
Chapter 5

'Power' and 'Greatness' – superheroes and masculinities: Guinness as a social and cultural signifier in southern Africa

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Guinness and Irishness are inextricably linked both in the popular imagination (Murphy 2003) and through the origins and manufacture of the product in Dublin. In southern Africa, too, this iconic product occupies a position in the lived experiences of both men and women that is cultural, social and economic, as I show in this chapter, which explores Guinness as a cultural artefact in the region. I examine two major sites where Guinness has occupied a role: in the economy, in the guise of brewing, distributing, marketing and advertising; and in the cultural and social spaces, where Guinness has had a role in the lives of the consumers and non-consumers of Guinness.

The chapter begins by exploring the changing face of production, the complexities of distribution and the new direction of Guinness marketing strategies (Doyle, interview, 1997).¹ In order to understand the role and function of Guinness within the southern African social and cultural framework, the study will then locate itself in the social and cultural space, examining Guinness as a cultural signifier by investigating a series of adverts that have appeared in Africa from the 1950s through to the 21st century, locating some of the myths and rituals that surround Guinness. I shall explore the texts where 'Guinness' is produced and reproduced as a cultural commodity in its advertising strategies and content, analyse some of the imagery and promise, and illustrate how the advertising texts support, and possibly generate, consumer readings and meanings.

Section 1

Producing Guinness, distributing Guinness, marketing Guinness

In order to situate Guinness as a significant economic entity, and as a cultural or social signifier in Africa, it is essential to examine the site of production using Johnson's (1983) understanding of the term, where he argues that in order to fully understand any artefact and its cultural impact we should explore the sites of 'production', 'readings', 'lived experience' and 'audience' (see also Hall and du Gay 1997). In considering the site of production, I am prompted to ask questions about the production, distribution and marketing of Guinness over the decades. This facilitates an exploration of the changing face of production, the complexities of distribution and the various marketing strategies that have emerged since Guinness was first shipped to Africa in 1827. In turn, I ask how these moments might coalesce to mean something culturally significant in Africa.

These questions are hinged on the combined facts that the original distribution network for Guinness was based on the traditionally established colonial shipping routes at that time; and in this 'old colonial' version of globalisation, Guinness was marketed, not as an Irish product, but as a product that was 'healthy', 'good for you', and 'a reaffirmation of your masculinity', as shown in section 2. In order to understand the emergence of Guinness as a key component in the economic, social and cultural landscape, it is useful to document the milestone moments for Guinness as a brand in Africa.

¹ Interview: Jim Doyle Marketing Manager, Guinness SA, Johannesburg. 1997.

Guinness began what became its phenomenal economic success story in 1759 in Dublin, and in 1936 opened a second brewery in Park Royal, London. It was there that the company developed a special, stronger stout designed specifically for export, which was then known as West Indies Porter. It was to evolve over the years to become the ubiquitous Guinness Foreign Extra Stout or FES. In Africa, Guinness has been present since 1827, when it was exported to the Continent through Sierra Leone.

Alongside Foreign Extra Stout's export from London and the development of a distribution network in Africa and Asia, another milestone in the Guinness Africa Story was the official opening of the first brewery in Africa, in 1963 in Nigeria². (Obiosio, 2007, online).



Figure 1: The plaque commemorating the official opening of the Guinness Brewery in Nigeria. (<http://www.guinness.com/global/story/history/1950%20-%202000/>)

According to Obiosio (2007) the presence of the brewery in Nigeria marked the beginning of a “stout revolution in Nigeria”, where “Guinness FES has cut an enviable marketing reputation for itself.” He goes on to argue that “the growth of this brand in Nigeria, of course, was aided by well thought out, carefully executed marketing strategies including fantastic promos, musical concerts and other impressionable marketing stunts” (online).

From its starting point in Nigeria, the growth of the brand across Africa extended to the Cameroon in 1969, Ghana in 1971, and Côte d’Ivoire in 1973. According to Obiosio, more than 10 million glasses of Guinness are now consumed in Africa every day. In 2009, the official Guinness website reported that Guinness is brewed in 21 countries in Africa. It is also widely reported that Guinness has a significant share of the African market. In the business section of *The Times*³, 31 August 2007, James Rossiter reported that the full-year figures released by Diageo (the world’s biggest drinks group and current owner of the Guinness brand) show a 17 percent rise in Guinness sales across Africa with Nigeria rating as the second-largest market for the stout after the UK. In fact, the rise in sales in Africa is “more than compensating for any decline in sales in Britain and Ireland” (online). In the same report Rossiter also described the 2007 ‘Guinness Greatness’ marketing campaign that Africans have been bombarded with, as a

² Brewing ended at the plant in February 1997. MALTA GUINNESS® was launched in Nigeria in 1990.

³ <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/markets/article2358129.ece>. Accessed 3 October 2007.

campaign that advertises the drink 'as a source of strength and virility'. I return to this in section 2 of this chapter.

Marketing Strategies

Over the years, marketing strategies have altered depending on many variables such as which advertising agency was acting on behalf of Guinness, the in-house marketing team at Guinness, current sales and so on.

In 1997, when I interviewed Donagh Lane, then marketing manager at Guinness, Dublin, he commented on the different marketing approaches utilised in Africa and Asia under what can be described as 'the old colonial mechanism'.

It's very different in the Far East and Africa, because in certain countries their Guinness is very strong and it's been strong for a hundred years. Places like Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, and places like Malaysia, Singapore, most of whom were English colonies before.

(Lane, interview, Guinness, Dublin, 1997)

New colonialism and commodification

The 1990s saw a change in the way Guinness was marketed to the African market. In our interview Jim Doyle described the South African market, prior to the 1990s as "very different to now" and he illustrated it as 'informal in nature', for example instead of pubs, shebeens⁴ were the main outlets for distribution. However, in the 1990s one new strategy that Guinness SA was implementing was to target 'black aspirants' who are emerging in the new South Africa. Jim Doyle described their profile:

They have cars, jobs, are moving into white areas, building their own homes, wearing expensive clothes. They are looking for a point of difference, and this can apply to beer or pair of shoes. They are moving out of townships and [away from] the sharing of a quart bottle of Castle.⁵

(Doyle, interview, Guinness SA, Johannesburg, June 1997)

From the 1990s onwards, the world picture changed dramatically, and Guinness marketing departments worldwide adjusted their strategies to suit the location, the target audience and optimum demographics, psychographics and lifestyle fragmentors with one goal and objective – to ensure increased volume of sales and maintain their market share.

This change is corroborated by Davies (1998, p. 174) who comments that with worldwide advertising, "the emphasis has become more sophisticated and aspirational, shifting away from the original base of manual workers". Here there is an interesting parallel between the 'new

⁴ Shebeen: Originally illegal drinking places/clubs which are found across southern Africa. Interestingly, they flourished in South Africa in spite of the apartheid government's prohibition of the supply and drinking of alcohol by black people. Shebeens occupy a particular place both in the development of township cultures and in the struggle against apartheid. They have been much written about in South African literature (for example, by Can Themba) and produced major South African singers such as Dolly Rathebe and Miriam Makeba. I asked Jim Doyle if the African 'shebeen' was derivative from the Irish word and meaning (illegal bar). "Categorically yes", was his reply. For more information he advised a visit to South African Breweries (SAB) Museum to see some slides. He reported 40,000 to 50,000 shebeens in South Africa's townships. The concept of drinking in a bar or hotel lounge is post-apartheid and at the time of the interview in 1997 was not yet widespread.

⁵ Castle, a South African Breweries product that enjoys the biggest market share for beer in southern Africa.

black audience' that Guinness SA was chasing in the late 1990s and the profile of many consumers in the UK and other locations, as the strategy at that time suggested a focus on target audiences who wish to mark themselves as 'different'.

In the late 1990s in South Africa, Guinness wished to talk to the people who were living in the margins and striving to shift into the mainstream, audiences who were making themselves 'different' from their black township peers. In Johannesburg, according to Doyle, this group of 'new black' people were using consumption in order to make that shift. By the act of conspicuous consumption, using expensive shoes, clothes or imported Guinness, they were signifying themselves as 'shifting into a new social and political space'; but, laments Jim Doyle, "at the expense of their own". Here, like the 'marginal' in the UK's 1990s target audience, the product appeals to and is utilised by consumers and audiences who want to make a statement about their difference.

Doyle described how the South African strategy was changing and Guinness SA was due to re-launch the product, targeting consumers who were categorised as 'aspirational'. However, in the first instance Guinness SA intended "to use the 'Ireland card'" in order to develop an association between Ireland and the product. In the first instance they would also target the Irish in South Africa.⁶ Once they attained the "high ground on the genuine Irishness of Irish Stout and ale" and "established the authenticity of the original" they planned to roll out to other target audiences. This change in strategy marked a significant shift in marketing approaches, the proposed intention to use 'the Irishness of the product' as part of the message strategy mirrored strategies in other worldwide locations (outside Ireland) at the time – including markets such as the UK and the USA. This suggested that a 'new colonial approach' was about to be adopted, driven by a private economic force rather than the traditional political one. This approach was going to harness images and associations around 'Irishness' so that instead of using Irish labour, or Irish land, or Irish skills, the planned marketing strategy was proposing to commodify 'Irishness' and 'Irish identity'. Interestingly, at the same time the increasing presence of companies such as the Irish Pub Company (established in 1991).

These exported versions of 'authentic Irish Pubs' to all continents meant one could travel to Finland, Uganda or Russia and locate an 'Irish Pub' where you could order a pint in an 'atmospheric pub space' featuring icons of 'authentic Irishness'. Thanks to the increasing presence of other 'Irish-format' pub designers and Guinness's own Irish Pub Concept (established in 1996), the escalating appearance of 'Irish Pubs' also harnessed images of Irishness and commodified Irish identity. The colonial mechanisms, wearing a different, albeit new and modern guise, were called upon to maximise the economic impact of the economic effort.

New campaigns: Diageo and Saatchi & Saatchi's pan-African approach

1997 marked another significant milestone for Guinness as it merged with Grand Metropolitan. This 'merger between two of the world's leading food and drinks companies' produced the new company Diageo,⁷ which in 1999 gave Saatchi & Saatchi the task of taking the Guinness

⁶ 40,000 first-generation Irish passport holders, and 300,000 passports held by second-, third- and fourth- generation Irish. They are primarily located in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Jim Doyle cites these figures, supplied by the Irish Embassy in South Africa. These figures are probably exaggerated.

⁷ From its inception, Diageo was reported as the "world's leading premium drinks business with the most recognised collection of premium spirits, wine and beer brands. It is a global and multinational company trading in 200 markets around the world generating some \$19 billion in revenue and employing 26,000 people worldwide. With a turnover of €1 billion and profits in the region of €215 million Diageo Ireland is a major contributor to the Group and to the Irish economy". Accessed 9 August 2007 http://www.business2000.ie/cases/cases_7th/case5.htm.

'brand' in Africa and turning it into what Saatchi's CEO Kevin Roberts has coined 'a lovemark'.⁸

The agency adopted a radical, innovative and creative new marketing approach for Guinness in southern Africa. It was at this time that they adopted not only a wholly sympathetic African philosophy to their marketing approach, they also shifted in tradition by launching a pan-African approach, rather than producing small campaigns relevant to a particular country. To demonstrate this, the Michael Power campaign was launched in 1999. According to O'Kane (2004), Saatchi and Roberts, are "very proud of Michael Power, the James Bond-like spy who has become the spokesman for the brand in Africa. Helped by the success of the Michael Power ads and a full-length movie, Guinness sales in Africa are booming" (online).

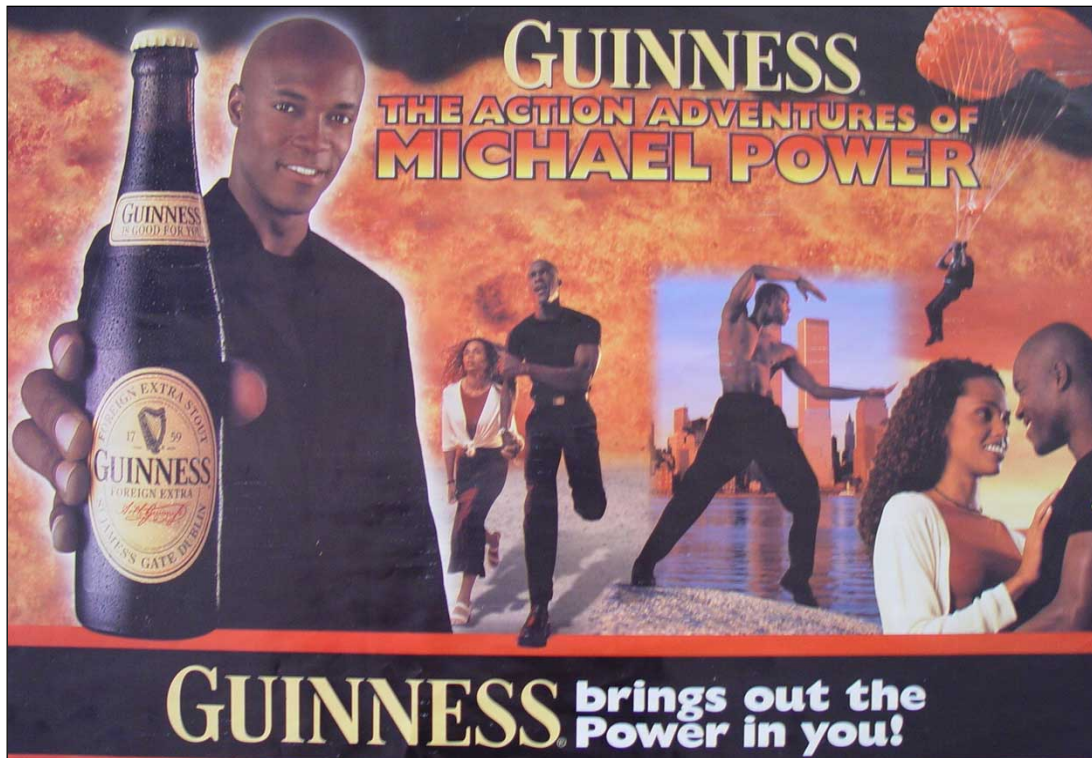


Figure 2: 1999 'Michael Power' launch poster (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

In a remarkable, and unprecedented manner (in marketing terms), the *Michael Power* campaign led to and was reinforced by a movie featuring the advertising campaign's lead character. In a James Bond style movie, the character was cleverly developed into a more robust entity in the mindsets of the target audience. Alongside consumers' recognition of, affection for, and desire to be like, the advert's character, the film provided new depths of rich association, recognition, and affiliation. The film was an innovative, creative and pioneering marketing strategy. It gave the agency the opportunity to extend the campaign beyond its initial target audience, and allowed it to harness and build upon the positive associations and recognition generated out of

⁸ 'Lovemarks' is defined by Saatchi & Saatchi as something that transcends brands. A 'lovemark': 'delivers beyond your expectations of great performance. Like great brands, they sit on top of high levels of respect - but there the similarities end. Lovemarks reach your heart as well as your mind, creating an intimate, emotional connection that you just can't live without. Ever. Take a brand away and people will find a replacement. Take a Lovemark away and people will protest its absence. Lovemarks are a relationship, not a mere transaction. You don't just buy Lovemarks, you embrace them passionately. That's why you never want to let go.' Accessed 10 August 2007 www.lovemarks.com

the movie content and exposure. The character was now a robust and recognisable individual, which fed back into the advertising strategy for subsequent Michael Power adverts.

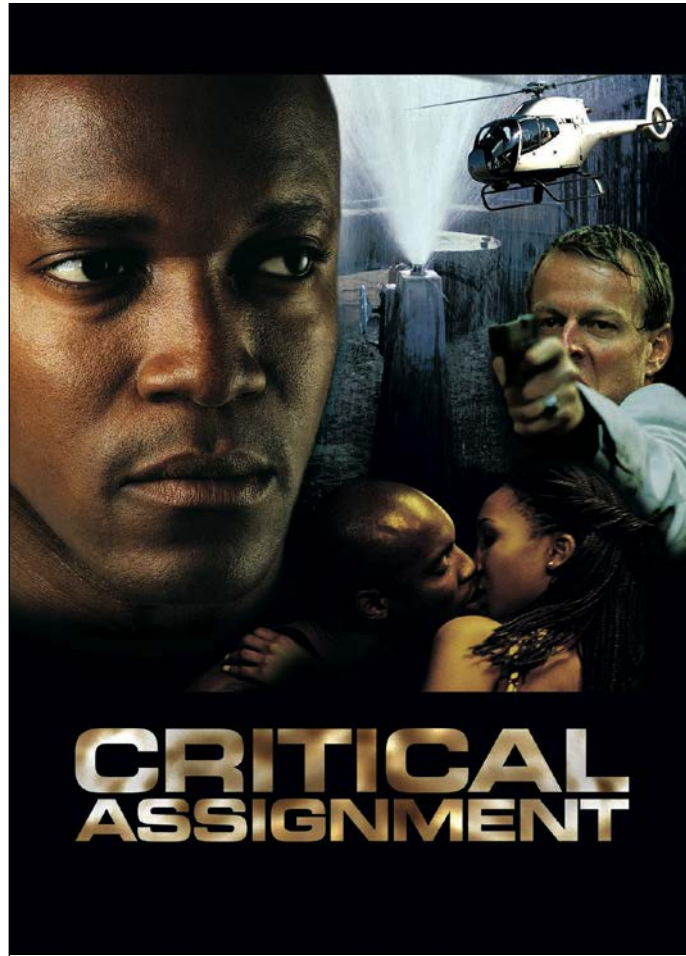


Figure 3: Critical Assignment 2003 movie poster (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

However, despite its resounding success the Michael Power campaign came was replaced in 2000 by 'Guinness Greatness', a new campaign also developed by Saatchi & Saatchi and also a pan-African campaign. Diageo's 2007 annual review noted the 'Guinness Greatness' campaign performed well in 2006, marking Nigeria as "the second best-selling market" and reporting that five of Guinness' top 10 markets were in Africa (online).

Diageo described the growth in part to this new advertising and marketing campaign. However, the campaign was, according to the 2007 annual review, 'more than just advertising, it was a philosophy that touched everyone. It was about celebrating everyday moments of inspirational behaviour – the drop of greatness in each of us. The campaign was introduced in Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya and Nigeria' (online).

For Diageo and Saatchi & Saatchi, the key driver in their marketing strategies in Africa is innovation. This can be seen in their approach to both the 'Michael Power' campaign and the 'Guinness Greatness' campaign. By utilising the concept 'lovemark' as part of the core strategy this has resulted in Guinness consumption in Africa reaching sales levels that mark this region as a global leader in consumption.

These new marketing and advertising approaches certainly herald a challenge to other advertising agencies which may be utilising more traditional methods or approaches to the

segmentation of the African market. Additionally, while the advertising industry may feel challenged to re-examine its own structures and approaches, the new approaches have also trail-blazed new strategies for perceiving and constructing the consuming audiences, as well as generating creative and innovative ways of using the message and vehicle strategies to maximum effect.

Section 2

Talking Guinness, Advertising Masculinities

Having situated the marketing and advertising approaches and strategies that have been used by Guinness in recent years in southern Africa, I now examine the advertising content and the images used in the visual campaigns that have run in Africa since the 1950s. I explore how adverts themselves, their visual content and the signification and iconography used, all contribute to a process of producing, embedding, and reinforcing a particular set of readings for the consumer. The adverts, irrespective of their moment in time, seem all to draw on specific myths that have been generated around Guinness, and, I would argue, those myths have, in turn, been injected into the cultural fabric of each society that has been exposed to them.

Guinness campaigns: ‘Power’ and ‘Greatness’: Guinness as a social and cultural signifier

In order to understand the role and function of Guinness within the southern African social and cultural framework, it is useful to understand Guinness as a cultural signifier. To do this, I have asked several general questions around the product itself: such as ‘what are the myths that surround Guinness?’ i.e. what are the consumer’s (and non-consumer’s) beliefs about the product. For example, many believe that the product is ‘good for you’, ‘gives you strength’, is ‘powerful’, is an ‘aphrodisiac’ and so forth. I also ask ‘what kind of social or cultural images does the advertiser utilise and embed into the communication strategies for adverts?’ and “what might these images ‘mean’ to the consumer (and non-consumer)’?”

Guinness as ‘food’

Historically, Guinness has been associated with ‘being good for you’ and this advertising slogan has reflected and reinforced the belief that Guinness is a food, a tonic and a meal-replacement. Kearns (1997), writing about the consumption of Guinness in Ireland, cites respondent Joe Murphy (age 66) who describes how his grandmother would send him to the pub to buy her a gill. When there he would be mesmerised by the dockers and shipwrights drinking in the pub with their ‘shiny shovels’ sitting alongside them, usually with their names engraved on the handles; he talked of these hard-working men, who always drank in the same pub because of the slate (a credit arrangement ensuring the drinker would always return to the same pub). Here they drank pints but, he reminds us, “the pint in those days will never be seen again, it was a *different* type of drink. It was mostly porter in those days and then Guinness came in with a ‘fifty-fifty’, half stout and half porter. And the dockers would knock back anything from ten to fourteen pints in a shot ... Guinness was a *food* - at least we called it food” (Kearns 1997:203-204).

Focusing on the historical consumption of beer in Britain, Harrison describes how it was widely believed, that beer was an essential source of energy, particularly relevant to men in strenuous physical occupations. The belief in this source of nutrition and energy was widespread for working-class men and while it may not have been a real substitute for food, the feel-good factor was welcomed. Harrison goes on to explain that “though intoxicants were no better than food for providing energy, their stimulating effects could temporarily dull the fatigue resulting from long hours and hard labour” (Harrison in Hey 1986:28).

The pint of Guinness was often the only form of nourishment supporting these men through a long day of manual labour. For these working-men, the pub was the only place they could go for calorific sustenance. It was at this time that the image of a pint of Guinness as a nutritional product was reinforced by the advertising that surrounded it ‘Guinness is good for you’ (see Figure 4 below).



Figure 4: Guinness is Good for You (Benson Advertising Agency 1932; Davis, 1998, p. 15)

In Ireland, the traditional and contemporary myths surrounding Guinness include: Guinness is healthy, nourishing, full of iron, a substitute for a meal, given to you when you were sick as a child, and so on. (Murphy 2003). In contemporary research, I found that many consumers and non-consumers still subscribe to this belief, which may have developed from the early advertising slogan, ‘Guinness is good for you’. Although that health claim can no longer be made by the advertisers due to regulations, the myth continues to carry great strength amongst many drinkers and non-drinkers. Respondents in Ireland, and Irish migrants in London and New York all repeated the ‘beliefs’ and described incidents in their own lived memories and experiences where Guinness was given to them or others who were ill or recovering from illness in hospital, or it was boiled and put in a baby’s bottle “as a tonic” or kept by a grandmother in the pantry, ‘in case of emergency’ (Murphy 2003). Interestingly, many respondents described incidents where either they, or others, as nursing mothers were advised (by mothers, mothers-in-law, nurses or doctors) to drink it daily for nourishment – both during and following their pregnancy. In fact, the link between ‘milk’ and ‘Guinness’ is an association that was made by respondents on numerous occasions. The less tenuous link of ‘nursing mothers’ and ‘nutrition’ is the main one and the signification between the goodness of milk and the goodness of Guinness is a recurring theme amongst Irish respondents. Interestingly, the endorsement for the ‘goodness’ is often reported as coming from the medical profession. One respondent in London explained that the doctor had told his mother to drink Guinness every day when pregnant; another described how “when you [donate] blood in Dublin they give you a pint of Guinness”, perceived as a way of nourishing the donor following the ‘loss of blood’. A first-generation respondent in New York was told to drink Guinness because he had an ulcer as Guinness “wouldn’t irritate like other alcohols” and a female New York respondent described how her

father, while seriously ill in hospital, was sent, along with other patients, to the local bar near the hospital, to drink Guinness – “for iron, and that kind of thing”.

In contrast to the health myths that surround the product, the official line, from Guinness is obviously based on facts. In 1997 I interviewed Donagh Lane at Guinness Dublin and John Hosking at Guinness Park Royal, London⁹. Lane reported that Guinness is good for you because it does contain nutrients; it is a good source for folic acid, and it is made up entirely of natural ingredients. However, Lane and Hosking both insisted that their marketing departments in Dublin and in London would never make a claim that Guinness is good for you in any contemporary advertising campaign, as regulations would not allow it. Lane concluded by noting that while the product was *natural*, it was alcoholic and so claims of health-giving qualities would be unfounded. However, in recent years there have been numerous reports in popular press, describing the medical benefits of Guinness. And while Diageo may not make such health claims, especially in Europe (due to EU legislation around alcohol advertising), the consumer is reminded by news carriers such as the BBC, that Guinness has less alcohol, fewer calories, fewer carbohydrates than other alcohols, and can offer protection against heart attacks (BBC 2003, online, and Hunt, 2004, online).

Likewise, in Africa, similar associations of ‘healthy’, ‘being good for you’, and ‘a tonic’ and all the connotations of *nutrition* appear to exist. In 1904, Arthur Shand produced a report on Guinness in South Africa, on behalf of Guinness, St James’s Gate Brewery, Dublin. In this century-old document, we are given not only what could be described as an enlightening market research report, but we are also given insights into some of the social and cultural aspects of South Africa at that time. For example, Shand makes several references to the fact that Guinness is prescribed by doctors and this ensures that consumers will select Guinness above any other brand. As he moved from place to place, evaluating the storage, distribution, pricing and competition of the brand, his report inevitably contained some interesting social and cultural information pertaining to that time.



Figure 5: Adverts adorning Nigeria’s Brewery in-house bar, 1957
(courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

⁹ Guinness Brewery at Park Royal, London, was closed in 2004, with all supply of Guinness now coming from St James’s Gate, Dublin.

For example, when he was in Grahamstown he reported that “the half pints are beginning to go well, as private families find where Stout is ordered by a Doctor, it is much easier and pleasanter to use the half pint than to open a pint, drink half of it and cork it up again for the next meal” (Shand 1904: 20). In Pietermaritzburg he comments that “when a person needs building up he will fly to Guinness, but after his strength has been restored, owing to its cheapness, he will fall back on the Colonial [Stout]” (1904:34). In Johannesburg he notes that, “[D]octors always suggest Guinness to their patients when they are run down, and the average man never thinks of drinking the Colonial, if he desires a bottle of Stout” (1904:41). In Pretoria one of the bottling companies, Mosenthal and Co, tell him they think “Guinness will always hold its own, as Doctors continue to recommend it in preference to the Colonial Stout” (1904:47). This is an interesting way of documenting the fact that the medical profession then, and to a lesser extent now, recommended Guinness as a tonic.

Similar to the ‘Guinness is good for you’ advertising slogans that were popular in Ireland prior to advertising regulations, historical African advertising material promoted similar reminders and allusions to Guinness ‘being good for you’. These slogans, and the subsequent mythologies are present in that lived history. For example in 1957, advertising in the Nigerian Brewery’s own bar – ‘Guinness is good for you’ and ‘Have a glass of Guinness when you are tired’ (see Figure 5 above) – sports similar reassurance that if you are tired, or feeling run down or lacking in energy, then Guinness is the solution.

The message was a recurring one. For example, in 1968 and again in 1979, consumers in the Cameroon were reminded that ‘Guinness does you good’/‘is good for you’ (see Figures 6 & 7).

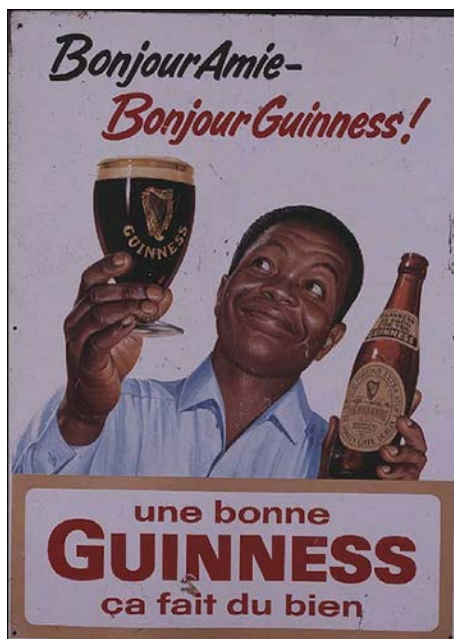


Figure 6: 1968 Guinness does you good (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)



Figure 7: 1979 Guinness is good for you (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

We see less ‘official’ advertising reference to the fact that ‘Guinness is good for you’ in contemporary advertising. This is partly because in many countries the regulatory authorities will not permit any alcohol from making such claims. However, the continuous and less than subtle message that Guinness *is* good for you and ‘gives you strength’ is a recurring one, however it gets played out in a more complex way in later advertising.

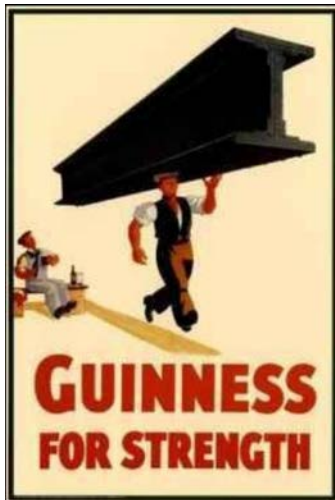


Figure 8: 1934 Ireland/UK
(Benson Advertising Agency:
Davis, 1998, p. 7.)

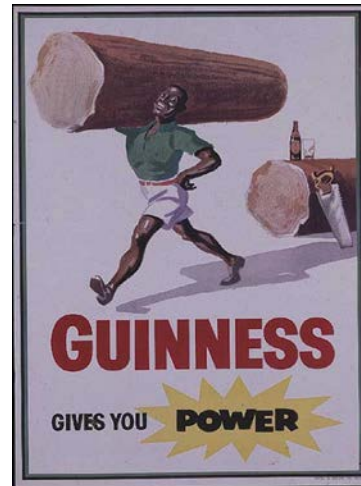


Figure 9: 1962 Nigeria. Reworking the girder
theme for the Nigerian Market
(courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010) Guinness
does more than 'give you strength' ...

The role Guinness plays in the cultural and social life of consumers and non-consumers in Africa emerges in another theme that Guinness marketing uses and has used historically when advertising the product – the sign that Guinness equals *strength* as well as good health. This image of strength is, in later campaigns, translated into images and messages associated with *power* (to the extent of actually naming the advertising character *Power*. I argue that in all of these advertising images, the 'strength' and 'power' that is not just alluded to but often quite overtly linked with the product, are qualities that are marked as 'male' in our social value system, and so the Guinness advertising campaigns are, in essence, linking the product with male consumer's aspirations to 'buy into' these images and associations of strength and power.

In 1997, marketing manager Donagh Lane elaborated on this:

These values hold through all over the world, particularly 'goodness' and 'power'. For example, in Africa, Guinness is seen as this an elixir of power, juju juice,¹⁰ which makes men potent; and in parts of the Far East it is seen almost like a health drink, ... 'when you are run-down at the end of the day' drink. It's the same set of values ...

(Lane, interview, Guinness, Dublin, 1997)

In early advertising Guinness was 'packed with power' and with that, came the un-stated promise that the drinker would be too, if he consumed it. This power was male, physical and desirable. For example, if we examine some of the adverts from the 1960s, we can see an excellent example of the "Guinness = power" imagery. Playing on one of the original Irish/UK Guinness poster ad the familiar "Man with the girder" (Guinness for Strength, 1934) (see above Figure 8), this 1962 Nigerian advert states simply that Guinness = power (see above Figure 9)

As both adverts are viewed, I argue that the images for 'strength' and 'power' are wrapped up particular moments of expression of an essentialist version of masculinity or a version of masculinity that is wholly "heterosexual" or "'straight' masculinity" (Dyer 1995:88, 1995:124), or hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). It is a version of masculinity that

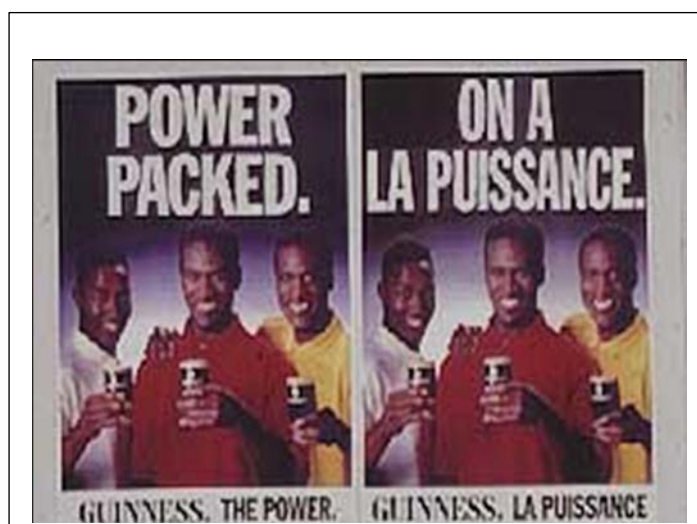
¹⁰ Juju or Ju-Ju is a word of West African origin (1894) that refers to the supernatural power ascribed to, or associated with, an object. Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online. Accessed April 2009.

speaks of ‘dominance’, ‘physical strength’, a worker or member of the labour force, and all that ideology implies. However in these early images, the ‘body as powerful’ is the focus of the representation, in sharp contrast to later images.

Thirty years later, in the 1990s, the same connotations of strength and power can still be found in Guinness’s advertising, however they are communicated by using more refined images. This suggests that the marketing strategies have enjoyed some success and so these message strategies continue to be used by the advertising agencies and marketing departments for Guinness. In the 1990s Guinness, ‘The Power’ campaign (see below Figure 10) was widespread. The messages, although similar to earlier advertising, were much more subtle in image. It was no longer relying on the ‘physicality of masculinity’ for the connotation of ‘power’ as the actors are not conveying a physical version of strength. Instead the images communicate a more subtle version of power, this time portraying not physical power, but a rather more complex version of power that is found over and over again in recreations of a specific, androcentric and patriarchal version of power. Additionally, this version of power is also communicated in a more complex way.

This power is communicated by the suggestion of being in control. The men hold the camera in a direct gaze, something Goffman (1979) refers to when he comments on how men and women are positioned in adverts, and how these positions communicate traditional power relations in a patriarchal culture. Staring directly at the camera communicates control, assertiveness and confidence. It is a position that is mostly reserved for boys and men in advertising, whereas, in contrast, girls and women are mostly portrayed looking away, gazing into the distance, or looking at each other (Kilbourne 1999). Alongside the connoted confidence and control, the advert generates a hint of sensuality and sexual power. This is communicated through the attractiveness of the characters and through their youth and virility. There is a suggested access to economic power as the men are ‘well dressed’ i.e. not in labourer’s work clothes as in earlier images. These are new elements that carry more meanings and more complex connotations than previous versions of the message strategy. Alongside these signifiers, the advert reiterates the message by stating, in headline fashion, that the drink/men are ‘Power Packed’. The personification of the product, through the men, and the labelling of both as ‘power packed’, all coalesce to reinforce the message that ‘Guinness = Power’. And if there was any confusion that it was the product that was the ‘bringer of the power’, the advert reminds the reader in its final text, ‘Guinness. The Power’.

The value of the word ‘Power’ transcends its original connotation at this point. Now it is not only a human quality that the consumer may aspire to possess. It is, by the use of the definite article, ‘The Power’, altered and built upon to connote a standalone power flowing from the product. It is transformed into an element that can be tapped into, harnessed and absorbed – an organic ‘power’ like the sun or flowing water; generating more power as a result of itself.



*Figure 10: 1990s
‘Guinness, The
Power’ Campaign,
Cameroon and Ivory
Coast (courtesy of
Guinness Archives,
2010)*

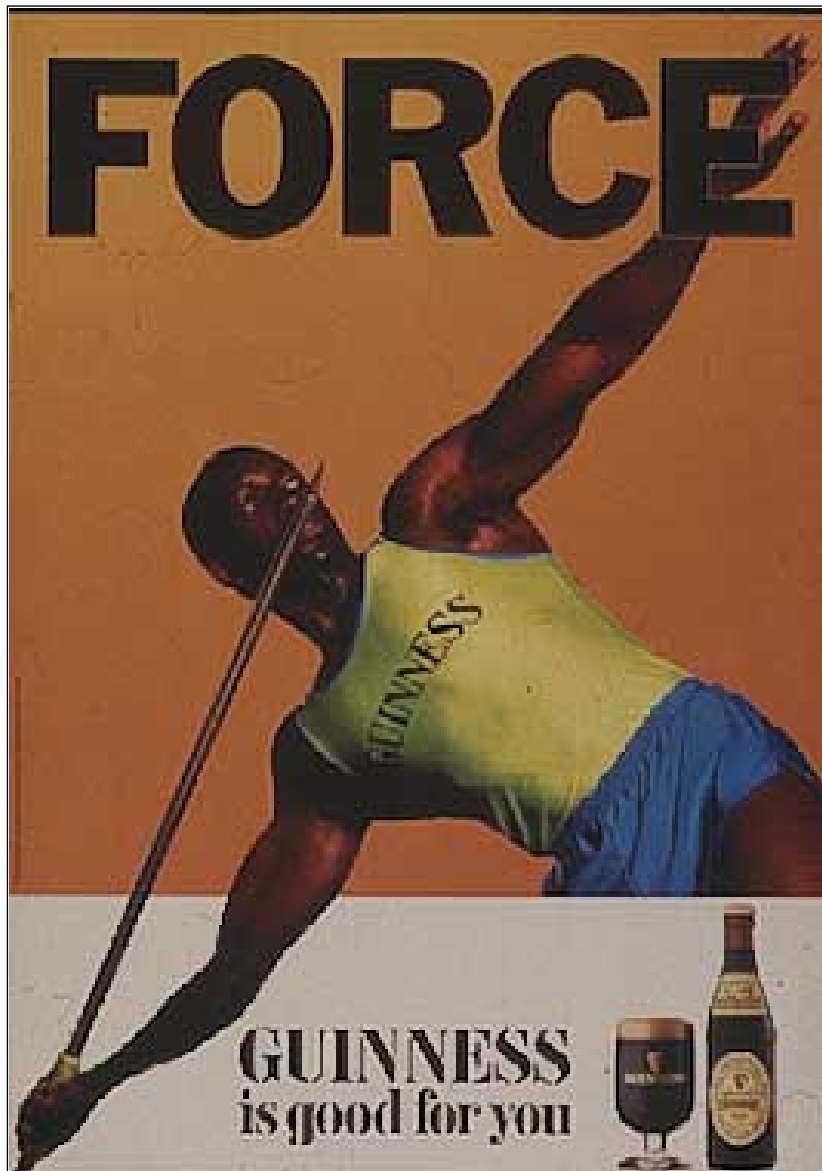


Figure 11: 'Force', Cameroon 1990 (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2007)

In the 1990s other images alluding to power and strength were also used in Guinness advertising (see Figure 11 above and 12 below) and in Cameroon and Nigeria the same image – an athlete throwing a javelin – is used in 1990 and 1991. Here there is no 'subtle allusion' to power instead it is implicit in the images. The actor is muscular, robust, powerful, athletic and successful and all of these attributes for the male body are directly linked with Guinness being 'good for you'. It is at this point that other connotations around the signifiers 'strength' and 'power' can be examined. The use of the athletic male figure, who is toned, muscular, vital, energetic, powerful and successful are all possible connotative readings of these adverts.

Interestingly, in the 1990s image the word FORCE is used, while in the 1991 advert the word STRENGTH is used. Both words leave no doubt in the reader's mind that the message is about 'power' and the promise that the product will deliver it.

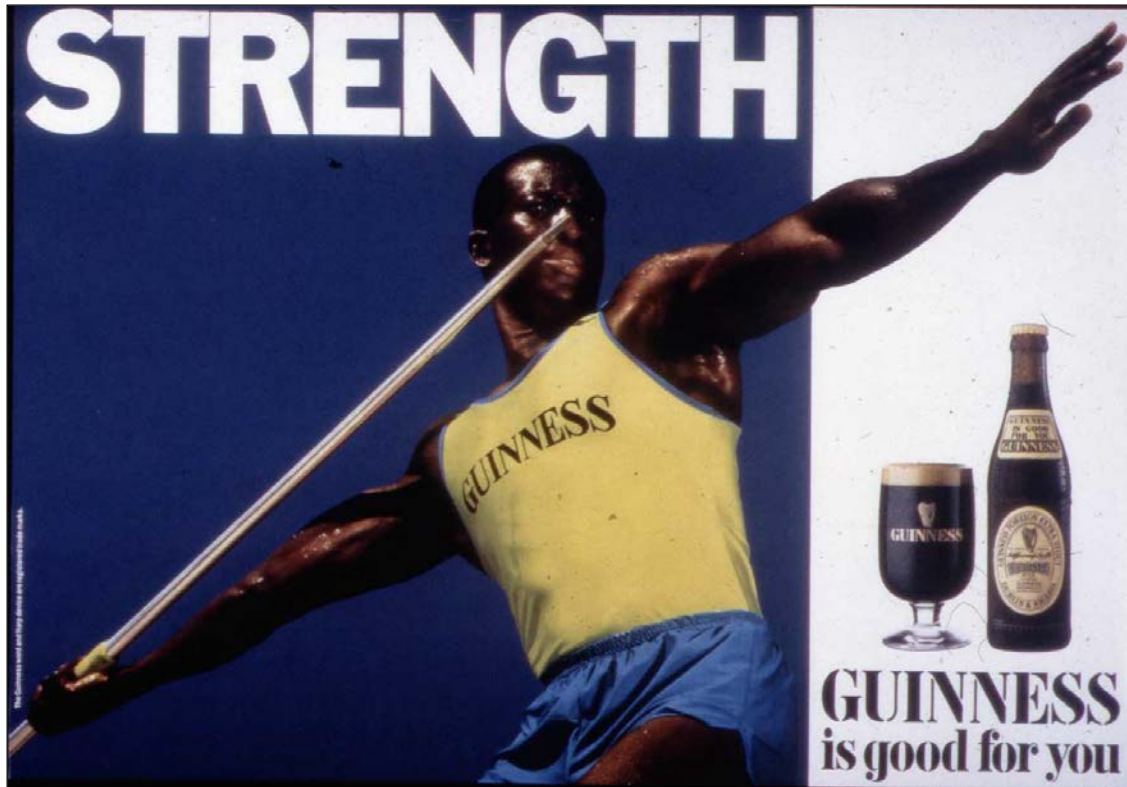


Figure 12: 'Strength', Nigeria, 1991 (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2007)

Sexuality, sensuality and virility: Other constructs of 'power' and 'masculinity'

The other core issues that emerge when we explore the images in the text lead us directly to all advertisers' holy grail. Linking sex, sexuality, and sensuality with any product is a much-practised tradition, although the exercise has become more sophisticated and subtle as regulations and social and consumer pressures mean we see fewer overt examples, such as bikini-clad beauties on the bonnets of prestige, expensive cars. In interviews, and in general reading a recurring theme around Guinness and its associations with constructed meanings of 'power' can be linked one specific construct, is the connotation of power in the form of masculine virility and one of the recurring myths surrounding Guinness is that it is an aphrodisiac.

In 1992, an example of this element can be found in the Nigerian advert (see below Figure 13) where the message around the product shifted from being simply about 'power' and 'strength' to a more complex set of readings and possible meanings. The advert below suggests that the product is 'exciting', 'inviting' and 'satisfying'. It gives the product a new dimension, additional to the 'health, strength and power' promise, and moves into new space that alludes to sensuality and promise. The words have many connotations and can be referring to the product, inherent qualities of the product, or to the consumer who will imbibe these qualities when he drinks the product. The message strategy has become more complex and multilayered in possible readings and meaning. The reader is further assisted to a particular reading by the images that accompany the text. The graphic imagery of the sensual 'pour', the 'wait' and the 'satisfaction', are rich connotative signs that subtly lead the reader to greater promise.

In my interview with Lane in 1997, he discussed this aspect of consumers' associations with the product. Broadly speaking, he explained that the values of 'goodness' and 'power' were values that can be found around the product, "all over the world" but, as noted above, he went on to

elaborate that in the African market, there were strong associations, from the consumers, that Guinness was “an elixir of power” or “juju juice”.¹¹



*Figure 13: 'Have you had your Guinness?' Nigeria, 1992
(courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)*

By 1995, Guinness’s advertising appeared to be introducing a message strategy that utilised a more overt set of images that connote sensuality and sexuality (see Figures 14, 15, & 16). The sensual and sexual set of images and subsequent preferred readings can be located in the series of adverts reproduced in the ‘Guinness the Power’ campaign. Focusing on the senses, the target audience is invited to “see it”, “taste it”, “feel it”. The text is reinforced with commanding and elegant graphics that reinforce the ‘sense’ message. The sensual message is alluded to and its construction is reinforced with the use of warm colours and refined, illustrative images. Interestingly, it is rare in advertising to locate examples of the male figure where the body has been ‘dismembered’ in this manner.

It is a treatment most commonly used on the female body to sell products ranging from alcohol to household appliances. Kilbourne (2002) argues that the process of dismemberment renders the body to ‘parts’ and subsequently reduces the body to object instead of subject. An object to be ‘gazed at’ and in that process the body as an object is constructed as ‘sexual’, ‘an object’, ‘available’, and ‘a commodity in itself’. Here the message strategy appears to be inviting a more active than passive reading, however, and the male character is, even in dismemberment, in control. His gaze is strong, his control is exerted over the product as he ‘tastes’ it and ‘feels it’ and the overall message is still a powerful one that says ‘sensuality’, and then links that value with Guinness.

¹¹ As mentioned above, juju is a word of West African origin (1894) that refers to supernatural power associated with, or ascribed to, an object.

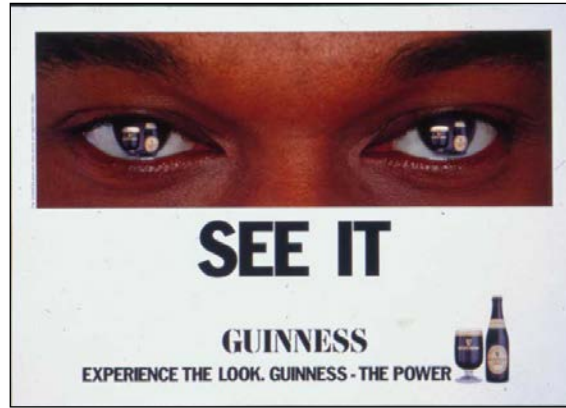


Figure 14: 'Guinness the Power, See it'. Africa, 1995.
(courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

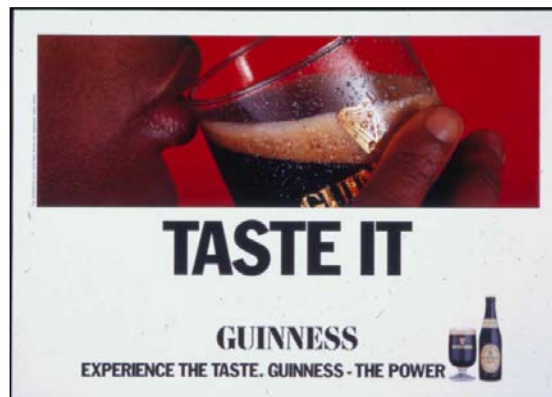


Figure 15: 'Guinness the Power, Taste it'. Africa, 1995.
(courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)



Figure 16: 'Guinness the Power, Feel it.' Africa, 1995.
(courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

In 1998, in Cameroon, a similar image can be found (see Figure 17). However, in this advert the connotations are layered and multi-faceted. The message of sexuality and sensuality is bound up in a subtle marker of male 'attractiveness'. This is embedded in an advert that also alludes to 'male bonding' and 'success/wealth/enjoyment'.



Figure 17: 'Experience a Guinness'. Cameroon, 1998.
(courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

Feel the 'power': New images, new strategies, same message

In the late 1990s there were some significant changes noted in the advertising around Guinness. In 1999 following Saatchi & Saatchi taking responsibility for the account, as noted in section one, the face of Guinness advertising radically changed. New marketing and advertising strategies were reflected in the media and message strategies that followed and Michael Power, the personification of the product, was born (see figure 18, below). As noted above, apart from the significant content and image changes, the brand was now being advertising using a pan-African approach with the same images and adverts appearing in every African country where Guinness advertised, in contrast with previous models where advertising was country-specific and tailored to that location.

As mentioned above, this trend was noted in Europe, too, where Guinness advertising was, for the first time, similar in Ireland and UK, for example. Guinness Africa was tapping into an earlier strategy that was successful in the UK – where Rutger Hauer (the Dutch actor best known for his role in *Bladerunner*) was 'the face' and, many argued, 'the personification', of Guinness throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. But Guinness Africa developed the concept much further. Here, 'the face' and 'the personification' of Guinness was not limited to the advertising genre – it transgressed, in a challenge to traditional advertising, and relocated itself in an action film genre, with great results.

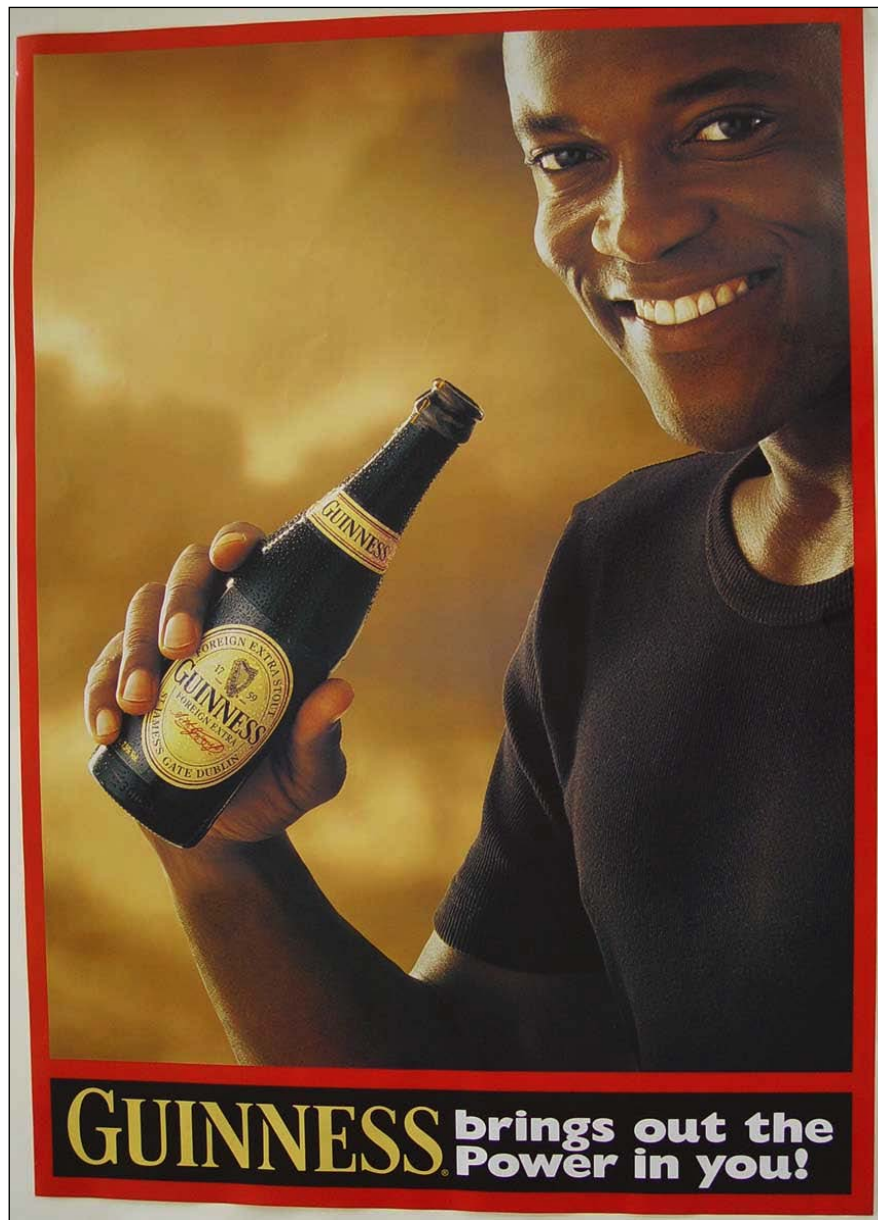


Figure 18: 'Michael Power' poster, 2001. (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

The name of the character embodies the long-term and traditional value of the product, 'physical strength' as well as the characteristics of 'physical power'. Thus associated with it the images that accompany the name reinforce this action character's physical, social and cultural expressions of power. His obvious physical strength is expressed in each advert and the values of patriarchal power are present and reinforced in various contextualised moments of expression. The character's attributes are far reaching but each advert communicates a sexual and seductive set of images that subscribes to essentialist versions of heterosexual masculine power. (Interestingly, *Power* is also an Irish surname and the name is associated with intrinsically 'Irish' products and services such as Power's Irish Whiskey, Power's Turf Accountant (betting shop) and so on). Here was an advertising message that embodied the values of the product and appealed to the aspirations of the consumer.

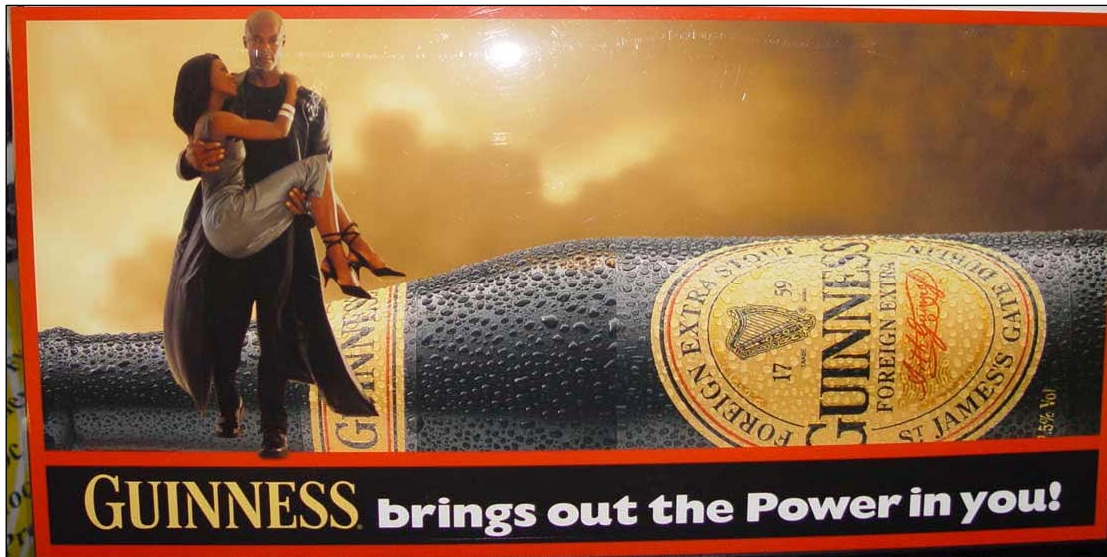


Figure 19: 'Michael Power', 1999. (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010)

According to Roberts 2006, "Guinness hired marketing firm Saatchi & Saatchi to pitch the dark beer to a specifically African market. They launched a campaign that sought to substitute Guinness for locally brewed bitters, or 'male power' drinks, and drew on racialised masculine attachments to the African landscape to give the beer continent-wide brand recognition" (online).

Additionally, the images borrow from the James Bond genre and Michael Power is often described (in popular writings) as Africa's James Bond. This in itself raises some interesting questions. For example, Bond is white, British, archotypically alpha male, sexy and amoral. When transposed to Africa, what shifts in meaning around the 'body' and 'meaning' occur? Does Michael Power *mean* the same as James Bond? Black feminist writer Bell Hooks, 1997, talks about the commodification of colour and the commodification of blackness. In the course of her writing, Hooks argues the importance of positioning the discussion around race and racism. Is Guinness commodifying or celebrating blackness when they produced an African James Bond? Is Michael Power a 'blackened' or hijacked version of white masculinity, further commodified by constructs of colour and positions of race and white supremacy? It could be argued that Michael Power buys into the existing meanings that exist around 'Bond' or it could be argued that Guinness is producing a new version of masculine power and a new iconic figure to carry that meaning; a character that is 'black', 'African', 'autonomous', 'strong' and 'individual' as 'stand alone' values, independent of colour politics.

'Guinness Greatness' and greatness reconstructed

In September 2006, Michael Power's reign came to an end and he was replaced by the 'Guinness Greatness' campaign. By early 2007 the new campaign was unfolding into the most eclectic campaign Guinness marketing had undertaken. Guinness advertising no longer featured an individual character, instead it was "about all of us and how every day, all over the world, men are demonstrating inspirational behaviour" Ajayi (2007 online). By September 2007 the campaign had been introduced in Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya and Nigeria and by the end of that year the campaign was generating consumer recognition and recall around a variety of diverse communication strategies: adverts, 'Greatness Parties', reality TV shows ('Tales of Greatness'), and sponsorships in football under the flag 'Guinness Greatness Football'.

Using the slogan 'There's a drop of greatness in every man', Diageo's annual review in 2007 described the campaign as "more than just advertising, it was a philosophy that touched

everyone. It was about celebrating everyday moments of inspirational behaviour – the drop of greatness in each of us” (Diageo annual review 2007 online).

Great Masculinities. The marketing strategies that market the New Heroes

Quoted in the *Independent* in August 2007, chief executive of Diageo, Paul Walsh, talked about the nature of the ‘Guinness Greatness’ campaign. Reminding readers of the slogan “there’s a drop of greatness in every man ...”, Walsh went on to say that since there is not a particular awareness [in Africa] that Guinness is an Irish drink, the campaign taps into a growing sense of cultural pride and confidence in Africa instead (Attwood, 2007, online). Additionally, according to Mars (2008, online), the company invested in an aggressive “search for Guinness greatness” advertising campaign, designed to appeal to cachet-seeking male drinkers across southern Africa.

To meet their aims, Guinness drew on remarkably diverse media vehicles to carry the ‘Guinness Greatness’ message. In an interesting and creative departure from the traditional media strategies found in advertising, Guinness utilised the ‘reality show’ genre and launched a new TV programme to ‘find men of greatness’ across Africa. Using big-name presenters (for example, Ebuka of *Big Brother* Nigeria fame) and ensuring broad coverage, across several local stations, audiences were invited to ‘share their moments of greatness’ (Ajayi, 2007, online) “The show feature[d] real men sharing their stories of greatness before viewers across the nation” (Ajayi 2007, online).

In as creative a strategy as turning the Michael Power advertising character into a pan-African, cinema feature film, Guinness again harnessed the media in an innovative way. The ‘Guinness Greatness’ campaign focused on recognising and rewarding the greatness “in all Guinness drinkers and encouraged them to share moments of greatness and inspire the greatness in others” (Ajayi 2007, online). Ajayi, quoted Keith Taylor, the managing director of Guinness Nigeria Plc as saying:



Figure 20: ‘Guinness Greatness’ launch poster, (courtesy of Guinness Archives, 2010; image from copywriter, Steve Hough’s website)

Greatness is about the moments of inspirational behaviour that men demonstrate everyday. It can be a moment well handled, usually with humour, where someone copes well in a situation and comes up with the right response, a one-liner, a witty comment, a piece of quick thinking, rising to a challenge or displaying strength of character.

Ajayi concluded that the Guinness campaign communicated the belief that there is greatness in every man, and that this greatness is demonstrated in everyday moments of inspirational behaviour such as moments of quick thinking, handling difficult situations with humour and rising to a challenge.

By turning ‘the MAN in the street’ into a hero, and celebrating an essentialist version of masculinity, I argue that Guinness had cleverly shifted images and meaning. It had taken the traditional messages of ‘power’ and ‘strength’, further developing them through the Michael Power campaign into a sensual, sexual hero. Then, in a final, winning chess move, they embraced every male consumer, and interpolated male non-consumers as well, by reminding them that even in their everyday actions, they too are heroes, on a par with the James Bonds and Michael Powers of medialand.

Consumers’ reading ‘Guinness Greatness’



*Figure 21: ‘Guinness Greatness’, outdoor advertising,
(photo, courtesy of David Patrick Lane, 6 October 2007;
http://davidpatricklane.typepad.com/my_weblog/2007/10/guinness-greatn.html)*

The ‘Greatness’ campaign clearly focuses on engaging the consumer with a sense of ownership of the product and unlike the Michael Power campaign, which was aspirational (all audiences wishing to be more like the hero), now Guinness was telling the consumers that they too were heroes. The shift from the impersonal to the personal was the next logical step in developing a strong brand-loyal market base and, unsurprisingly, the expressions of ‘heterosexual masculinity’ and ‘power’ prevail.

The ‘Greatness’ campaign speaks to and about male consumers, and it speaks of power and greatness. The billboard pictured in figure 21 reads ‘Guinness brings out the power in you’. This

was posted on a blog in October 2007 and the author, David Patrick Lane, reminded readers of one Nigerian man's comments in press reports about the campaign: "It makes me feel powerful", adding: "If I have three stouts, my wife knows she had better watch out. I have energy in my body" (Lane, blog, 2007, online). Again, the recurring link between power and virility is seen and this apparently only African connotation of virility and Guinness is well documented.

According to Serkin (2003, online) in Africa, the Irish beer's reputed aphrodisiac qualities enhance its popularity. He quotes David Hampshire, Diageo's managing director for Africa, who says "there has always been a thing around Guinness and sex ... Guinness is considered an aphrodisiac in Africa". Mars (2008, online) also describes how, unlike Europe, where there are no such associations, "in Africa the reputed aphrodisiacal qualities of beer have enhanced its popularity". In Nigeria, she continues, "Guinness is associated with strength and sexual virility and is colloquially known as 'black power' and 'Viagra' after Pfizer's virility drug, with this rather risqué positioning further cultivated by advertising campaigns". Despite costing twice as much as lager in Nigeria, approximately 46 percent of beer consumers in the country drink stout (Mars, 2008, online).

Conclusion: Male heroes, boy's toys, a Man's Drink

Guinness brewing and Guinness advertising has played a role in shaping the economic and cultural face of southern Africa for the past 180 years. It has established itself as a significant economic entity and as a result of this, the production and sale of the product has, by default, resulted in a rich history of graphic images that have been developed to support the marketing machinery.

I have explored the advertising texts where the imaginings of 'Guinness' are produced and reproduced as a cultural commodity. This process of 'production of meaning' is carried out by advertising strategies and advertising content; from the traditional ('good for you' and so on) to the contemporary, highly researched, expensive campaigns such as the 'Michael Power', and the 'Guinness Greatness' campaigns. I have illustrated how the advertising texts can generate particular readings and particular cultural meanings.

Inextricably bound with the broader social imagery and meaning, the consumption of Guinness, and the subsequent media texts, generate and support specific myths and subsequently particular constructs of masculinity. Each of the campaigns discussed in this study has produced a reading, through its texts, of an essentialist version of what it is to be 'male'. From the simple girder poster campaign in 1962 ('Guinness gives you Power'), to the multi-faceted, sophisticated *Power* and *Greatness* campaigns, the messages have been similar.

Guinness advertising campaigns speak to men. They tell them that Guinness equals power and that power is initially a physical power and that can also be read as a masculine power. It reminds men that Guinness is about power and strength, and a certain version of masculinity. The later campaigns – 'Power' and 'Greatness' – celebrate specific 'male' qualities. The 'Michael Power' campaign produces images of a hero character, a personification of all of the embedded qualities of the product – attractive, sexy, brave, cool, strong, and powerful. The 'Guinness Greatness' campaign builds on this, taking and developing the essentialist definition of masculinity a step further by introducing values such as camaraderie and courage, which line up alongside the more familiar referents, such as virility and physical strength. On top of this, the strategy shifts from one where the reader is aspirational, and wishes to be like the alpha-male Bond, to a message rooted in the possible where the reader is told they themselves are already heroes. According to Graham Cruickshanks (2009) at Saatchi & Saatchi SA, the 'Guinness Greatness' campaign appeals to the 'maleness' in all men "on the basis that it makes guys feel positive about themselves. It reminds them that they are all capable of inspirational behaviour. Highlighting big things or small things that other men would raise a glass to".

In the various ‘Greatness’ adverts, such as ‘Sky’, ‘Rivalry’, and ‘Tornado’,¹² Cruickshanks (2009) explained that the message is the same – men can realise their dreams, overcome their differences and celebrate their own capacity for greatness. As with all Guinness communication, the adverts are beautifully shot and edited, utilising spectacular panoramic scenery, held together with powerful scripting. The result is a series of seductive, contemporary messages that draws in audiences to a powerful collection of connotative images that produce exacting readings about masculinity (and by binary default, femininity) in southern Africa.

The ‘Guinness Greatness’ campaign, the ‘Michael Power’ campaign and all the other preceding campaigns discussed in this chapter have one thing in common. Alongside the obvious task of marketing the product and speaking of ‘Guinness’, the adverts speak of ‘Africa’. They generally reflect and respect the codes and signs and are sympathetic to the cultural and social mores. Whether we are carrying out a quality assurance task, like Arthur Shand in 1904, or students of culture and meaning, a century later, it is astonishing to discover that some of the iconic meanings surrounding Guinness have not changed. Guinness in Africa is still imbued with values of ‘goodness, strength and power’. Everything else – virility, aspirational super hero, or personal hero – is ‘added value’.

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¹² These adverts can currently be viewed on YouTube.com [June 2010].

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