

“From Our Lips:’ Lipstick as Consumer Technology and the MAC VIVA GLAM Advertising Campaigns”

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Article abstract

Lipstick has remained a stable technology for over five thousand years, while influenced by social and cultural mores, and ideas about sexuality, gender and class. This is particularly evident in the twentieth century since lipstick has become a consumer technology, as evidenced by the fundraising lipstick VIVA GLAM. Made by the originally Canadian brand MAC Cosmetics, sales of VIVA GLAM generate funds for the brand’s own AIDS charity, the MAC AIDS Fund. VIVA GLAM’s advertising was initially controversial because it featured drag performer RuPaul in 1995 and Canadian crooner k. d. lang in 1997. More recently, VIVA GLAM’s advertising has featured singers Cyndi Lauper and Lady Gaga and promoted safe sex behaviours amongst young heterosexual women. Lipstick’s meaning and function continues to adapt to its historical circumstances, particularly around gender norms, and VIVA GLAM is a new chapter in this cultural history of lipstick as a consumer technology.

“‘From Our Lips:’ Lipstick as Consumer Technology and the MAC VIVA GLAM Advertising Campaigns”

Andrea Benoit

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Abstract: Lipstick has remained a stable technology for over five thousand years, while influenced by social and cultural mores, and ideas about sexuality, gender and class. This is particularly evident in the twentieth century since lipstick has become a consumer technology, as evidenced by the fundraising lipstick VIVA GLAM. Made by the originally Canadian brand MAC Cosmetics, sales of VIVA GLAM generate funds for the brand's own AIDS charity, the MAC AIDS Fund. VIVA GLAM's advertising was initially controversial because it featured drag performer RuPaul in 1995 and Canadian crooner k. d. lang in 1997. More recently, VIVA GLAM's advertising has featured singers Cyndi Lauper and Lady Gaga and promoted safe sex behaviours amongst young heterosexual women. Lipstick's meaning and function continues to adapt to its historical circumstances, particularly around gender norms, and VIVA GLAM is a new chapter in this cultural history of lipstick as a consumer technology.

Résumé: Le rouge à lèvres est resté une technologie stable depuis plus de cinq millénaires, tout en étant constamment influencé par les mœurs sociales et culturelles, ainsi que par des idées sur la sexualité, le genre et la classe. Cela est particulièrement évident au XX^e siècle, alors que le rouge à lèvres est devenu une technologie de consommation. Le rouge à lèvres VIVA GLAM témoigne de cette évolution. Fabriqué par MAC Cosmetics, une marque à l'origine canadienne, ce rouge à lèvres a été conçu pour la collecte de la fondation caritative pour le sida de la marque, le MAC AIDS Fund. La publicité de VIVA GLAM a d'abord été controversée parce qu'elle mettait en scène la performeuse drag RuPaul en 1995 et la crooner canadienne k. d. lang en 1997. Plus récemment, la publicité de VIVA GLAM a présenté les chanteuses Cyndi Lauper et Lady Gaga et la promotion des comportements sexuels sécuritaires chez les jeunes femmes hétérosexuelles. Le sens et la fonction du rouge à lèvres continuent de s'adapter à des circonstances historiques, en particulier autour des normes de genre, et VIVA GLAM est un nouveau chapitre de cette histoire culturelle du rouge à lèvres en tant que technologie de consommation.

From our lips: You know you've got a sexy voice. Use it! Let's talk about how to keep your love life safe, seductive and satisfying. Just between us girls.¹

This quote is from a 2010 ad for VIVA GLAM lipstick, created by the originally Canadian brand MAC Cosmetics (Makeup Art Cosmetics). One hundred percent of the profits from the sale of this lipstick are donated to the brand's charitable arm, the MAC AIDS Fund, which helps fund organizations worldwide that support men, women and children affected by HIV/AIDS. As this ad copy suggests, lipstick now seemingly lends its glamour quotient to a new function, one of saving lives. A lipstick designed as a branded fundraising tool for an AIDS charity is unique in lipstick's cultural history.² VIVA GLAM was initially controversial because it was first advertised in 1995 by the drag performer RuPaul and in 1997 by singer k. d. lang, raising a number of questions about (homo)sexuality, femininity and gender. In 2010, singers Lady Gaga and Cyndi Lauper became the spokespeople for the seventh iteration of the lipstick, which was marketed to young women. These VIVA GLAM campaigns addressed female sexuality and female empowerment. All of these VIVA GLAM advertising campaigns exploited lipstick's malleable meaning by proposing that it is a consumer technology with an overarching function: to help people living with AIDS.³

Lipstick is a stable technology that has been open to meaning and possibility within changing historical and cultural contexts for over five thousand years. Its use is an embodied practice, marking the surface of the body, and has many ostensible functions: to make the wearer look good, to attract attention, to disguise, to amplify and to seduce others.⁴ It has marked gender identity, status, and political affiliation. It has been influenced by changing ideas about social and cultural mores, citizenship,

1. Advertisement from MAC VIVA GLAM (2010). <http://www.macaidsfund.org/#/glam/campaignhistory>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

2. For a comprehensive cultural history of cosmetics, see Richard Corson, *Fashions in Makeup From Ancient to Modern Times* (London: Peter Owen, 2007); for more about the MAC AIDS Fund, see Elizabeth Anderson, "Fighting AIDS: how an edgy ad campaign built a brand and brought in bucks," *onPhilanthropy.com*, September 5, 2007. <http://onphilanthropy.com/2007/fighting-aids-how-an-edgy-ad-campaign-built-a-brand-and-brought-in-bucks/>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

3. To view MAC's entire VIVA GLAM advertising campaigns, and learn more about its corporate history, see <http://www.macaidsfund.org/#/glam/campaignhistory>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

4. Page Dougherty Delano, "Making Up for War: Sexuality and Citizenship in Wartime Culture," *Feminist Studies* 26, 1 (2000): 33-68.

femininity, female liberation and sexuality. Lipstick has consistently been controversial because of who wears it and for what reason, and the types of distinctions and symbolic value it bestows upon its wearer. Despite this, the basic composition of lipstick has altered very little, with technical adjustments implemented primarily for the safety and comfort of its users. The base components have remained the same, but wearing lipstick has historically been a barometer for measuring the social climate.

I argue that MAC's VIVA GLAM lipstick is a consumer technology that demonstrates unique import in a neoliberal consumer society that increasingly relies upon consumption as a driving force for change. In the first half of my discussion, I situate lipstick historically, as a technology with a colourful past that is marked by its formal and informal regulation. Influenced by French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, and guided theoretically by media scholar Jonathan Sterne, I then suggest how lipstick's long history is carried into its current incarnation as a fundraising consumer technology in VIVA GLAM.⁵ With the rise of consumer culture, lipstick's historic informal regulation has now seeped into the advertising space. This second half of the discussion is dedicated to three of VIVA GLAM's advertising campaigns, including the historical context in which it, and the brand, appeared. I emphasize that VIVA GLAM is a consumer technology or tool designed to raise funds for the MAC AIDS Fund, and this function is prescribed by its advertising. An empirical study to determine the specific consumer meaning-making around VIVA GLAM, however, is beyond the scope of this article. VIVA GLAM likely generates varying levels of consumer engagement. Furthermore, no claim is made here that VIVA GLAM's ads initiated a demonstrable change in larger medical, cultural or media discourses and attitudes about HIV/AIDS. VIVA GLAM's success in both instances can be assessed instrumentally by its sales. Rather, I suggest that VIVA GLAM lipstick is a consumer technology designed to address issues of larger social concern in innovative ways. VIVA GLAM's advertising and its other promotional texts convey this function to consumers, becoming a new chapter in the cultural history of lipstick as a consumer technology.

5. Jonathan Sterne, "Bourdieu, Technique and Technology," *Cultural Studies* 17, 3/4 (2003): 367-389.

Lipstick as Technology over Time

One of the initial challenges in considering lipstick as a technology is that its material composition has evolved very little in five thousand years. Technical adjustments have been implemented primarily for the safety and comfort of its users. Lipstick is composed of the same three ingredients – pigments, emollients and waxes – that are mixed and applied to the mouth. Common colour ingredients in antiquity were white lead, minerals, crushed rocks, animal byproducts including carmine (crushed beetles), and poisonous colorants such as vermilion and fucus, which were mixed with emollients. Now, these colour pigments are iron oxides and titanium dioxide. The process for making a lipstick involves combining these pigments with castor oil until the mixture is extremely smooth. This pigment is added to a wax, usually beeswax, carnauba, paraffin, ozokerite, microcrystalline or candelilla. Once combined, the mixture is heated, placed in molds, and cooled. Additional ingredients now include more sophisticated moisturizers, vitamin E, aloe vera, collagen, amino acids, and sunscreen. Significant technological advancements in colour cosmetics have made it possible to eliminate ingredients that are poisonous and toxic, particularly colour additives. In the last one hundred years, scientific and medical knowledge has played an increasingly important, although secondary, role in the regulation of lipstick. The cosmetic industry has developed new finishes for lipstick such as matte, long lasting and shiny. The lipstick bullet can be shaped in many forms, including fishtail (angled on both sides), teardrop (pointed tip, angled on one side), and wedge (rounded top, angled on one side), to allow optimal application to the lips.⁶ Variations have been developed including glosses and pencils, and a huge range of packaging innovations, particularly in lipstick cases, has occurred. MAC founder Frank Toskan likens creating a lipstick to making a soufflé, as a delicate process of getting temperatures and timing just right.⁷

Wearing lipstick, however, has meant many different things throughout its five thousand year history. One way these meanings can be determined is through the daunting task of analyzing lipstick's formal (legal, sacred) and informal (social, cultural) regulation over time, which legal scholar Sarah E. Schaffer has exhaustively traced.⁸ This long

6. Meg Cohen Ragas and Karen Kozlowski, *Read My Lips: A Cultural History of Lipstick* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998), 39.

7. Jessica Pallington, *Lipstick: a Celebration of the World's Favorite Cosmetic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 85.

8. Sarah E. Schaffer, "Reading our Lips: The History of Lipstick Regulation in Western Seats of Power," *Food & Drug Law Journal* 62, 1 (2007): 165-225.

history, necessarily abbreviated here, illustrates how lipstick's meaning has shifted over time according to gender, class and sexual ideals. As Schaffer notes, the Sumerians originated lipstick culture in 3,500 B.C. and the neighbouring Assyrians, both men and women, painted their lips red. Egyptian men and women wore lipstick to signify status, participating in a robust beauty culture with no formal regulation. In ancient Greece, lipstick signified social status and femininity, but was frequently the provenance of prostitutes. This evolved into lipstick's first formal regulation, since prostitutes could be charged with impersonating a woman from a higher class: "In what would become a prominent pattern in lipstick regulation, this first lipstick law focused on lipstick's potential deception of men and the undermining of class divides rather than on its safety for women."⁹ During the Roman Empire, however, lipstick enjoyed high popularity and low formal and informal regulation, and it demarcated social status (but not gender) by the colours worn.¹⁰

Lipstick shifted between high popularity and social disapproval during the Middle Ages. There was a return to some formal regulation of it in England. There, lipstick was seen as "Satanic" because it altered the face. By the 1300s, lipstick was increasingly associated with incantations and witchcraft.¹¹ Lipstick was both popular and shunned during the Renaissance. Courtesans in England, France and Italy wore it without concern about social disapproval.¹² Lipstick users faced strong social criticism in England during the 1500s, although Elizabeth I loved wearing a crimson mouth and wore lipstick on her deathbed.¹³ Makeup was thought to be medicinal and have magical powers, even able to fend off death.¹⁴ This initiated more formal sanctions on lipstick use in the 1500s by clergy, ethicists, and lawmakers. The first formal lipstick law since Ancient Greece appeared at this time, which, passed by English Parliament, declared that using makeup to deceive an Englishman into marriage was punishable as witchcraft.¹⁵ Later, during the reign of James I in the mid-1600s, this formal control of lipstick continued, yet the English population still wore it. The classes were differentiated by the cost of its ingredients, since lower classes could only afford a cheaper ochre red. Male courtiers used lip rouge, even though it was identified with femininity. It was thought that James I's effeminacy and rumoured

9. *Ibid.*, 166.

10. *Ibid.*, 167.

11. Ragas and Kozlowski, 17.

12. Schaffer, 169.

13. *Ibid.*, 170; Pallingston, 11.

14. Pallingston, 11; Schaffer, 170.

15. Schaffer, 171.

homosexuality contributed to its popularity amongst the male courtiers. A bill was introduced in British Parliament in 1650 calling for the end of “painting, wearing black patches, and the immodest dress of women,” but it did not pass because it was thought to be unenforceable.¹⁶

A formal, legal regulation of lipstick in England emerged alongside the more informal social disapproval of its use. An Act in 1724 had increased lipstick safety in London by prohibiting certain unsafe ingredients, yet white lead – a toxic substance that killed its wearers – was still used to cover smallpox scars.¹⁷ London prostitutes wore lipstick and makeup, as did older women, although young women did not. The clergy denounced its use as “cheating” or “altering God’s most precious gift,” as it was thought to be a (dishonest) means for entrapping males.¹⁸ In 1770, women who seduced men into matrimony by wearing lipstick and cheek paint faced having the marriage annulled, and possibly being charged with witchcraft. The citizens of the new American colony emulated the French (who openly wore it) rather than the English, and coloured their lips discreetly, improvising by licking their lips with red ribbons.¹⁹

The meaning of makeup shifted widely during the nineteenth century. According to sociologist Paula Black, in the early Victorian age (mid-1800s), men were suspicious of makeup because it was considered artifice.²⁰ Prostitutes and actresses primarily used cosmetics. Indeed, there was extreme condemnation of lipstick. Lipstick remained the least respectable cosmetic and led to underground use and subterfuge.²¹ By the 1860s, however, this informal lipstick prohibition ended. In 1880, the French company Guerlain produced the first commercially successful lip colour in stick form, and in 1897, the American Sears Roebuck catalogue began advertising lip rouge. The objection to its use in the early twentieth century was two-fold: either the ingredients were questionable (although this was considered more of a threat to men who might ingest it when kissing a woman, rather than a danger to the female wearer herself), or else lipstick marred a women’s natural beauty.²² The thousands-of-years-old conflict between lipstick as enhancer of beauty or sign of immorality continued to underline its use into the twentieth century, as it evolved into a popular consumer technology.

16. *Ibid.*, 172.

17. *Ibid.*, 173.

18. Ragas and Kozlowski, 16.

19. *Ibid.*, 18.

20. Paula Black, *The Beauty Industry: Gender, Culture, Pleasure* (London: Routledge, 2004).

21. Pallington, 14; Ragas and Kozlowski, 20; Schaffer, 175.

22. Schaffer, 177.

Considering Lipstick as a Consumer Technology

As media scholar Jonathan Sterne notes, “[t]echnologies are socially shaped along with their meanings, functions and domains and use. Thus, they cannot come into existence simply to fill a pre-existing role, since the role itself is co-created with the technology by its workers and users.”²³ Following French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, Sterne suggests that the way a technology and its users interact is not determined solely by the technology’s material features or its intended use, nor are its meanings and functions constructed only by those who use it. Rather, a negotiation takes place. I suggest this negotiation can be seen in the way that informal and formal regulations have been observed, refuted or re-appropriated by lipstick users over time. Lipstick, as a technology, is not produced merely to fill a social need, but also acts upon, and reacts to, the forces in its environment. It is not static but something that changes over time for different groups of people in different historical circumstances. Acknowledging this history is crucial, for the meaning of any current technology “carries with it the sedimented social history of relations in which that technology was once embedded, and the relations in which the experiencing individual is embedded.”²⁴ Sterne’s theoretical frame acts a guide here for recognizing how lipstick as a technology exists within a constant negotiation between the material technology, its users, and its particular historical context, one that is now defined as a consumer society.

Taking this perspective, we can see that consumption is one social relation that acts upon, and reacts to, social change, and can be expressed through a variety of promotional strategies, consumer activities, communications and networks. It offers consumers a framework and the means for both acceptance and resistance through commodities, such as with boycotts, ‘buycotts,’ culture jamming and other new forms of activism.²⁵ This negotiation between lipstick, its users, and the formal and informal regulations that make up its history is thus heightened by early twentieth century consumer culture, especially as a strong beauty culture has also emerged. Lipstick became a consumer technology that coincided

23. Sterne, 373.

24. Ibid.

25. Consumer activism has changed immensely with the development of social media and heightened forms of branding. For some examples, see Sarah Banet-Weiser and Charlotte Lapsansky, “RED is the New Black: Brand Culture, Consumer Citizenship and Political Possibility,” *International Journal of Communication* 2 (2008): 1248-1268; Vince Carducci, “Culture Jamming: A Sociological Perspective,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 6, 1 (2006): 116-138; Roopali Mukherjee and Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Commodity Activism: Cultural Resistance in Neoliberal Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

with, but was also increasingly co-opted by, larger social movements. For example, the Suffragettes of the early twentieth century sported red lipstick as part of rally procedures; it was used “with the express intent of appalling men”²⁶ and its wearers proudly wore their “signs of emancipation.”²⁷ Lipstick as a consumer technology assumed a central role in political struggles about women’s rights and the subjective experience of being female. Cosmetic advertising and marketing were also undergoing a technological evolution as the cosmetics industry established itself as a legitimate economic player.²⁸ Lipstick names, such as Volupté’s “Lady” and “Hussy” (1938) reflected the dichotomy of female sexual identity that wearing lipstick made visible. Promotional campaigns were attuned to lipstick’s populist meanings and place within ideological battles, but displayed sophisticated rhetoric, visuals and appeals to female subjectivity. As historian Kathy Peiss notes, “[t]he new mass-market cosmetics industry celebrated itself as both cause and consequence of women’s modernity and emancipation.”²⁹

Lipstick became both sign and symptom of women’s struggles, and this negotiation was articulated in the burgeoning consumer culture within increasingly complex advertising, which I suggest constitutes an extension of lipstick’s informal regulation. The long-standing conflicts around gender identity, social roles, and morality centred on lipstick could be seen in ads of the time. During the Second World War, when more women directly participated in the war effort, lipstick was represented in advertisements as a symbol of traditional femininity, but it also suggested feminine defiance, resilience, independence and bravery.³⁰ Print advertisements like Tangee’s “War, Women and Lipstick” delineated the working woman’s dilemma about participating in a ‘man’s world’ of work, while being bound to traditional expressions of femininity, and offered a clear solution: “It’s a reflection of the free democratic way of life that you have succeeded in keeping your femininity even though you are doing a man’s work. No lipstick—ours or

26. Schaffer, 176.

27. Pallington, 15.

28. A historical treatment of the cosmetics industry is offered by Geoffrey Jones in *Beauty Imagined: A History of the Global Beauty Industry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

29. Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America’s Beauty Culture* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1998), 135. See also Linda Scott, *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 127-163.

30. Delano, 26; Peiss, 240.

anyone else's—will win the war. But it symbolizes one of the reasons why we are fighting.”³¹

After the Second World War, a return to more traditional gender roles prevailed. Sexuality in advertising was more acceptable, more prominent, and eventually became conventional. The 1952 Revlon “Fire and Ice” lipstick campaign featured model Dorian Leigh in posters and print ads, with copy asking, “Are you made for ‘Fire and Ice’?” followed by fifteen questions asking whether the potential wearer would likely engage in a variety of activities. Answering “yes” to at least eight out of fifteen questions (including “Have you ever danced with your shoes off?” and “Do you close your eyes when you’re kissed?”) indicated that the wearer was indeed “made” for Fire and Ice lipstick.³² As Karen Ragas and Meg Kozlowski note, Fire and Ice was a “red [lipstick] with real meaning that captured the feminine spirit, the good and bad nature of women.”³³ The fine line between feminine respectability and undesirable female sexual excess was precariously maintained.

By the 1960s and 1970s, wearing makeup again took on a political force when second-wave feminists abandoned it for a “natural,” un-made up look that represented resistance to a gendered beauty ideology, and to consumer culture overall. The 1970s also saw a new exploration of gender ambiguity, especially with male “glam rock” singers such as David Bowie and Mick Jagger experimenting with makeup in their on-stage personas. The use of lipstick by men was acceptable under certain artistic circumstances, but remained within the realm of fantasy and showmanship.³⁴ In England, the rise of punk in the 1970s revealed a new appropriation of makeup and fashion as integral to an authentic subcultural resistance against race and especially class-based oppression.³⁵ The 1980s New Romantic movement illustrated a new contemplation of androgyny in male bands such as Japan and Duran Duran. Robert Smith, the lead singer of The Cure, was notorious for his ubiquitous smudged red lipstick.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the cosmetic industry increasingly chose to “refocus on lipstick’s social impact in terms of the product’s socially responsible characteristics” that increasingly relied on the citizen-

31. Ragas and Kozlowski, 50; Peiss, 240.

32. Penny Dade, *All Made Up: 100 Years of Cosmetics Advertising* (London: Middlesex University Press, 2007), 49.

33. Ragas and Kozlowski, 54.

34. Corson, 590.

35. The classic text on punk and subcultures is by Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979).

consumer's responsible consumption choices.³⁶ In the current social and economic climate of neoliberalism, consumption has become a dominant venue for promoting social change. Neoliberalism has shifted responsibility for social concerns onto the market.³⁷ Private corporations are increasingly called upon to fund and support social justice programs, and citizens' personal responsibility is realized through consuming. Market logic as the guiding force for resolving political, social and cultural concerns is illustrated in the primary discourse of capitalism: advertising. This is now seen in advertising schemes such as "cause-related marketing," in which brands partner with charitable organizations. Specially designed products are created and a portion of the sales is donated to the charity, known as a "purchase-triggered donation."³⁸ The overall strategy is defined by advertising and other marketing and promotional communications. It is within this historical context and set of social and economic relations that MAC and VIVA GLAM emerged.

MAC and VIVA GLAM

MAC (Makeup Art Cosmetics) was created in Toronto in 1984 by makeup artist Frank Toskan, and hairstylist Frank Angelo. Arising from Toronto's fashion community, "the Franks," as they were called, innovated a professional line out of their kitchen that was initially designed to suit their own technical and photographic needs. The Franks produced a diverse range of products appropriate for all skin colours, particularly darker skin tones, developing neutral shades instead of the pinks and purples that dominated major cosmetics lines, and using matte textures that photographed better. By creating a wider range of colour products than were commercially available at that time, MAC accommodated, indeed embraced, a racially and ethnically diverse consumer. MAC quickly gained a loyal following within the Toronto fashion industry. It acquired counter space in downtown Toronto's Simpson's flagship store on Queen Street and at The Bay, where counters were staffed with highly creative makeup artists of both sexes (and all genders), rather than generic and interchangeable sales associates.³⁹

36. Schaffer, 210.

37. For an example of how this process unfolds in breast cancer culture, see Samantha King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2006).

38. The various types of CRM are discussed by Inger L. Stole, "Philanthropy as Public Relations: A Critical Perspective on Cause Marketing," *International Journal of Communication* 2 (2008): 20-40.

39. See Marina Sturdza, "MAC Cosmetics achieves a remarkable success," *The Globe and Mail*, 9 March 1989, C5; Leslie Brenner, "MAC Attack," *New York Magazine*, 3 June

While MAC's reputation in the Toronto fashion world was growing, however, so was the AIDS epidemic. Early cases were called GRID ("Gay-Related Immune Deficiency") as gay men were disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. The swiftness with which people with GRID died created fear within gay communities across North America. In Canada, the first AIDS deaths had occurred in 1980, and between 1981 and 1984 there were 128 deaths in Canada. By 1985, there were 175 deaths; that number was 341 in 1986, and each subsequent year saw the number of deaths increase exponentially.⁴⁰ Government malaise about HIV/AIDS prevention, research, education and treatment was the norm, and homophobia characterized HIV/AIDS in Canada and the United States. Support for AIDS awareness and people living with AIDS (PWAs) was controversial for the government, and particularly for corporations.⁴¹ The Italian sportswear company Benetton faced a great deal of controversy for its 1993 advertisement portraying the dying AIDS activist David Kirby, an emaciated figure surrounded by his grieving family.⁴² AIDS was not like breast cancer, a "safe" disease because it perpetuated ideologies about motherhood, nurturing and nationalism. Instead, AIDS raised uncomfortable questions surrounding homosexuality and gay male sexual practices, and how these challenged hegemonic ideas about sexuality, morality and family values. Indeed, AIDS was initially framed as occurring in "guilty" victims. The strong alignment of AIDS with homosexuality was also discursively associated with punishment for

1991, 22: 2; Stephanie Strom, "Lauder in Distribution Venture with Rival," *The New York Times*, 10 February 1995, D3.

40. In 1987, there were 527 deaths. In 1988, there were 622 deaths. In 1989, there were 821 deaths. In the 1990s, the number of deaths rose steadily: 912 deaths in 1990; in 1991 there were 1104 deaths; in 1992 there were 1292 deaths; in 1993, 1317 deaths. See Public Health Agency of Canada, "Surveillance Report to December 31, 2011," (Ottawa, 2012).

41. For an analysis of how AIDS was covered in American media during the 1980s, see James Kinsella, *Covering the Plague: AIDS and the American Media* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989). For a Toronto perspective on AIDS activism, see Ann Silversides, *AIDS Activist: Michael Lynch and the Politics of Community* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003). For breast cancer activism and corporate responses, see King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* For an analysis of corporate initiatives, see Jo Littler, *Radical Consumption: Shopping for Change in Contemporary Culture* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2009). A historical approach to the promotional nature of the public "good" can be found in Paul Rutherford, *Endless Propaganda: The Advertising of Public Goods* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

42. Benetton's advertising as an educational text is discussed by Henry A. Giroux, "Consuming Social Change: The 'United Colors of Benetton,'" *Cultural Critique* 26 (1993-94): 5-39; for a comprehensive analysis of how Benetton's advertising blurred the boundaries between public service announcement, "shockvertising" and promotional vehicle, see Serra A. Tinic, "United Colors and Untied Meanings: Benetton and the Commodification of Social Issues," *Journal of Communication* 47 (1997): 3-25.

“immoral” behaviours that included gay sex, sex work, and drug use. Once AIDS was seen in “innocent” victims (heterosexuals, children, women), the disease was likened to a “war.” This “war” was described as a general threat to the (heterosexual) social body.⁴³

MAC Cosmetics responded to the AIDS crisis in Toronto. In September 1994 it created the MAC AIDS Fund to financially support local Toronto AIDS organizations, including the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), in their day-to-day work helping people living with AIDS.⁴⁴ The special VIVA GLAM lipstick was created as the Fund’s sole fundraising tool. It was a deep red shade designed to have universal appeal, and thus optimal sales, although, as Revlon’s Fire and Ice demonstrated, red lipstick itself has had a storied history.⁴⁵ MAC covered the full cost of producing VIVA GLAM and retail partners in department stores were required to give up their margin to ensure that all profits were donated to the Fund. One hundred percent of VIVA GLAM sales were (and continue to be) donated to the Fund.

MAC had never advertised the brand, claiming the expense as prohibitive, but it created advertising images specifically for the MAC AIDS Fund to drive sales of VIVA GLAM. These print ads featured the Fund’s first spokesperson and honorary chair, RuPaul, the male, black, New York City drag queen and singer, whose club dance hit “Supermodel (You Better Work)” had recently topped the charts.⁴⁶ RuPaul’s new role was officially announced at a New York launch party in March 1995, in a campaign that was provocatively titled “Who is the MAC Girl?” It depicted RuPaul in full glamour mode, wearing a blonde wig, red bustier and red thigh-high boots.

Another displayed RuPaul’s body spelling out, literally embodying, VIVA GLAM. By using a man as the brand’s “face,” MAC poked fun at

43. Juanne N. Clarke describes these representations in Canadian mainstream magazines in “Homophobia out of the closet in the media portrayal of HIV/AIDS 1991, 1996 and 2001: Celebrity, heterosexism and the silent victims,” *Critical Public Health* 16, 4 (2006): 317-330. The classic text on metaphorical meanings of AIDS is Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* (New York: Picador, 1988). For ways that AIDS has become imbued with cultural, not just medical, meaning, see the essays in Paula A. Treichler, *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

44. The AIDS Committee of Toronto has traditionally been one of the MAC AIDS Fund’s beneficiaries in Canada. The Fund now accepts applications from organizations desiring funds, which are then adjudicated according to strict criteria. This is listed on their website: <http://www.macaidsfund.org/#/work/application>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

45. Ragas and Kozlowski, 95-6.

46. Larry Flick, “RuPaul: Changing the Makeup of Pop Music,” *Billboard*, 5 June 1993, 1.

traditional female beauty culture, while maintaining MAC's authentic and subcultural brand identity that celebrated diversity and individuality. It also demonstrated, to great effect, the transformative (or deceptive) power of makeup that has characterized it through the ages.

Figure 1: MAC Cosmetics VIVA GLAM campaign featuring RuPaul, 1995.



Source: www.macaidsfund.org/theglam/campaignhistory. Accessed December 11, 2013.

There appears to be no precedent in the cosmetics industry for a man (drag queen or otherwise) fronting a cosmetics advertising campaign targeted to women.⁴⁷ Contracts with prestige cosmetics brands were traditionally reserved for top models and, increasingly, celebrities. Frank Toskan, however, thought that RuPaul was a natural choice for MAC:

We couldn't find anyone who wore more makeup and had so much fun doing it...I've always thought it would be impossible to put a face to MAC because of

47. Bernadette Morra, "Drag queen crowned the new face of MAC," *The Toronto Star*, 2 March 1995, B3; David Livingstone, "Style Notes: What a Girl," *The Globe and Mail*, 2 March 1995, D3.

what we stand for - all sexes, all races, all ages. But RuPaul is male, he's female, and he's ageless. He fits the bill.⁴⁸

Some were very uncomfortable with RuPaul, while others proclaimed the decision "Brilliant."⁴⁹ American *Vogue* magazine received both angry and positive letters from readers after running the VIVA GLAM ad.⁵⁰ Some questioned whether women would want to buy a lipstick from a brand so closely associated both with a black drag queen and a terminal (gay) disease like AIDS.⁵¹ However, demand for MAC cosmetics "surged" at NYC's exclusive Henri Bendel and Nordstrom after the RuPaul announcement.⁵² By mid-1995, sales of VIVA GLAM had raised over \$2 million for the MAC AIDS Fund, primarily through word-of-mouth, media exposure and counter promotion.⁵³ By the end of 1995 this number had risen to \$3 million.⁵⁴

In 1997, the advertising campaign for VIVA GLAM II was released. It featured k.d. lang, the Canadian singer, lesbian and animal rights activist, a woman who notoriously never wore makeup. The ad showed her sporting an Elvis-style pompadour and a lipstick print on her cheek – planted by another VIVA GLAM wearer, presumably a woman. The beauty industry had long relied on conventional images of women to maintain the beauty ideology,⁵⁵ but as lang had said in 1996, "I think it's very courageous of such a large company to have two queer people as spokesmodels [...]. Between us, RuPaul and I break every concept of the beauty myth – the race thing, the gender thing, everything."⁵⁶ Not only

48. Morra, B3.

49. For a discussion of RuPaul, see Phillip Brian Harper, *Are We Not Men? Masculine Anxiety and the Problem of African-American Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). See also Zine Magubane, "Black Skins, Black Masks or 'The Return of the White Negro': Race, Masculinity, and the Public Personas of Dennis Rodman and RuPaul," *Men and Masculinities* 4, 3 (2002): 233-257.

50. Bain, 52.

51. See Susannah Frankel, "Wham, Bam! VIVA GLAM! Who's the new MAC spokesmodel, sporting the hippest lipstick on the planet?" *The Guardian*, 15 May 1996, T11; Cyndee Miller, "Would you buy lipstick from this man?" *Marketing News* 29, 19, 11 September 1995, 1.

52. Bain, 52.

53. Syllvi Capelaci, "Who's that Girl? RuPaul raises the roof and funds at AIDS Gala," *The Toronto Sun*, 16 May 1995, Imagination: 48; Morra, B5.

54. Christian Arthur Bain, "Truth in Advertising: The man behind M.A.C. is pushing more than his latest shade of lipstick: try AIDS awareness, human rights, and RuPaul," *The Advocate*, 3 October 1995, 52.

55. Jean Kilbourne, *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1999); Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (Toronto: Vintage Books, 1990).

56. Frankel, T11.

this, RuPaul and lang challenged ideas about who was “allowed” to wear lipstick, confronting the informal regulation of lipstick use as a female activity and its representation of this in the consumer sphere. They also mocked the historical conflict about lipstick as disguise or trickery, exploiting the deliberate confusion about gender that RuPaul’s outlandish drag presented, and lang’s rejection of a conventional feminine appearance. MAC’s advertising instead proposed a vital life full of glamour, humour, creativity, and hope about AIDS, all bound up in a VIVA GLAM lipstick. This appeared to work: by 1998, the total funds raised for the MAC AIDS Fund was \$16 million.⁵⁷

Figure 2: MAC Cosmetics VIVA GLAM II campaign featuring k.d. Lang, 1997.



Source: www.macaidsfund.org/theglam/campaignhistory. Accessed December 11, 2013.

While MAC’s demonstrable success in altering perceptions about AIDS and gay people is debatable, MAC’s VIVA GLAM campaign did help change the conversation in art, news and advertising, from one about

57. Christine Bittar, *Brandweek* 39, 36 (28 September 1998): 41.

AIDS and death to one that celebrated life. The most prevalent media representations of AIDS in the 1980s and well into the 1990s had been of the dying white man. Gruesome images of men with Kaposi's Syndrome had especially been the norm. Art projects such as Nicholas Nixon's photographs of people with AIDS told honest stories of gay men and their lives, attempting to repudiate the dominant media images of gay men with AIDS, but these also showed emaciated figures often close to death.⁵⁸ MAC's ads disrupted the flow of dominant images signifying AIDS. RuPaul, a drag queen and the first MAC "Girl," along with k.d. lang, a woman who looked like a man, were amongst the more visible representatives of the "gay subculture" achieving mainstream visibility in the 1990s. Since one of the biggest challenges in the AIDS epidemic had been the rampant institutional homophobia in medicine, government and the media, MAC's campaign used spokesmodels that faced homophobia head on, challenging stereotypes about gay identity by co-opting a moment in popular culture, particularly film, that was generally more accepting of sexual and gender fluidity.⁵⁹

VIVA GLAM: Sign of the Times

The MAC AIDS Fund has continued to respond to the AIDS epidemic, even after MAC's purchase by New York-based cosmetics conglomerate Estée Lauder in 1998. The AIDS epidemic, and cultural meanings around AIDS, have changed, as have the MAC AIDS Fund and VIVA GLAM. Highly affective antiretroviral therapies (HAART) were developed in 1995, and in retrospect that year could be seen as the peak of the crisis.⁶⁰ Once considered a frightening, controversial and terminal disease, HIV is

58. For an analysis of ad images representing HIV/AIDS, see Marco Scalvini, "Glamorizing Sick Bodies: How Commercial Advertising Has Changed the Representation of HIV/AIDS," *Social Semiotics* 20, 3 (2010): 219-231. For American AIDS activist art, see Douglas Crimp, ed. *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988) and Douglas Crimp, "Portraits of People With AIDS," in *Cultural Studies*, eds. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992): 117-130; also see Gregg Bordowitz, *General Idea: Imagevirus* (London: Afterall Books, 2010) for the originally-Canadian art collective's AIDS activist artwork.

59. See Joe Clark, "What a drag!" *Toronto Star*, 15 May 1993, Saturday 2nd edition, Weekend: J1; Alex Pugsley, "Queerness bursts into the mainstream," *The Toronto Star*, 14 May 1993, A25.

60. There were 1495 deaths in Canada in 1995; after that year, deaths rapidly declined. See Dena L. Schanzer, "Trends in HIV/AIDS Mortality in Canada, 1987-1998," *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 94, 2 (2003):135-139. Schanzer's work on HIV/AIDS mortality identifies AIDS as the leading cause of death for men 25-44, accounting for 15% of all deaths in Canada in 1995. Only suicide rated higher than HIV/AIDS.

now a chronic but manageable condition with these antiretrovirals. The urgency around the crisis has subsided and a certain malaise has resulted. The focus on AIDS has shifted to sub-Saharan Africa and “distant others” with campaigns like product RED.⁶¹ There have been numerous innovations of VIVA GLAM since 1997, including new colours, textures and formats, and consequently new spokespeople to promote them, which keep the products and the cause fresh in the mind of consumers.⁶² Some of these spokespeople have been quite famous, such as singer Elton John, while others, like retro burlesque entertainer Dita von Teese, less well known. In 2010, singers Cyndi Lauper and Lady Gaga were chosen to represent the Fund’s current focus on AIDS amongst women. Each singer introduced her own version of VIVA GLAM lipstick and “Lipglass” (a lipgloss), and Gaga introduced a second version in mid-2011. While not as controversial personas as RuPaul or k.d. lang, each performer has a unique tie to the gay community. Lauper, in her 50s, first appeared in the early 1980s, corresponding to the first occurrences of AIDS a full generation ago. Lauper has long been a strong advocate for LGBTQ issues, and represented older women susceptible to HIV infection. The then-25-year old Lady Gaga, also a well-known proponent of gay rights, represented a new cohort of young heterosexual women who need to be educated about AIDS, safe sex and female self-esteem.

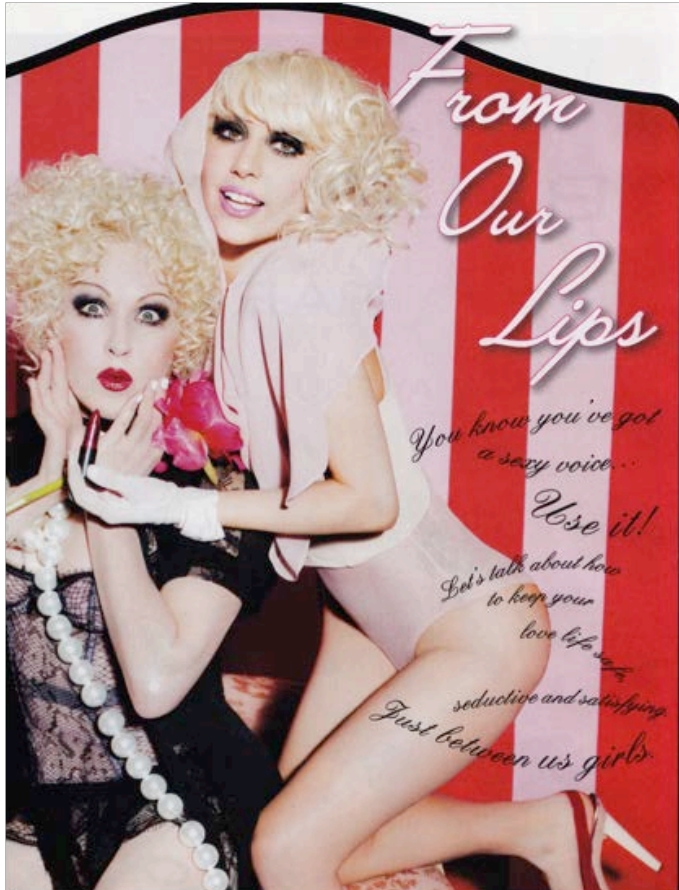
In this highly visible promotional campaign, two sets of meaning were discernible. The print advertisement itself, appearing in fashion magazines and in visual presentations at the MAC Cosmetics counter, featured the two women in a boudoir-style set, wearing lingerie and their personalized VIVA GLAM shades. The copy read: “From our lips: You know you’ve got a sexy voice. Use it! Let’s talk about how to keep your love life safe, seductive and satisfying. Just between us girls.” The discourse about safe (heterosexual) sex introduced in the late 1980s was revived here, combined with 1990s-style ‘girl power.’ The connotative

61. Lisa Ann Richey and Stefano Ponte, *Brand Aid: Shopping Well to Save the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

62. In 2000, VIVA GLAM III featured singers Mary J. Blige and Lil’ Kim. In 2002, VIVA GLAM IV again featured singer Mary J. Blige, adding Shirley Manson and Elton John. In 2004, singers Christina Aguilera, Missy Elliot, Boy George, actor Chloe Sevigny, and supermodel Linda Evangelista promoted VIVA GLAM V. In 2005, VIVA GLAM V was re-launched with Canadian actor Pamela Anderson. An ensemble appeared in 2006 for VIVA GLAM VI, consisting of singers Eve, Debbie Harry, Lisa Marie Presley and burlesque star Dita Von Teese. Black Eyed Peas singer Fergie was very successful in 2008, with a limited edition VIVA GLAM VI Lipglass (lipgloss) released as well. All images can be viewed at the MAC AIDS Fund’s website: <http://www.macaidfund.org/#/glam/campaignhistory>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

chain of semiotic meaning between voice, talking, lipstick and female empowerment is straightforward.

Figure 3: VIVA GLAM campaign featuring Cyndi Lauper and Lady Gaga, "From Our Lips," 2010.



Source: www.macaidfund.org/theglam/campaignhistory. Accessed December 11, 2013.

However, in other promotional materials and communications, particularly in interviews with Lady Gaga and Lauper,⁶³ the singers offered another perspective on VIVA GLAM's function. They positioned VIVA GLAM as a type of visual reminder for heterosexual female consumers to be proactive and to remember to pack a condom in their purse next to the VIVA GLAM lipstick. Lady Gaga said:

63. Lady Gaga and Cyndi Lauper on *The Sharon Osbourne Show*, UK <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggqAP-yB6dQ&feature=youtu.be>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

Lipstick in a way is a sexual symbol. It's your femininity, and it's seen in society as a seductive instrument—it's a way to lure a man or to lure a woman. But when you give that to your daughter, say 'Listen, this is it. This is your femininity. I wear it and you will wear it too, but let me explain to you what it defines and what you have to do to protect yourself ... We want the lipstick to be a reminder: 'Hey, where's your condom?''⁶⁴

In doing so, an additional layer of meaning was deposited on lipstick's "sedimented social history of relations."⁶⁵ The lipstick was framed not just as a beauty aid, or a device that highlighted femininity. It was also a type of memory device, a tool or technology to informally discuss and regulate safer sex behaviours amongst heterosexual young women, while also regulating the consuming habits of women. Recalling how makeup was thought to have magical powers in the Renaissance, and even be able to fend off death, VIVA GLAM lipstick as a talisman was updated for the modern (female, heterosexual) consumer fighting AIDS.⁶⁶

The promotional reach of Lady Gaga's endorsement in particular has gone far beyond that of the RuPaul and k. d. lang print advertising campaigns.⁶⁷ In February 2011, Lady Gaga reached, or, in marketing-speak, "touched," twenty million fans/consumers when she posted on Facebook and tweeted to eight million Twitter followers about her upcoming appearance on *Good Morning America* to promote VIVA GLAM and the MAC AIDS Fund.⁶⁸ The results of such social media

64. Kate Dailey, "'Forgive Me for Being Blunt:' AIDS Activists and Viva Glam Spokesmodels Lady Gaga and Cyndi Lauper's Slightly NSFW Interview," *Newsweek*, February 11, 2010. <http://www.newsweek.com/forgive-me-being-blunt-aids-activists-and-viva-glam-spokesmodels-lady-gaga-and-cyndi-laupers-222972>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

65. Sterne, 383

66. See Angeline Lucinda Weiss, "Desire for Good: the MAC VIVA GLAM Advertising Campaigns," (Master's Thesis, University of Georgia, 2010), for semiotic analysis of the VIVA GLAM campaigns from 1995 to 2010. Her reading of the Cyndi Lauper and Lady Gaga campaign considers the representations of heterosexual desire and female agency; for a treatment of Gaga's influence in the gay communities, see Joseph H. Hancock, "Brand this Way: Lady Gaga's Fashion as Storytelling Context to the GLBT Community," in *Fashion in Popular Culture: Literature, Media and Contemporary Studies*, eds. Joseph H. Hancock, Toni Johnson-Woods, Vicki Karaminas (London: Intellect, 2011), 1-22. For analysis of Gaga's impact on young girls, see Jennifer Keishin Armstrong and Heather Vood Rudolph, *Sexy Feminism: A Girl's Guide to Love, Success and Style* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2013.)

67. See Andrew Hampp, "Gaga, Oooh La La: Why the Lady is the Ultimate Social Climber: Leveraging Digital Media and Creative Partnerships Makes Artist a Uniquely 2010 Pop Star," *Advertising Age*, 22 February 2010, 42. See also Dave Lackie, "The Influence of Gaga," *Cosmetics* 39, 2 (2011): 54-55.

68. *Good Morning America* interview <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=896cEsZSI6s&feature=youtu.be>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

contagion were profound: during the time that Lady Gaga and Cyndi Lauper fronted the MAC AIDS Fund, \$34 million dollars was raised for the Fund. This is the same amount as the first ten years of the Fund's existence, when traditional print advertising was the only medium promoting VIVA GLAM.⁶⁹ Using lipstick has become an increasingly complex embodied practice that is now influenced by the communicative and promotional flows in a highly mediatized consumer culture.

Yet the reasons that women wear lipstick appear to be more diverse than ever. For instance, Clarke and Bundon's empirical study on older (ages 71-83) women's use of lipstick indicated that they use it in distinctly different ways than either their predecessors or younger women. In their early life, using lipstick was both a cultural norm and an act of defiance. Clarke and Bundon note that, "although a seemingly trivial act, wearing lipstick is a powerful example of how the personal is political." In later years, lipstick became for these women a symbol of youth, and an attempt to maintain an attractive feminine appearance. Lipstick was also used to illicit favourable opinions from others, such as independence, health, and competency (in the workplace, for example). Lipstick was often a "core element of their identity" even when physical ailments or disabilities affected its application. The authors suggest that lipstick use is strongly influenced by historically situated gender norms and the physical and material realities of age.⁷⁰

As for VIVA GLAM, there is little empirical evidence that consumer engagement with it is connected to an increased understanding, awareness or support for HIV/AIDS as a relevant social cause, or if it 'works' as a reminder to practice safer sex. The first ads for VIVA GLAM did not explicitly state that the funds raised went to the MAC AIDS Fund, as this was supposed to be explained by the counter staff at the point of purchase. These later ads are clearer about this, but the copy is located in fine print, often near the bottom of the ad, and can be very easy to miss. Whether purchased for themselves or friends, or, as Lady Gaga has suggested, for their daughters, is unclear. Sterne uses Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to explain the specific ways that the negotiation between technology, users, and social context takes place. As a type of social "disposition" that is both embodied yet influenced by

69. Ariel Schwartz, "The Lady Gaga Effect: Pop Star's Social Media Savvy Helps the MAC AIDS Fund Raise Millions of Bucks," *Fastcompany.com*, 18 February 2011, <http://www.fastcompany.com/1728820/lady-gagas-social-media-savvy-helps-the-mac-aids-fund-raise-millions>. Accessed December 11, 2013.

70. Laura Hurd Clarke and Andrea Bundon, "From 'The Thing to Do' to 'Defying the Ravages of Age': Older Women Reflect on the Use of Lipstick," *Journal of Women & Aging* 21, 3 (2009): 198-212.

social resources, this “embodied social knowledge” that is the *habitus* comes through in everything an agent (person) does, wears, or says, but it is not fixed: it is both spontaneous and generative, yet socially structured. Bourdieu’s *habitus* would offer a theoretical entry point for exploring empirically how women incorporate VIVA GLAM into their everyday practices. The *habitus* provides a lens through which to investigate how the knowledge suggested by VIVA GLAM’s ads – about AIDS, safe sex, female empowerment – is used by women through speaking, wearing, giving and consuming lipstick. Nonetheless, the advertising and promotion appear to be “successful” if only in the sense that VIVA GLAM sales have increased exponentially since 1994. In July 2012, the Fund reached its milestone of \$250 million dollars (US), which was announced on Twitter with much fanfare, making lipstick as a fundraising consumer technology a viable project.⁷¹

Conclusion

Lipstick has been a sign and symptom of a host of complex cultural, social, economic and political issues, including gender, sexuality and status, for thousands of years, despite minimal changes in the material technology itself. Lipstick is now a consumer technology used to conform to and maintain the status quo, as well as a tool used to initiate and indicate resistance and action. The advertising texts from the early to mid-twentieth century discussed here illustrate how lipstick as a consumer technology cannot be dissociated from its historical moment. Advertising has become another platform for establishing and negotiating the discourse of lipstick’s meaning, and for securing its informal regulation, particularly in current neoliberal economic and social arrangements. I have suggested that MAC’s VIVA GLAM is an exemplary contemporary form of lipstick as a consumer technology. VIVA GLAM’s claim to being the first lipstick to raise money for an AIDS charity becomes part of lipstick’s larger history, as it continues to respond to its contemporary historical moment. There is no other non-profit organization tied to a lipstick and brand on the scale of MAC and the MAC AIDS Fund, making it unique amongst other cosmetic brands.

Initially created as an intervention into the AIDS crisis in Toronto in 1994, VIVA GLAM is now a sustainable global funding source for people affected by AIDS, while becoming, as a by-product, the primary tool in MAC’s branding and promotional toolbox. VIVA GLAM lipstick has itself undergone a technical evolution in its numerous iterations since

71. The twitter handle is @MACCosmetics

1994, with new colours, textures and formats and spokespeople to keep consumers buying it. The emergence of VIVA GLAM marks a moment when lipstick became a consumer technology with a new agenda for social change. Lipstick's embedded history predates the emergence of VIVA GLAM, but it is a legacy that is modernized as this new technological aspect is embodied within lipstick's future. As a consumer technology, lipstick will continue to respond to its historical and cultural context, changing meanings, influencing new ideas, acting upon the thoughts, actions, and subjectivity of the next generation of consumers. Lipstick has evolved from a "sign of emancipation" to a marker of a "Lady" or a "Hussy" to now denote the "MAC Girl" in each consumer, yet it is simultaneously all of these things.