# Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process

GRANT McCRACKEN*

This article offers a new approach to celebrity endorsement. Previous explanations, especially the source credibility and source attractiveness models are criticized, and an alternative meaning transfer model is proposed. According to this model, celebrities' effectiveness as endorsers stems from the cultural meanings with which they are endowed. The model shows how meanings pass from celebrity to product and from product to consumer. The implications of this model for our understanding of the consumer society are considered. Research avenues suggested by the model are also discussed.

The celebrity endorser is a ubiquitous feature of modern marketing. The actor Robert Young, the quarterback Jim McMahon, the dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, the CEO Lee Iacocco, the singer Whitney Houston, the test pilot Chuck Yeager, and the politician Tip O'Neill have all lent name and image to recent campaigns. Unfortunately, the popularity of this communications strategy has not earned it extensive study. Nor has it inspired especially illuminating theoretical accounts. As a result, the received wisdom on celebrity endorsement is modest and imperfect, and existing models fail to capture several of the most interesting and central characteristics of the endorsement process.

This investigation of endorsement addresses these deficits from a cultural perspective. The argument is that the endorsement process depends upon the symbolic properties of the celebrity endorser. Using a "meaning transfer" perspective, these properties are shown to reside in the celebrity and to move from celebrity to consumer good and from good to consumer. This perspective is then used to address controversial issues concerning the consumer society. Finally, research opportunities are reviewed.

For present purposes, the celebrity endorser is defined as any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. We will refine this definition later, but for the moment it is deliberately broad to encompass not only the usual movie and television stars, but also individuals from the world of sport, politics, business, art, and the military. The term "celebrity" is also meant in this article to encompass a variety of endorsements, including those in the explicit mode ("I endorse this product"), the implicit mode ("I use this product"), the imperative mode ("You should use this product"), and the copresent mode (i.e., in which the celebrity merely appears with the product). Moreover, it includes a range of endorsement roles, such as cases in which the celebrity is also an expert (e.g., Bobby Unser recommending motor oil), is associated with the manufacturer in some long term capacity (e.g., Pat Summerall for TrueValue Hardware), or has no special knowledge of, or association with, the product in question (cf. Friedman, Termini, and Washington 1977). This definition is designed deliberately to exclude the "typical consumer" endorser (Friedman and Friedman 1979). The model presented in this article applies to all these variations but the last.

## THE LITERATURE

Two models, the source credibility and the source attractiveness models, inform research and reflection on the topic of celebrity endorsement. Both were devised originally for the study of communications and have been applied only latterly to the endorsement process. Both are designed to determine the conditions under which the message sender or source is persuasive.

The source credibility model rests on research in social psychology (Hovland and Weiss 1951–1952; Hovland, Janis, and Kelley 1953). The Hovland version of the model contends that a message depends for its effectiveness on the "expertness" and "trustworthiness" of the source (Hovland et al. 1953, p. 20; cf. Dholakia and Sternthal 1977; Sternthal, Dholakia,

*Grant McCracken is Associate Professor, Department of Consumer Studies, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2W1. He wishes to thank Peter Bennett, Tara Curtis, Bill Frisbee, Ron Goldman, Monty Sommers, Vic Roth, Donna Woolcott, and Rami Zwich as well as the anonymous JCR reviewers for their very useful comments on earlier versions of this article.



© JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH • Vol. 16 • December 1989

and Leavitt 1978). Expertness is defined as the perceived *ability* of the source to make valid assertions. Trustworthiness is defined as the perceived *willingness* of the source to make valid assertions. The Hovland model holds that sources exhibiting expertness and trustworthiness are credible and, to this extent, persuasive.

The source attractiveness model also rests on social psychological research. The McGuire (1985) model contends that a message depends for its effectiveness chiefly on the "familiarity," "likability," and/or "similarity" of the source (McGuire 1985, p. 264; cf. Baker and Churchill 1977; Debevec and Kernan 1984; Friedman, Santeramo, and Traina 1978; Joseph 1982; Kahle and Homer 1985). Familiarity is defined as knowledge of the source through exposure, likability as affection for the source as a result of the source's physical appearance and behavior, and similarity as a supposed resemblance between the source and receiver of the message. The McGuire model holds that sources who are known to, liked by, and/or similar to the consumer are attractive and, to this extent, persuasive.

The source models (as we shall call the source credibility and source attractiveness models together) have been confirmed by research. The Hovland model has been validated by several parties (Atkin and Block 1983; Kamen, Azhari, and Kragh 1975; Klebba and Unger 1983; cf. Finn 1980, p. 779). The McGuire model also demonstrated its value (Friedman and Friedman 1979), and it appears safe to say that celebrities owe some of their effectiveness as marketing devices to their credibility and attractiveness. The source models are, to this extent, a necessary part of our understanding of the endorsement process. But, they do not capture everything at issue in the endorsement process. Indeed, there is reason to think these models cannot explain endorsement's most fundamental features. The evidence for this skepticism is everywhere. The research itself is littered with puzzles and peculiarities the source models cannot explain.

For instance, the research by the Friedmans produced results that are not consistent with the source models. They found that some product categories were incompatible with celebrity categories (e.g., that Mary Tyler Moore served as a poor celebrity endorser for vacuum cleaners). But the source models make no such provision. For the models' purposes, as long as the credibility and attractiveness conditions are satisfied, *any* celebrity should serve as a persuasive source for *any* advertising message. According to the model, the persuasiveness of the celebrity has everything to do with the celebrity and nothing to do with the product.

Kamen, Azhari, and Kragh (1975, p. 18) suggest that the spokesperson acts as a kind of "core around which the substantive messages are positioned." In this capacity, the spokesperson helps

> trigger the past associations with the sponsor and stimulate the remembering of past messages. He would integrate new messages with the old so as to build a unifying, coherent, sustained, and consistent image of the brand.

This position implies that the celebrity serves the endorsement process by taking on meanings that then carry from ad to ad, and that the celebrity is capable somehow of serving as a site in which meanings cohere. Plainly, neither possibility is consistent with either source model. After all, these models make assertions only about the credibility and attractiveness of the message sender and none about the endorser's role as a message medium or the continuity of the message from ad to ad. In the language of Kuhn (1962), the paradigm is beginning to accumulate anomalies. Scholars have been compelled either to abandon or transform the source models.

But if the internal evidence for skepticism is strong, the external grounds are even stronger. The scholarly and professional literature is littered with data that cannot be explained by the source models. There are mysteries everywhere. Bill Cosby failed as an endorser for E.F. Hutton despite his evident success for Kodak and Coca Cola. John Houseman failed as an endorser for McDonald's despite his effective work for Smith Barney (Marshall 1987). George C. Scott proved, mysteriously, to be the wrong choice for Renault, as did Ringo Starr for Sun Country Classic wine coolers (Motavalli 1988). The source models, as the present guardian of current endorsement practice, did not forewarn advertising practitioners of the inappropriateness of these celebrity choices. Nor can they, as the received academic wisdom on the endorsement process, help us understand what went wrong. The source models have not served as a practical or theoretical guide to celebrity endorsement.

Consider, for instance, the example of John Wayne as a celebrity endorser for the pain reliever Datril. "Wayne had nothing to do with the product, and sales of the analgesic languished. . . . (It was a) classic . . . mismatch between star and product" (Kaikati 1987, p. 6). This is offered as a kind of explanation of what went wrong in the Datril case. But what does it mean to say that the celebrity "had nothing to do" with the product? What "mismatch" between celebrity and product is being asserted here? The source models do not tell us. They cannot explain why John Wayne and Datril were incompatible.

Schudson's treatment of James Garner as a celebrity endorser is germane. Schudson (1984, p. 212) suggests that there is something mysterious about the advertisements in which Garner appears.

> Garner does not play himself, the person, nor does he play a particular fictive character. Instead, he plays what I would call the generalized James Garner role, the type for which James Garner is always cast—handsome, gentle, bumbling, endearing, a combination of

Bret Maverick from "Maverick" and Jim Rockford from "The Rockford Files."

This thoughtful observation spells real trouble for the source models. If the celebrity endorser represents not himself but his stage persona, the issues of expertness and trustworthiness can hardly apply. After all, it hardly makes sense to impute credibility to a fictional character. But even if we force the issue and insist that fictional characters can, somehow, be credible, Schudson's observation tells us this is a special, role-specific credibility. It is no longer a simple matter of the willingness and ability to make valid assertions.

The issue of source attractiveness is problematical in a different way. According to Schudson's account, Garner's attractiveness consists in the "endearing," "gentle," and "bumbling" qualities of his stage persona. We must add to this perhaps the most salient trait of Garner's stage persona, his claim to being the foremost representative of a particular category of American male. As a prototype of the category, Garner is a member of the larger pantheon of actors that helps define this gender category in America (e.g., James Stewart, John Wayne, Cary Grant, Sylvester Stallone).

When we observe Garner from this point of view, we see that his attractiveness depends not on his qualities as a person or even on his qualities as a famous person, but on the qualities he has created in his stage persona. For communications purposes, the celebrity is a composite of his fictional roles. This means that when consumers respond to Garner's "attractiveness," they are, in fact, responding to a very particular set of meanings. They are identifying with a bundle of symbolic properties created for, and by, Garner in the television programs "Maverick" and "The Rockford Files."

This is not "identification" in the ordinary sense. The source models do not capture and illuminate what is going on here. Audience response to James Garner is more complicated and interesting than the source models allow. Garner is persuasive as a communicator not only because he is "attractive," but also because he is made up of certain meanings the consumer finds compelling and useful. Garner succeeds as an endorser for Mazda because he represents a bundle of meanings about maturity, Americanness, confidence, masculinity, intelligence, and good humor.

It is here that we begin to uncover the real insufficiency of the source models as an account of celebrity endorsement. The source attractiveness model can tell us that consumers will identify with Garner, but it cannot tell us why—nor can it contend with the meanings contained in Garner's persona. Still more important, the model does not allow us to make sense of the meanings contained in a celebrity endorser once they are determined. The source model can tell us only that a celebrity is attractive, not what attractive is.

The implications of this insufficiency are powerful. First, the source models do not allow us to understand the appeal of any particular celebrity. This makes it impossible to understand why a celebrity like Garner should be persuasive for some products but not for others. The source models prevent us from identifying the matches and mismatches. We are left unable to assess how Garner's image interacts with different products and creative themes.

Second, the source models will never allow us to discriminate between celebrities in any useful way. Certainly they allow us to say that James Garner is, perhaps, more credible than Alan Alda. But it does not allow us to say how Garner and Alda differ from a symbolic or communications point of view. The source models might tell us only that Michael J. Fox, Tony Danza, and Don Johnson differ in their degree of attractiveness. This is problematical because we understand that their differences go much deeper than this. Hypothetically, the source models might tell us that Cybil Shepherd, Bea Arthur, and Joan Collins are equally credible. But we know this sameness masks profound and thoroughgoing differences. In short, the source models tell us about *degrees* of attractiveness and credibility when what we need to know about is *kinds* of attractiveness and credibility.

Both the internal and external evidence contain anomalies that demonstrate the insufficiency of the source models. If we are to understand the endorsement process, we must build better, more sophisticated models. We especially must come to terms with the meanings contained in the celebrity and give an account of how these meanings serve the endorsement process. The remainder of the article is designed to suggest such an account.

## CULTURAL MEANING AND THE CELEBRITY ENDORSER

The effectiveness of the endorser depends, in part, upon the meanings he or she brings to the endorsement process. The number and variety of the meanings contained in celebrities are very large. Distinctions of status, class, gender, and age, as well as personality and lifestyle types, are represented in the pool of available celebrities, putting an extraordinarily various and subtle pallet of meanings at the disposal of the marketing system.

For example, class and status are represented by the likes of Peter Jennings and John Forsythe as patrician men and Catherine Deneuve and Audrey Hepburn as regal women. The distinction of new wealth is contained in genteel versions such as Pierce Brosnan and Diane Sawyer or in more grasping versions such as Larry Hagman and Joan Collins. The upper middle class is represented by Tim Matheson and Shelley

Long, the middle class by John Ritter and Christie Brinkley, and the lower middle class by Patrick Swayze and Suzanne Somers.

Cultural categories of gender and age are also represented in the celebrity endorser. One extreme representation of maleness is established by the likes of Sylvester Stallone, the other by the likes of Dick Cavett. Ranging between them are Hulk Hogan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Brian Bozworth, Fred Dryer, Tony Danza, Stacey Keach, Paul Newman, Patrick Duffy, Timothy Hutton, Bob Newhart, Tony Randall, and Jeremy Brett. For women, Loni Anderson and Sigourney Weaver represent the extremes of the continuum of their gender. Ranging between them are Cheryl Ladd, Victoria Principal, Cheryl Tiegs, Pam Dawber, Kate Jackson, and Jane Seymour. Age categories range from the militantly youthful Pee Wee Herman to the prematurely ancient Danny DeVito, or from the callow youth represented in Judge Reinhold to the wisdom gained by age in E.G. Marshall. These age categories are subject to change, as Gary Coleman and Angela Lansbury have recently demonstrated.

In addition to these demographic categories, the celebrity world also contains a range of personality types. The curmudgeon is represented by Edward Asner, the rake by John Larroquette, the irritable incompetent by John Cleese, the bewildered alien by Bronson Pinchet, the good hearted dimwit by Woody Harrelson, the irrepressibly impudent by Tracey Ullmann, the indiscriminately jolly by Ed McMahon, the irascible by David Letterman, the blandly agreeable by Gary Collins, and so on.

The celebrity world also offers a range of lifestyle types. The quintessential yuppie is perhaps Ed Olin of "Thirtysomething." The stereotypic young professional woman was once Mary Tyler Moore and is now, perhaps, Pam Dawber. The perfect Dad was once Robert Young and now may be Michael Gross or Bill Cosby. The perfect princess is represented by Delta Burke of "Designing Women," the working class hero by Carroll O'Connor, the man of wisdom and experience by David Brinkley or Charles Kerault. Here, too, the range and depth of representation is extensive.

This review oversimplifies celebrity meanings. Even the most heavily stereotyped celebrity represents not a single meaning, but an interconnected set of meanings. Cher offers a useful case in point. It is possible to locate her on all the dimensions noted. She is low to middle class in her status meaning, located toward the "hot" end of the gender continuum, and clearly youthful in attitude if not age. The personality is extroverted and outspoken, the lifestyle open, freewheeling, and alternative. But, plainly, none of these dimensions by itself captures the meanings with which Cher is charged or, more importantly, the essential configuration of meanings she brings to the endorsement process. For this, it is necessary to characterize the whole person. Cher is hip, risk taking, individualistic, sensual, sexual, expressive, irreverent, and liberated. It is this larger package of meanings playing off one another that defines Cher. These meanings enter into the endorsement process when Cher speaks, for instance, for Baly-Matrix health clubs or her own perfume.

These, then, are some of the meanings contained in the celebrity world. They are reviewed here in a cursory, undocumented way. An exact assessment of these meanings awaits empirical study and theoretical development. But enough has been said to indicate that the celebrity world is something richer and more complicated than a collection of merely credible or attractive individuals.

It is, I would argue, precisely the meanings of the celebrity that makes him or her so useful to the endorsement process. For an endorsement succeeds when an association is fashioned between the cultural meanings of the celebrity world, on the one hand, and the endorsed product, on the other. Not all endorsements succeed in this transfer. Indeed, some are too unsophisticated even to undertake it. But the best endorsements take their power and their efficacy precisely from this: the successful transfer of meaning.

For example, James Garner's endorsement of Mazda succeeds when a transfer takes place between his persona and the Mazda line. It succeeds when the qualities of maturity, Americanness, confidence, good humor, and a certain kind of maleness are made the qualities of the Mazda vehicle. The endorsement succeeds, in other words, when the properties of the man are made the properties of the car.

## MEANING TRANSFER: THE GENERAL PROCESS

Celebrity endorsement is, in fact, a special instance of a more general process of meaning transfer. I have described this general process elsewhere in some detail (McCracken 1986, 1988) and review it only briefly here. According to this model, there is a conventional path for the movement of cultural meaning in consumer societies. Meaning begins as something resident in the culturally constituted world (McCracken 1988, pp. 72–73), in the physical and social world constituted by the categories and principles of the prevailing culture. Meaning then moves to consumer goods and finally to the life of the consumer. Several instruments facilitate this transfer. The movement of meanings from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods is accomplished by advertising and the fashion system. The movement of meanings from consumer goods to the individual consumer is accomplished through the efforts of the consumer. Thus does meaning circulate in the consumer society.

Advertising serves as an instrument of meaning transfer in a deceptively simple manner. The transfer process begins when the advertiser identifies the cultural meanings intended for the product (i.e., the type of gender, status, age, lifestyle, time, and place meanings). Or, more technically, the advertiser determines which of the "categories" and "principles" of culture pertain (McCracken 1988, pp. 73–77). In the language of current advertising practice, the advertiser decides what he or she wishes the product to say.

Once this choice has been made, the advertiser surveys the culturally constituted world for the objects, persons, and contexts that already contain and give voice to these meanings. These elements enable the advertiser to bring the selected cultural meanings into the advertisement in visible, concrete form. However, the advertiser must portray the elements and the product with consummate care and skill. This care is necessary for two reasons. First, elements come charged with more meanings than are wanted for the product so the advertiser must evoke some, but not all, of the meanings of the elements. Second, elements and product must be presented in such a way that the similarity between them suggests itself irresistibly to the viewer. This precise combination of elements and product set the stage for the transfer of meaning from the product to the consumer. Imprecise or unsophisticated combinations discourage it.

Note that there is no necessary or motivated relationship between the meanings and the product. It is not the case that chocolates can be given only certain meanings while tennis racquets can be given only others. Any product can carry virtually any meaning. Certainly, goods lend themselves to particular meanings (e.g., chocolates and social sentiment), but advertising is such a powerful mechanism of meaning transfer that virtually any product can be made to take virtually any meaning. This property of meaning transfer is still another reason for taking special care in the selection of certain meanings. The transfer process must be carefully controlled.

Which meanings are chosen for the product will depend on the marketing plan and the sophistication of client, account executive, research group, and creative team. How well meanings are represented in and manipulated by the advertisement will depend in particular on the creative director and his or her staff. But the final act of meaning transfer is performed by the consumer, who must glimpse in a moment of recognition an essential similarity between the elements and the product in the ad. The consumer suddenly "sees" that the cultural meanings contained in the people, objects, and contexts of the advertisement are also contained in the product. Well-crafted advertisements enable this essentially metaphoric transference. Badly crafted advertisements do not.

Once meanings have been moved into goods, they must also be moved into consumers. Consumers must take possession of these meanings and put them to work in the construction of their notions of the self and the world. They must craft and shape these meanings to fulfill the strategies of meaning manipulation with which they have constructed their lives. Consumers are constantly finding gender, class, age, lifestyle, time, and place meanings in their possessions, and using these meanings to fashion aspects of the self. They are constantly taking possession of cultural principles in consumer goods that help define and fashion the home, the family, and other aspects of the world in which they live. Consumers turn to their goods not only as bundles of utility with which to serve functions and satisfy needs, but also as bundles of meaning with which to fashion who they are and the world in which they live (Belk 1988). When this is done, the movement of meaning is complete. The meaning that began in the culturally constituted world has finally come to rest in the life and experience of the consumer. The cultural circuit is complete.

Thus, in general terms, do culture and consumption interact to create a system of meaning movement in contemporary societies. I have given just one account of this process (McCracken 1986, 1988). Readers may wish to consult other accounts of this meaning process (Adams 1973; Holman 1980; Levy 1959, 1981; Mick 1986; Prown 1980; Stern 1988; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988), how it is used (Ames 1982; Appadurai 1986; Belk 1988; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Solomon 1983), how it enters into the marketing system (Douglas and Isherwood 1978; Gottdiener 1985; Hirschman and Holbrook 1981), and how it might best be studied (Prown 1982; Sherry 1989; Umiker-Sebeok and Levy 1987).

## MEANING TRANSFER: THE CELEBRITY ENDORSER'S CONTRIBUTION

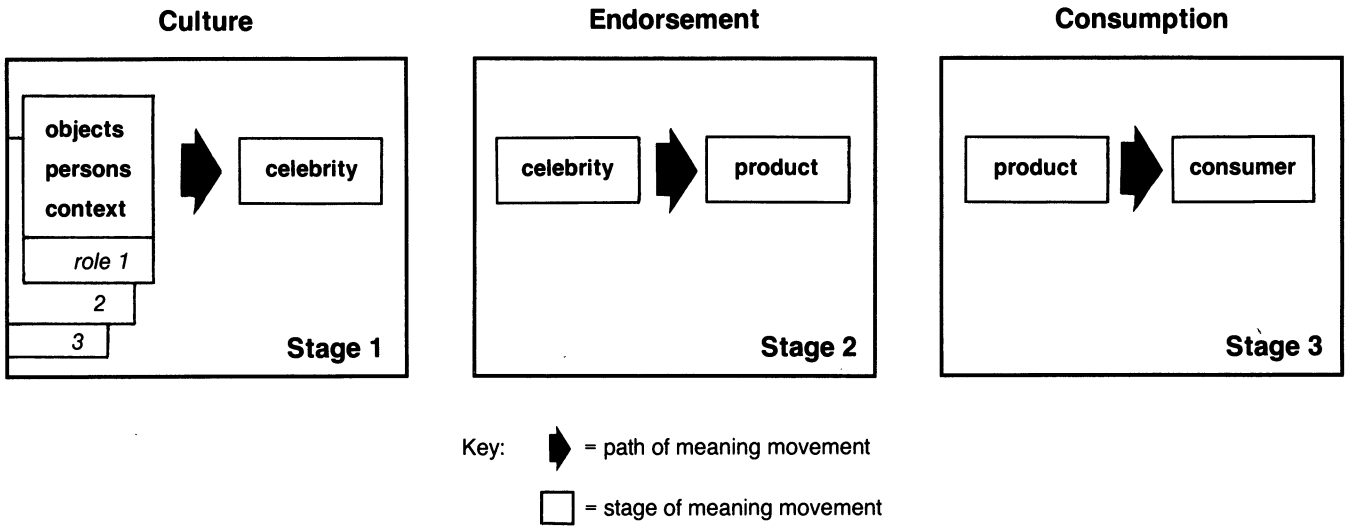
Celebrity endorsement plays a crucial part in the meaning transfer process just described. As the Figure shows, the meaning that begins in the dramatic roles of the celebrity comes, in Stage 1, to reside in the celebrities themselves. In Stage 2, this meaning is transferred when the celebrity enters into an advertisement with a product. Some of the meanings of the celebrity are now the meanings of the product. In the final stage, the meaning moves from the product to the consumer. Celebrity endorsement makes a very particular contribution to each of these three stages.

### Stage 1

Endorsement gives the ad access to a special category of person from the culturally constituted world. It makes available individuals charged with detailed and powerful meanings. Celebrities are, in this re-

**FIGURE**

MEANING MOVEMENT AND THE ENDORSEMENT PROCESS




spect, very different from the anonymous models (or anonymous actors) who are normally used to bring meanings to the ad. Celebrities deliver meanings of extra subtlety, depth, and power.

The contrast between celebrities and models is worth developing. It is clear enough that advertisements can undertake meaning transfer without the aid of celebrities. Anonymous actors and models *are* charged with meaning, and, obviously, they are available at a fraction of the cost. Indeed, for most advertising purposes, the meanings that can be "imported" through an anonymous model are perfectly sufficient. The question, then, is why celebrities should be used for an ad. How does the celebrity "add value" to the meaning transfer process? What special powers and properties does the celebrity bring to the advertisement, to the product, and, ultimately, the consumer?

Anonymous models offer demographic information, such as distinctions of gender, age, and status, but these useful meanings are relatively imprecise and blunt. Celebrities offer all these meanings with special precision. Furthermore, celebrities offer a range of personality and lifestyle meanings that the model cannot provide. Finally, celebrities offer configurations of meaning that models can never possess. No mere model could bring to Baly-Matrix the properties that Cher delivers, nor could any model have summoned the impatient, time-tested integrity John Houseman gave the Smith Barney line "We make money the old-fashioned way, we earn it." Only a man playing Houseman's roles in the way Houseman played them could empower the slogan as Houseman did. Celebrities have particular configurations of meanings that cannot be found elsewhere.

In addition, celebrities are more powerful media than anonymous models and actors. Even when they deliver meanings that can be found elsewhere, they deliver them more powerfully. Celebrities evoke the meanings in their persona with greater vividness and clarity. Models and actors are, after all, merely "borrowing" or acting out the meanings they bring to the ad. The celebrity, however, speaks with meanings of long acquaintance. Celebrities "own" their meanings because they have created them on the public stage by dint of intense and repeated performance. Audrey Hepburn delivers "elegance" much more vividly than even the most elegant model. She does so because she has enacted and absorbed this elegance by performing it on stage and screen.

Celebrities draw these powerful meanings from the roles they assume in their television, movie, military, athletic, and other careers. Indeed, these careers act very much like large ads, as Stage 1 of the Figure shows. Each new dramatic role brings the celebrity into contact with a range of objects, persons, and contexts. Out of these objects, persons, and contexts are transferred meanings that then reside in the celebrity. When the celebrity brings these meanings into an ad, they are, in a sense, merely passing along meanings with which they have been charged by another meaning transfer process. Or, to put this another way, the meaning that the celebrity endorsement gives to the product was generated in distant movie performances, political campaigns, or athletic achievements.

Interestingly, celebrities appear largely unaware of their part in the meaning transfer process. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in their concern for type-

casting. Actors say they dislike being cast repeatedly in the same role, claiming that typecasting limits their career and creative options. What they do not see is that their careers, their art form, and the endorsement process all depend upon typecasting.

The North American movie demands the participation of actors charged with meanings; it needs actors to bring their own meanings with them to a part. These meanings simplify the movie's expository task and give it substance and direction. Bill Murray, Sylvester Stallone, Morgan Fairchild, and Joanne Woodward all carry meanings with them from role to role. One of the troubles with unknown actors and actresses is precisely that they are unable to carry meaning into the role they are asked to play.

There are a few exceptions to this pattern. A few actors and actresses are "rinsed" of meaning between roles and, as a result, bring a new persona to each new film. Only an actress of the calibre of Meryl Streep is capable of earning (and exploiting) this privilege. For most, a mild case of typecasting is not just the consequence but actually the very cause of their participation in the Hollywood system.

More to the present point, it is precisely this typecasting that makes celebrities so useful to the endorsement process. It is the accumulated meanings of celebrities that make them so potent a source of significance. Meryl Streep has limited value as a celebrity endorser because she is largely free of accumulated meanings. The same may well be true of George C. Scott. Without typecasting, actors are unable to bring clear and unambiguous meanings to the products they endorse. Without typecasting, they have no meanings to give the transfer process.

## Stage 2

Ideally, the choice of particular celebrities is based on the meanings they epitomize and on a sophisticated marketing plan. In the best of all possible worlds, the marketing/advertising firm first would determine the symbolic properties sought for the product (having determined which symbolic properties are in fact sought by the consumer). It would then consult a roster of celebrities and the meanings they make available, and, taking into account budget and availability constraints, would choose the celebrity who best represents the appropriate symbolic properties. At present, no roster exists, so advertising firms are forced to rely on a very general rendering of what meanings are available to them in the celebrity world and where these meanings are located.

Once the celebrity is chosen, an advertising campaign must then identify and deliver these meanings to the product. It must capture *all* the meanings it wishes to obtain from the celebrity and leave no salient meanings untapped. Furthermore, it must capture *only* the meanings it wishes to obtain from the celebrity. All celebrities will encompass in their range of cultural significance some meanings that are not sought for the product. Care must be taken to see that these unwanted meanings are kept out of the evoked set.

This will be accomplished by filling the advertisement with people, objects, contexts, and copy that have the same meanings as the celebrity. These elements cue, by the principle of redundancy, the consumer to the salient message. They help select the exact set of meanings that are sought from the celebrity.

The ad will sometimes operate on the meanings of the celebrity, and may even modestly help transform them. It is interesting to note, for instance, how novel treatments of Paulina Porizkova's appearance in the current Estee Lauder "White Linen" campaign "repositions" her beauty and redefines its meaning (Wells 1989, p. 72). This campaign very deliberately makes Porizkova's beauty more classic, more elegant, and therefore more appropriate to the Estee Lauder "White Linen" product line. In other words, an advertising campaign can sometimes have the effect of a new dramatic role, bringing the celebrity into contact with symbolic materials that change the meanings contained in their persona. Celebrities have been known to exploit this effect by choosing their endorsement to tune their image. Typically, however, the ad is not trying to transform the meanings of the celebrity. In most circumstances, it seeks only to transfer them.

Finally, the ad must be designed to suggest the essential similarity between the celebrity and the product so that the consumer will be able to take the last step in the meaning transfer process. In a perfect world, copy testing is then used to judge whether indeed the ad succeeds in this regard. When assurance is forthcoming, the second stage of transfer is complete and the ad is put before the consumer. The consumer suddenly "sees" the similarity between the celebrity and the product, and is prepared to accept that the meanings in the celebrity (by dint of long and fond acquaintance) are in the product. If all has gone smoothly, the properties of James Garner are now the properties of Mazda.

## Stage 3

Let us now consider celebrity endorsement in its final stage of meaning transfer. How does the process of celebrity endorsement help consumers get meanings out of the product into their lives? How, in other words, does an endorsement by James Garner help the properties of the Mazda become the properties of the consumer?

Consumers are constantly canvassing the object world for goods with useful meanings. They use them to furnish certain aspects of the self and the world. The object world, as we have seen, gives them access

to workable ideas of gender, class, age, personality, and lifestyle, in addition to cultural principles of great number and variety. The material world of consumer goods offers a vast inventory of possible selves and thinkable worlds. Consumers are constantly rummaging here.

We know that this final stage of the transfer process is complicated and sometimes difficult. It is not enough for the consumer merely to own an object to take possession of its meanings, or to incorporate these meanings into the self. The meanings of the object do not merely lift off the object and enter into the consumer's concept of self and world. There is, in other words, no automatic transfer of meaning nor any automatic transformation of the self. The consumer must claim the meanings and then work with them.

We have some general sense that rituals play an important part in this process. Consumers must claim, exchange, care for, and use the consumer good to appropriate its meanings (Cheal 1988; McCracken 1988; Rook 1985). We know that they must select and combine these meanings in a process of experimentation (Belk 1988; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). But this process is still very much terra incognito from a scholarly point of view. Of all of the topics in the culture and consumer behavior portfolio, this one is the most neglected. A cultural understanding of celebrity endorsement illuminates this little known terrain.

Celebrities play a role in the final stage of meaning transfer because they have created the self. They have done so publicly, in the first stage of the meaning transfer process, out of bits and pieces of each role in their careers. All the world has watched them take shape. From darkened theaters, consumers have looked on as celebrities have selected and combined the meanings contained in the objects, people, and events around them. The self so created is almost always attractive and accomplished. Celebrities build selves well.

The constructed self makes the celebrity a kind of exemplary, inspirational figure to the consumer. Consumers are themselves constantly moving symbolic properties out of consumer goods into their lives to construct aspects of self and world. Not surprisingly, they admire individuals who have accomplished this task and accomplished it well. Celebrities are proof that the process works. Celebrities have been where the consumer is going. They have done in Stage 1 what the consumer is now laboring to do in Stage 3 of the meaning transfer process. Or, to put this another way, consumers are all laboring to perform their own Stage 1 construction of the self out of the meanings supplied by previous and present roles and the meanings accessible to them there.

But this is more than just a formal parallel between celebrities and consumers in Stages 1 and 3. The consumer does not revere the celebrity merely because the celebrity has done what the consumer wants to do, but also because the celebrity actually supplies certain meanings to the consumer. Celebrities create a self out of the elements put at their disposal in dramatical roles, fashioning cultural meanings into a practicable form. When they enter the endorsement process, they make these meanings available in material form to the consumer. Consumers are grateful for these meanings and keen to build a self from them. The celebrity is supplying not just an example of self-creation, but the very stuff with which this difficult act is undertaken.

Let us return to the James Garner example once more. Consumers have watched James Garner fashion what Schudson calls the "fictive self" out of the objects, events, and contexts of his screen life. Garner has given them a dramatic example of the very act in which consumers are themselves engaged. Furthermore, Garner has put useful and interesting meanings at their disposal. He has given them a vivid, well-organized and "performable" self. This film persona (and its successor in the television world, Thomas Magnum) offers a self that is capable but occasionally incompetent, forthright but unassuming, and almost always the master of his fate (except when conspired against by a comically or otherwise imperfectly malevolent force). The Garner self is diverse, balanced, and, most of all, workable.

But there is a second, in some ways more interesting, way in which celebrities play the role of a "super consumer." This occurs when the film persona of the celebrity consists not merely in the presentation of an interesting film persona but actually in the creation of a self that is new and innovative. Most film stars bring to the screen a self, cut whole cloth, from the standard American personality inventory. But there are a few who have undertaken a much more difficult and creative innovation in which personality elements are created or dramatically reconfigured.

In this highly creative mode, the celebrity becomes a kind of experiment in self-construction. This makes the celebrity very powerful indeed. He or she has become an inventor of a new self the consumer can use. A good example of such an act of self-invention is the character portrayed by Bruce Willis in the series, "Moonlighting." Willis invented a version of maleness, a way of interacting with others (not the least of whom was a female superordinate), and a posture toward the world that holds enormous appeal for certain consumers. In his creation of David Addison, Willis put useful meanings at the disposal of the consumer. In a sense, he product-tested notions of the self for a group of consumers who are themselves engaged in an act of experimentation. Consumers perceive that Willis is working on a self and is within "spitting distance" (as his screen persona might say) of accomplishing this self. Consumers engaged in a similar process are grateful for both the example and the point-

ers. It is precisely this exemplary status, and the novel meanings contained in Willis's persona, that make him a compelling endorser for Seagram's wine coolers (Gabor, Thorton, and Wiener 1987).

The celebrity world is, to this extent, a realm of experimentation in which actors sometimes do more than merely play out cultural categories and principles. Sometimes they also engage in innovation, as when Bea Arthur creates new notions of the elderly, the stars of "Family Ties" work out certain notions of the family, and rock and roll stars invent and reinvent the adolescent self. This experimentation makes the celebrity an especially potent source of meaning for the marketing system and a guide to the process of self-invention in which all consumers are engaged.

Celebrities serve the final stage of meaning transfer because they are "super consumers" of a kind. They are exemplary figures because they are seen to have created the clear, coherent, and powerful selves that everyone seeks. They are compelling partners to the meaning transfer process because they demonstrate so vividly the process by which these meanings can be assembled and some of the novel shapes into which they can be assembled.

But who really needs the meanings created by celebrities? We know that there are certain groups especially keen on using them. Solomon (1983) observed that anyone undergoing any sort of role change or status mobility is especially dependent on the meanings of their possessions. McCracken (1987b) has tried to show the importance of this meaning to those who are moving from one age category to another. O'Guinn et al. (1985) have pointed out that those who are newly arrived to a culture are also heavily indebted to the meanings contained in the consumer society and the celebrity world.

But it has also been asserted that everyone in a modern, developed society is underspecified in this sense. As Belk (1984) and Sahlins (1976) have argued, modern Western selves are deliberately left blank so that the individual may exercise the right of choice. Also pertinent is the relative collapse of institutions that once supplied the self with meaning and definition (e.g., the family, the church, the community). Working together, individualism and alienation have conspired to give individuals new freedom to define matters of gender, class, age, personality, and lifestyle. The freedom to choose is now also an obligation to decide, and this makes us especially eager consumers of the symbolic meanings contained in celebrities and the goods they endorse.

This, in broad detail, suggests how celebrity endorsement operates as a process of meaning transfer. We have reviewed each of the three stages of this process, considering in turn how meaning moves into the persona of the celebrity, how it then moves from the celebrity into the product, and, finally, how it moves from the product into the consumer. Celebrities are, by this account, key players in the meanings transfer process.

## THE REAL CONSUMER SOCIETY

This discussion of the cultural aspects of celebrity endorsement enables us to address one or two larger issues in the field of consumer research. More precisely, it carries larger implications for the debate that now rages about the nature of the consumer society. One party to this debate argues that the consumer society encourages low artistic standards, materialistic preoccupations, and an affection for the trivial and unimportant (e.g., Barnouw 1978; Ewen 1976; Lasch 1979; Pollay 1986). The consumer society has been declared the domain of the Philistine.

The North American preoccupation with movie stars is a favorite target (Ewen 1988, pp. 92–100). North America is accused of having a trivially minded fascination with the affairs of the rich and famous. This fascination is cited as evidence of the depths to which popular culture is destined to fall, the bankruptcy of North American life, and the shallowness of the individual who lives therein.

These arguments are, no doubt, very satisfying from a political and polemical point of view, but they do not reckon very well with the cultural realities of the celebrity world as described here. These criticisms fail to see that Hollywood, the star system, and celebrity endorsement are all profoundly cultural enterprises and that our fascination with celebrities reflects our involvement in the meaning transfer system they accomplish.

The celebrity world is one of the most potent sources of cultural meaning at the disposal of the marketing system and the individual consumer. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that we should care about celebrities and the lives they lead. It would be much more surprising if we were indifferent and somehow above an interest in the world of the stars. As all of us labor to fashion manageable selves, it is inevitable that we should cultivate a knowledge of this world. More plainly, North Americans are not "star-crazy," but rather merely active consumers of the meanings that are made available by the celebrity world.

There is indeed a delicate and thoroughgoing relationship between the culture, the entertainment industry, and the marketing system in modern North America. We are beginning to understand what this relationship is and how it works. We must hope that the first victims of this emerging understanding will be the glib assertions that characterize North American society as thoughtlessly materialistic, and North American consumers as the narcissistic, simple-minded, manipulated playthings of the market place. Celebrity endorsement and the marketing system are cultural undertakings in which meaning is constantly

in circulation. As we begin to render a more sophisticated account of how these systems work, we will begin to see that North American culture and commerce are more interesting and more sophisticated than its critics have guessed.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

The cultural perspective suggests three avenues of research. The first of these is a thorough assessment of how meanings move in the celebrity world. We know that each role, event, or accomplishment in the career of the celebrity changes the meanings of the celebrity, but we do not know precisely how this takes place. We do not know what the precise relationship is between the role, event, and accomplishment, on the one hand, and the celebrity, on the other. Nor do we know how meaning transfers from one to the other. We need a precise idea of how meanings come to exist in celebrities.

The first avenue of research has a methodological component as well. We need an instrument that allows us to determine methodologically the meanings that adhere in celebrities. We know that the meanings that exist in celebrities are extraordinarily numerous and various, but we have yet to devise an instrument that allows us to detect and survey these meanings. Only some delicate combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will enable us to decipher the meanings of the celebrity world in the individual and the aggregate.

Once an instrument is devised, certain crucial empirical work can be undertaken. We can determine the meanings that any individual celebrity brings to the endorsement process, and to survey the meanings that exist in the entire world of endorsement. A typography of the meanings contained throughout the celebrity worlds of sports, politics, business, art, the military, television, and Hollywood is possible and will give us a systematic sense of the meanings at the disposal of the endorsement system and the meaning transfer process.

The second avenue of research should concentrate on a more precise determination of how advertising accomplishes the transfer of meaning from celebrity to product. How do creative directors identify and catalog the symbolic properties contained in the celebrity world? What are the rhetorical and visual devices by which this celebrity meaning is transferred within the advertisement? What celebrity meanings are seen to work best with what products? What is the process by which consumers contribute to the meaning transfer process? It is also relevant to ask here how a celebrity changes his or her stock of symbolic properties by participating in an advertisement.

The third avenue of research deals with how consumers appropriate and use the meanings that come to them as a result of endorsement. How does the consumer take possession of this meaning? How does the consumer use the meaning of the celebrity in the construction of self and world? It may be that some consumers routinely canvass the symbolic meanings of one or several celebrities to take advantage of the experimentation taking place here. Do consumers set up long-term relationships with a single celebrity and systematically "download" all the new meanings this celebrity makes available through new roles and endorsements? Do consumers follow a variety of celebrities from whom they draw a variety of meanings? What happens to consumers when celebrities are transformed by disgrace or new fame? We must begin to chart what becomes of the cultural meanings after they leave the endorsement and enter into the life of the consumer.

These are all questions that need to be answered for us to understand the process of celebrity endorsement in fine detail. They are the research opportunities the meaning transfer perspective brings to light.

The meaning transfer approach casts some doubt on the sufficiency of the source models' explanation of celebrity endorsement. But it does not prevent us from asking the questions that have been asked in this tradition. For instance, it is still possible to talk about the issue of credibility or other questions relevant to source research. It is still possible to see that some celebrities are more credible than others and that each celebrity is more credible for some promotional purpose than others.

What the meaning transfer model does is shift the terms of this debate. When we consider credibility in this new context, we are no longer talking about the manner in which celebrities communicate information, but rather the manner in which they communicate meaning (McCracken 1987a). Credibility now turns on which meanings celebrities make available to endorsements and how well they transfer these meanings to the product. Examples of this cultural credibility are not hard to find. John Houseman was the compelling choice for the Smith Barney advertisement. The actor chosen to succeed him, Leo McKern, carries different meanings in a different configuration. He is, in a word, less credible. The Smith Barney slogan is changed, and diminished, as a result.

The symbolic or cultural perspective (McCracken 1987a) allows for a new credibility measure of a different sort. There is, for instance, no longer any single kind of credibility. A celebrity can be extremely credible for certain meanings and not at all credible for others. Plainly, this aspect of credibility cannot be captured by the theories and instruments conventionally used. Indeed, to investigate the celebrity endorsement from the symbolic or cultural point of view, a new set of questions and methodologies must be investigated.

## CONCLUSION

A new perspective on the process of celebrity endorsement has been developed. It has suggested that

the source models with which endorsement is now understood by practitioner and scholar are insufficient. The chief deficit of these models is that they ask us to accept that it is the attractiveness and credibility of the celebrity that make the endorsement work. Useful for certain purposes, this approach prevents us from seeing that celebrities are in fact highly individualized and complex bundles of cultural meaning. It also prevents us from seeing that endorsement consists in the transfer of these meanings from the celebrity to the product, and from the product to the consumer. The meaning transfer model presented here is intended to demonstrate that the secret of the celebrity endorsement is largely cultural in nature, and that the study of the celebrity and endorsement is improved by a cultural perspective.

[*Received November 1988. Revised April 1989.*]

## REFERENCES


Adams, Marie Jeanne (1973), "Structural Aspects of a Village Art," *American Anthropologist,* 75 (February), 265–279.

Ames, Kenneth L. (1982), "Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America," in *Material Culture Studies in America,* ed. Thomas J. Schlereth, Nashville, TN: The American Association for State and Local History, 206–221.

Appadurai, Arjun, ed. (1986), *The Social Life of Things,* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Atkin, Charles and Martin Block (1983), "Effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsers," *Journal of Advertising Research,* 23 (February/March), 57–61.

Baker, Michael J. and Gilbert A. Churchill (1977), "The Impact of Physically Attractive Models on Advertising Evaluations," *Journal of Marketing Research,* 14 (November), 538–555.

Barnouw, Erik (1978), *The Sponsor: Notes on a Modern Potentate,* New York: Oxford University Press.

Belk, Russell W. (1984), "Cultural and Historical Difference in Concepts of the Self and Their Effects on Attitudes Toward Having and Giving," in *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 11, ed. Thomas C. Kinnear, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 753–760.

——— (1988), "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 15 (September), 139–168.

Cheal, David (1988), "The Post Modern Origin of Ritual," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior,* 18 (September), 269–290.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (1981), *The Meaning of Things,* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Debevec, Kathleen and Jerome B. Kernan (1984), "More Evidence on the Effects of a Presenter's Physical Attractiveness: Some Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral Consequences," in *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 11, ed. Thomas C. Kinnear, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 127–132.

Dholakia, Ruby Roy and Brian Sternthal (1977), "Highly Credible Sources: Persuasive Facilitators or Persuasive Liabilities?" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 3 (March), 223–232.

Douglas, Mary and Baron Isherwood (1978), *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption,* New York: W.W. Norton.

Ewen, Stuart (1976), *Captains of Consciousness,* New York: McGraw-Hill.

——— (1988), *All Consuming Images,* New York: Basic Books.

Finn, David W. (1980), "The Validity of Using Consumer Input to Choose Advertising Spokesmen," in *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 7, ed. Jerry C. Olson, Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research, 776–779.

Friedman, Hershey H. and Linda Friedman (1979), "Endorser Effectiveness by Product Type," *Journal of Advertising Research,* 19 (October), 63–71.

———, Michael J. Santeramo, and Anthony Traina (1978), "Correlates of Trustworthiness For Celebrities," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* 6 (Fall), 291–299.

———, Salvatore Termini, and Robert Washington (1976), "The Effectiveness of Advertisements Utilizing Four Types of Endorsers," *Journal of Advertising,* 5 (Summer), 22–24.

Gabor, Andrea, Jeannye Thorton, and Daniel P. Wiener (1987), "Star turns that can turn star-crossed," *U.S. News and World Report,* (December 7), 57.

Gottdiener, Mark (1985), "Hegemony and Mass Culture: A Semiotic Approach," *American Journal of Sociology,* 90 (5), 979–1001.

Hirschman, Elizabeth and Morris B. Holbrook, eds. (1981), *Symbolic Consumer Behavior,* Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

Holman, Rebecca (1980), "Product Use as Communication: A Fresh Appraisal of a Venerable Topic," in *Review of Marketing,* eds. Ben M. Enis and Kenneth J. Roering, Chicago: American Marketing Association, 250–272.

Hovland, Carl I. and Walter Weiss (1951–1952), "The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 15 (Winter), 635–650.

———, Irving L. Janis, and Harold H. Kelley (1953), *Communication and Persuasion,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Joseph, Benoy W. (1982), "The Credibility of Physically Attractive Communicators: A Review," *Journal of Advertising,* 11 (July), 15–24.

Kahle, Lynn R. and Pamela M. Homer (1985), "Physical Attractiveness of the Celebrity Endorser: A Social Adaptation Perspective," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 11 (March), 954–961.

Kaikati, Jack G. (1987), "Celebrity Advertising: A Review and Synthesis," *International Journal of Advertising,* 6 (2), 93–105.

Kamen, Joseph M., Abdul C. Azhari, and Judith R. Kragh (1975), "What a Spokesman Does for a Sponsor," *Journal of Advertising Research,* 15 (April), 17–24.

Klebba, Joanne M. and Lynette S. Unger (1983), "The Impact of Negative and Positive Information on Source Credibility in a Field Setting," in *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 10, eds. Richard P. Bagozzi and

Alice M. Tybout, Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research, 11–16.
Kuhn, Thomas S. (1962), *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Lasch, Christopher (1979), *The Culture of Narcissism,* New York: W.W. Norton.
Levy, Sidney J. (1959), "Symbols for Sale," *Harvard Business Review,* 37 (July/August), 117–124.
——— (1981), "Interpreting Consumer Mythology: A Structural Approach to Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Marketing,* 45 (Summer), 49–61.
Marshall, Christy (1987), "It Seemed Like A Good Idea at the Time," *Forbes,* (December 28), 98–99.
McCracken, Grant (1986), "Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 13 (June), 71–84.
——— (1987a), "Advertising: Meaning or Information?" in *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 14, eds. Paul Anderson and Melanie Wallendorf, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 121–124.
——— (1987b), "Culture and Consumption Among the Elderly: Three Research Objectives in an Emerging Field," *Ageing and Society,* 7 (June), 203–224.
——— (1988), *Culture and Consumption,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
McGuire, William J. (1985), "Attitudes and Attitude Change," in *Handbook of Social Psychology,* Vol. 2, eds. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, New York: Random House, 233–346.
Mick, David Glen (1986), "Consumer Research and Semiotics: Exploring the Morphology of Signs, Symbols, and Significance," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 13 (September), 196–213.
Motavalli, John (1988), "Advertising Blunders of the Rich and Famous," *Adweek,* (January 11), 18–19.
O'Guinn, Thomas C., Ronald J. Faber, and Marshall Rice (1985), "Popular Film and Television as Consumer Acculturation Agents: America 1900 to Present," in *Historical Perspective in Consumer Research: National and International Perspectives,* eds. Chin Tiong Tan and Jagdish N. Sheth, Singapore: National University of Singapore, 297–301.
Pollay, Richard (1986), "The Distorted Mirror: Reflections on the Unintended Consequences of Advertising," *Journal of Marketing,* 50 (April), 18–36.
Prown, Jules D. (1980), "Style as Evidence," *Winterthur Portfolio,* 15 (Autumn), 197–210.
——— (1982), "Mind In Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio,* 17 (Spring), 1–19.
Rook, Dennis W. (1985), "The Ritual Dimension of Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 12 (December), 251–264.
Sahlins, Marshall (1976), *Culture and Practical Reason,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Schudson, Michael (1984), *Advertising, The Uneasy Persuasion,* New York: Basic Books.
Sherry, John F., Jr. (1989), "Postmodern Alternatives: The Interpretive Turn in Consumer Research," in *Handbook of Consumer Theory and Research,* eds. Harold H. Kassarjian and Thomas Robertson, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, in press.
Solomon, Michael R. (1983), "The Role of Products as Social Stimuli: A Symbolic Interactionism Perspective," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 10 (December), 319–329.
Stern, Barbara (1988), "Medieval Allegory: Roots of Advertising Strategy for the Mass Market," *Journal of Marketing,* 52 (July), 84–94.
Sternthal, Brian, Ruby Roy Dholakia, and Clark Leavitt (1978), "The Persuasive Effect of Source Credibility: Tests of Cognitive Response," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 4 (March), 252–260.
Umiker-Sebeok, Jean, ed. (1988), *Marketing and Semiotics,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Wallendorf, Melanie and Eric Arnould (1988), " 'My Favorite Things': A Cross-Cultural Inquiry into Object Attachment, Possessiveness, and Social Linkage," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 14 (March), 531–547.
Wells, Linda (1989), "Face Value," *New York Times Magazine,* Part 2 (February 26), 46, 56, and 72.