the basketball court and in fact, actually has an advantage, shown in the last scene when he uses his prosthetic leg to block a shot. Although focused on a sports theme, the ad does not turn Pieretti into a Supercrip. All the shots show his prosthetic leg to be the equal of the other legs on the court. His aggressive play in the one-on-one game makes him seem "cool," not as if he is succeeding "in spite of" his leg. His leg is actually the star of the ad as it helps him use a unique tactic in the basketball game. His prosthetic allows him to achieve the goal of both "bold and daring" that the Doritos slogan is asking all to aspire to.

Pieretti is an interesting case study as a disabled athlete who eschews the Supercrip label. In a profile of him, Clark (2002) writes: "Disabled athletes are not always 'inspiring' or 'courageous.' Sometimes they are just heeding a call — a call that differs only in tenor, not in kind, from that which beckons nondisabled jocks. Being disabled can be a drag sometimes, but it can also act as a catalyst. Case(y) in point: Casey Pieretti, amputee skater" (p. 1). Pieretti has always been an athlete, as a basketball player before his accident and as a triathlete for a time after the loss of his leg. His perspective: "once a jock, always a jock." He regularly states that the trauma of losing his leg was miniscule compared to the deaths of his father and brother due to a drunk driver several years before his accident. As an inline skater and motivational speaker, Pieretti tries not to reinforce a Supercrip status and he adds, "I've had my share of being discriminated against, most definitely" (Clark, 2002, p. 2). The problem caused by the Supercrip image is that "focusing on the Herculean achievements of a few very fit disabled people obscures the day-to-day needs of the disabled majority — a barrier-free environment, an end to job discrimination, and at the most fundamental level, simply being thought of as human beings" (Clark, 2002, p. 2). Pieretti skirts around the Supercrip label to one of disability pride, especially because he rarely hides his prosthetic leg. "Pieretti's greatest contribution to disability awareness may be his willingness to walk around wearing shorts, showing off what he calls his *Terminator* leg," Clark writes (2002, p. 2).

Bank of America

Description: The ad opens with a long shot of a woman warming up for martial arts in a studio. The camera cuts to a close up of her face. Her eyes are closed, and she is breathing evenly in preparation for the contest. An Asian male prepares to attack. There is a close up of his face with his eyes wide open as he prepares to move in on the woman. Her hands fly, and she stops his attack. The camera moves to a long shot with the woman in the center of the shot with male opponents on

either side. Both men are in a state of readiness to attack, and she in a position to defend. One of the men lunges and misses. She turns toward the other man, kicks and scores a direct hit. Accompanying the image of the woman "throwing" her male opponent, a voiceover asks the question, "What is possible?" A close-up shot of the woman in a resting position is shown. The next shot shows the woman leaving the studio and walking towards the camera out into the street. As she exits, she unfolds a white cane. This is the first indication that she is blind. The voiceover for this image says, "Does achievement discriminate? Or does it open its doors to everyone?" The final shot shows the back of the woman walking confidently down the street, the white cane stretched out in front of her. She is dressed in a sweat suit, sneakers, and carrying a sports bag over her shoulder. The caption, "Talking ATMs for the visually impaired. Bank of America: Embracing ingenuity," is placed over this shot. All the shots of this woman suggest she is intelligent, has great skill in the martial arts, and these are executed with strength, accuracy and grace, with the resting shot indicating her knowledge of the etiquette of the art.

Theme: We want your business/Supercrip

Analysis: This ad, entitled "Sparring," "demonstrates the company's success in breaking through societal limitations — and creating new banking experiences for sight impaired customers," and delivers a brand promise: "To be the people who make banking work for customers and clients in ways it never has before," according to company press materials (Scredon and Humphrey, 2001, p. 2). Bank of America had been providing innovative and accessible services for blind customers for a while, when it began installing thousands of talking ATMs throughout its branches (DREDF, 2001).

However, this ad rightfully attracted criticism. *Advertising Age* said what the Bank of America wants is everybody's money, even blind people's (Garfield, 2001). *Advertising Age* says the ad smacks of pity in an effort to attract nondisabled customers to its "worthy" efforts on behalf of disabled people and tries to woo disabled people and their money with its Supercrip blind woman. "What message do we send the disabled — to say nothing of the able-bodied — with our insistence on viewing them as pitiful wretches unless riding a unicycle on a tightrope with a piano balanced on each knee?" it questions (Garfield, 2001, p. 73). With these types of Supercrip images, in which a blind woman beats three Asian men in a martial arts competition, the ad is sending an insulting message. Garfield (2001) favors mainstreaming disabled people into advertising but says the medium should be accessible to them. The irony of the Bank of America TV ad is that it actually does little to inform blind people about the talking ATMs because it uses captions instead of voiceover.

The ad on its surface seems inclusive. It does show a blind woman being independent, following her interest in the martial arts, traveling on her own, being a high achiever in her chosen sport. The ad goes for a big impact, because by using her blindness as a surprise, it cheapens her independence. Is she best in her sport because she is a woman or because she is blind; the audience is suddenly confused. Is she showing greater skills of movement or is the message really the

improbability of a blind woman, no matter how excellent at martial arts, actually beating three others? The overall theme of the ad pushes inclusion to the background and sends the resounding image of a Supercrip, with all the condescension that implies.

Analysis of selected ads using disabled people: UK

Marks & Spencer

Description: The two winners from the VisABLE campaign, a deaf woman and a wheelchair-using man, subsequently appeared in Marks and Spencer's print ads selling women's panty hose and men's casual wear (*M&S Magazine*, 2000, p. 32, 45). Natalie Doyle, a design student who is deaf, is paired with another model in an ad accompanying the article about "the easy way to gorgeous summer legs" (p. 21). It is a classy ad, showing two smartly dressed women, one black and the other white, drinking wine in a sophisticated wine bar. They are looking across the room and are clearly having a "conversation" about somebody. From their nonverbal expressions, both are laughing and one of the women is half shielding her mouth with her hand, they are probably meant to be discussing a rather attractive male. Both are smiling and have a pose that shows off the panty hose on their long, slim, and elegant legs. There are no obvious signs that Doyle is deaf in the ad. Ben Ashwell, a city analyst and a wheelchair user, is shown advertising "The coolest casuals for young men — and how to wear them for the hottest new looks" (p. 45). He is a young, good-looking man with a sparkling smile, a trendy haircut, and an earring; he is shown wearing an M&S casual top. He is in a relaxed pose with his arms resting on the wheels of his sporty wheelchair, which has no armrests. This full-page ad with Ashwell as the centerpiece shows a range of clothing and accessories for the modern young man.

Theme: Inclusion

Analysis: Both the disabled people had other jobs before they became models. Although not apparent to those who see the ads featuring them, the power of these images comes from being the first examples of how businesses can use the VisABLE models in campaigns that were designed to get more disabled models into mainstream advertising. In the ad featuring Doyle, it is not obvious that she is deaf, so M&S receives no recognition that it has employed a disabled model. However, for Doyle personally, she may have found new career, and if she is ever featured in a TV ad, her deafness will be apparent. The ad featuring her sends a message of inclusion because she is appearing with other people. She is shown engaged with another young woman in an activity appropriate to their social group. The image of Doyle fits with Knoll's photo category (1987) for disabled people known as "one of the gang," in which they interact equally with others. In another way, Ashwell is also "one of the gang" — although he has a visible disability, because he is modeling men's fashions just as any nondisabled male models would. He is simply another model, showing off the clothes.

HSBC Bank

Description: HSBC Bank has two print ads using disabled people; one is a wall ad in the banks' branches and the other is an insert into its statement mailings. One describes "accessible banking, ways to bank with us" and features a male employee who is blind. The other ad focuses on "accessible banking, services for customers with disabilities" and features two photographs -- on the front a male customer, who is an amputee, and inside, a male customer, who is a wheelchair user. In the wall ad, the blind employee is shown reading a Braille script, in which his hand is blurred across the page as if he is speed-reading. In the insert ad, the male amputee is shown in a white tennis outfit holding a tennis racket in one hand and a remote control in the other. A tennis ball is visible in the foreground. He is sitting on a sofa and is presumably checking his account via TV before going to the tennis court. His prosthetic leg is clearly visible. The image inside the insert shows a male wheelchair user wearing a traditional business suit. All three images feature white males in the 25 to 50-age range.

Theme: We want your business/ Partial Inclusion

Analysis: Mary Walsh, the Customer Disability Manager at HSBC, says, "we ... deliberately did not use a wheelchair user" in the bank's images of disabled people; however, that information is contradicted by the inside image in the insert. She says the bank's policy is to "use disabled people as a slice of life" (2002). The image of the blind employee actually doing a real bank job is certainly inclusive because it indicates there is a place for blind employees at HSBC. However, the amputee on the front of the statement insert presents multiple messages of sports and home banking. Why was it necessary to combine the sports image with the message of increased banking access for disabled people? Was putting him in tennis shorts just a convenient way to emphasize his disability and to make sure the reader did not miss it? Or was the advertising agency influenced by the number of disabled sportspeople now being used in advertising in Britain? The underlying message of the insert's images seems to be about adding banking business by attracting upscale white and male disabled consumers. HSBC's insistence that it is trying to depict a slice of life does not ring true with only professional white males being shown.

Conclusions

Previous research found that disability images focused primarily on two impairments: wheelchair use and deafness (Haller and Ralph, 2001). This appears to be changing somewhat. Although there is still much emphasis placed on wheelchair users, prosthetic limbs, missing limbs, white canes, and more severe disabilities such as cerebral palsy, now provide the visual cues that advertisers need to denote disability. Furthermore this analysis of ads featuring disabled people in the US and the UK illustrates that disabled people are representing the advertising messages while denoting themes about the current place of disabled people in these societies. As a disabled screenwriter explained, "with varying degrees of finesse, they [advertisers] juggle two points: Their products or services are worthy, and so are people who can't walk" (Moss, 1992, p. 19).

Of course, as with much advertising, only attractive people typically become models. But as one disabled actor said, "the Adonis in a wheelchair is better than the whimpering victim in a corner" (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 31). However, this study shows that recent advertisements are taking more risk when they show disability. Keplinger, in the Cingular ad, has severe cerebral palsy and is difficult to understand, but that makes his message of self-expression for the cell phone company even more powerful. And Pieretti does not hide his prosthetic leg; in fact it is the star of the Doritos commercial. Therefore, these more risky disability images have the potential to send an empowering media message about disability to their audiences, and according to several scholars, this has the potential for attitude changes towards disabled people (Farnall & Smith, 1999, Panol & McBride, 1999, Farnall, 1996).

Though still relatively rare, ads featuring disabled people seem to be increasing in both countries. In the UK this is probably due to the new disability legislation and the Disability Rights Commission asking companies to include disabled people in their advertising, even establishing a government review aimed at ensuring the appearance of more disabled people in its advertising campaigns (*Campaign*, 2001). UK ads provide less visual excitement than those from America, but most of them give some form of inclusive message. Ironically, it is UK charities such as Leonard Cheshire and SCOPE, which were once hounded by the disability rights groups for their negative images, that are mainly responsible for this increase in the number of ads featuring disabled people (Scott-Parker, 1989). The idea of a "special" modeling competition and modeling agency for disabled people raises questions, but there have been positive results from both efforts. Also, SCOPE's ongoing dialogue concerning advertising's positive portrayal of disabled people has helped put disability issues onto the UK's mainstream agenda.

However, money continues to be a dominant theme for advertisers in both the UK and the US. "The implication of the images produced in these advertisements is that advertising not only includes disabled people for capitalistic reasons, but realizes these must be accurate images to earn any profit from their use" (Haller and Ralph, 2001). The positive impact of appealing to the disabled consumers' dollars has long been documented (Williams, 1999). Despite being poorly done, the Bank of America ad has realized the potential of a large untapped source of customers -- visually impaired people, and began a nationwide installation of talking ATMs. UK's Disability Rights Commission, SCOPE, and VisABLE campaigns are trying to promote a similar idea of profitability there. As B&Q home improvement reports on its initiative to hire disabled people and attract disabled consumers points out: "The total cost of the physical changes and auxiliary aids and the training totals £8000. Set against the potential for increased turnover from disabled and elderly shoppers this figure represents an attractive investment" (2000, p. 10). Several ads we analyzed presented this straightforward capitalistic theme of "we want your business." We found this same theme in our analysis of advertising images of disability in 2001 (Haller & Ralph).

This article aimed to investigate whether advertising images remained static in their messages (focusing solely on integration) or were expanding their messages to

show a variety of disability images. Our analysis of a few selected ads revealed that improvements have occurred in advertising images of disability, such as the themes of empowerment (Cingular) and the themes of disability pride and inclusion (Doritos, Marks & Spencer, and HSBC). However, several ads still embrace antiquated themes that continue to stigmatize disabled people: Nuveen, HealthExtras, and Bank of America. These ads' themes convey underlying messages that disabled people are broken and in need of repair, are awash in tragedy, or are Supercrups, who are put on pedestals for just living their lives. The advertising images analyzed fit only two categories of Thomson's (2001) taxonomy of visual rhetorics of disability: the wondrous (Supercrup images) and the realistic. In what may be a positive trend in both US and UK societies, Thomson's other two categories (sentimental and exotic) seem to meet with rejection, according to our analysis. Although our reported sample of ads is very small due to space constraints, we reviewed a larger number. We hope that the more enlightened of the ads we discussed illustrate an ongoing trend that the pity-filled, sentimental images represented by telethons and charities, and the exotic images of disabled people as freaks, are no longer considered appropriate in 21st century societies trying to restructure themselves so disabled people can compete equally in all facets of life.

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