

The #3 Motif in Advertising

Becky Proctor
Folklore and the Media
MWF 10:30
April 11, 1994

The #3 Motif in Advertising

In American society there is much folklore that is present in our advertising ads. It may be done consciously or unconsciously. For example, folk speech, folklore vocabulary, proverbs, or motifs may be used in advertising ads. One of the most prominent motifs used in advertising today is the #3 motif. I have collected 10 examples of the #3 motif from the women's magazine *Elle* from the months of January, February, and March.

In my collection of #3 motif ads they consist of ads advertising: skin care products, skin cleansing products, perfume, shoes, or clothes. In these ten examples four of them are advertising skin care products, four of them are modeling clothes, and the other two are shoe advertisements.

Of the skin care product examples, two advertise for skin cleansing, two advertise for skin moisturizing, and one advertises for perfume. In ad #1 the three different items: clarifying lotion, the soap, and the moisturizing lotion, in the ad help in the advertising by showing the "3-step skin care". In ad #2, the three containers help demonstrate the label "turnaround cream" by one jar facing the left, the next right below facing the right, and the third facing straight ahead. In ad #3 the three containers help the advertising by giving examples of the perfume, the perfume gel, and the perfume creame. In ad #4 there are only two forms of the soap. In the ad they display both forms and put one bar of soap on another probably just because it is visually pleasing or because the #3 motif is in the subconscious.

Two out of the ten examples of ads with the #3 motif were for shoes. Each ad consisted of three shoes. This would help the advertising by showing the different style or color of the shoes which ever applies. In example #6 the shoes were placed in a triangular shape three-sided. This may come from the art background and triangular shapes being appealing to the eye. Also this ad was directed at three clientele: men, women, and children.

In the last four examples of the # 3 motif, they each have three models modeling clothes. In three of the four examples the models are standing side by side, which divides the picture plane into thirds. This is the rule of thirds. In art, one is taught the rule of thirds so the eye does not wander aimlessly through the chaos but flows through the art in some order, or draws the eye in. This is why the advertiser chooses three so it will be appealing to the audience. The tenth example stood out the most to me because it is full of the #3 motif. First, it is a three page advertisement. There are three people present in the first and last pages. There is a repetition three times of the letter M. By having the advertisement three pages long it forces the reader to notice it. It starts out catching your attention then, POW, and ends subtly.

The #3 motif has been embedded in Americans through religion and folklore. The prominent religion in the United States is Christianity. In Christian belief there is the son of God who was crucified on the cross and resurrected in three days. Also, part of their belief is in the Trinity. The Trinity is the Father, the Son, and, the holy ghost. This symbolism in religion is carried out in other parts of our lives. People also have put symbolism in the number three with sayings like: "Bad things always happen in threes.", "The third time is the charm.", and "If at first you don't succeed try, try again" (three attempts before giving up). Advertisers have taken this motif to appeal to their audience. The number three is everywhere in our society and as a positive thing. In an advertisement usually two examples would be too few and four would be too many but three is just right. Therefore, it appeals to the American people because they are comfortable with it, used to it, and accept it. It makes them feel as if it is right.

- #1 3 products from Clinique, 3 different colors, 3-steps to skin care
- #2 3 jars of cream in 3 stages
- #3 3 bottles of perfume, 3 colors, 9 lines of print
- #4 3 products of Neutrogena, 3 lines of black type
- #5 3 styles of Keds shoes, three word slogan, 3 parts to the ad, 3 spots of color
- #6 3 shoes, 3 clientele men , women, and children, triangle shape
- #7 3 models
- #8 3 models picture plane divided into 3 parts
- #9 3 models picture plane divided into 3 parts
- #10 3 page ad, 3 M's, 3 people present



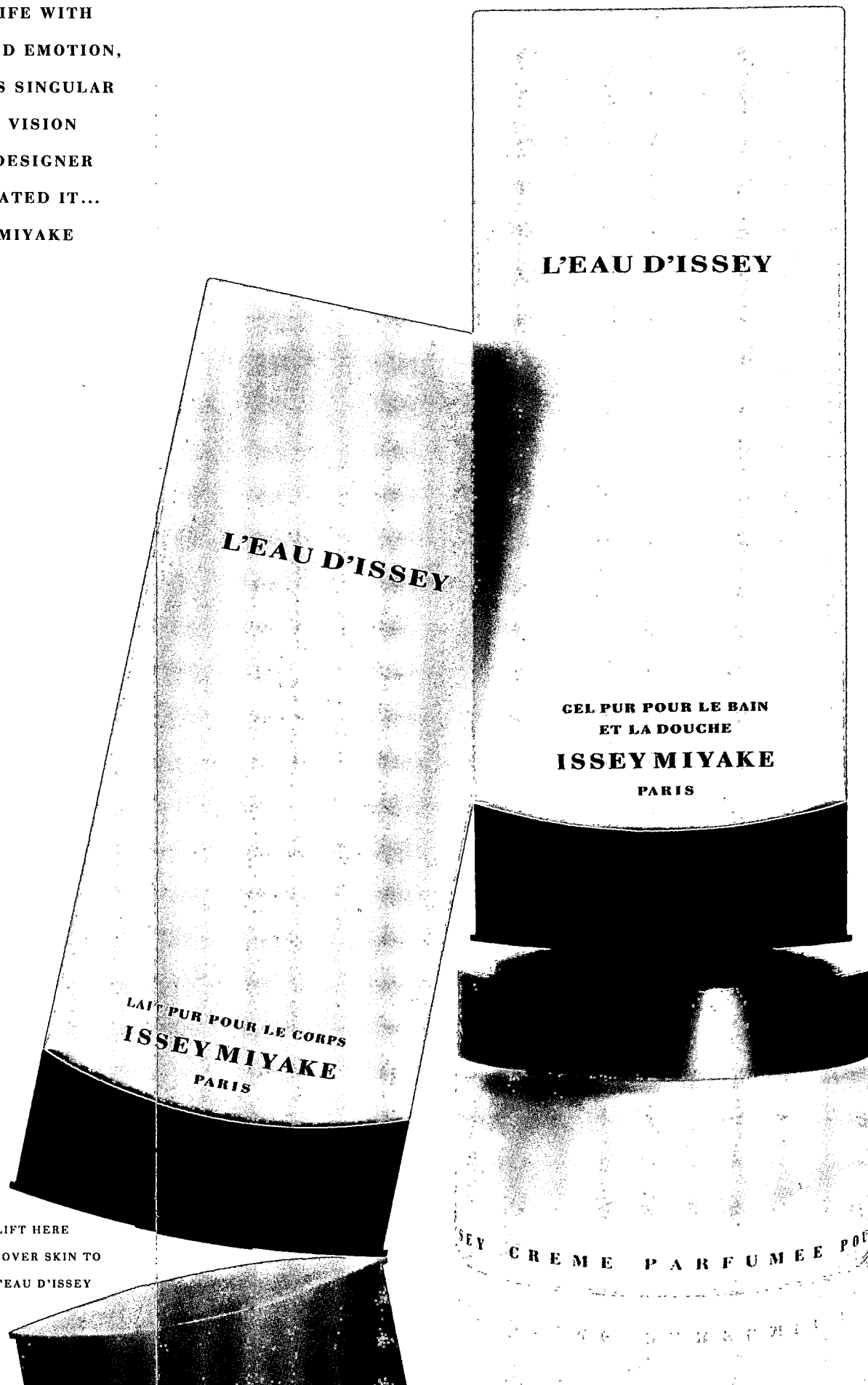
CLINIQUE

clarifying
lotion **2**

dramatically
different
moisturizing lotion



L'EAU D'ISSEY,
FOR THE WOMAN WHO
LOVES LIFE WITH
UNFETTERED EMOTION,
A SCENT AS SINGULAR
AS THE VISION
OF THE DESIGNER
WHO CREATED IT...
ISSEY MIYAKE



PLEASE LIFT HERE
AND SMOOTH OVER SKIN TO
DISCOVER L'EAU D'ISSEY



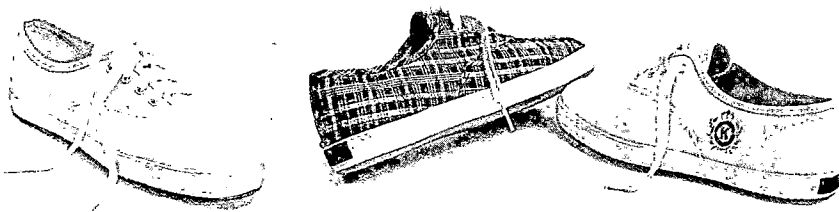
Pure.



Neutrogena®

Your childhood isn't lost, you just misplaced it.

It's probably in your closet
behind an old Candy Land®
game or buried under
a pile of course catalogs
somewhere. So dig
it out, use it. Do something
incredibly un-adult.
Then carry it with you, so
you'll always have it
handy when you need it.



They feel good.™



COLE HAAN
resort

fine footwear and accessories. for men, women and children.
the *alana* leather espadrille in espresso. the *xanthe* mule in luggage or olive nubuk.
the *leilani* leather ankle tie in espresso, black, navy or white.

For stores near you write: Cole Haan, Dept. T2, North Elm St., Yarmouth, ME 04096-5002

Manuscripts & Folio Archives
Library Special Collections
Western Kentucky University

Coca-Cola

TODAY'S SPECIALS

FLY 1-12
ME HAUL

470
البران بصرى

CANOE

MYR 206 STOKP-90

EAH-78

NOT

KRISHNA T

EEES

CH 67 M13

TO 2

SHANY

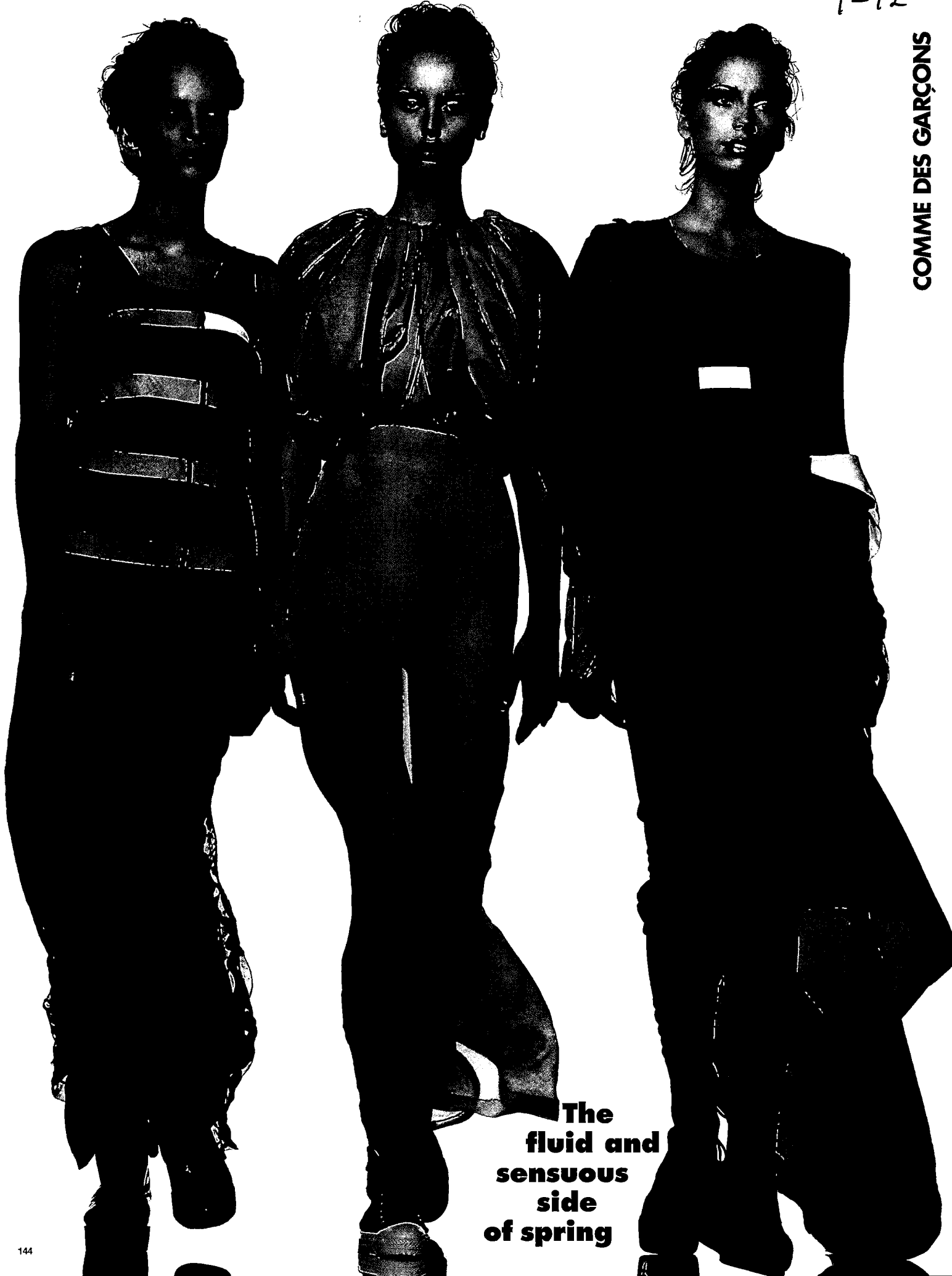
CAPTS

ALA 8

VERDY

BK-LA





**The
fluid and
sensuous
side
of spring**



CLAUDE MONTANA: PARIS / NEW YORK / HONG KONG / KOW-LOON / SINGAPOUR

PARIS: 31, RUE DE GRENELLE 75007 / 56, AVENUE MARCEAU 75008 - NEW YORK: THE CLAUDE MONTANA FIFTH AVENUE BOUTIQUE

PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED BY
GRUPPO

1-14~



MaxMara

1-146

