

The Commodification of Biblical Texts in Advertising and Contemporary Capitalism

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1. Introduction

The sub-field of biblical reception in general, and the critical study of the Bible in popular culture in particular, has experienced rapid growth in the past decade or so. The introduction, for example, of the journals *Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception* and *The Journal of the Bible and Its Reception*, the annual *Biblical Reception*, in addition to an increasing number of monographs and edited collections, suggests that the discipline of biblical studies is expanding in new directions to address new contexts.¹ One aspect of contemporary popular culture that has not been sufficiently probed by biblical scholars until now, however, is the medium of advertising. This is striking given that advertising is in many respects located at the heart of contemporary popular culture, providing the indispensable economic imperatives and compulsions around which the global media industrial complex and, conversely, everyday life is structured. Without advertising the cultural texts we consume on a daily basis—whether television shows, magazines, or webpages—would look quite different in both content and form. Advertising is part of the capitalist machinery that ascribes cultural mystique to commodities; the subjective feelings we possess towards goods and services that aid the construction of our cultural identity. But more than this, advertising determines the development, growth, content and form of the mass media systems which are a part of the culture of almost every social formation in existence today.

Katie Edwards' *Admen and Eve* (2012) explores the question of how the use of the Bible in contemporary advertising has aided the perpetuation of a whole assortment of gendered and sexual ideologies. Indeed, the mythical and prototypical function of Gen. 2-3 undergirds a certain gendered and sexual epistemology. Popular cultural recycling of Adam and Eve has obviously had a significant impact in promulgating ideologies including but not limited to the binary construction of gender, the social and economic subordination of women, and the "appropriate" gendered performance according to Western cultural norms.

This article takes as its point of departure Edwards' discussion of the postfeminist cultural milieu as it applies to Gen. 2-3 to explore some of the broader implications of the commodification of biblical texts under contemporary capitalism. While acknowledging the importance of critical analysis of gender and (hetero)sexual ideologies codified within Eve advertising, I want to focus on intersections with class and capitalism that function within and beneath the layers

¹ In recent times even New Testament scholar Larry Hurtado has acknowledged the pressing tasks of reception history, although he places a curious emphasis on "the first three centuries CE" (Hurtado 2014, 18). Unfortunately, relying on an N-Gram search, Hurtado regards "Marxist exegesis" as unfashionable, having reached "a high-point in the early 1980s, and then, sometime after the mid-1980s, suffering a precipitous decline in frequency of occurrences" (2014, 5). A literature survey would have revealed a lot of implicit Marxism in biblical studies that has now been absorbed into the mainstream of the discipline.

of gendered ideology. This is, after all, the bottom line of advertising: to sell products according to the imperatives of capital accumulation. The manner in which people engage advertising in modern Western society is hugely influenced by the mediating institution of the market. My intention is not, as such, to diminish the importance of Edwards' focus on feminist and gender concerns, but rather to develop her argumentation through a consideration of where Marxist and feminist ideas might converge but also possibly diverge.

2. Setting the Context: Postfeminism and Neoliberalism

Within *Admen and Eve*, Edwards assesses how the biblical figure of Eve is represented in advertising from the 1990s onwards in terms of deeper cultural attitudes and assumptions about gender, sexuality and race. Her introduction makes it clear that the analysis is mostly limited in scope to white, heterosexual representations of Adam and Eve as these best reflect contemporary advertisers' prime market of white, heterosexual female consumers (Edwards 2012, 2).

Edwards sets as a broader context the contemporary milieu of postfeminism. As with the term postmodernism, postfeminism has become overloaded with different nuances. It tends to designate a distinctive sensibility made up of interrelated themes including the notion that femininity is a bodily property, an emphasis upon self-surveillance, individualisation, choice and empowerment, and the sexualisation of culture, including the resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference. According to Edwards, postfeminism reigned during the 1990s and has continued since: “girl power” was celebrated by the Spice Girls and their fans, “kick-ass babes” like Charlie’s Angels got to hit men where it hurt while sporting various fetish outfits and girls of twelve wore T-shirts that claimed “This Bitch Bites” (2012, 35-6). As an ideological constellation, postfeminism predominantly takes on a heterosexual logic and draws on the feminist intervention—both positive in its reclamation of female empowerment but antagonistic towards feminist thought that is deemed anti-sex. Edwards contends that the threat of feminism is a major social factor underlying the rebirth of the image of woman as *femme fatale* and indeed the proliferation of Eve is a manifestation of this image.

Through her analysis, Edwards demonstrates how “[t]hese ideologies portray female sexuality as irresistible to the rather docile modern man and portray the modern woman as knowing how to make her body work in her favour” (2012, 4). Women can use their sexuality to gain money and power, including social superiority and success, in both gender relations and the workplace. In other words, women in control of their sexuality enjoy financial autonomy. In the context of postfeminism, the aims and gains of second-wave feminism are transformed into a marketable commodity: “The advertisements are selling the concept of female empowerment and sexual autonomy through images of Eve, a postfeminist social construction of femininity” (2012, 4). Accordingly, in contemporary advertising Eve embodies the ultimate postfeminist and “exercises her power through her female sexuality, which is maintained or boosted through her consumer spending power—the greater the consumer power the greater the power of her sexuality to increase her social status” (2012, 38). But equally, attitudes to female sexuality appear not to have progressed that greatly over the past 100 or so years. Women are still defined by the male gaze, as sexual objects, and so on.

It is also possible to situate the postfeminist era within a broader context of late capitalism and especially neoliberalism. While Edwards tends to avoid this route, I think it is both interesting and necessary in terms of positioning Eve advertising within the larger framework of capitalist relations, as will be progressed in the next section. Very briefly, as I use the term, neoliberalism refers to the contemporary “post-political” milieu in which governments of Western democratic nations tend to perceive their role as concerned primarily with economic administration and management in contrast to representing the class interests of particular groups in society. Built upon classical liberal ideals, it emphasizes cultural indeterminacy, individualism, the free market, deregulation and the privatization of welfare and other aspects of the state. It now functions as a “hegemonic mode of discourse” and basically structures every aspect of political and economic consciousness in contemporary society (Harvey 2005, 3).

Rosalind Gill (2007) and Eva Chen (2013) have both identified numerous junctions between postfeminist popular culture and neoliberal ideology. The terms “choice,” “freedom,” and “agency,” for instance, are repeatedly appropriated by postfeminist media culture. As Chen observes, “[w]hile these terms suggest a feminist legacy, they are used not to advance the feminist cause, but to celebrate a rhetoric of individual choice and freedom which often is measured in terms of commodity consumption” (2013, 440). Similarly, Wendy Brown (2003) has uncovered the constitutive role of neoliberal rationality in the formation of late capitalist consumer culture, including its construction of a new subject that is interpellated as an acquisitive entrepreneurial and self-responsible consumer. Given Edwards’ repeated mention of “female consumer power” it might have been interesting for her to explore further how the logics of capital are also encoded within and through contemporary representations of Gen. 2-3. Indeed, the discourse around “choosing” one’s identity through consumerism is already especially contentious. In a footnote, Edwards observes that “[d]espite the fact that postfeminist advertisements ... tend to reflect Equality and Choice and (Hetero)sex positive feminisms, it seems that women ‘choose’ to represent themselves only in the same ways that men have represented them in the past” (2012, 6). This actually represents the illusion of choice under contemporary forms of capitalism: we are free to choose so long as we choose according to the limited array of options before us. Our so-called freedoms and liberties are effectively curtailed by the limits and horizon of capital itself.²

Edwards subsequently identifies the ideological regression as follows:

The idea that collective politics has been superseded by individual consumer choice is inherent in all postfeminist advertising, as is the fundamental fantasy that women have achieved professional and personal equality in contemporary society and so should inevitably make a return to “femininity,” which always involves the constant consumption of clothes, cosmetics, shoes and perfume. (2012, 85)

In fact, I would go one step further to contend that contemporary capitalism paradoxically summons both the liberation and subjugation of women at the same time and that this reflects a fundamental contradiction of neoliberal ideology. On

² See, for example, Slavoj Žižek on his notion of the “forced choice” under bourgeois liberal-democracy (Žižek 2008, lxii).

the one hand, the liberation of women as a result of the feminist movement has in fact created a new supply of workers—an extension of the proletariat reserve workforce that enables increased productivity but also increased competition in the employment market, thereby reducing wages (supply vs. demand) and keeping corporate profits at a sustainable level.³ Nancy Fraser has suggested that “male dominance is intrinsic rather than accidental to classical capitalism. For the institutional structure of this social formation is actualized by means of gendered roles. It follows that the forms of male dominance at issue here are not properly understood as lingering forms of premodern status inequality” (Fraser 2013, 38). In other words, patriarchy is inherent to the capitalist political economy and not necessarily an inherited remnant of pre-capitalist, pre-Enlightenment societies. Contemporary female-targeted advertising utilizes the biblical figure of Eve precisely because her image and character can be used in a way that supports not only the ideologies of postfeminism, but also the gendered divisions of labour under capitalism, even if these have transformed dramatically over the past fifty or so years.⁴

3. The Mechanics of Advertising in Contemporary Capitalism

Advertising is possibly one of the most influential institutions of socialization in contemporary popular culture. It not only plays a key role in the construction of gender, racial and class identity, but it also structures much of the mass media content we consume and has an impact on the creation and mediation of wants and needs. While gender is only one aspect of human experience and society, contemporary advertising seems almost obsessed with it. This is possibly because gender can be easily communicated at a glance due to our intimate knowledge and use of the conventionalized gender and sexual codifications. Representations of gender and sex are extremely effective in advertising as they instantly connect the intended injunction “to consume” with what is understood to be a fundamental element of human identity. Indeed, Edwards suggests that Gen. 2-3 remains popular with advertisers precisely because “it offers the opportunity to explore and exploit contemporary heterosexual gender roles and the distribution of power in sexual relations” (2012, 18).⁵

Drawing predominantly from a cultural studies framework, Edwards’ ideological critique concentrates on advertising as a medium of mass

³ One could reason that women are arguably even more desirable as workers as the wage gap between men and women and the “glass ceiling” for aspiring women means they provide relatively inexpensive labour. This potential economic threat was used as a justification by male unions and professional associations in the late 19th century to deny women entry into “masculinized” occupations.

⁴ Boer and Petterson (2014) have recently explored how the biblical narrative of the fall repeatedly features in the capitalist theory of major Enlightenment philosophers (e.g. Smith, Hobbes, Grotius, Malthus, Locke).

⁵ Henri Lefebvre suggests that the focus on female bodies in advertising is effective because it is unusual or unexpected. Even in an age when popular culture is saturated with sexualized bodies, they still seem to shock and awe (Lefebvre 2014, 123). Interestingly, Edwards also observes that in the postfeminist context, while advertising still tends to focus on the objectification of women and Eve, men and male bodies are becoming increasingly objectified “because it is an unusual and, for the consumer, unexpected change of tactic. The advertiser gives the postfeminist consumer a knowing wink when it portrays a muscle-bound male as a sex object” (2012, 123).

communication that produces and reproduces certain discourses understood as cultural symbols and social formations. Just as the opening chapters of Genesis are often treated as prototypical in Christian anthropology, for instance, Edwards suggests that contemporary representations of Eve are, in fact, treated as prototypical for women: “Eve’s body, as it is portrayed in popular culture, represents the collective bodies of women so that her image in advertising is a reflection of how women are viewed and how they should view themselves” (2012, 2-3).

Within the framework of Marxian political economy, however, advertising can also be examined in terms of its subordination to the logic of capital accumulation and reproduction, that is, as a constituent part of the overall context of political economy of the capitalist system.⁶ Advertisements show us the mediating role that commodities could play in the relation between individuals and expectations. Advertising at its most basic level, then, is a discourse about the relationship between people and objects—a relationship towards which Marxists have traditionally devoted a lot of intellectual energy. In fact, Karl Marx arguably provides the most adequate starting point for an analysis of the operation of this social relation within a capitalist mode of production with his examination of the fetishism of commodities. Marx begins Volume I of *Capital* with an exploration of the individual commodity as capitalism’s elementary form. He believed that if one could understand how the commodity was produced, distributed, exchanged and consumed, then one could gain insight into the workings of the wider economic system. This is because objectified in the commodity are the social relations of its production (Marx 1990).

In contemporary capitalism, advertising plays a central role in the application and obfuscation of meaning. The fetishism of commodities involves first emptying them of meaning by hiding the real social relations of production objectified in them through human labour, thereby leaving a possible space for imaginary/symbolic social relations to be injected. In other words, advertising fills the imaginary space that has been emptied by production. According to Sut Jhally (1987), advertising does not ascribe false meanings to commodities; rather it provides meaning to a domain that has already been emptied of meaning. Because people need some kind of meaning in their interaction with products, but the actually-existing capitalist social relations behind the commodity’s production is disavowed, advertising functions to fill this void. Its power stems from the fact that it harnesses the human need to search for meaning and symbolism in a world of consumerist excess.

As part of our so-called “leisurely pursuits,” the consumption of advertising is also entangled with a dialectical tension towards work. Not only does targeted advertising present a whole assortment of contradictory class assumptions, some of which are highlighted by Edwards, but these assumptions and codifications reify a worker’s place in the division of labour and the wider social system. Product consumption becomes an explicit marker of class identity: your choice of cosmetics, clothes and perfume gives you potential power and influence in the work place. In other words, you can now supposedly transcend class distinctions by consuming mass marketed products.

⁶ For more on the political economy of advertising see Arriaga (1984).

Jhally offers a somewhat unusual framework for explaining the economic dynamics of contemporary advertising that is of equal interest to us here, but from a different angle. Focused on commercial television, Jhally suggests that when an audience consumes advertising it is, in fact, working for the media, producing both value and surplus-value. Thus, from this perspective, advertising is seen to enlist a form of human labour on the part of the audience. This comparison functions not merely as analogy or metaphor, but rather, consumption of advertising becomes an extension of factory labour that is, in turn, exploited by producers: the audience themselves are transformed into labourers who work for a media company in the same respect as the workers in a factory. By consuming advertising, the audience will actively create symbolic meaning and also generate profit for the media in return for the “wage” of entertainment (Jhally 1987, 121). It is not too much of a stretch to extend this observation to the kind of advertisements that predominantly feature in Edwards’ book: magazine advertisements, billboards and television commercials, in which (niche) audiences are similarly sold to marketers.

A fundamental point of Marxian economics is that human labour forms the basis of productivity in societies, and not merely capital or technology. In the case of advertising, Jhally argues that it is audience consumption (watching/viewing) that is actually vital to the whole process. While it is true, on the one hand, that advertising exists ultimately to sell products to consumers, it is equally true that without the labour activity of the audience, advertising would collapse in its present form. In a very real sense, then, we can observe similarities between industrial labour and consumption of advertising (Jhally 1987, 83). Indeed, popular cultural consumption exists as a form of unpaid labour. If consumers really are making connections between advertising and its underlying biblical material, then consumers are in fact participating in a form of labour that is ultimately of benefit to the advertisers and their clients.

What does all this mean in terms of an analysis of advertising and the Bible? From a Marxist viewpoint, because the constitution of meaning takes place under conditions of an inequitable labour relationship, any attempt at understanding the content of advertising should start with a recognition of the conditions within which this content is created and within which the constitution of meaning (for capital) takes place. Edwards rightly focuses on the way in which symbols in advertising are used to infuse products with particular associations that send signals to a specific, targeted consumer. This is in contrast to the idea that advertising provides information about products to help the consumer make rational decisions in a complex marketplace. From Edwards’ analysis of Eve imagery we especially notice that the use-value of a product is not as important as its symbolic meaning, which also encodes a whole host of gendered, class and racial codifications. Additionally, contemporary Eve advertising predictably obfuscates the social and economic relations of production. Advertising thus provides us with an incomplete picture of the information we would require to fully understand the meaning of things. A central question thus emerges: how is biblical imagery utilized in advertising to obfuscate the social relations of the production of commodities?

4. What Does Adam Want? Or, Consumerist Ideology and Contemporary Constructions of (Female) Bourgeois Identity

One aspect of Edwards' book that can be fleshed out with respect to the capitalist mechanics of advertising is her discussion of the commodification of women in Chapter 3. In this chapter, Edwards examines the phenomenon of postfeminist consumerism to suggest that advertisers use images of Eve as temptress in order to sell women the ideal of female heterosexual sexual identity as a means to power. Edwards rightly problematizes the very "power" which is offered to women; namely, power narrowly focused on individual choices (e.g. which brand of eyeliner should I wear?) instead of power for wider social change (e.g. equal pay, true gender equality, or the class struggle).

Advertisers also utilize Eve imagery to sell the ideal of freedom and competition under neoliberal capitalism as the ultimate and untranscendable horizon of our interaction with objects. Indeed, Edwards observes that "postfeminism creates competition between women in terms of who can be the most successful temptress. Postfeminism can benefit individual women, not women as a collective" (2012, 84). The status of Adam and Eve as prototypical representatives of man and woman respectively enables advertisers to claim a false universality. Lurking behind both figures, however, we consistently find the bourgeois individual—imagined as a free agent, able to make good or bad moral and, of course, economic decisions. Eve is used to appeal to the individual consumer in a unique and personalized way, yet this is concealed under the manipulation of taste and preference.

Edwards suggests that "[t]he idea is that pleasure, style, consumer temptation and luxury products are all part of what a young woman needs to do to make herself feel good. The constant consumption of expensive luxury goods is naturalized in these adverts" (2012, 81-2). However, what is actually available, from which to "choose" freely, is limited by the mechanics of the market and is often-times anything but luxurious. Mass production caters to conformity rather than eccentricity and so a prime ideological function of advertising is to secure "agreement" among the masses as to their needs for a limited number of products. In other words, consumer free choice actually refers to the free choice among those products that can be mass produced in this way. The role of advertising is not limited to creating demand and involves steering it towards directions that work for the benefit of producers. Because the profitability of mass producers rests largely on the demands of the wider public, we are led to a situation where a consumer's average taste needs to be pulled down.⁷

This manufacturing of consent and the curtailing of human freedom in the marketplace actually has a precedent in the biblical text of Gen. 2-3 itself. In 2.16 it is God who plants in Adam the idea of consuming the mysterious forbidden fruit

⁷ Edwards remarks that the intention of advertising is "to sell fantasy not reality." Following an incisive analysis of an advertisement that portrays a self-assertive Eve as the epitome of contemporary ideals of beauty, Edwards contends that advertisers are attempting to sell something that is not already possessed by the consumer. She ripostes: "They would not need to sell the idea of sexual power to women if women were already experiencing that power" (2012, 44). But is not the opposite also the case? A core function of advertising is not to sell us products which we desire but do not possess, but rather to sell us those products that we already have and/or have little need.

in the first place. The serpent subsequently tempts Eve into “choosing” the fruit from one particular tree of all the trees in the garden (3.1-4). While a liberal (and theological) predisposition might compel the reader to infer that ultimately Eve has “free choice” in the matter of eating the fruit, there are external circumstances identified in the text which prime her actions. It could be argued that God and the serpent identify and ascribe mystique to the “product” which Adam and Eve were always intended to consume. As a commodity, the fruit promises to make them like God, knowing good and evil. Once Eve sees that “the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate” (v. 6).

Edwards herself insists that in the original text Eve is the star of the story and that advertising exploits what is already implicit in Genesis, namely that Adam is led astray by seductive female allure. Also notable is Edwards’ discussion of women as commodities themselves—the idea that part of what female-targeted advertising does is position women not only as consumers, but also as the commodities of men (2012, 66).⁸ Part of female self-empowerment comes from “looking good” for the male suitors in their lives, whether for social, marital or commercial advancement. Luce Irigaray similarly argues that, through their use, consumption and circulation, women’s bodies “provide for the condition making social life and culture possible.” However, this infrastructural use-value of the maternal body as a site of production is disavowed in patriarchal societies (Irigaray 1985, 171). In other words, women’s participation in the economy is limited to and determined by the needs and/or desires of exchanges among men. Unfortunately, Edwards does not adequately theorize the ideology of (hetero)sexual desire itself. By this I do not mean that heterosexuality and sexual attraction are problematic, normative constructs. Rather, I mean to theorize the convergence between sexual desire and the surplus value of a commodity under capitalism. Indeed, it is intriguing that the vast majority of commodities advertised using Eve imagery are products which add some kind of “surplus value” to women. These products include feminine accessories like handbags, make-up and perfumes that add value to the no-frills “consumable product” of woman. This being the case, the woman is not only positioned as the female consumer but also as the commodity. Because the economy of desire is, according to Irigaray, “man’s business” in which the exchange takes place between masculine subjects, the woman “requires a *plus-value* added to the body of the commodity, a supplement which gives it a valuable form” (1985, 177).

Again, within the Genesis text, the forbidden fruit represents the unfathomable “it” forever eluding our symbolic grasp; or, what Slavoj Žižek, following Jacques Lacan, labels the *objet petit a*. For Adam, moreover, the fruit is conflated with the woman and so this drives the assimilation of sexual desire and economic consumption. Lacan (1999, 64-77) himself argues that Woman has something in addition to man; she is the man plus *objet petit a*. Given the fruit’s symbolic status in both the biblical text and wider Western culture as the ultimate object of desire, it functions as a mediator of surplus enjoyment (*plus de jouissance*) and frames the fantasy of consumerism. Sexual gratification is that point of ecstasy beyond and

⁸ As Edwards repeatedly points out, while Eve advertising is predominantly targeted at the young female consumer, she is invited to look at herself through a distinctly male gaze.

above reality—a point of release and escape. Associating a commodity with such feelings of intense enjoyment is an ideal strategy for emptying its meaning of the social relations behind its production. The point is not simply that advertising interpolates subjects as placid and sexualized consumers, although this is certainly true. Rather, the use of Adam and Eve in advertising taps into a libidinal economy of desire in order to sell its product. As such, the consumer is already a sexualized object. The text of Gen. 2-3 is actually the perfect cultural referent for such a task because the text revolves around (sexual) appetite and desire.

5. The Commodification of Biblical Texts in Contemporary Capitalism

Today, almost everything falls into the sphere of exchange value (that is, into the realm of the global free market). The biblical text is no exception. I deliberately employ the expression “biblical texts” in order to differentiate from “the Bible,” compiled into book form and mass marketed as a commodity itself. Rather, I am taking here about the ways in which individual biblical texts, like Gen. 2-3, are axed from their original contexts and experience an afterlife in the context of late neoliberal capitalism to re-inscribe and support the ideological contours of the wider superstructure.

Admen and Eve helpfully exposes how the first few chapters of Genesis continue to serve a strong ideological function in contemporary Western culture, particularly in terms of perpetuating gender and (hetero)sexual stereotypes. In this essay I have explored how an analysis of the broader context of late capitalism might provide further insight into the function of the Bible in contemporary advertising and also popular cultural texts in general. While biblical critics of popular culture have tended to focus on how the Bible is used to both comply with and, occasionally, oppose elements of contemporary culture, what is usually understated is that the very forms of popular culture we are analysing are themselves contingent upon the tacit acceptance of global capitalism and especially (nowadays) neoliberalism as the only or primary framework for human understanding and experience.

And so, to generalise and simplify: biblical scholars who have analysed popular culture have tended to employ critical approaches that meld rather comfortably with the liberal atmosphere of higher education in late postmodern capitalism. While a critique of a conventional or mainstream ideology is often carefully articulated (sexism, racism, classism, colonialism, and so on), a deeply ingrained ideology that normalizes liberal-democracy and its natural bedfellow neoliberal capitalism remains underexplored. In fact, even the counter-discourse of anti-capitalism is now widely disseminated within capitalist popular culture. How often does the villain in Hollywood films turn out to be the evil corporation? Far from undermining the wider economic system, this gestural anti-capitalism ultimately just reinforces it (Fisher 2009, 16-19). While Edwards’ analysis could have been enhanced by paying closer attention to the wider economic structures and mechanics of advertising, her shift to the commercial basis of contemporary popular culture is a welcome one.

Advertisements draw us in because we depend upon the meaning they provide for the definition of our own social lives and, furthermore, they depend on our own knowledge of referent systems for the operation of meaning. The meaning of

advertising is not always apparent on its surface waiting to be appropriated in the same way by everybody who sees it. But before we can understand the “content” of advertising, we arguably must contextualize it concretely in the modern economy. Edwards demonstrates early on in her book that, as a powerful cultural icon, the character of Eve is not free to be remoulded by re-readings despite the well-meaning intentions of feminist biblical scholars. Indeed, given her proliferation in culture, the cultural Eve supplants the textual and subsequent scholarly constructions. Similarly, within the totality of capital, Gen. 2-3 exists as a kind of theological master signifier which symbolises the closure of human experience within the confines of the market.⁹ Eve’s proliferation across advertising not only obfuscates the social relations of production as they are encoded within a commodity, but she also compels us to accept the narratives of “free choice” and the injunction to “consume” as essential and eternal categories of human nature.

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⁹ Boer and Petterson argue that, in its frequent wrestling with Gen. 2-3, classical economic theory is in many respects constructing a foundation myth of capitalism that universalizes capitalist assumptions about human nature and the market. (2014, 67–77).

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